Utah Public Libraries Begin Boycott of Macmillan eBooks

SALT LAKE CITY (November 27, 2019) – Nearly 70 public libraries in Utah will join a nationwide boycott of Macmillan because of the company’s new policy that limits access and increases costs for new books.

The six-month boycott, effective immediately, is supported by Utah’s Online Public Library Overdrive Consortium, which includes 69 libraries statewide. The decision to begin the boycott was unanimous among the seven voting members who attended the consortium’s administrative committee meeting on November 13, 2019. The committee has nine members.

The Utah State Library, which operates Utah’s Online Library, will honor the consortium’s decision and will not purchase any new eBooks from Macmillan until at least May 2020. Macmillan’s eAudiobooks, as well as physical formats such as print or CD, are not impacted by the boycott.

Throughout the United States and Canada, libraries and library systems are protesting a decision by Macmillan, one of five major publishers, to only allow the purchase of one copy of new eBooks for the first eight weeks after release. After the eight week, libraries can only purchase additional metered copies at a premium price, and they will not permit the sharing of eBooks among members of the consortium.

Utah’s consortium is comprised of smaller suburban and rural libraries that depend on the shared resources to provide a wide range of books and other materials to their patrons. The costs to provide them individually would be prohibitive and ultimately limit the information available to their patrons.

The consortium did not make the decision to boycott lightly. Utah’s libraries are committed to promoting literacy and a lifelong love of reading and learning. Additionally, libraries and librarians believe in promoting equal access, and Macmillan’s policy has created a barrier to that access.

“Public libraries are the people’s university, but access will be more limited because of this policy from Macmillan,” said Provo City Library Director Gene Nelson, a voting member of the administrative committee who represents the Utah State Library. “Wait times for thousands of patrons will increase significantly and costs to libraries will escalate. Our hope is that Macmillan will work with librarians to find a solution.”

Join libraries across the country in opposing Macmillan’s embargo of eBooks. Sign the petition at https://ebooksforall.org and demand #eBooksForAll.