

Project Proposal

The Little Library League:

A National Literacy & Community Connectivity Initiative

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Executive Summary

The *Little Library League* is a scalable, technology-driven initiative designed to enhance literacy, strengthen community engagement, and promote physical activity through the integration of existing “little free libraries” into a unified digital ecosystem.

This proposal outlines the development of a map-based mobile application and community program that connects individuals to local book-sharing hubs, tracks the movement of shared materials, and transforms neighborhoods into interactive literacy networks. Beginning at the municipal level (e.g., Bend, Oregon), the initiative is designed for expansion to regional, national, and ultimately global implementation.

Problem Statement

Despite widespread access to digital media, literacy engagement and community interaction have declined in many areas. Public libraries remain underutilized, and opportunities for organic, local connection are increasingly limited.

Simultaneously, thousands of informal “little free libraries” exist across the United States, but they operate in isolation, without coordination, data tracking, or integration into broader literacy initiatives.

There is currently no unified system to:

- Map and connect these micro-libraries
- Track the circulation of shared materials
- Leverage them as tools for education, community-building, and physical engagement

Proposed Solution

The *Little Library League* will create a digital and experiential infrastructure that transforms decentralized book-sharing boxes into an interconnected national network.

Core Components

1. Map-Centric Application

- Integration with mapping systems (e.g., Google Maps)
- Real-time display of little library locations
- Expandable geographic scope (city → county → state → national → global)

2. Book Tracking & Exchange System

- Users scan or log books they contribute or take
- Each book is linked to specific locations over time
- Access to basic bibliographic and community-generated information

3. Community Walking & Exploration System

- Creation of structured walking routes connecting library locations
- Gamified experiences (e.g., “library trails,” stamp-based participation)
- Encouragement of outdoor activity and local exploration

4. Expanded Engagement Features

- Treasure hunt-style challenges
- Neighborhood-based information hubs
- Integration with public library programming, book clubs, and literacy campaigns

Goals & Objectives

Primary Goals

- Increase literacy engagement across diverse populations

- Strengthen local community interaction and cohesion
- Promote physical activity through exploration-based participation

Secondary Goals

- Support public libraries through increased visibility and engagement
 - Encourage sustainable book sharing and reuse
 - Create a scalable model for global community connectivity
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Implementation Strategy

Phase 1: Pilot Program (Municipal Level)

- Launch in Bend, Oregon
- Map existing little libraries
- Develop beta version of application
- Partner with local library systems and community organizations

Phase 2: Regional Expansion

- Extend coverage to surrounding counties and statewide networks
- Introduce gamification features (walking tours, tracking systems)

Phase 3: National Scaling

- Develop partnerships with national literacy organizations
- Expand infrastructure to include major metropolitan and rural areas
- Integrate with federal literacy and education initiatives

Phase 4: Global Integration

- Open platform for international participation
 - Create a worldwide map of community book-sharing networks
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Innovation & Impact

The *Little Library League* represents a novel convergence of:

- **Physical infrastructure** (existing little libraries)
- **Digital technology** (mapping, tracking, mobile engagement)
- **Community-driven participation**

Unlike traditional literacy programs, this initiative:

- Requires minimal physical infrastructure investment
 - Leverages already-existing community assets
 - Encourages both intellectual and physical engagement
 - Scales organically through user participation
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Potential Partnerships

- Local and state library systems
 - U.S. Department of Education
 - National Endowment for the Humanities
 - Municipal governments and planning departments
 - Technology partners (mapping and app development)
 - Nonprofit literacy organizations
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Funding Considerations

Funding may support:

- Application development and maintenance
- Data infrastructure and mapping integration
- Community outreach and pilot program implementation
- Program evaluation and scaling

Potential sources include:

- Federal innovation grants
- Educational and literacy funding programs

- Public-private partnerships
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Conclusion

The *Little Library League* offers a low-cost, high-impact opportunity to revitalize literacy engagement while strengthening the social fabric of communities across the United States and beyond.

By transforming isolated book-sharing boxes into a connected, interactive network, this initiative provides a simple yet powerful framework for education, exploration, and human connection.

At its core, the project represents a scalable answer to a fundamental need:
to reconnect people with knowledge, with place, and with one another.