Library 2.0: Libraries Meet the Digital Age

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TV Online Ed Technology Contributor Jacob Schandel

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It used to be that, for a research project, you had to get information from books. This idea is absolutely mind-blowing to many in our generation: not being able to ask Google Now, Siri, or Cortana a question and get an answer without lifting a finger. Libraries still serve a niche function in the 21st century, being a place to research a topic or find a good book to read, but with the increase in online research sources (ahem, Google) as well as online bookstores that can let people read books digitally (like Amazon Kindle, Google Play Books, or iBooks), many people may forget about their local library and what a good resource it is. Have no fear, technology is here! Libraries are modernizing to adapt to the 21st century, and they are adopting the various technologies that come with it. Here, we will be taking a look at how the Tuscarawas County Public Library System embraces technology through the online services it provides its members, a look which will also show how strong of a resource the modern library truly is. All you need is a library card. If you don't have one, you can get one from your local branch, like the Bolivar Library. For more information on the Tuscarawas County Public Library System, please visit www.tusclibrary.org. (Note: while the focus of this article is going to be on the Tuscarawas County Public Library System, the Stark County District Library is another nearby library offering similar services, with their closest branch located on Route 800 just north of the Flipside Grille, home of the best quesadilla in the world. If this is a more convenient library for you, then you can learn more about what they offer over at www.starklibrary.org.)

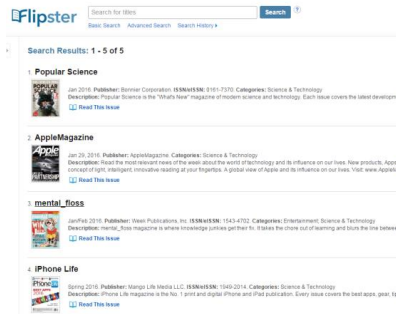## Borrow a book (on your e-reader or other device).

The entire concept of a library is that it allows people to borrow books for free. Luckily, the Tuscarawas County Public Library System is part of a coalition of libraries in the state of Ohio that, together, form the Ohio Digital Library. This allows for people to borrow books on their e-readers. If someone doesn't have an e-reader, they can use the OverDrive app. OverDrive is available on Google Play, the App Store, the Chrome Web Store, and online. (Earlier this school year, the Tuscarawas County Public Library sent a representative to talk to our middle school students about how to use their Chromebooks to borrow books. You can read more about that in Isabelle Edward's article here.) To borrow a book, simply log in to the Ohio Digital Library with your library card and PIN, find the book you want, and click borrow. A major positive to the Ohio Digital Library is that books are automatically returned at the end of their borrowing period. This means you don't have to worry about manually returning your book. You can get started with the Ohio Digital Library over at the Tuscarawas County Public Library System's website.

Read a magazine.

Magazines are a great thing to read when you want to kill some spare time. The only lousy part about them is that you have to pay for them. Worse yet, most people only read a magazine once, and then it goes into the trash. Through the library, you can read and download periodicals online for free. The
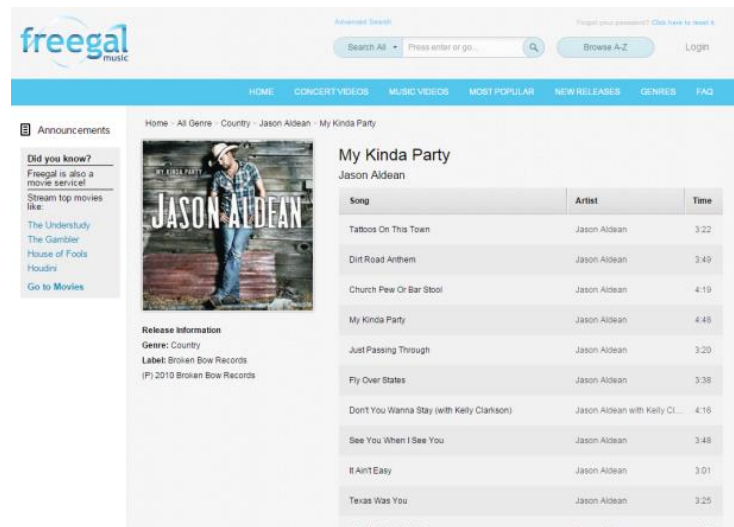
library offers access to magazine app Flipster in order to provide this. To get started, go to Flipster and log into the website with your library card. From there, you can simply search the title you want to read. To read it on the go, get the Flipster app (iOS and Android) first and foremost. Then, go into your web browser on your device and download it to the app from there. While the interface takes some getting used to for offline reading on the go, Flipster through the library is definitely an amazing free solution for reading periodicals for free.

Download free music (legally).

There is a plethora of ways to download free music online. However, most of them are a crime to use, and if you use them, you are also probably getting horrendously criminal sound quality (no pun

intended). Luckily, you can legally download free music if you have a library card through the Tuscarawas County Public Library. Freegal Music is a service which allows library card holders to download (in the case of the library in question) up to three songs a week in MP3 format. While the song selection is not exactly that of iTunes, I was able to find a plethora of popular artists and songs, from Jason Aldean to One Direction to (some) Daft Punk. In my testing, the audio quality is good for a downloaded MP3, and I would dare to compare it to the quality of music available from other online music stores like iTunes or Google Play Music. Of

course, these songs download directly in the browser, so you will want to either directly put them on your phone via the classic drag-and-drop method or iTunes or you will want to use a cloud service like Google Play Music or Microsoft's Groove Music to beam your songs to your devices. This method is an amazing way to download free music legally and easily.

Be a boss.

Local libraries are continuing to grow their offerings that position them as players in the digital age, from digital genealogy services to ways to access newspapers for free online. As libraries continue into the 21st century, they are certain to continue in this path of modernization. As they continue to modernize, they will only improve what they offer. However, it is definitely worth it to stop in at your local library and ask about what all they offer that makes them a part of the digital age.