



SHARE

Solus

Solus App Fact Sheet

Background

The SHARE E-Resources Committee was tasked with reviewing mobile app vendors to determine the app that would best fit SHARE. The process has taken over a year, but after careful consideration, Solus was determined to have the best app for our consortium.

Why do we need an app?

- Patrons are using phones and mobile devices to conduct their day-to-day business online. There is a new expectation for data to be easily accessible by mobile devices.
- There may be a generational gap here, where some seniors are still uncomfortable with smart phones and more mobile technology and are still using their home PCs. But the shift is starting and to remain **competitive**, we need to make sure we are offering an innovative discovery system! *See the full data on how patrons are accessing us via mobile devices (now about 32%, up from 12% in 2019!).* If you would like to take a look at our OPAC analytics, check out our [OPAC Access Data](#).
- **Who are our competitors?** It used to be our local bookstore or maybe even a grocery or drug store that would sell books. Now we are competing with Amazon, Netflix, and even McDonalds as a Wi-Fi and study access point! How are they providing information to their customers? Digital discovery, mobile ordering, and curbside delivery! An app allows us to remain competitive and meet changing patron expectations.
- **Data in an app is better for rural or disadvantaged communities.** Most people have a phone, even if they may not have a desktop computer. It also can be accessed easier with less bandwidth and via a cell network versus internet.
- App access is far superior to mobile optimized web access. In addition to catalog and account access, an app provides additional features, including digital library cards, barcode scanning, content carousels, notifications, and the nearest public library locations.

How are we going to pay for it?

The SHARE Finance & Policy Committee has proposed using our reserve fund (for technology upgrades) for three years. At the end of that time, the committee will re-evaluate SHARE fees in total, but they also propose a cap on any additional cost for the app to less than \$100 per library agency. Why? SHARE committees believe that this is what our patrons both need and expect.

- In comparison: The Belleville Public Library uses a mobile app, called Boopsie (Boopsie was recently bought by Solus). Under their contract they pay more than \$4,000 per year. *The power of our group allows us to receive top-of-the-line technology at a fraction of the price each library would pay separately.*
- What does this include? The proposal would include the “base app.” The base app would be a SHARE branded app that would have access to patron accounts, collection content, holds, curbside service technology, and cloudLibrary integration.
- For an additional cost, libraries may choose to add a more customized “template” to include their own branding, color schemes, and e-resource integration (like OverDrive or Hoopla, for example).
- For an additional cost, libraries may also choose to add additional features, like self-check, even including RFID.

In the app, patrons will have:

- Digital library card
- Linked accounts (parent with children for example)
- Library information (hours, location, directions, website, phone, email)
- Patron account access (with an option to remain logged in)
- Catalog searching
- Ability to place holds
- Content carousel
- ISBN barcode scanning
- Click-and-Connect (optional curbside pickup technology)
- cloudLibrary integration
- Other e-resources integration*
- Event calendars*
- Announcements/messages/social media*
- Self-check and RFID self-service**

**With template for additional fee.*

***With self-check and RFID for additional fees.*

Frequently Asked Questions

- ***What is the difference between the base app and a template? What is included in each?***
 - The base app includes:
 - Digital library card with optional linked accounts
 - Library information (hours, location, directions)
 - Patron account access
 - Items out
 - Place hold
 - Renewals
 - Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) search
 - Content carousel
 - ISBN barcode scanning
 - Integrated cloudLibrary
 - Click-and-Connect (optional curbside pickup technology)
 - Templates may include all of the above, plus:
 - Specific library branding (logos, fonts, colors)
 - Event calendars
 - Announcements/messages/social media
 - Customizable content carousels, like staff picks
 - Additional integrated e-resources (that are not currently imported into our catalog)
- ***What if our library decides that we want to upgrade to a template from the base app? Won't that be confusing?*** It will be a seamless process and happens in real time. They will initially see the base app. When your library's template is ready to go live, it will automatically switch. When the patron next logs in, they will see your new branded template. There is no need to download a different app or learn a new system!
- ***How will we get statistics?*** Statistics will be provided for the base app and templates. If your library has the base app, they will not get detailed statistics on access, other than the times that your library information page was accessed. For libraries with templates, they will get additional details to review return on investment.
- ***How will our library manage the content, like the library hours?*** You will send the details to SHARE to update in Polaris, just like the current process. If you have a template, your library will receive a login and password to update your customized content in the app, as well.
- ***How will self-check work? Does it support RFID?*** Patrons can use their phone to scan barcodes to checkout, and it also supports RFID. The self-check feature will include additional fees.

- ***I do not want my school/college/special library included in the location feature, since it is not open to the public. Can it be hidden?*** Yes, we will only include public libraries in the location feature.
- ***Can patrons see their reading history in the app?*** Yes, if that option is activated in Polaris for your library.
- ***Will patrons be able to pay fees through the app?*** That is currently in development! They are starting with Apple Pay and Google Pay, but will also likely include PayPal. SHARE would also request development for JetPay (the state's e-pay vendor). This feature will require a template, with an additional fee.
- ***Does the app send notifications?*** That is currently in development!
- ***Is the app accessible?*** Yes, with additional features with every release. It includes support of large text, reader assist, and 7.5:1 color contrast ratio.
- ***Does it support other languages?*** Yes! The app supports 25 other languages and counting!
- ***How does Solus protect patron confidentiality?*** The data flows between the Solus server and the Polaris database, with fully encrypted connections at their server and within the Polaris API's. The information passes through their server and is not stored, so they are classified as a data processor, not a data controller. With linked accounts, the linked cards all patron driven (not through Polaris associations), and there is an assumption of trust between patrons, like husband and wife or parent and children, for example. The patrons would set that up and would require all linked library card numbers and passwords.
- ***This looks great! When can we get started?*** The SHARE Finance & Policy Committee has requested [member comment](#) and will be reviewing those comments at their next meeting on [March 11, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.](#) After review, they will either make adjustments to the proposal or send it to the SHARE Executive Council for review. The next SHARE Executive Council meeting will be held on [Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 2:30 p.m.](#) If the SHARE Executive Council makes a motion to move forward, we will have a membership meeting and vote, likely in May. From there we will begin to work with Solus for a project start date at the beginning of our fiscal year, July 1, 2021, with a go live event to follow!