2018 Summer Reading

Annual Report and Recommendations

Beanstack

Contents

Overview

Summer 2018 was a resounding success for libraries on Beanstack - by far, our biggest season ever, with dramatic growth in programs, patrons, and reading. More than **800 libraries** used Beanstack to organize and facilitate **2,009 unique reading programs.**

Our partner libraries reached more people than ever before: **1,452,400 readers** signed up worldwide, from surfers in

Over 50,000 people used the mobile app to log reading this Summer.

Lana'i, Hawaii, to students in Brooklyn, NY, to sergeants at the USAF Base library in Spangdahlem, Germany.

Those readers logged new records, reading a stunning **6,094,951 books**, plus tripling the amount of minutes[1] from last year with **476,338,441 minutes logged** - that's 906 years of continuous reading time.

Our users also wrote and shared a record **223,000 book reviews** with other readers, including 1,300 picture reviews, and completed over **3.4 million Activities**.

The free Beanstack mobile app, which launched in spring, got a great workout: **over 50,000 people** used the mobile app to log reading this summer.

**Enrollment** – How many people signed up for Summer Reading?

Active Participation – What portion of those enrollees actually logged reading or activities.

While some of these record figures reflect an overall increase in the number of libraries using Beanstack, we're also seeing strong growth within libraries. **53% of surveyed clients said their reader participation was up** either "somewhat" or "significantly" from Summer 2017.

Beanstack's popularity gives us the unique opportunity to gather data and insights from hundreds of libraries, serving a wide array of populations. We're able to measure how small aspects of program design, from prizes to log types, can have a measurable impact on readers. Each year, we aggregate the results of the Summer Programs, look deeper at the libraries which have run the most effective summer programs, and talk to partner librarians about their keys to success. We share our findings publicly in the hopes that we can help libraries everywhere (whether they use Beanstack or not) increase enrollment and engagement throughout the summer months and beyond.

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1.   In pure minutes logged; tracking by "hours" was largely phased out in 2018.
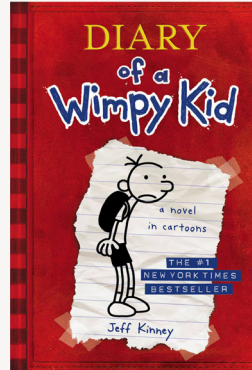
Top Reads
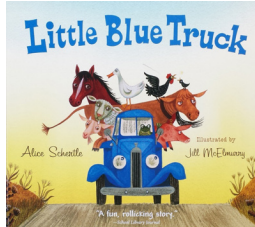
Ages 0-5

Classics rule the preschool category, but 2008's *Little Blue Truck* made a strong showing right behind some perennial leaders.
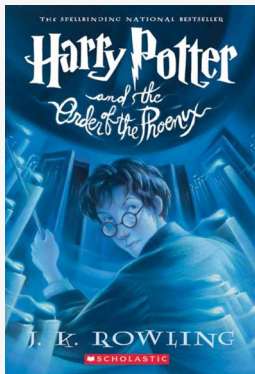
1. *Goodnight Moon*
2. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
3. *Green Eggs and Ham*
4. **Little Blue Truck**

Ages 6-12

Harry Potter and Greg Heffley duked it out for the top spot.

1. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*
2. **Diary of a Wimpy Kid**
3. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*
4. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

Ages 13-17

J.K. Rowling reigns untouchably supreme among teen readers.

1. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*
2. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*
3. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*
4. **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**
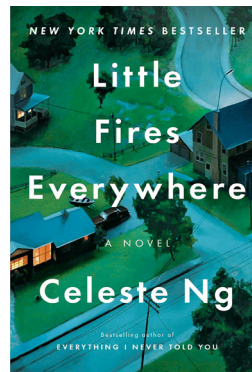
Ages 18 and up

Adult readers embraced both the very old and the very new. The Bible's popularity as a nightly read took it to the top of the most-logged list, while Stephen King's latest made the top three.

1. *The Holy Bible*
2. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*
3. *The Outsider*
4. **Little Fires Everywhere**

Methodology

Given over 800 library systems using Beanstack globally, serving populations as large as Los Angeles Public Library (3.9M people) and as small as Roxbury, NY (2,500 people), we looked for metrics that would be useful for comparison across an enormous array of programs. For our most basic evaluation, we used Enrollment and Active Participation, but we needed to control for library size. Therefore, we adjusted those two measures to capture "Outreach" and "Effective Outreach," each based on the library's total population served according to data provided by the Library Journal index.

We also estimated the Depth of Participation, using a combination of data points[2], namely:

Units Logged
Books, pages, minutes, hours, or days

Book Reviews & Picture Reviews
Traditional written reviews, and photos or videos posted through Beanstack's proprietary system

Interactions
The number of times readers logged into our system to take an action

Activities Completed

Outreach – Portion of the available area population enrolled

Effective Outreach – Portion of the available population that became Active Participants (APs)

Looking at these metrics alone, we identified some industry-wide trends relating to usage and demographics. Then we pinpointed those individual programs that had exceptional enrollment, participation, and depth—we call those libraries Differentiators—and looked for commonalities among that group. Our goal, in both cases, was to find actionable insight useful to any library in the industry looking to improve its future program numbers.

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2.   A note on Program Completion rate: we do track this statistic, and we know it's a key number for many of our customers. However, completion goals are set by library, and vary widely from place to place. Some programs offer multiple completions for each reader, while others use only one, and some have done away with completion altogether. Therefore, we chose not to weigh it when comparing programs.

Industry Trends

Age Demographics

As we have consistently seen, Kids ages 12-and-under constitute the majority of summer enrollees, and Kids and Teens together account for more than 80% of all enrollees.

> **There are more 8-yr-olds in summer reading than all adults age 25-40 put together.**

Interestingly, these groups also appear to be the driver of the majority of adult enrollment, as the population curve peak of adult enrollees lines up very neatly with the ages when adults are parenting children in the house.

Most Summer Readers are Kids Under 13
Enrolled Readers by Program Age

Kids ● Teens ● Adults ● "All Ages" Programs

- 9.8%
- 15.8%
- 13.9%
- 60.5%
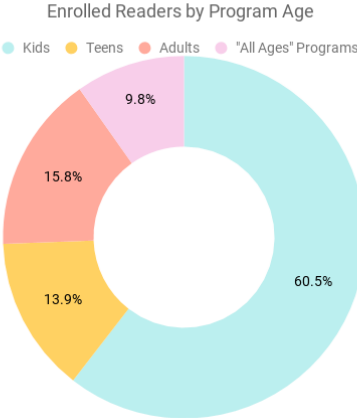
Kids and Their Parents Lead Enrollment
Age Distribution of Summer Readers
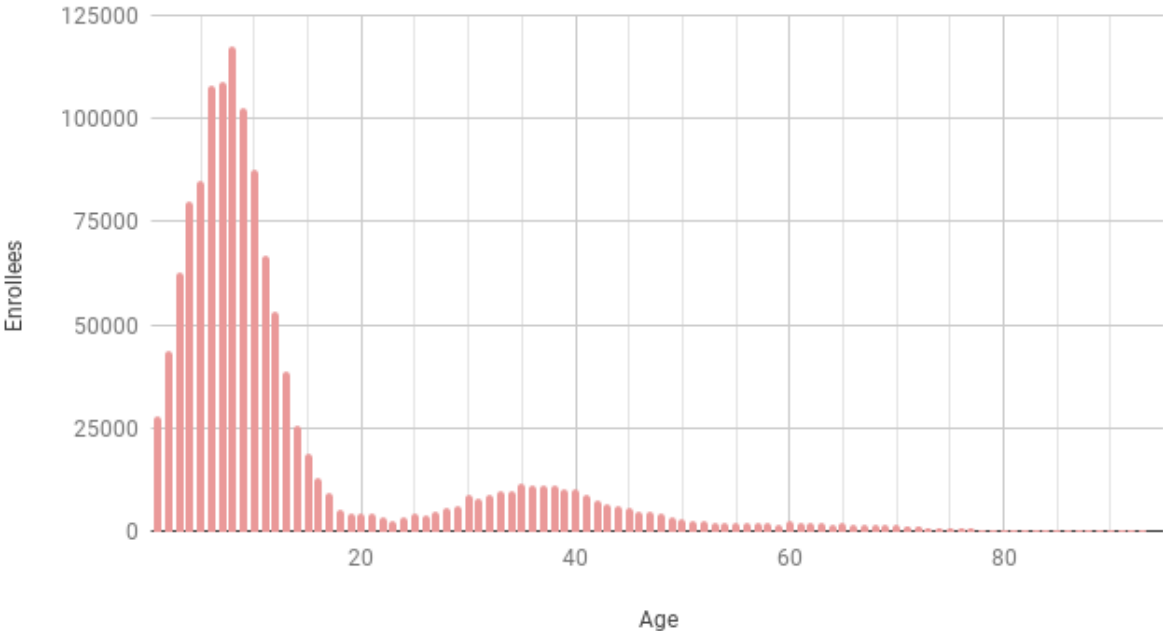
Of course, it will be no surprise to library staff that parents and caregivers signing up with their kids represent a large chunk of Adult enrollments. However, the degree to which kid signups seem to be driving adult signups is worth appreciating.

For libraries looking to increase Adult enrollment, our data imply that the single most effective strategy may simply be to improve marketing and recruitment among Kids and Teens—and let those groups bring their parents and caregivers along for the ride.

Some libraries only offer programs for Kids and Teens, which is likely a missed opportunity to connect with Adult readers. Even a bare-bones Adult program, available at Kids' signup, can boost Adult engagement with the library.

Libraries are best at reaching readers under 13; an area Kid is more than twice as likely as an area Teen to be enrolled in a summer reading program. Once enrolled, Kids are also the age group most likely to stay in the program and log reading.
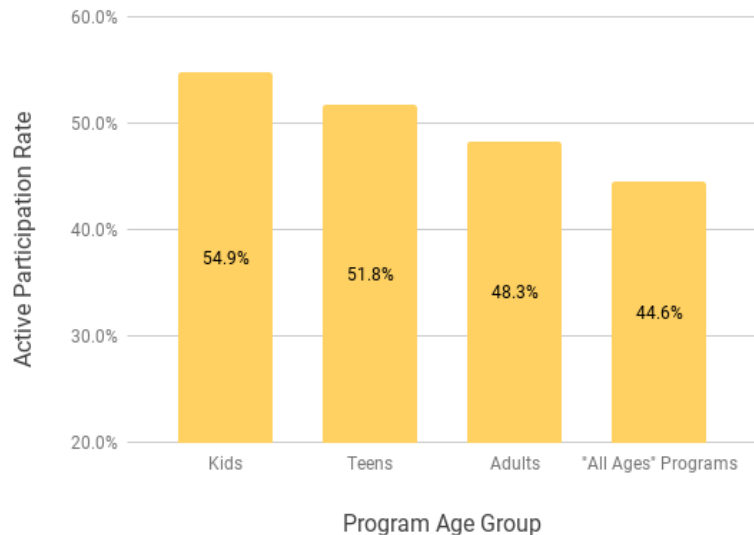
Libraries Reach Kids Most Effectively
Average Outreach as a % of Area Population
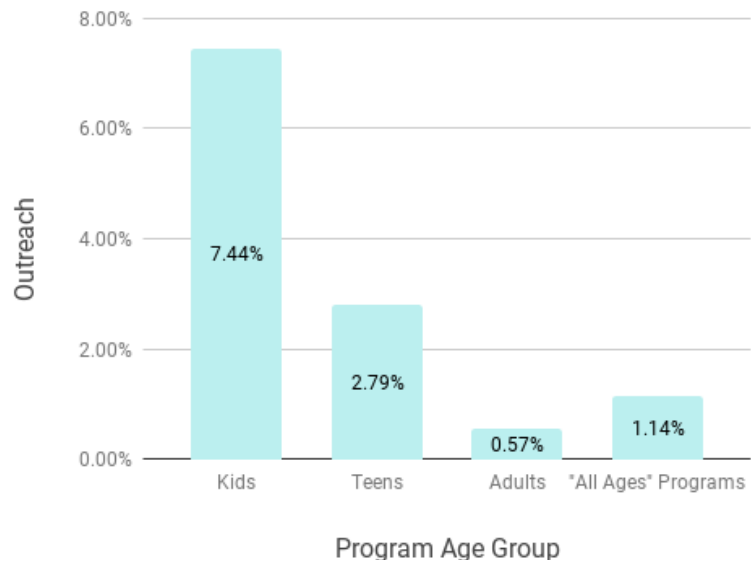
Kid Enrollees Are Most Likely to Participate
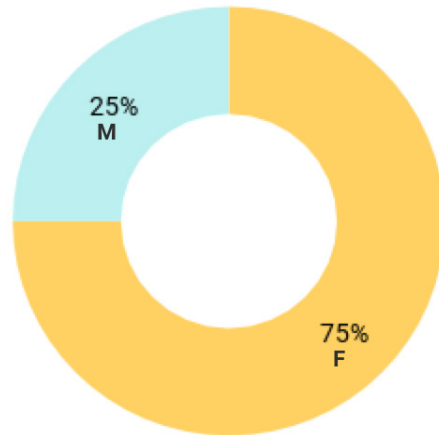### Active Participation Rates by Program Age Group

Logging Reading: When, How, and Who

We might picture a family logging their books on Beanstack in the evening, right after they finish their bedtime stories—or maybe logging their minutes on weekends, after a quiet Sunday afternoon with a good book. However, our site usage during Summer Reading paints a different picture—strongly implying that users are "saving up" their reading and batch-logging it during work hours instead.
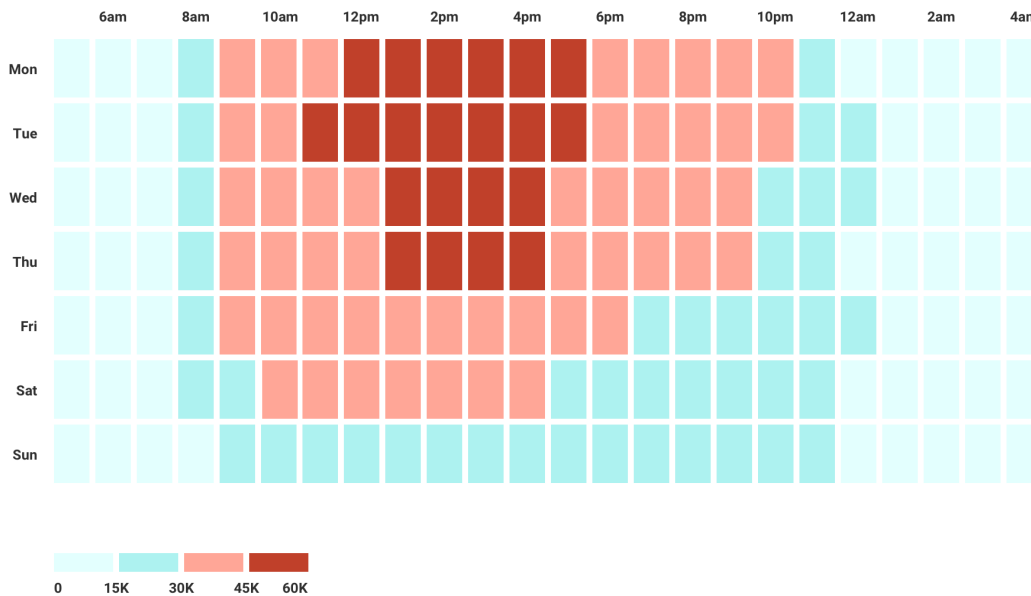
Even though our enrollees and Active Participants overall are 60% female, 75% of our site traffic is from female users. Since the 75/25 gender ratio of our site traffic is a close match to the 80/20 gender ratio of Adult summer enrollees, we can infer that **Adult women are most commonly doing the logging**, both for themselves and/or on behalf of children. This makes sense, given that almost 20% of summer enrollees are aged 6-and-under, and would be unlikely to log independently.[3]

Women Visit Most
Beastack Site Traffic by Gender

25% M

75% F

Most Readers Log During Work Hours
Average Summer Logging by Time and Day

	6am	8am	10am	12pm	2pm	4pm	6pm	8pm	10pm	12am	2am	4am
Mon												
Tue												
Wed												
Thu												
Fri												
Sat												
Sun												

0   15K   30K   45K   60K

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3.   This inference, though reasonable, isn't conclusive. Kids over 5 or so may all be logging their own reading, but while their mother is signed in to Google—in which case, Google analytics would record the site user as "adult woman" for that session.

Readers who use mobile devices log into Beanstack almost twice as much.

Most Beanstack logging during summer is still done via desktop computer; three-quarters of all summer readers are using desktops to access the site. However, when people do use phones and tablets to log their reading, they log much more often. While that doesn't necessarily mean desktop users are reading less (it's possible they are just batching their logging more), it does mean that mobile users are more frequently engaged with their reading programs. Either way, it's worth noting that the average user logs only a handful of times during the summer.

In short, when we imagine the "typical" book-logging experience, it would be most accurate to picture a woman, likely a mother, sitting at a desktop computer during business hours, entering her family's reading info for the last week or two.
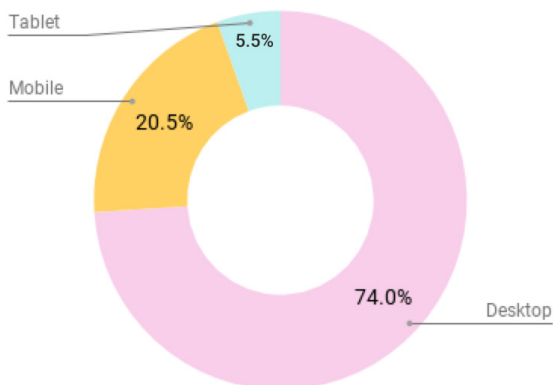
Mobile Users Log In Almost Twice as Often

Average Beanstack Sessions/User by Device Type
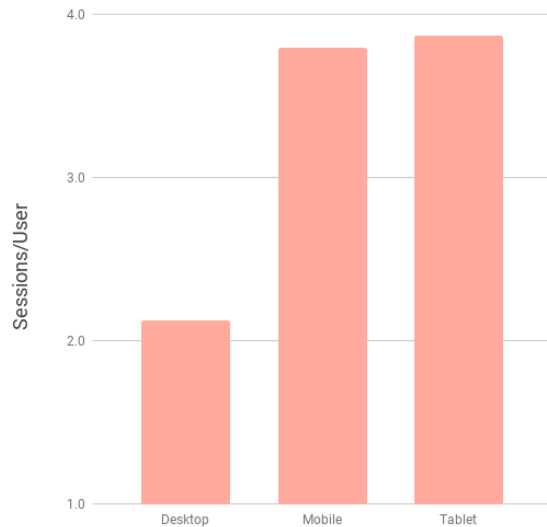
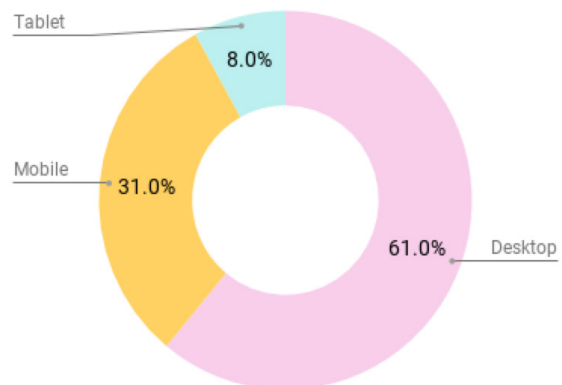*Only 25% of Logging Readers are on a Mobile Device...*

Summer Site Users by Computer Type

Tablet 5.5%
Mobile 20.5%
Desktop 74.0%

...But They Account for 40% of Site Activity

Summer Site Usage by Computer Type

Tablet 8.0%
Mobile 31.0%
Desktop 61.0%

Mobile App Users Turn Up Big

This year, Beanstack released a free mobile app for Apple and Android phones, which works hand-in-hand with the web presence. The app allows readers to scan by ISBN, time reading sessions, and track real-time stats—like a Fitbit for reading. The app was heavily tested during peak summer season, with over 50,000 downloads.

We looked at usage differences between Appies and Webbies, and were pleased to see that app usage correlated with a dramatic leap in Active Participation rates. Webbies participated at 51%, right in line with the population average—but **a stunning 76% of Appies logged reading in their programs**.

Appies – Readers who installed the mobile app. They were able to log reading both through the app and the web.

Webbies – Readers who did not use the app. Note that **2 in 5 Webbies still log via phone or tablet**—but by accessing their library's website, rather than using the app.

> **Participation rates were 50% higher for readers who downloaded the Beanstack App.**

It's too early to conclude that the app itself leads to higher AP rates.[4] Nonetheless, as an initial finding, a nearly 50% jump in participation rates is certainly encouraging. We know already that, even without the app, readers using phones and tablets log more often. With ISBN scanning, logging via the app literally takes a few seconds - making it more likely for patrons to log, and thus participate. The app's stat-tracking feature adds an element which may also boost participation. We'll be looking much more deeply into app usage in future reports.
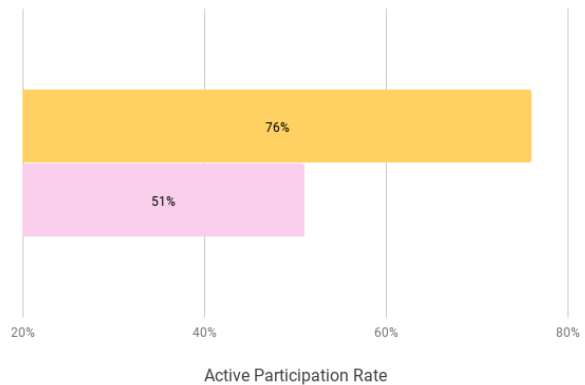
App Users Are Much More Likely to Log Reading

Active Participation: Appies vs. Webbies

■ Appies   ■ Webbies

76%

51%

20%   40%   60%   80%

Active Participation Rate

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4.   For example, Appies may comprise a higher percentage of families with kids, a group that has higher-than-average AP rates. There may also be a self-selection bias, wherein people who are most enthusiastic about Summer Reading are also the most likely to download the app. It's possible that the libraries which "pushed" the app heavily to patrons are also those libraries which already get high AP rates. Plus, our sample size of Appies, at 50,000, is still only a small fraction (3%) of our overall summer users.

Self-Signup is Best

Self-Signup Makes a Difference
Active Participation Rates by Signup Method

■ Staff-Enrolled ■ Self-Enrolled
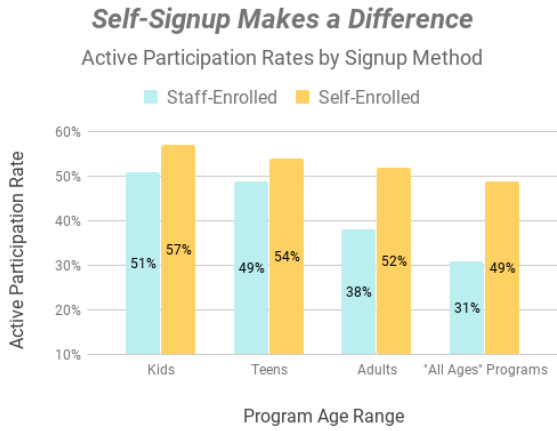
This summer, 70% of enrollees did the signup process themselves, and 30% were signed up by library staff. Just as we saw last year, r**eaders who sign themselves up are significantly more likely to become Active Participants**. The effect for Adults is most pronounced.

Returning Readers Shine

Libraries hoping to boost overall participation rates should strive to re-sign readers who have enrolled in a previous Beanstack program. These "veteran" summer readers average 16 points higher in Active Participation than first-time "newbie" enrollees.[5] It's notable that **veteran Adults have the highest AP rates of *any* age group** below—one of the only cases in which Adult participation exceeds the level for Kids. Beanstack saves account information from season to season, so Veterans are already in the system—they don't have to re-do the Registration process from scratch.

> **Adults who have used Beanstack before are 50% more likely than 1st-timers to become Active Participants.**

Returning Readers Shine
Active Participation for Veterans vs Newbies

■ Newbies ■ Veterans

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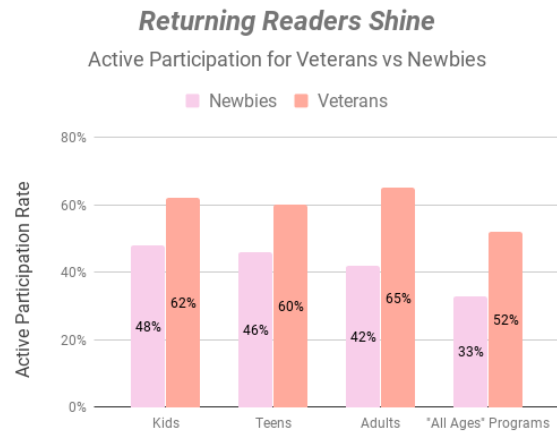
5.   These data only consider readers from libraries who have used Beanstack prior to Summer 2018.

Activities Are Trending

The Beanstack platform offers enormous flexibility in terms of how users log their reading and other activities, with more than half-a-dozen ways to log, plus combinations of different methods. **Nationwide, 3 in 5 programs use a combination approach**, such as Minutes plus Activities and/or Reviews.

For single-logging-method programs, Minutes and Books are the most common, followed by Activities.[6] But when combination programs are included, **Activities are by far the most common logging method overall**. Nearly 60% of all programs nationwide use Activities, usually combining them with Minutes or Books, and often with Reviews as well.

Our data show very consistent Active Participation rates for programs regardless of logging method. When it comes to getting enrollees to log that first time (thus becoming Active Participants), it appears that any of the major logging methods, used alone or in combination, works equally well. This held true regardless of age level.

However, when it comes to *Depth* of Participation, we find that logging method can make a big difference—and our highest-scoring programs are benefitting from those effects. We'll explore this further under Differentiator Trends.
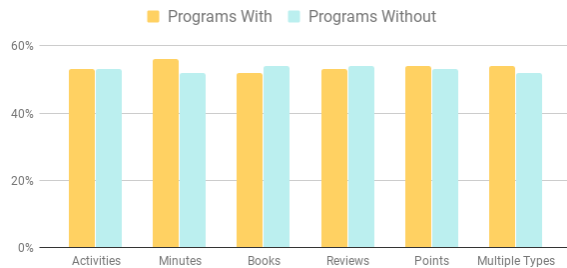
Incorporating Activities, Reviews is the Norm
Single-logging-method Programs vs. Combination Programs

41.0% Single

59.0% Combo
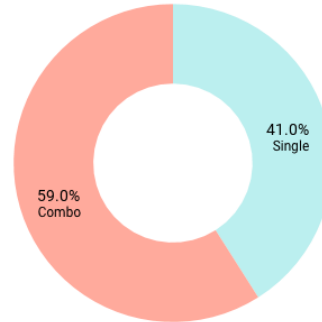
Logging Method Doesn't Seem to Affect AP Rates
Active Participation by Program Logging Method

Programs With   Programs Without

Activities · Minutes · Books · Reviews · Points · Multiple Types

Libraries Use Activities Most

% of Programs Using Each Logging Method

Did Not Use   Used Alone   Used in Combo

Activities · Minutes · Books · Reviews · Points · Days · Pages · Hours

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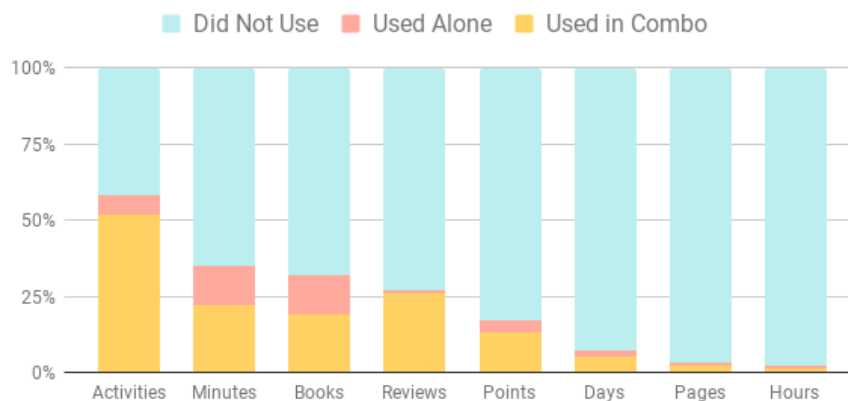
6.   Book Reviews are rare as a solo logging method, but there are a few programs that use them that way.

Gender: Girls and Women Lead Summer Reading

Fewer than 15% of Beanstack libraries ask for readers' gender at SRP registration, and only 13 libraries offered a "non-binary" gender option for enrollees,[7] so our sample size for this dataset includes just over 150,000 enrollees. For ages 12-and-under, signups and participation are fairly equal between boys and girls. By the teen years, girls are significantly more likely to enroll, and, even among enrollees, teen girls participate more than teen boys. By adulthood, enrollee women outnumber men by more than 4 to 1, and among those, women are almost 20% more likely than men to actually log their own reading.

Female Enrollees Participate More
Active Participation Rate by Age and Gender
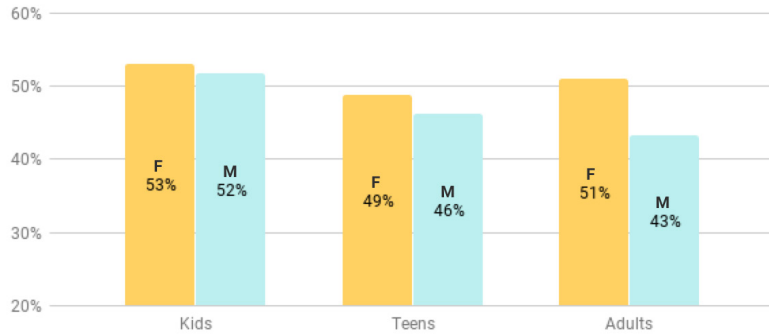
Active Participation by Gender Shifts with Age
Ratio of Female to Male APs

Kids — F 53% / M 47%
Teens — F 58% / M 42%
Adults — F 84% / M 16%

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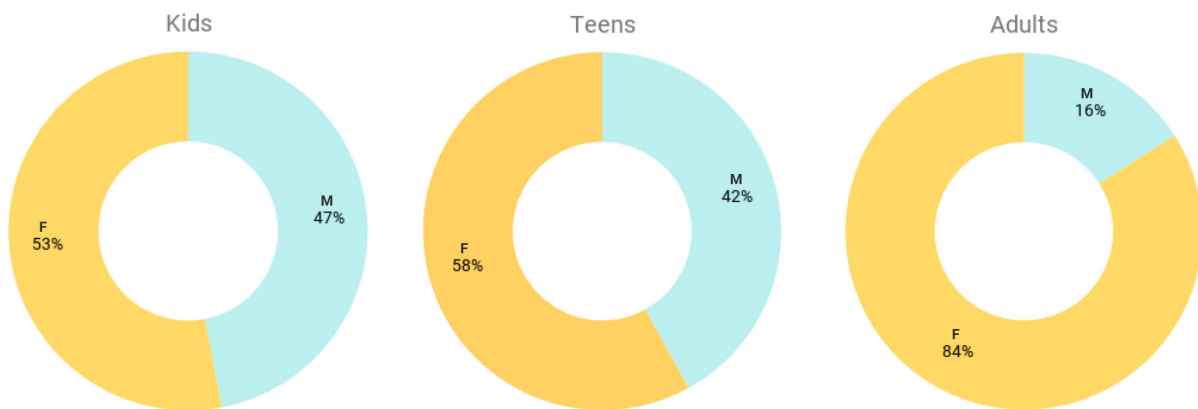
7.   So few libraries offer a "non-binary" option that our data on those genders are too small to be usable in this report. We would encourage libraries which collect gender data to add "non-binary," in the interests of both inclusivity and accuracy.

Start Date Comparison

| Median start date		Median end date		Average duration
01 JUNE	→	**11** AUGUST	→	**10** WEEKS

With more than 2,000 summer programs running on Beanstack, we see a wide array of program launch dates, with some launching as early as May 1, and a few launching as late as early July. June 1, which fell on a Friday, was by far the most common start date.

> ## 45% of all programs launched on June 1, 2, or 4.

This summer, as last, it appears that **libraries launching any time in May and June are equally successful** in recruiting readers. Programs with July launches did not do as well in Outreach, but these programs represent fewer than 1% of programs overall—too small a sample size to draw definite conclusions.[8]

May and June Start Dates Work Equally Well
Outreach Rates by Start Date of Program

Apr 1 - May 15	May 15-31	Jun 1-15	Jun 16-30	July 1-15
2.64%	2.68%	2.91%	2.81%	1.47%
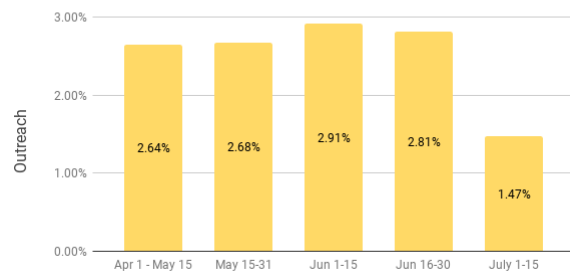
Start Dates Vary Widely
Number of Programs Launching, By Date

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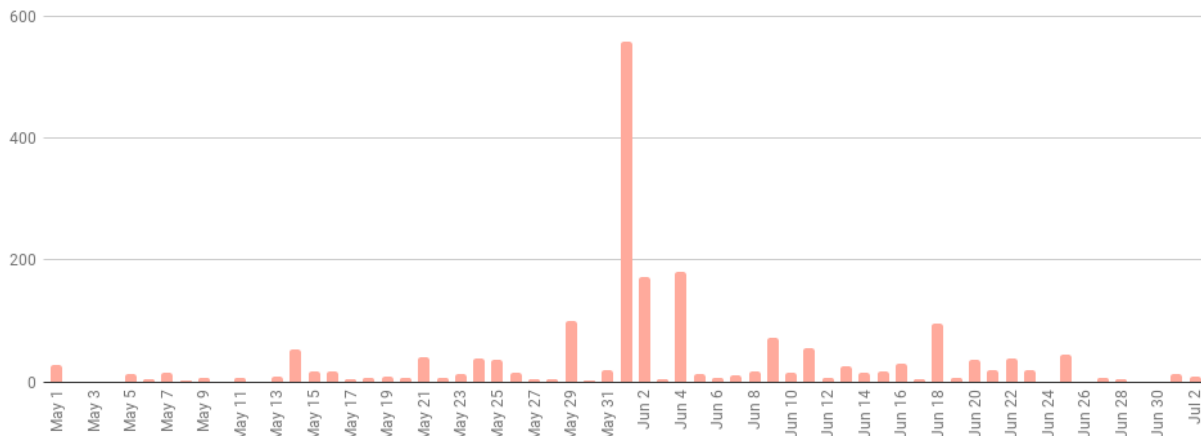
8.   This graph has been adjusted to control skewing caused by the largest city programs.

It's easy to see how the staggering of program start dates influences the overall units logged during summer. Nationwide, the pace of logging ramps up steeply in the two weeks after June 1, and, interestingly, holds fairly steady until late July. That implies that programs are enrolling the bulk of their readers right around the launch date, rather than picking up new enrollees steadily as summer goes on.

The Books, Minutes,[9] and Activities curves show a fairly level "plateau" through the middle of summer, a good signifier that **readers continue to read and log steadily throughout their programs** (as opposed to reading with gusto at the beginning and losing interest as time goes on).

> ❝
>
> **We did find with Beanstack that participants continued logging reading well into late July to gain more badges & prizes, whereas in the past we saw a dramatic fall off in participation after the first week in July.**
>
> *Heidi Martin, Youth Svcs*
> *Tipp City PL*

Programs Launched and Total Units Logged, by Date
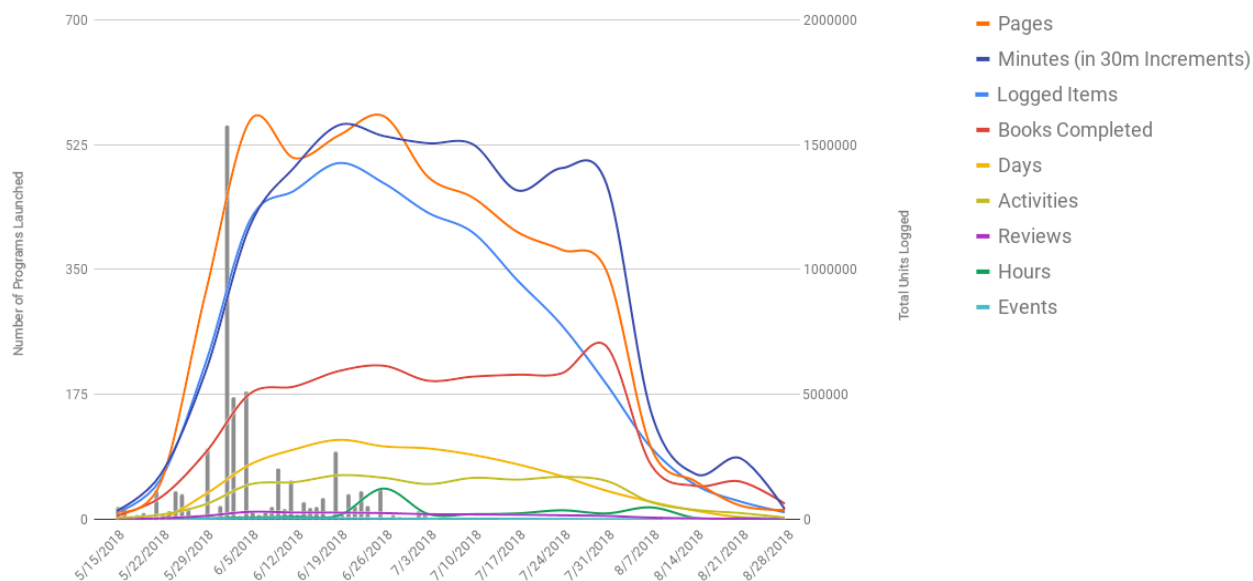
9.   Minutes here are being counted in half-hour increments - in reality the Minutes curve would be 30 times taller, making the rest of the graph difficult to read.

Differentiator Trends

At the risk of stating the obvious, there's no universal standard for what defines a "successful" Summer Reading Program—every library has its own set of goals, and they should (and do) vary widely depending on the community and its readers. Similarly, the keys to running an excellent program are hard to pin down. Thoughtful program design is part of it—but so are qualitative factors: good leadership, veteran staff, flexible training, and, always, people committed to making it work. We spoke to high-performing libraries about these qualitative aspects, seeking to understand how different libraries make the most of them. On the data side, we're looking deeper

at the numbers, and some measurable ways programs are maximizing those metrics. Combining those approaches yields some insights into the small choices that go into productive program management.

Differentiators are those individual programs that had exceptional enrollment, participation, and depth—they scored in the top quintile in at least 3 of the 4 key statistics in the chart below.[10] Compared to nationwide averages, these programs achieved significantly higher numbers.

|	Active Participation	Outreach	Effective Outreach	Depth
Nationwide	52%	8%	5%	17
Differentiators	75%	18%	14%	21
% Improvement	44%	123%	204%	24%

We also looked at any program which finished at the very top for each of the critical categories. Though not as well-rounded as the Differentiators, these programs were "specialists," and outscored all others in their key area. We hope to identify consistent trends across these programs, to give all libraries ideas about how they can put Beanstack's features to work for maximum results.

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10. Due to the difficulties of accurately comparing Depth across programs with different log types (e.g. Activities-only programs vs. Pages-only programs), we weighed Depth less heavily when identifying Differentiators.

Differentiators Add Activities, Reviews

Compared to the national average, **Differentiators are 15% more likely to use Activities and/or Reviews in combination with their main logging method**—almost 75% of them do. Overall, almost 70% of Differentiator programs offered Activities, compared to 58% nationwide. While choosing a combination approach instead of a single **logging method doesn't appear to affect Active Participation rates, it has a clear impact on the Depth of that participation**. Programs that add Activities and/or Reviews to their program average significantly greater Depth metrics—especially Teen and Adult programs.

Adding Activities Correlates to Greater Depth
Program Depth of Participation vs Activity Use by Age

■ Without Activities   ■ With Activities
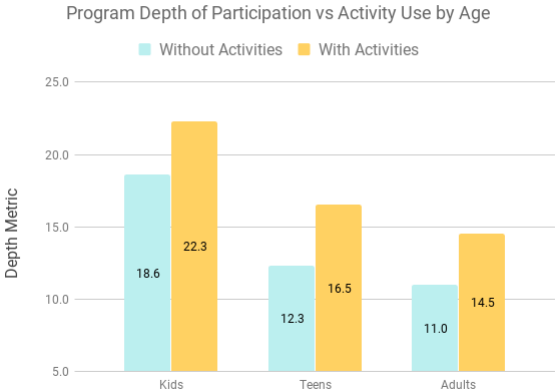
It's worth noting that greater Depth from Activities doesn't necessarily mean more reading. Because an Activity track can include just about anything—from "read five books" to "visit a park" or "use the Library makery"—it's difficult to pin down precisely how much extra reading (if any) they generate. Regardless, our Differentiator libraries cite Activities as effective tools for increasing patrons' involvement with the community, for reaching self-identified "non-reader" enrollees, and for promoting a broader vision of Summer Reading as something that encompasses a wide range of experiences.

Do Adults and Teens Prefer Minutes?

Last summer we noted that Adult and Teen programs that used Books as the primary logging method had lower Depth scores than those that did not. That correlation held true again in 2018, and again, the effect was pronounced. Programs that did *not* log by Books (mostly Minutes and/or Activities programs) achieved roughly double the Depth of Participation as "Books-only" programs.

Again, this doesn't guarantee that enrollees in Book-logging programs are *reading* less. They may simply be logging in less frequently (more batching), which would lower their interaction score, and obviously, Books-only patrons do not benefit from the increased Depth points that come from logging supplemental Activities or Reviews. Nonetheless, it is telling that **even Books programs that also used Activities and/or Reviews still did not match the Depth of the non-Book programs**. It is possible that the obstacle of finishing an entire book before logging it is acting as a deterrent for Teens and Adults, reducing their likelihood of engaging with their programs throughout the summer.

That said, there are plenty of excellent Book-logging programs; in fact, four of our Differentiators were "Books-only." Yet, **Differentiator libraries are much less likely to use Books as a logging method**: only 16% of them logged Books at all (compared to 32% nationwide).

Book-Logging May Discourage Depth
Depth of Participation by Log Type, Older Readers

■ No Books   ■ Books Plus Other   ■ Books Only
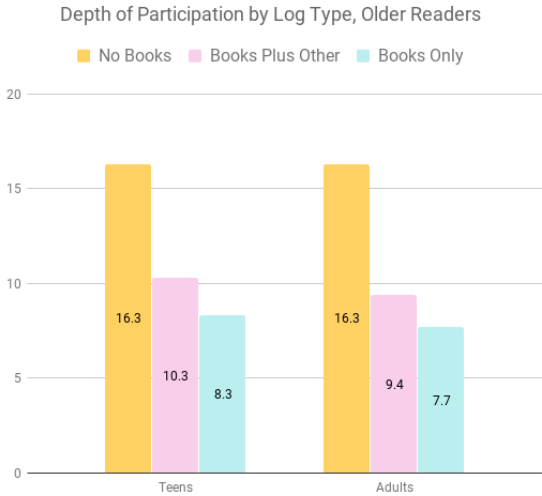
Offering Badges at Smaller Increments

Last summer, this report pointed out a strong correlation between more badges offered and higher participation rates. This summer, we were pleased to note that on average, the number of badges offered rose slightly. Still, in 2018 the Differentiator programs continued to offer slightly more badges to their readers: **Differentiators offered an average of 21 "virtual badges" for each program, 17% more than the nationwide average of 17.**

This summer, we again saw the same significant correlation between badges and participation. Beanstack programs are based on badging milestones; libraries determine the milestone, and communicate it with a badge. Some libraries create badges only at points where they traditionally offer a prize—if there is no prize, there is no milestone. However, we find a strong positive correlation between the number of

badges available in a program and readers' levels of Active Participation and Depth of Participation— independent of physical prizes. The effect is significant and holds true for all age groups.

The implication is that badges are prizes in themselves—they appear to motivate readers to keep on logging.

> "
> Allowing children to meet a lot of low-bar goals (every 2.5 hours) rather than one single high-bar goal, meant readers could be successful at their own rate.
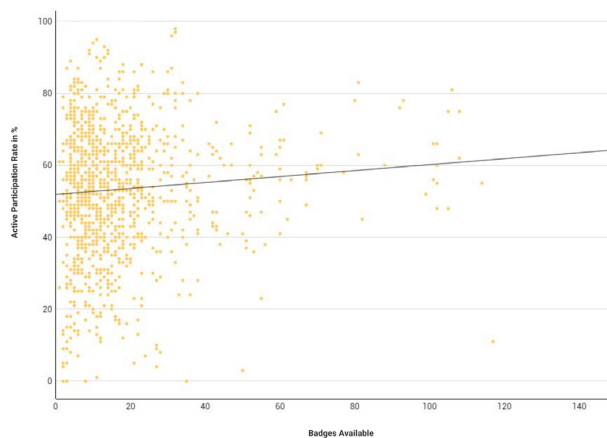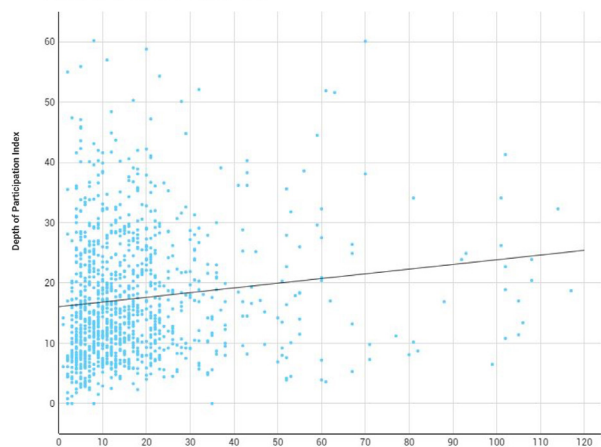>
> *Ann Carpenter, Youth Svcs*
> *Brooks Free Library*

More Badges Correlate to More Participation
AP Rates by # of Program Badges Available

...And Greater Depth of Participation
Depth Metric by # of Available Program Badges

Keeping it Simple

When we canvassed Differentiators for their "secret sauce," we heard, over and over, that simplicity is a crucial ingredient. Of course, Beanstack is designed to be infinitely customizable, and offers dozens of optional features, from Raffles to Tickers to Points,[11] and that range of possibilities can be seductive. What the Differentiator libraries seem to do well is identify which of those features are most effective with their patrons and staff, and narrow the focus to those alone. Carver County Library's Paul Ericsson discussed the challenge of that process:

> One legitimate criticism [from users] in 2017 was that we left on . . . too many functions that made the system confusing to use. In 2018 we limited the system's functions to those we are actively supporting. . . . "K.I.S.S." and "less is more" was the theme for our configuration in 2018 and the result was ease of use for the public as well as for the staff.

In short, simple design is easier for new trainees, for patrons, for staff, even for marketing purposes—all of which boosts enthusiasm and leads to increased engagement.
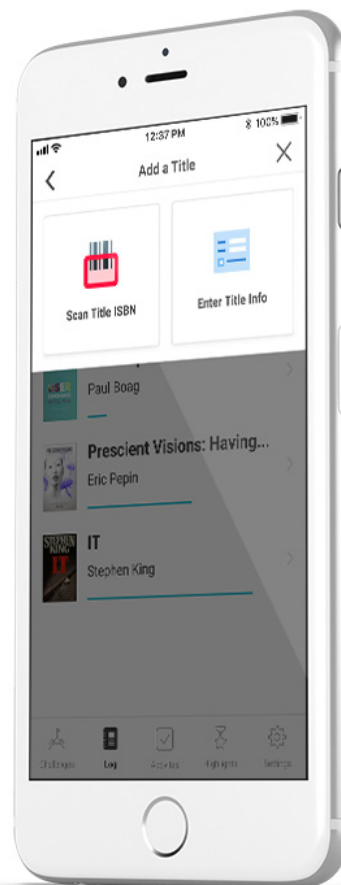
> **66**
>
> ## Our 'secret sauce' is keeping summer reading simple for both staff and patrons alike.
>
> *Lindsey Bray*
> *Omaha Public Library*

> **66**
>
> ## Our 'secret sauce' is creating a simple, streamlined program.
>
> *Karen Yother*
> *Community Library Network*

ISBN scanning with the Beanstack mobile app simplifies the book-entry process to a matter of seconds.

---

11.   Oh, my.

One Size Can Fit All

Looking to identify best practices, we were particularly interested in libraries that landed more than one program in the Differentiator pool (i.e., both their Kids program and their Adult program, say, finished in the top quintile nationwide in all of our metrics). Impressively, there were even a select few for which all three of their age group programs qualified. Studying those libraries' program designs, we were immediately struck with how often these Differentiators used a "universal" program design for every age group—meaning, that while specific Activities or Minute increments might vary from Kids to Adults, we see the same program layout, goal/badge structure, and logging method for every age group.

This one-size-fits-all approach is a clear application of the "simplicity first" theme, and runs counter to the idea that

program design needs to be tweaked and customized by age to maximize participation.[12] When we checked the other Differentiator libraries (those with only one Differentiator program), the prevalence of the one-size method was clear. Seventy percent of the Differentiator libraries use a "universal" program design, identical across ages, and another 10% use only slight variations across ages (e.g. Kids and Teens are identical, Adults have the same layout and badge structure but a different logging method).

To be clear, program design is not the same from one Differentiator library to the next—in fact, there's an enormous range of designs across those libraries. The one-size-fits-all idea refers to different age programs within each library.
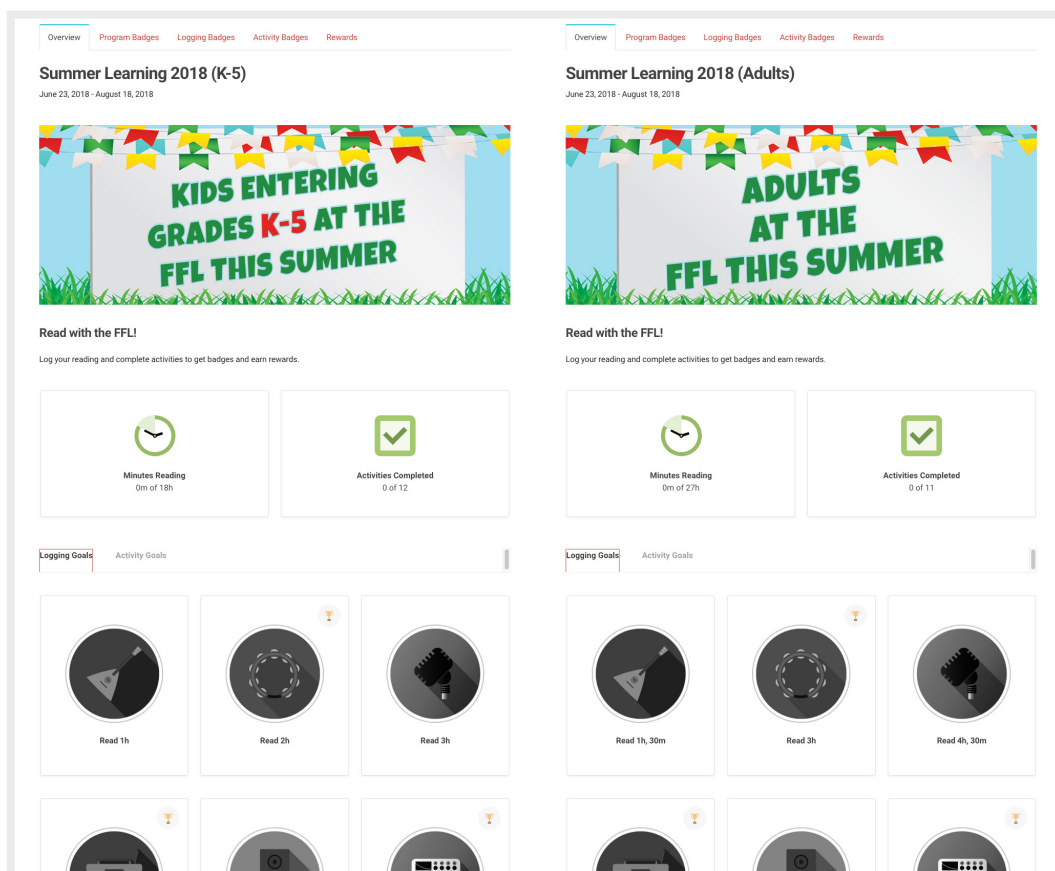
Fayetteville Free Library's Kids, Teen (not pictured), and Adult programs are nearly identical.

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12.   For example, the (ahem) suggestion that logging by books is a deterrent for Adults and Teens, but not for Kids.

Investing in Training

After "simplicity," the second big theme we heard from multiple Differentiator libraries was that they put a great deal of effort into organizing and managing their Summer Reading staff trainings. Most carry out training sessions at multiple levels: first, the core leadership team, then the key branch staff, and finally, small group trainings (or even 1-on-1s) for desk staff, assistants, and volunteers. Beanstack provides bite-size training videos and in-depth webinars, which our clients can watch any time—the Differentiator libraries use them extensively.

As a more quantifiable measure of training prep, we asked Differentiators whether they used a "cheat sheet" for staff training; more than 90% of Differentiator respondents built their own custom "cheat-sheets" for staff, with instructions for the functions they used most, and (often) links to the relevant Beanstack video clips. In our end-of-summer survey, "written documentation specific to our library" was ranked as the #2 most-effective training item, behind only "multiple in-person training sessions."

Numerous Differentiators pointed out the connection between simple, and/or one-size-fits-all program design, and more effective staff training and use. It's an important point. Libraries have finite resources. Spending lots of time tweaking and adjusting program design for each individual age group may help reader Participation or Depth slightly—but if that means less time devoted to staff training, or if the complexities of the programs then deter staff from "embracing" the software and becoming experts, the big loss may outweigh the small gain when it comes to the final results of the summer season.

> **More than 90% of Differentiator respondents built their own custom "cheat-sheets" for staff**

A sample from Omaha PL's staff "cheat-sheet."

Conclusions & Recommendations

Summer Reading is Beanstack's bread-and-butter service, but the versatility of our application has led customers to use it year-round to manage an array of programs, from Winter Reading Challenges to Book Clubs, and in schools as well as libraries. Beanstack currently serves over 1000 clients, and our customers range from small-town, single-branch operations to major metropolitan districts. We designed Beanstack to be flexible and robust enough to work for any client, regardless of size, budget, reader demographics, staff numbers, or the dozens of other qualities that make one library so different from another.

It's no surprise that, even among a small set of Differentiators, there's a wide range of program designs, and multiple strategies that work to engage readers deeply. **Your own staff will always be the best judge of what suits your specific reading population, and your unique goalset**. That said, we're pleased to be able to use our unique ability to gather up-to-the-minute data from hundreds of libraries to offer some recommendations for the industry as a whole. Based on the results of Summer Reading 2018, we encourage all libraries to consider the following suggestions:

Actively Recruit "Veterans."

Past enrollees are 50% more likely than Newbies to become Active Participants. Beanstack saves account info so they don't have to start from scratch.

Encourage Self-Registration.

The simple act of entering their own information, rather than having staff register on their behalf, seems to boost readers' participation.

Embrace Mobile

Readers logging by mobile log in twice as often. Show people how to use their phones to log.

Encourage Downloading the Mobile App.

It's free, it's simple, and app users were 50% more likely than average to become Active Participants.

Cater to the Base.

The most efficient way to drive Adult signups may simply be to recruit more Kids. Don't miss the chance to offer at least a simple Adult program.
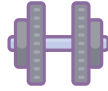
Recognize the Gender Split.

Non-Kid enrollees are mostly female. Whether it's adjusting Activities to match the audience, or working harder to hang on to Teen boy readers, knowing your readership should inform your program design, outreach, and marketing.

Know Who's Logging.

75% of the time, it's women, and mostly, it's parents. Try to make them experts.

Train Like the Army.

Strategize your training at multiple levels. Training can be more important than program design.

Build a Cheat-Sheet.

It's second only to in-person training. Design one that can go on every desk.

You're the Best Judge of Start Date.

There's no universal best date, though July may be too late for optimal results.

Offer More Badges..

Even if they aren't paired with prizes. The Differentiator program average is 21; many go higher.

Consider Adding Activities, Reviews.

Programs that use them show greater Depth of Participation at every age level.

Widen Scope with Activities.

They can be a tool for community involvement, expanding reading tastes, driving event attendance, and more.

Consider Letting Adults Log by Minutes.

Logging by books appears to be a significant deterrent to Depth. Readers can still enter titles to track their reading.

Consider Letting Teens Log by Minutes

It appears to increase Depth of Participation.

Hone In On Simplicity.

Select the Beanstack features that will be most impactful for you; don't sacrifice ease of use for minor frills.

Consider One-Size-Fits-All.

Keeping the programs similar across ages may boost staff and patron ease of use and engagement.

As always, we close with a note that's a reminder to us more than anyone: **it's all about encouraging people to engage more with their local library**. It's easy to get caught up in features that get people to do more stuff online, and those features do increase reading and engagement. But it's more important for a product like ours to make it simple and fun for readers to do what they've done for years—show up at the library, realize what an amazing free resource it is, and experience the delight of a good book. Librarians and libraries do what matters most, and when we get letters from you like the ones below, it makes our day.

Regardless of whether your library uses Beanstack or not, we hope this year's report will be useful to you as you tailor your future programs to maximize results. We welcome your feedback, and look forward to seeing productive impact in Summer 2019.

Yours in reading,
Jordan and Felix
Co-Founders
Zoobean

> 66
>
> Our average minutes read per participant during SRP increased from last year for all age groups—in total by 38%! Our sincerest mahalo for all that Zoobean does to support our SRP and other online reading programs . . . helping us to nurture literacy and grow the love of lifelong reading and learning. We look forward to collaborating with you again for summer 2019!
>
> *Stacey Aldrich, State Librarian*
> *Hawaii State Public Library System*

> 66
>
> We had a number of parents express how hard it has been in years past to get their children to read over the summer, but with all the great changes from Beanstack at our library, their kids were excited and motivated to read. Wonderful!
>
> *Holly Barfield, Asst. IT Director*
> *Forsyth County PL*

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Beanstack

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