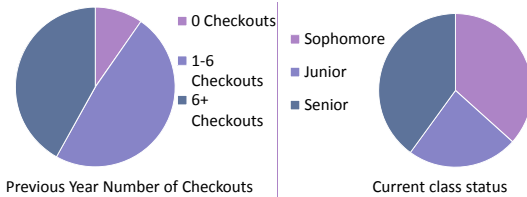


# Do Fines Change Patron Behavior?

## Abstract

This poster contains preliminary data from a study on library fines. The data describes the difference in behavior between a control group of patrons charged daily overdue fines and an experimental group who are not. Also included are the results from a survey of OhioLINK (Ohio's academic library consortium) libraries on their current library fine practices and opinions. The research is partially funded through an award from OhioLINK.

## Participants (n=31)



## Process

### Daily

- Pulled a list of items checked out to participants
- Checked for returned items, and recorded check in time
- Renewals were treated as a new checkout for calculation purposes

### Weekly

- Reviewed fine information and pulled invoice data for all participants
- Waived fines on items in study parameters

## Summary

Preliminary findings show that those in the experimental group did keep things longer and received more fines. However, this group checked out fewer books during this time which contributes to a higher fine average. Additionally, the experimental group has more people who have been fined before the study started which may show a tendency towards not adhering to loan policy.

## Andrea Boehme and Katie Mihaly Bowling Green State University (Ohio)

### Preliminary Findings

#### Borrowing Habits

	People (#)	Checkout (#)	Renewals (#)	Days Used (avg)	Days Over (avg)
C	8	69	14	21	7
E	7	28	6	34	18.2

#### Fines

97 books checked out - 21 fines

	Control	Experimental
Total fines	2	19
People	1	3

Fine	Control	Experimental
Waived	0	10
Assessed	2	9

#### Before and During

(Before data normalized for years at institution)

	Before			During		
	Avg # Check outs	Avg # Fines	Avg Fine / Check out	Avg # Check outs	Avg # Fines	Avg Fine / Check out
C	7.21	.22	.03	8.63	.25	.03
E	15.77	1.11	.07	4	2.57	.68

	People fined	People fined
C	4	1
E	9	3

## OhioLINK Staff Survey

Response	Number	Percentage
2 Year College	8	19%
Independent / Private College	22	52%
Medical School	1	2%
Public University	10	24%
Regional Campus	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	

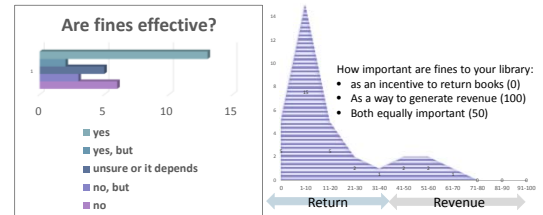
120 OhioLINK locations  
42 respondents

## Do you charge daily fines?

Response	#	%
No	7	18%
Yes	33	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	

Yearly fine revenue	Number	Percentage
Less than \$5,000	18	53%
2 Year College	5	28%
Private College	11	61%
Medical School	1	6%
Public University	1	6%
\$5,000 - \$10,000	3	9%
Private College	2	66%
Regional Campus	1	33%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	3	9%
Private College	2	66%
Public University	1	33%
More than \$100,000	1	3%
Public University	1	100%
I don't know	7	21%
Private College	3	43%
Public University	4	57%
N/A	2	6%
Independent/Private College	2	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>34</b>	



## Are fines effective?

Comments from library staff:

- "...Often patrons just keep items until they are finished with them anyway."
- "Seems like [fines are] the most effective way to get the patron's attention."
- "I think it lands on people differently; the people who are most dependent on the library... are also the least likely to be able to pay. This bothers me, but I've not found a replacement for fines that encourages the behavior we'd like to see."
- "I support finding alternative ways to encourage reliable borrowing and returning."
- "I think daily fees are only effective with people who tend to be diligent in the first place. People less responsible don't really care..."
- "What [fines] create, however, is a retention issue."
- "Yes, because most people do not like to part with their money if they do not have to."