

# Library Aware Feedback

## Heidi Cox (MCF)

- Abby Seymour, Teen Librarian -- I use Library Aware on a fairly regular basis and think it is a great tool for librarians. What I love most about it is how library specific the content is. I use their templates the most because they are always exactly what we need. For example, around Labor Day they had a bunch of flyer templates saying that the "Library will be Closed on Labor Day." When the summer reading program hit, Library Aware had many templates for all age groups to use. My favorite function is that Library Aware makes it incredibly easy to import book covers and will often have Readers Advisory posters available. They keep those RA posters very current too because featured on the homepage this week are posters with books about Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

I find Library Aware relatively easy to use. If you just want to do the basics like print out an already-made template, you're good to go. Getting into the more nitty gritty features though I find less user-friendly. For example, if I see a template about a LEGO program that I want to use but they don't have the template in the size I want, then I am out of luck. That being said, they offer their templates in many sizes and it's usually not a problem but it's been an issue for me a couple of time.

Before Library Aware, I used Canva and I found Canva much easier to manipulate and easier to tailor design aspects to my needs, but on Canva I had to make almost everything from scratch because they didn't have much library-related content. Library Aware really feels like they know what librarians need and their site has significantly cut down my time spent making posters/flyers. I recommend it!

- Heather Kent, YS Librarian
  - Do you and your staff use it on a regular basis? Yes. I use it regularly when I need a poster for promotion. It is also good for making widgets for social media.
  - What do you perceive as the primary benefits that Library Aware provides? Poster templates that are geared towards libraries. Unlike Canva, which is also a good poster making program, Library Aware has "library" specific templates. I also like the automatic organization banner that is placed on the projects you make.
  - Is it relatively easy to learn and use? It is fairly easy to use - although, there are a little quirks that take a while to get used to.
  - Is there anything about Library Aware and you and your staff don't like? I do not like that I cannot save an item as a JPG without going to the folder and viewing the picture and saving from the web page. It's just a couple steps that are cumbersome.
- Ann Engler, Adult Services Librarian
  - Do you and your staff use it on a regular basis? Yes, I use it quite often.
  - What do you perceive as the primary benefits that Library Aware provides? The professionally designed templates are helpful for events and bookmarks, especially since they're already geared towards libraries. Being able to add book covers to things easily is super handy. The "canned" flyers they put out for read-alikes and celebrations, etc, are really nice to have.
  - Is it relatively easy to learn and use? Pretty much. If you're using the templates without many changes, it's pretty straightforward. Editing things is a bit clunky at times but doable.
  - Is there anything about Library Aware and you and your staff don't like? If you're starting a design from scratch, it's kind of frustrating and I usually end up using Canva instead.
- Heidi Cox, Library Director

- Do you and your staff use it on a regular basis?  
No but that's only because I coordinate programming any more. When our levels of service change due to Covid restrictions, I did use LibraryAware to create informational signage and bookmarks for the public. We also just had 6 digital signs installed and I m working on training staff to use LibraryAware to create digital signs.
- What do you perceive as the primary benefits that Library Aware provides?  
I think our promotional materials look more professional and consistent. Everything now has all of our contact information and logo. I used to have to "reject" flyers because they were missing that. Now it's automatic so no one forgets. I think our social media posts are more visually interesting and easier to create with LibraryAware. They create a lot of content as examples and that helps give us ideas for displays and posts. They anticipate upcoming events such as Library Card Signup month, holidays, StarWars Day, etc... and they will have content out there. I think we save time because all of the book covers are in there so you don't have to hunt the internet for good looking book covers. We also use the newsletter feature. We do a library news specific newsletter and then patrons can sign up for genre book recommendations. The genre newsletters are automatically generated by LibraryAware.
- Is it relatively easy to learn and use?  
I think it's easy to use and they do offer a lot of training. They also offer chat help and they respond really quickly.
- Is there anything about Library Aware and you and your staff don't like?  
I wish that we could create one flyer and just do a save as to create the different formats. Instead you have to create each one individually. I think the formatting for the digital signs is clunky and a little weird to get used to.

#### Jill Fuller, Bridges Library System

*We are actually getting LibraryAware in 2021 for a year-long trial project, so I don't have much to report on. From the demo we had, our member libraries appreciated the variety and relevance of materials available; the professional quality of the pieces; how often new materials were available; the images, icons, and messaging that were library-specific; and the ability to download and edit templates. Many of them commented on how time-saving it would be, particularly for printed materials and display signs. It's fairly user-friendly, though I found a few issues with downloading- for example, some materials couldn't be downloaded as Jpegs. One thing our member libraries didn't like was that there are no resizing options, as there is in Canva Pro. This critique came up multiple times.*

*I'm sorry I don't have more feedback for you at this time, but we will have a better idea of how the product works for us next year.*

#### Jim Ramsey (STO)

*Thanks for getting in touch. We've only recently started using LA here, so we might not be as good a resource as McFarland, who have been using it for at least a year or two.*

*For me, the main attraction was the email management tool. The municipality I used to work for had an email management system that the library used, but that's not the case here. So from the start of my time here in Stoughton, I've been looking for a way to communicate with our patrons via email blast. To me, this is the primary benefit. For the price point (about \$1,000/year) it would be worth it to me for this feature alone.*

*We've only just started to use the Reader's Advisory components of LA like NextReads, their opt-in newsletters. LA also has a graphic design tool for creating flyers and other publicity. We've use this a bit, but our staff already use Canva and really like it, so we might not use this feature as much.*

*I'm copying our admin assistant, Sarah Monette, as she is the one to whom I've delegated most of the day-to-day work on LA. She has done a fantastic job setting up the email newsletter, the opt-in book newsletters, and the carousel widget of new releases on our homepage.*

*Sarah could speak to the ease-of-use question, as well as the things about LA that are less-than-great.*

*From Sarah Monette: Like Jim said, we haven't had LibraryAware very long, so there's a lot of stuff we haven't tried out. Creating a subscriber list to send e-blasts to was quite simple. To get the book carousel on our website, I did have to ask Rose for help, but that was 99% on Drupal's end. The layout editor is not difficult to learn to use, but it is very clunky and sometimes frustratingly limited in what it will let you do. However, it does produce good results. Separately, I'm forwarding you our September e-blast, so you can see what we created. ([first e-blast](#))*

Chris Baker (POR)

*They don't use Library Aware.*

Ben Miller (RL&LL)

*We haven't looked at Library Aware before, but I'm going to add it to our list of things to consider during a procurement. Our current contracts expire in 2022, so we won't be able to procure until then, but will be looking at content categories next year. This will be helpful as input for a potential category we haven't really had before.*

*If systems wanted to coordinate the purchase statewide, we could definitely talk about using BadgerLink authentication to provide a standard authentication process for this alongside BadgerLink offerings.*

*Let me know if that helps.*