

eBooks & eAudio

A Quick Introduction & Some Tips

~ Installing Software, Searching, Downloading, and Playing ~

Members of any library in the **Ramapo Catskill Library System (RCLS)** can choose from thousands of eBooks and eAudiobooks provided by RCLS!

If you are new to computers, eBooks, or portal digital audio players, you might have some questions or experience some difficulties at first. Fear not! Below are some tips and considerations to help you along the way. If you ever have any other questions, you can always stop by, or call, our **Reference Department** at **(845) 341-5461**. We're always happy to help!

The Basics

RCLS' **Digital Download Service** offers books in a variety of digital formats. Some can be viewed on your computer's screen. Others, such as eAudio books and eMusic albums, can be heard on your computer. Some eBooks can even be transferred to portable digital media devices or eBook readers (which are nice but *not* required).

Your computer probably needs to be updated before you can start using eBooks. Once you complete some basic steps, you can start enjoying this free service!

To reach the eBooks website, just go to **www.thrall.org** and click on **eBooks**.

Setting Up Your Computer

You need to download (retrieve a computer file from the Internet) and install some software from the RCLS eBooks website. As technical as that might sound, it's actually very easy! Just follow the link above (or go to **thrall.org/ebooks**), click on **eBooks**, and then click the "**special software**" link. This takes you to a page where you can find out how to download the software you need to work with eBooks.

If you are only interested in **reading books on your computer's screen (or a Sony Reader)**, you need to install **Adobe Digital Editions**.

If you would like to listen to eAudio books on your computer or portable media player, you will need to install the **Overdrive Media Console**. If you do this, please be sure to indicate the type of computer you have (such as an **Apple Mac** or **Microsoft Windows** system).

On Windows, the **Window Media Player** needs to be updated to play eAudio or eMusic. This is done by bringing up the Overdrive Media Console, selecting Tools from the Overdrive menu, and clicking **Windows Media Player Security Update**. It takes about a minute to finish that.

Windows users with **iPods** also need to install **QuickTime** and **iTunes** (download links for that software are also provided at the OverDrive website).

Many but not all titles work on Apple computers or iPod. Please inspect each title that interests you to see if it compatible with your equipment *before* attempting to download anything.

Searching for eBooks

Once you have everything installed, the fun can begin! Start locating to download by following the eBooks link on our home page and then clicking the “**Click here to locate and check out one or more available titles**” link when it appears.

You **browse or search** for eBooks. To browse, scroll down and see the subjects on the left side of the screen. Click the “more” links to see more subjects.

If you search (by clicking the **Search** tab at the top of the page), you can tell the catalog what format you prefer (Adobe PDF, audio, video, etc.).

When you look through titles, each will tell you the format of the item, if it can be transferred, as well as what computers or portable devices it can play on.

If you find a compatible title you like, click the **Add to Download List** link if it is available.

Some titles are “always available,” while others might already be checked out. Items not currently available can be reserved so you can borrow them once they become available. To do this, just click the **Place a Request** link.

Downloading & Playing

Provided all necessary software updates are in place, you should be able to find and download items once you have logged in (with your library card) and reached the check out prompt. After doing so, you should soon see a download link, which then activates software like Adobe Digital Editions or Overdrive Media Console.

Depending on the speed of your Internet connection and the size of the files needing to be downloaded, digital items can take a while to transfer even if you have high-speed Internet. Some audio or video files can exceed several hundred **megabytes**! One megabyte is roughly one million letters long, so that will give you an idea how big these things can get!

In addition to some free time (and patience), also make sure your computer and portable media device (such as an **MP3 player** or **iPod**) have enough free space to store the file. New computers ship with **hundreds of gigabytes** (*thousands* of megabytes) of free space on their hard drives (where your computer’s files are stored), so you probably don’t have to worry about free space if you have not used your computer to store many files such as digital photos.

On the other hand, iPods, MP3 players, and other portable devices, usually do not have such expansive free space. Some can have as little as 250 MB to 1 GB of storage space, whereas others (i.e. the “expensive ones”) might have several times that amount or more.

Some eAudio books are so huge that they often must be downloaded in parts – and only one or two of those parts might actually fit on your MP3 player. If that is the case, you can delete the files on your MP3 player once you are done with them to make space for other parts.

Returning Digital Downloads

Unlike regular books and items you borrow from the library, digital downloads do not need to be returned: they are pre-programmed to become inactive once their due date has been reached. You can even delete the e-file once done with it.

For More Information

While Thrall itself does not provide eBooks or personalized technical support for computers or portable media players, we do offer a number of books on iPods, MP3 players, and computers so you can learn more on how they work and find solutions to commonly experienced difficulties.

RCLS’ Digital Download Service website (efiles.rcls.org) also offers a **Guided Tour** of digital media, a list of **suggested devices** said to be compatible with the eBooks service, and links to related software providers who offer additional guidance and troubleshooting tips for their respective services.