Arapahoe Libraries Transforms their Email Marketing Strategy

About Arapahoe Libraries

Location:
Arapahoe County, Colorado

Population:
250,000

Branches:
8 Community Libraries, 1 Jail Library, 1 Library on Wheels

Mission & Goal:
To be the best public library system to the communities they serve by offering outstanding personalized service and a connection to valuable resources, events, and offerings.

Unique Highlight:
Arapahoe Libraries is an Early Adopter Library System that offers the latest and greatest technology tools to their patrons before they are universally accessible.

Products:
BiblioCore   BiblioApps
BiblioWeb   BiblioEvents
BiblioEmail

Arapahoe Libraries upgraded their email marketing tool, Mailchimp, to BiblioEmail. This change means that patrons can receive email communications that are specific to their interests and preferences. By segmenting their audiences and personalizing their email campaigns, Arapahoe Libraries are seeing an improvement in their email engagement metrics.

Objectives

Libraries are always looking to improve the overall patron experience, and Arapahoe Libraries knew that one way to do this is through more personalized communications. They realized some changes needed to make to their marketing communication plan and the tools they used to support that plan. Their previous email marketing tool had limited targeting capabilities. They were looking for a next-generation tool that intelligently uses audience segments and helps tailor the content to each of those segments.

Arapahoe Libraries felt an urgency to stay on top of the latest trends and provide the best experience for their patrons and community. The way that patrons engage with the library has been changing for quite some time. There is a greater emphasis on the library's online features, and more than ever, patrons are looking for more engaging, informative, and reliable online experiences. Ultimately, Arapahoe Libraries were at risk of not fully supporting patrons, losing their email subscribers, and becoming irrelevant in their community.

Solutions

Arapahoe Libraries used to distribute their emails en masse, without a lot of targeting. That has changed since using BiblioEmail. They now have the power to create audience segments

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73,000
Subscribers

Email:
Bookmark Design Contest

57.65%
Read Rate

33.2%
Click Rate

Email:
April Newsletter (Ages 0-5)

56.6%
Read Rate

32%
Click Rate

Email:
Women's History Month

34.82%
Read Rate

18%
Click Rate

based on subscribers' preferences. Some of the selections that Arapahoe Libraries offers their email subscribers are topic, genre, format, and age groups.

BiblioEmail integrates with Arapahoe Libraries' website (which is powered by BiblioWeb.) This seamless integration between digital channels means that patrons are exposed to a consistent branding experience across all of their online platforms. Plus, library staff no longer need to create net new content for their emails. Instead, they can populate emails by repurposing content that already exists on their website, blog, and events calendar. The marketing communications and website strategy now functions like one cohesive ecosystem.

> "At Arapahoe Libraries, we would tell other libraries that BiblioEmail is a win-win between personalized, tailored emails to your patrons to really connect them with those niche services and virtual events, to the seamless integration with the website. You just can't lose. It's a wonderful product, and I recommend it to any public library considering it."
>
> *Marcie Stanley,*
> *Marketing and Communications Supervisor*

Results

Arapahoe Libraries migrated 73,000 subscribers from the previous email marketing tool to BiblioEmail. Many subscribers have picked their preferences and are already receiving targeted emails based on their interests. For example, they recently sent out an email for a 'Bookmark Design Contest' that is open to kids aged 5-12. In the past, an email like this would have been sent to everyone in their database. Now that they know their subscribers' preferences, they only sent out the 'Bookmark Design Contest' email to those interested in receiving news for the 5-12 age group. The metrics for the 'Bookmark Design Contest' email were a success, with a 57.65% read rate, 33.2% clicks, and 24.8% unique clicks.

By promoting the array of virtual offerings, resources, and programs to interested subscribers only, Arapahoe Libraries is successfully humanizing the online patron engagement experience and making the library more relevant and in touch with their community's needs.

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COMMONS

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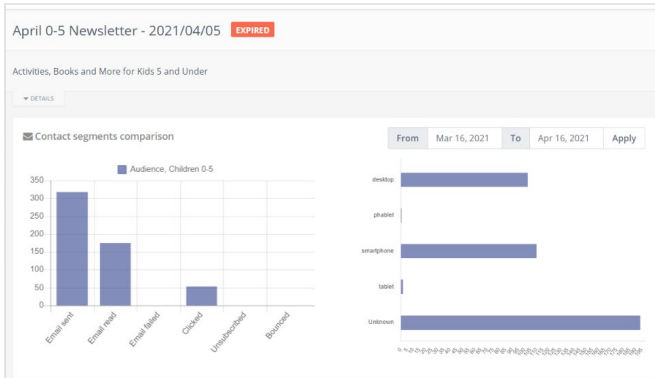
BiblioEmail dashboard showing the performance of the 'April Newsletter for Ages 0-5'. Data includes the number of emails sent, read, failed, clicked, unsubscribed, and bounced.

BiblioEmail report showing a big picture view of performance for all emails sent.

Although they are in the early stages of using BiblioEmail, the library has already seen an increase in the email open rates and click-through rates. The 'April Newsletter for Ages 0-5' resulted in a 56.6% read rate, with 32% clicks, and 22% unique clicks. The 'Women's History Month' email had a 34.82% read rate, 18% clicks, and 11.5% unique clicks.

Future

Arapahoe Libraries will continue to work closely with BiblioCommons to enhance their email marketing communications. They will be sending out an email campaign to subscribers who still need to pick their interests to get them excited about the benefits of setting their preferences. A communications campaign is also in the works to encourage new email sign-ups. The multi-channel campaign will include information and call-to-actions on the in-library digital screens, fun and attractive social media posts, and a prominent banner on their website's home page. As their segments continue to grow, Arapahoe Libraries will also be sending emails based on format type (books, movies, and music). In the future, summer reading, newly added online resources, and upcoming author events will also benefit from the email targeting capabilities.

"We were looking for that next-generation email marketing management tool that could offer the targeting and personalized tailored email experience that our patrons were looking for."

Marcie Stanley,
Marketing and Communications Supervisor

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