

# The world's biggest book club

Have you ever lost a book? Perhaps you abandoned your book on a bus, aeroplane or park bench. Did you wonder what fate that book met? Approximately 300 000 people worldwide intentionally abandon books on a regular basis — they are part of the world's biggest book club. There are no registration or set-up fees involved. This is a book club without geographical or cultural boundaries. It unites people from around the world in their love of literature and their desire to share it with others.

The art of 'bookcrossing' simply involves abandoning a once-loved book in a public location with the hope that someone else will pick it up, read it and then release it back into the 'wild' to continue its journey.

Bookcrossers can register their books at the website [<http://www.bookcrossing.com>] and receive a unique BCID (BookCrossing ID number). This number is attached to the front of the book along with some instructions, then the book is released. The person who finds or 'catches' the book must follow the instructions on the front cover and register on the website with details of where they found the book and where they plan to set it free.

The website also provides bookcrossers with the chance to discuss their love of reading with fellow bibliophiles via an online forum. There are thousands of reviews and rec-

ommendations, as well as leader boards for the most books registered and the most books released. The website also gives bookcrossers the chance to meet others in their local area who love bookcrossing. Reading can thus become a sociable experience.

Setting up a bookcrossing zone in a library can have many positive outcomes. It creates the opportunity to increase memberships by encouraging bookcrossers to visit and join the library. A bookcrossing zone is also a great way to interact with existing customers, giving them a fresh approach to discovering new books, and providing them with the opportunity to leave their 'released' books at their local library.

Bookcrossing has the potential to be incorporated into existing library activities. It can be used as an activity for children — for example, in the form of a treasure hunt. This unique book club has the ability to encourage a love of reading from an early age, ultimately improving our children's literacy standards.

'Bookcrossing' is a concept that was developed by Ron Hornbaker of Humankind Systems Inc, an American-based software and internet development company. The aim is simply 'to make the whole world a library'. Create some good book karma and register a book today at <http://www.bookcrossing.com>. ■



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