

A History in Going Fine Free

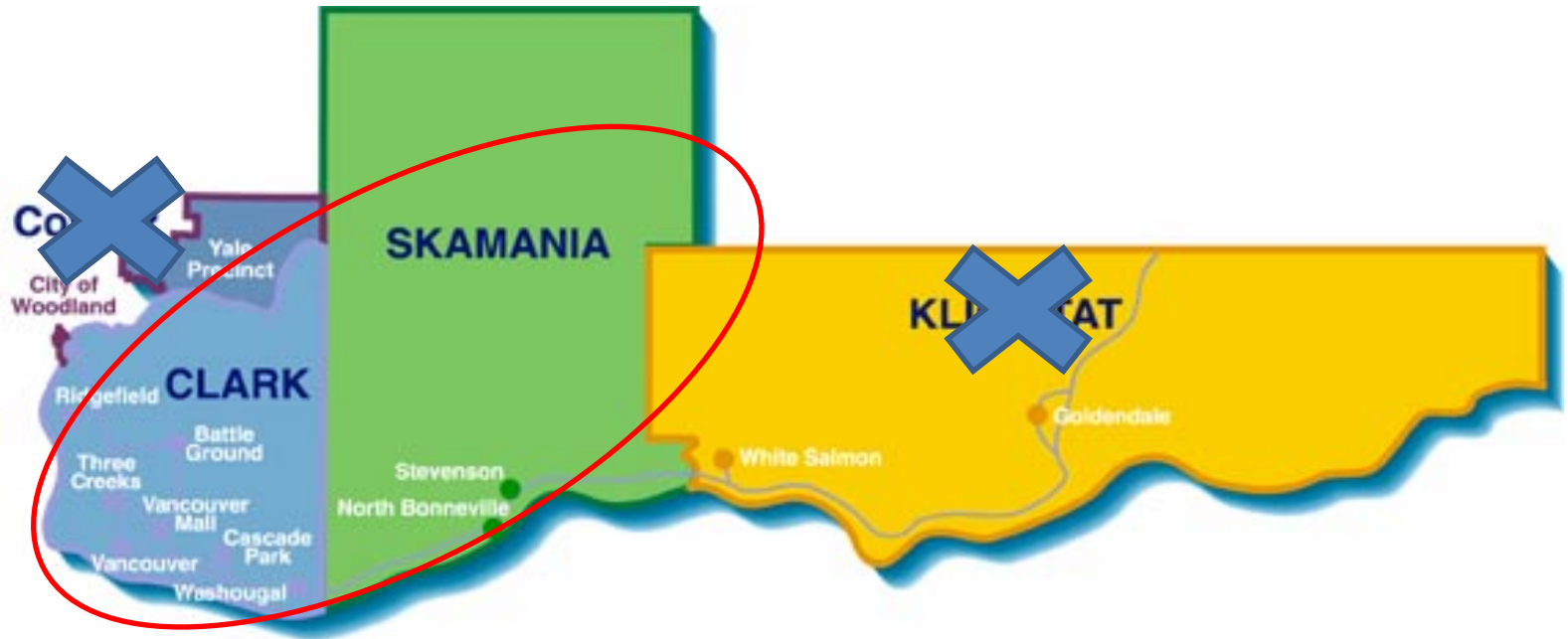
A look at the impact on Fort
Vancouver Regional Libraries

Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries



Regional public library district located in Southwestern Washington State

Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries



Only Clark and Skamania Counties in 1970 – 5 branches and mobile libraries

Fines Eliminated: October 1, 1970



“Last year we spent between \$10,000 and \$12,000 to collect overdue fines – and the fines amounted to about \$8,000.”

“It costs more to collect fines than the fines themselves.”

Ruth Watson, FVRL Regional Librarian
Quoted in the Oregonian, October 11, 1970

Library cards, fines abolished to save cash

“This will minimize delays at the main desk, when two or three persons can be signing their registration cards at the same time. Our people at the main desk can then be more truly ‘hostesses,’ and not ‘card pusher people,’” Miss Watson said.

The Columbian, September 30, 1970



Lorene Bryan, library office manager, burns library cards—not in protest, though.

Fort Vancouver Regional Library

Circulation Philosophy

- 1- Make the library materials as easy to check out as possible.
- 2- Allow everyone the same chance at the materials--even the person who just that day moved into the area.
- 3- Assume that all patrons are responsible persons
- 4- Try in every way to make patrons feel that it is their library and their participation is important
- 5- Follow through on reminding persons of delinquent materials, a written note and a telephone call.
6. Try to avoid getting emotionally involved in cases concerning materials which are not returned. We can spend only so much time on delinquent material return. Some persons are going to ignore rules no matter what the librarian does.

Automation: 1992



- ✓ Library cards
- ✓ Notices centralized
- ✓ Automated calls
- ✓ Data!

Considered Adding Fines

1999

High overdue rate: 41%

13,957 accounts over \$25.00

Rejected:

- Cost of equipment
- Staff time
- Anticipated drop in circulation

2009

Overdue rate: 23%

Revenue source

Rejected:

- Impact on patrons in tough times

Instead of Fines

	<u>Lost Billing</u>	<u>Block Limits</u>
1992	6 months	\$75.00 owed

1994	3 months	\$50.00 owed

	Migrated from Dynix to Unicorn in September 2005	

2005	8 weeks	\$40.00 owed

	Added UMS for Collections in December 2006	

2010	4 weeks	\$25.00 owed



September 2010 : 18.43% of items were overdue

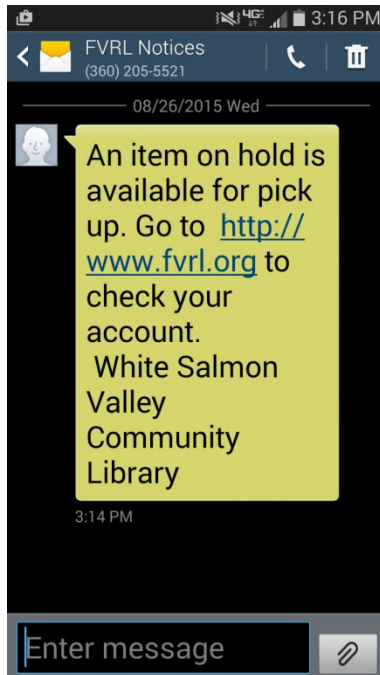
Notices



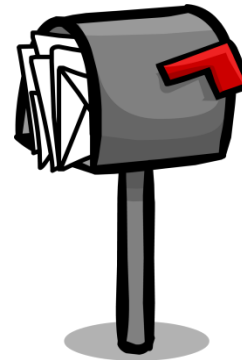
Automated phone notices 1992-
(ENS, TeleCirc, SVA, i-Tiva)



~1996



SMS 2017



Mail is still an option

Automated Renewals

Implemented August 2018

Expected Results

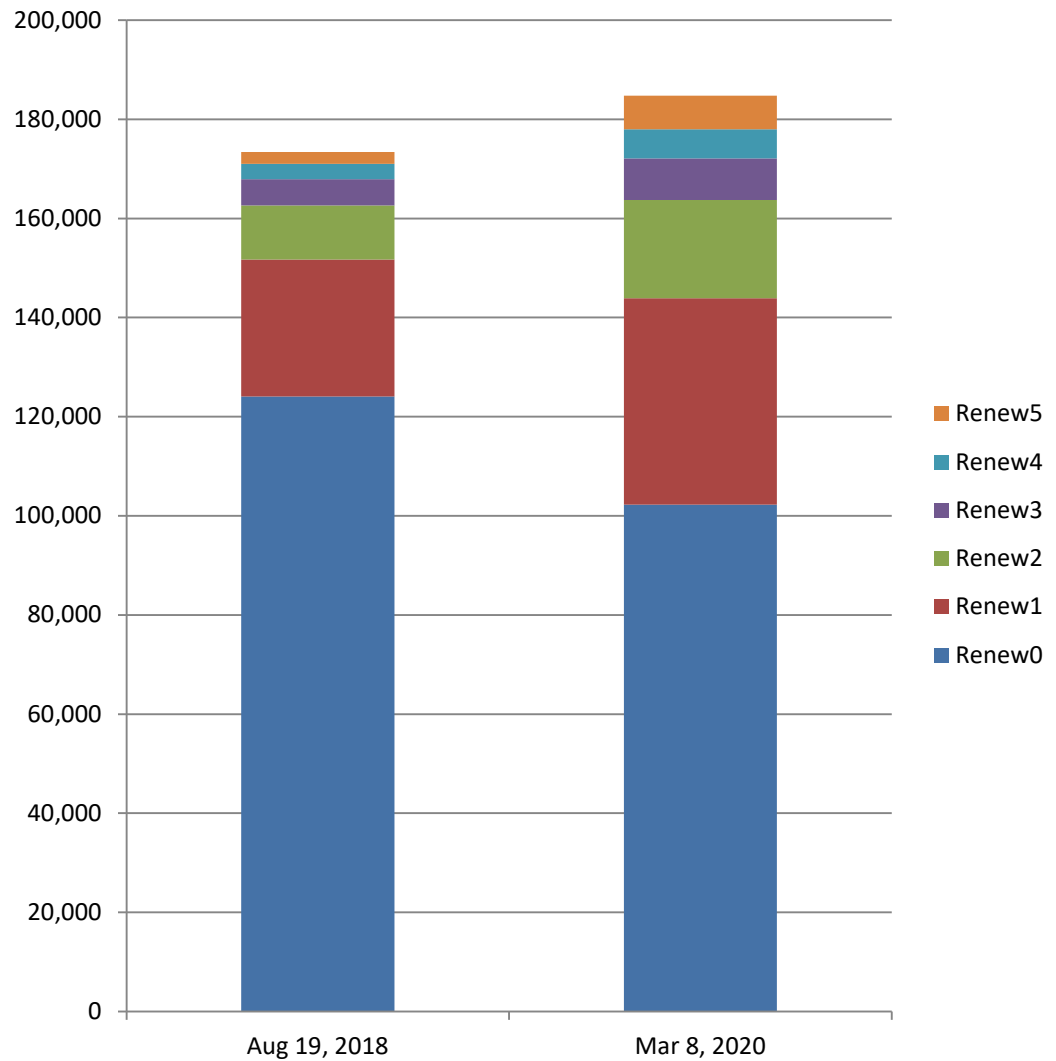
- Fewer overdue items (**4.5%**)
- Slightly more items out
- Happy patrons

Unexpected Results





- Reduction in lost bills
- Fewer accounts referred to UMS



Items Out: Before & After Automated Renewal Report



Summary

- “Assume that all patrons are responsible persons.”
- Administrative commitment
- Notices – early & often
 -    
- Automated Renewals
- Data (snapshots & statistics)



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