CORDELIA ANDERSON CONSULTING

704-763-0415
cordelia@cordeliaandersonapr.com
www.cordeliaandersonconsulting.com

Hawai‘i State Public Library System Rebranding

Hawai‘i State Public Library System

In Summer 2025, Hawai‘i’s libraries launched more than a reading challenge—they launched a renewed invitation to the community. As part of the 2025 Summer Reading Challenge kickoff, the Hawai‘i State Public Library System (HSPLS) also unveiled a new look: a refreshed brand identity that honors Hawai‘i’s rich culture, celebrates the uniqueness of each island, and reflects the ohana spirit that defines this beloved statewide system.

The updated brand debuted alongside the “Mele” Summer Reading Challenge, a celebration of music, poetry, and stories that connect people across generations. With rewards, events, and a statewide goal to engage at least 25,000 residents, this summer isn’t just about reading—it’s about reconnecting with everything the Library stands for.

FINAL DELIVERABLES

Identified and analyzed the diverse audience segments the library system serves; this includes demographics, preferences, behaviors, and needs.

Performed key stakeholder surveys and interviews.

Conducted focus groups on each of the six islands where HPSLS has branches with key stakeholders.

Created system-wide branding including: Logo, Color Palette, Typography, Website Design, Icons, Brand Guidelines and Photography Guidelines with related training videos.

Canva Brand Kit including: Logos, Fonts, Colors, Templates, Photography, Icons, and Brand Voice.

Templates, including: Emails, e-newsletters, Reports, Presentations, Social Media Graphics, Signage, Electronic and Printed Program announcements, and email signature with realted training videos.

Awareness Campaign including: Brand Video, Print and Social Media Graphics, Public/Media Relations, Partner Toolkit with campaign assets and swag items.

Executive Summary with project highlights, survey results, brand audit and brand training.



Community Engagement

Our key partners in this project were The Kālaimoku Group, a Native Hawaiian-Owned Communications & Marketing Firm. Through this collaboration, we were able to consider the perspectives of the residents of Hawai‘i while also bringing our deep experience with libraries. A perfect partnership was born, and with HSPLS, we created a new Brand Story for the library system:

The Hawai‘i State Public Library System brand is rooted in Hawai‘i’s ohana spirit, embodying the deep bonds of family, community, and respect for the resources we are entrusted with. It reflects the vibrant landscapes, rich cultural traditions, and aloha spirit of the Hawaiian islands and people of Hawai‘i. The brand represents the unique place that the Library and its staff hold in the hearts of Hawai‘i residents, who see the library as a free, welcoming, safe, and cherished place. It also depicts the Library’s role as a keeper of the sacred connections between the past and future, between knowledge and exploration.

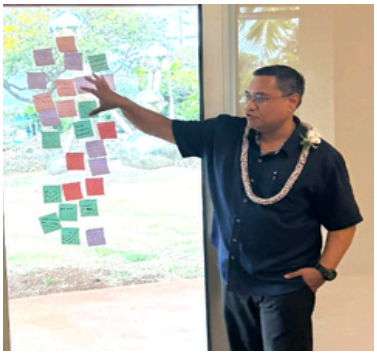
The real star of this project wasn’t the logo. It was Library itself—doing the same exceptional work it always has, now with a little extra shine.

First and foremost, this project was about meaningful community input. In 2024, we worked with HSPLS on a comprehensive community engagement effort.

- 13,554 survey responses in 8 languages
- Nearly 400,000 patrons reached via email
- Focus groups in 7 locations across 6 islands
- Four staff focus groups and 309 staff survey responses

The insights that emerged confirmed what many already know: Hawai‘i’s libraries are deeply trusted, culturally rooted, and universally loved.







Staff and Executive Team Engagement

Early on, we knew that staff would be a critical piece of this project. We launched an Internal Rebranding Hui (team), and the consulting team attended four Staff Days in February 2025 to get Library Staff energized and excited about the new identity. The Staff Day sessions were designed to engage all staff in interactive activities, brainstorming, and collaboration.

Staff shared stories about how their everyday work tied into the HSPLS Brand Story. As a result, library staff are enthusiastically supporting the launch of the new look as part of 2025 Summer Reading. One talented staff member (below) even made a stained glass version of the new logo!













Brand Building

The logo graphic was inspired by the rich history of traditional geometric patterns seen in indigenous Hawaiian artwork, textiles, and tattoos. The shapes are inspired by the lōkahi, which is a symbol for unity, accord, and harmony; and lei hala, which represents wisdom and rite of passage. Māhā ʻUpena is also suggested to reinforce community, providing and prosperity. They are suggested and united to form the letter H (representing Hawaiʻi and HSPLS).



The previous HSPLS logo dated back to the 1990s.

Each small triangular shape and color on the right side of the H represents one of six islands that have HSPLS libraries. These triangles are equal in size and shape because each island is equally important in the system. The blue shape on the left represents the HSPLS system. Like the ocean, which connects the islands, the system supports and connects the island libraries.

Hawaiʻi State Public Library System

The new HSPLS logo, which we developed with community feedback, debuted in 2025.

With the brand rollout, we saw an opportunity to support staff in reinforcing the brand promise, telling the story of the new look, and educating the public about the origins of the colors. We created table tents and bookmarks for service desks. Staff used these as an opportunity to talk to the public about Hawaiʻi's official island colors, and they also incorporated the colors and shapes into craft programs.







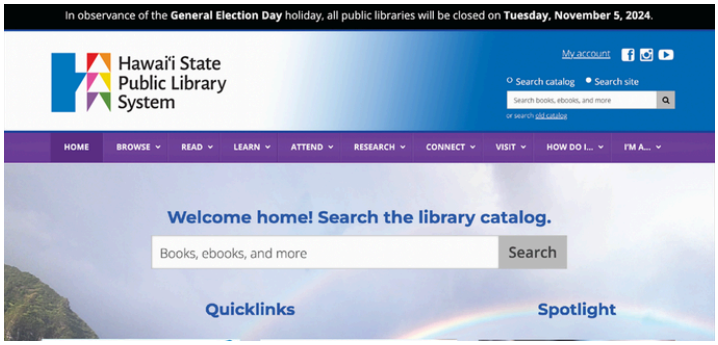
Brand Building

We are also still hard at work on expanding the brand – by extending the brand into the branches, launching an awareness and usage campaign, exploring library merch ideas, creating and sharing design templates, and much more.





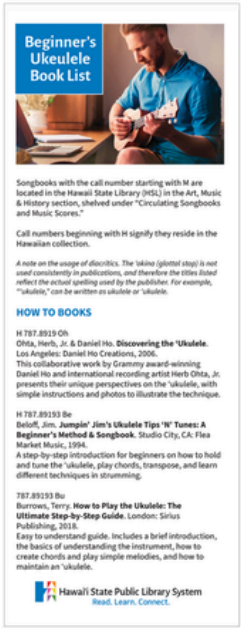














Brand Building

We developed a suite of business cards with different background colors for the different islands, and blue for systemwide.



We designed branded merchandise for the future HSPLS Swag Shop.

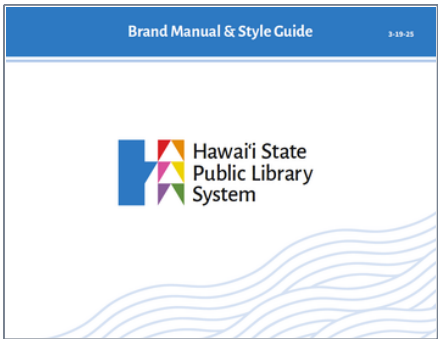


Brand Training

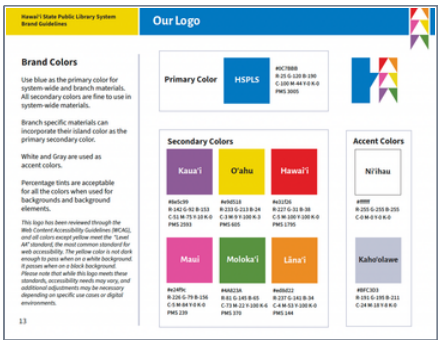
We also created brand assets and messaging to help staff use the new identity. Then training modules and training videos were created for staff.

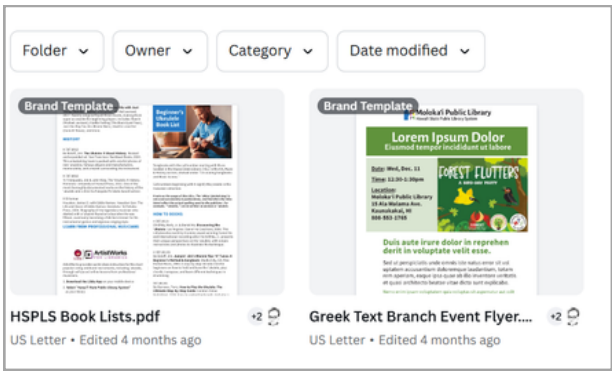


Presentation walkthrough of the new brand including brand inspiration and excercises on how to explain the new branding.

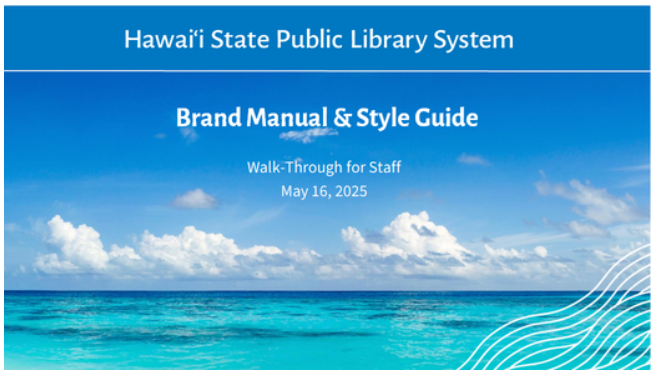


Brand Manual & Style Guide

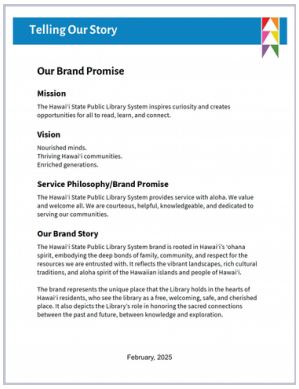


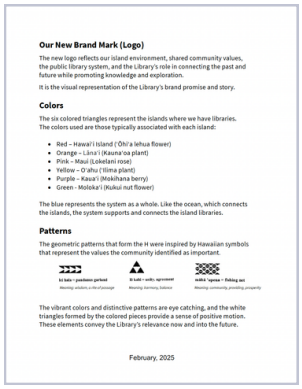


Templates in several formats, including Canva.



Live / recorded brand manual walk-through for staff.





Printed Brand Explainers



FAQs. We worked with staff to identify questions, create a document, and create training on how to use it.

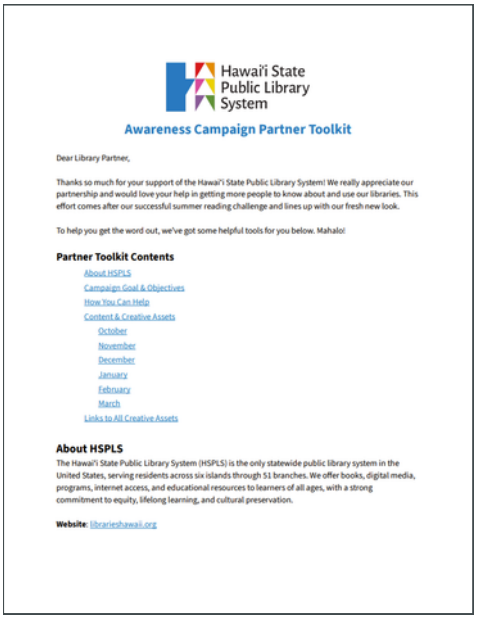
Awareness Campaign

For the next phase, the Statewide Awareness & Usage Campaign, we created content that aligned with the new brand and messaging about the library's impact and services.

We also created customizable social media templates and promotional assets as Canva templates and native InDesign files.

Additionally, we created a Partner Toolkit with all of these visuals, scripts/articles for website, e-newsletter, or to read aloud at meetings, and social media posts. These can be used by HSPLS and its partners to promote the campaign. *Click thumbnail for full document.*





Hawai'i State Public Library System

Awareness Campaign Partner Toolkit

Dear Library Partner,

Thanks so much for your support of the Hawai'i State Public Library System! We really appreciate our partnership and would love your help in getting more people to know about and use our libraries. This effort comes after our successful summer reading challenge and lines up with our fresh new look.

To help you get the word out, we've got some helpful tools for you below. Mahalo!

Partner Toolkit Contents

About HSPLS
Campaign Goal & Objectives
How You Can Help
Content & Creative Assets
October
November
December
January
February
March
Links to All Creative Assets

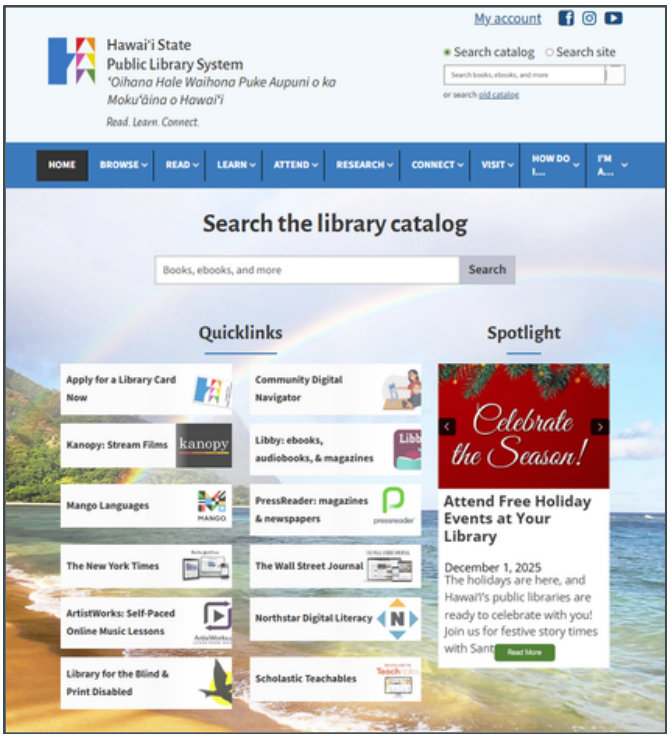
About HSPLS

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) is the only statewide public library system in the United States, serving residents across six islands through 51 branches. We offer books, digital media, programs, internet access, and educational resources to learners of all ages, with a strong commitment to equity, lifelong learning, and cultural preservation.

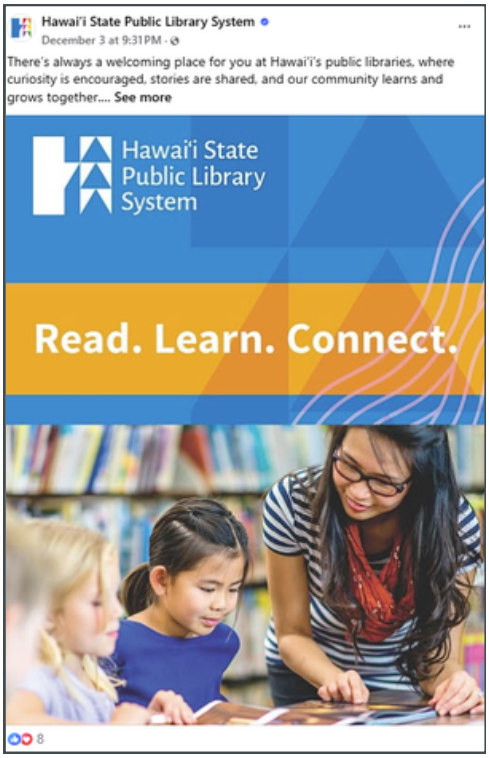
Website: librarieshawaii.org

Full Implementation

HSPLS began fully integrating the new brand into their materials in 2025, including website, email, social media, and print. *Clockwise from top left: home page, e-newsletter, Instagram, Facebook.*





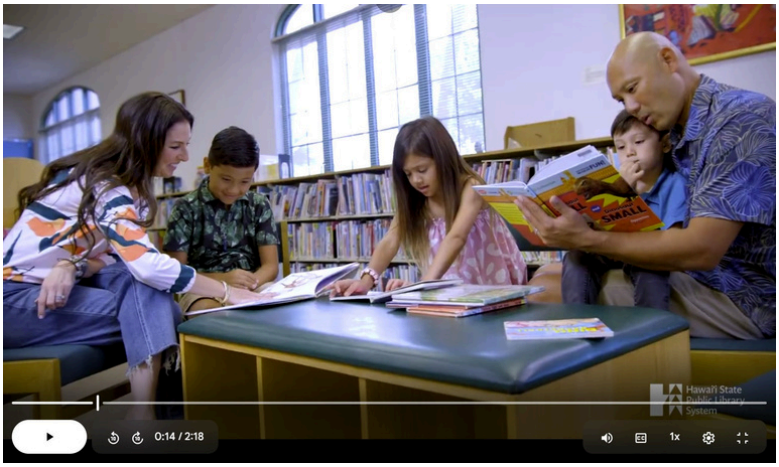




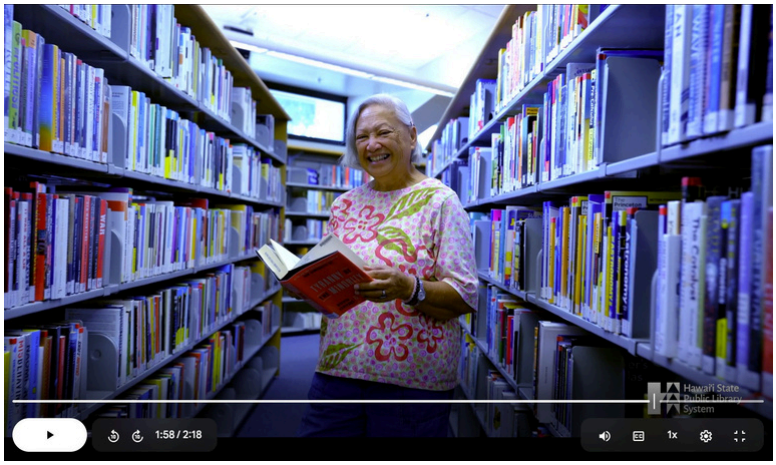
Brand Video

We also created a Brand Video to help communicate the new brand. Below are screen shots from the video. Here is a link to view it. HSPLS Brand Video Full Resolution

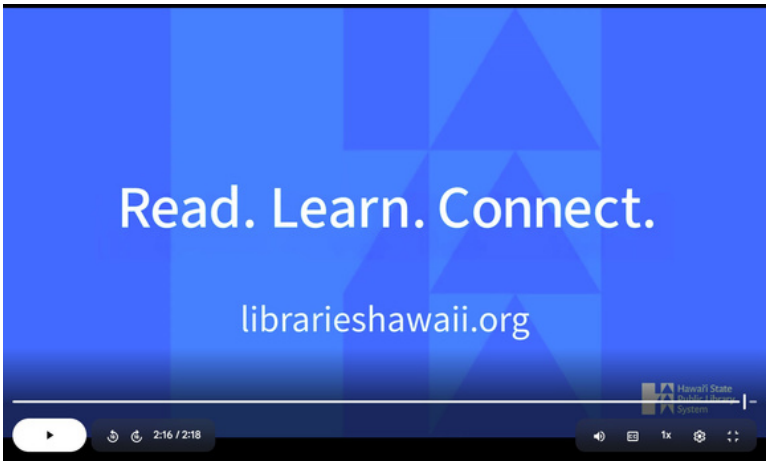








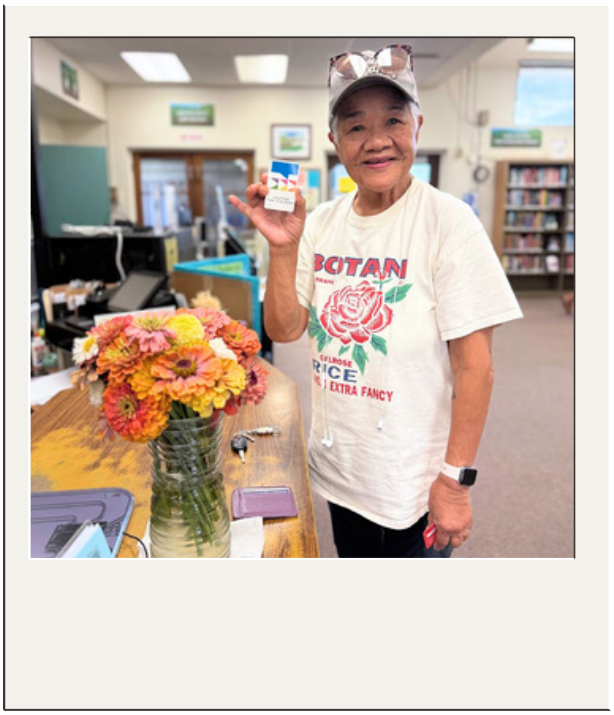


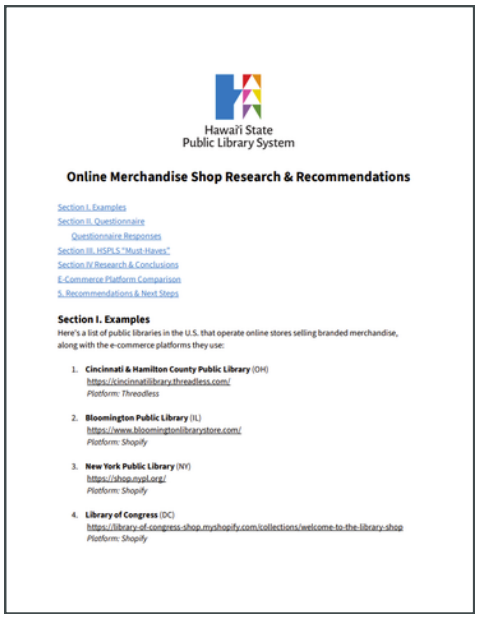


Reception & Results

Feedback on the new look has been very positive. Staff, Friends, and members of the public have received it well, and enjoyed getting their new cards.







Hawai'i State
Public Library System

Online Merchandise Shop Research & Recommendations

Section I. Examples
Section II. Questionnaire
Questionnaire Responses
Section III. HSPLS "Must-Haves"
Section IV Research & Conclusions
E-Commerce Platform Comparison
5. Recommendations & Next Steps

Section I. Examples

Here's a list of public libraries in the U.S. that operate online stores selling branded merchandise, along with the e-commerce platforms they use:

1. **Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library** (OH)
   https://cincinnatilibrary.threadless.com/
   Platform: Threadless
2. **Bloomington Public Library** (IL)
   https://www.bloomingtonlibrarystore.com/
   Platform: Shopify
3. **New York Public Library** (NY)
   https://shop.nypl.org/
   Platform: Shopify
4. **Library of Congress** (DC)
   https://library-of-congress-shop.myshopify.com/collections/welcome-to-the-library-shop
   Platform: Shopify

Patrons have asked to purchase t-shirts and other items with the new logo. This led us to conduct a research project into online library merch stores.

"I just wanted to let you know that we have been getting a lot of great feedback about the new logo. I just got off the phone with a woman who still has a green card that said she wanted to come in and change it because she loved it so much."

Staff Member, Wailuku Public Library

"A patron called to ask if we had the new library cards in stock. While [we] assisted her with updating her account, she said she was excited to get her new card!"

Branch Manager, Waimea Public Library

Reception & Results

We also saw a sharp spike in library awareness and usage during and after the brand launch.

Initial Results, June-December 2025

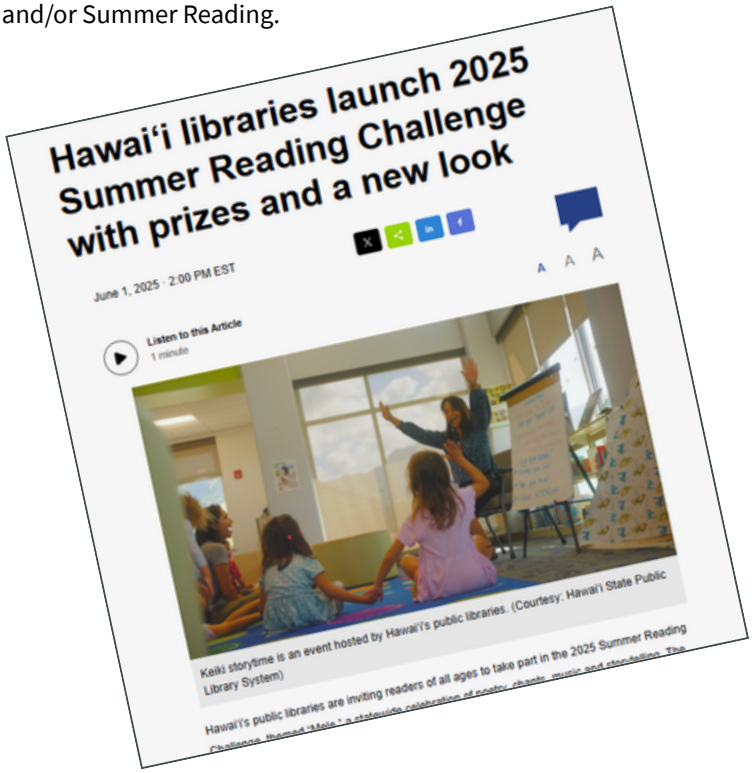
Increases from June-December 2024 to June-December 2025.

903%
Increase in Instagram Reach

23%
Increase in Email Newsletter Opens

9%
Increase in New Borrowers

28
Media stories about the library's new look and/or Summer Reading.


Hawai'i libraries launch 2025 Summer Reading Challenge with prizes and a new look

June 1, 2025 · 2:00 PM EST

Listen to this Article
1 minute

Keiki storytime is an event hosted by Hawai'i's public libraries. (Courtesy: Hawai'i State Public Library System)

Hawai'i's public libraries are inviting readers of all ages to take part in the 2025 Summer Reading

Fiscal Year Changes

Increases from fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2025.

10%
Increase in Patron Visits

11%
Increase in Items Used

41%
Increase in Information Requests

46%
Increase in Summer Reading Registration

It was a privilege to work on this this project. From the first community listening session to the final design files, we were guided by HSPLS's extraordinary team, the wisdom of local voices, and a deep respect for the legacy of public libraries in Hawai'i.

Are you interested in exploring a new brand for your library? Contact us!

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