Since our new catalog is designed to allow people to share ideas about books, movies and music they like (or don’t like), it’s natural to have concerns about how to manage your privacy and how to opt in or opt out of social features.

What is Private?

Library account details, personal information and borrowing history are NEVER SHARED with anyone. Michigan’s Library Privacy Act guarantees that our library records are always safeguarded so that citizens may read, listen and view freely. Even library staff cannot access a patron borrowing history or pin number.

By default, child accounts are private and cannot contribute content unless authorized by a parent or caregiver.

What is Public?

Until you take an action in the catalog, like rating, commenting or adding items to your shelves (including your For Later shelf), nothing is made public. When you opt to create content, it’s attached to your chosen username and available for anyone to see. Similar to creating reviews on Amazon or in GoodReads, other users can see your comment and click on your username to see what else you’ve rated or reviewed. Created content is automatically set to public so that others can benefit from your ratings and reviews; however, you can set your shelves or your ratings, reviews and lists to private at any point.

How Do Others Find Me?

There are only two ways that other people can locate your content in the catalog:

1. If you give someone your exact username, they can search “users” and find your profile. You cannot browse usernames, you must know the exact name.

2. When you leave a book review or create a list, your username is visible and linked to that item/list unless you have it set to private.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPINION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FROM LIBRARY STAFF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>HerrickDL_Hannah Mar 13, 2019</td>
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</tbody>
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It differs from the book in a few key ways, but stands on its own and makes wonderful use of its medium. Worth watching for the astounding special effects alone, and Hugo Weaving is wonderful as always. It’s another instance of film making ugly characters much less ugly (a pet peeve of mine), but... Read More »
How Do I Pick a Username?

Your username can be anything you decide and you can change it at any time. If you want others to find you, you can use your real name. If you want to remain anonymous in the system, choose something random which does not identify you in any way. Example: HappyPenguin63. This username is the only identifying information available to other users, unless you elect to create a profile and share more. If you change your username, all of your reviewed content will show the new username and people will no longer be able to find you by the previous username. Child usernames are set by the system so that they are non-identifying.

By default, your username displays in the catalog. To change your username:

1. Log in to the catalog.
2. Go to My Settings
3. Click on Username and make your changes in the box.
4. Save Changes to keep.

How Do I Create a Profile?

You can customize your profile but setting a unique username, adding a personal description of your reading likes and dislikes and even making a rating scale that's all your own! This way other readers can see if they want to follow you and get your recommendations. To set up a profile:

1. Login to your account.
2. Go to My Profile.
3. Click on Add/Edit Profile Details.
4. Click Save to keep your changes.

Making Things Private

Locate your privacy settings by logging into your account and going to My Settings - Privacy.
How do I make my shelves private?

Not everyone is comfortable with sharing, even though there’s a degree of anonymity because most people choose to display their username with their account, not their real name. These users can change the default privacy setting for any or all of their shelves.

You have three “shelves” to keep track of items you borrow. The Completed shelf is where you can store everything you’ve read, watched or listened to. In Progress is the place for what you are reading, watching or listening to right now. For Later is like a wish list, a place to keep track of things you’d like to borrow in the future. Shelf privacy settings allow you to control whether or not items you add to these shelves are visible to other library users. By default, anything you add is shared—visible to others. If you plan to add ratings or comments to things you’ve borrowed, you should make them shared. Otherwise, no one else will be able to see what you’ve contributed.

If you prefer, you can keep some or all of your shelves private. To change a shelf default to private:

1. Log in to your account.
2. On the menu, click My Settings.
3. On the My Settings page, look for the Privacy section.
4. In the Privacy section, next to My Shelves, click Change.
5. On the My Shelves page, click the checkbox next to each shelf you want to change.
6. Click Save Changes.

Note that changing the shelf default only applies to new items added after the change.

How do I make individual items private?

You may be comfortable having your shelves public, but may want some items private. To make an item private:

1. Log in to your account.
2. Go to the shelf containing the title you want to make private.
3. Click the Add Details link next to the title you want to keep private.
4. At the bottom of the menu, click the Keep this item private checkbox.

Private items display a lock icon.
Item privacy is associated with individual items. When you move something from one shelf to another, the privacy setting goes with it. Even if you move an item marked private to a public shelf, it remains private.

List imports from the old catalog are placed on your For Later shelf and automatically marked as private.

**How do I make my activity feed private?**

Your feed is normally visible to anyone who clicks on your username or follows you. It shows users items you add to your shelves, lists you create, comments and reviews you make and comments by others that you like. To change your feeds privacy setting:

1. Log in to your account.
2. On the My Feeds page, click the checkbox to make your feeds private
3. Click Save Changes.

![Privacy: My Feeds](image)

**How do I choose whether something is public or private when I add content?**

Every time you add an item to a shelf, rate or comment on an item, a pop up will appear, offering you the opportunity to make your action private. Simply click on **Change to Private** and that information will only appear on your personal dashboard and will not be visible to any other users.

![Comment saved.](image)

BiblioCommons Privacy Policy

There is a link to the BiblioCommons Privacy Policy on the bottom of each page of the catalog.