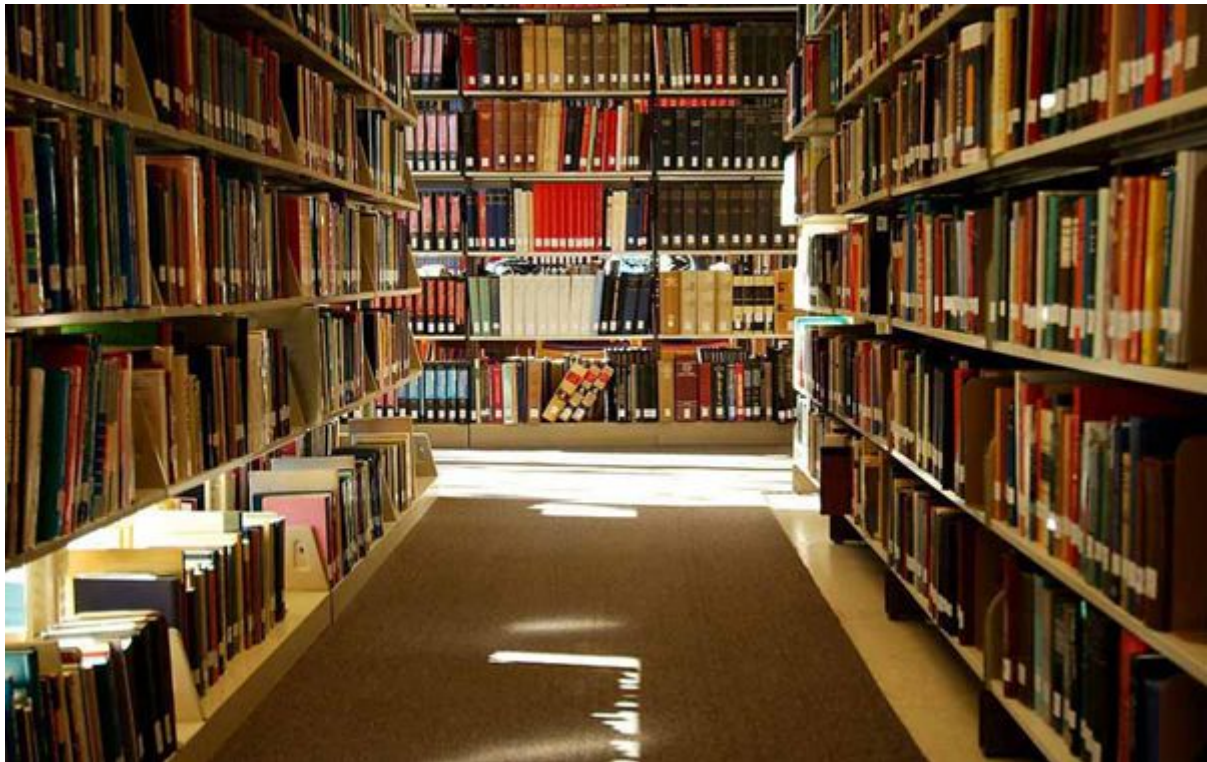


New online library platform gaining in popularity



A file photo of a library [Photo: Baidu]

“Book Borrower,” an online library platform, has become popular with about 2,000 books being borrowed every month only one year after it was officially opened, reported Beijing Youth Daily on Sunday.

Only service fees paid, deposits to be returned

Users can choose the books they like on “Book Borrower” after paying a service fee and a deposit. Deposit will be returned to users after they return the books. Service fees include postage and packaging fees. Users are responsible for sending the books to stipulated places after they are finished reading.

The platform was developed by Chen Dongzan in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, in late 2015. In March 2016, the platform went online on Wechat. On the first day of its operation, Chen gave away bookmarks with QR codes of the shared library outside bookstores and libraries in Harbin, and got his first customer that evening.

After a month, the platform had 38 users, most of whom were locals in Harbin. Currently, the users are mostly office employees and university students with female readers accounting for 64%.

No reading period limit to make it convenient for users

From Chen Dongzan’s perspective, “Book Borrower” is a platform that is in

between buying books and borrowing books from public libraries.

“The cost of buying books is relatively high and placing them at home takes up much space, while borrowing books from public libraries is not time efficient,” said Chen.

Chen says avoiding the shortcomings of buying books and borrowing books from public libraries has become the goal the online library is striving for.

Not proper time to talk about making profits

“Free of charge is why many previous book borrowing websites failed,” said Chen Dongzan.

Different from previous platforms, all the funds related to book borrowing on “Book Borrower” are offered by users. Chen said that there is little pressure for capital for the time being. However, it’s still too early to talk about making profits.

Chen says that the key to a lasting operation is to keep books in a mobile situation where no books will be on bookshelves for a long time.

Chen says he’s grateful that many longtime users were borrowing seven to eight books at a time by the end of 2016, which is a much higher number than before. Users who borrow twenty books at a time are also on the increase.

Chen said the platform is planning to set up storage in user intensive areas to make delivery quicker and cheaper in the future. “To make every family have a bookshelf with 300 books” is the vision and ultimate goal for “Book Borrower.”