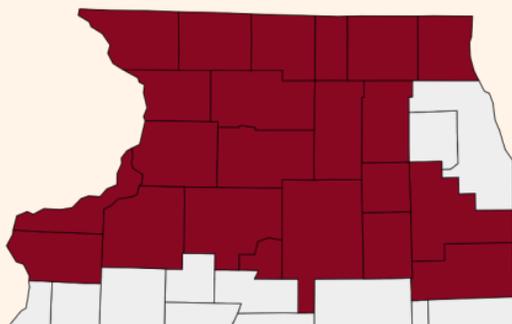# What is PrairieCat?

One hundred thirty-eight libraries in Illinois share an integrated library automation system known as PrairieCat. By sharing the cost of central site equipment, computer and database maintenance staff, and telecommunications, libraries of all sizes have found it possible to join the consortium and to realize the advantages of automated resource sharing.

PrairieCat serves libraries in 22 Illinois counties

Why Use the App?

PrairieCat maintains an online consortium catalog for its members. The catalog lists more than one million titles of books, periodicals, cassettes, videos, CDs, DVDs, electronic resources and other library materials. The catalog shows which libraries own a given title and if the item is currently on the shelf. Through the catalog, patrons of fully participating libraries can manage their own accounts, place holds, track their reading history, and pay fines with a credit card. With the app, you can access all of these features (and more) in one easy-to-use place, anytime, anywhere.

To Download the App

Search for PrairieCat Library in the Apple App store (iOS) or Google Play store (Android OS)

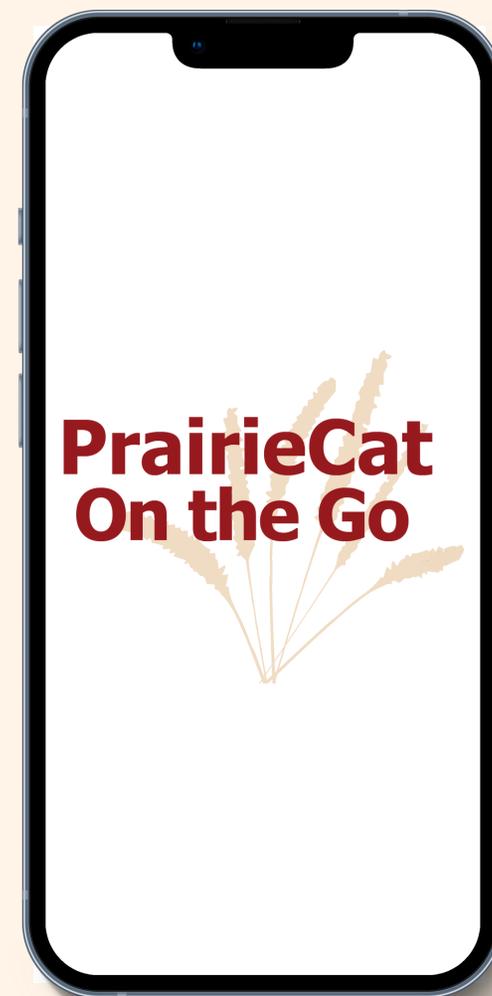**Choose the app that looks like this:** PrairieCat On the Go

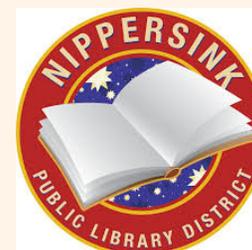**Or, scan a QR code:**

Apple   Android

- Once you download the app, you will see the default PrairieCat homepage
- Once you log into the app, your home library app will automatically load
- You can log into the app by using the full number on the back of your library card
- Your PIN is the last 4 digits of the number on your library card unless you've changed it

Patrons and Library Staff Are <u>Loving</u>:

- Digital library cards
- Linking accounts and managing accounts for the whole family
- Selecting preferences for layouts and languages
- Accessing e-materials directly in the app – searching, placing holds, checking out, and downloading e-books and e-audiobooks
- The improved look and design
- The library customization of the app including branding, layout, features, and more
- The optional reading tracker and lists

PrairieCat On the Go

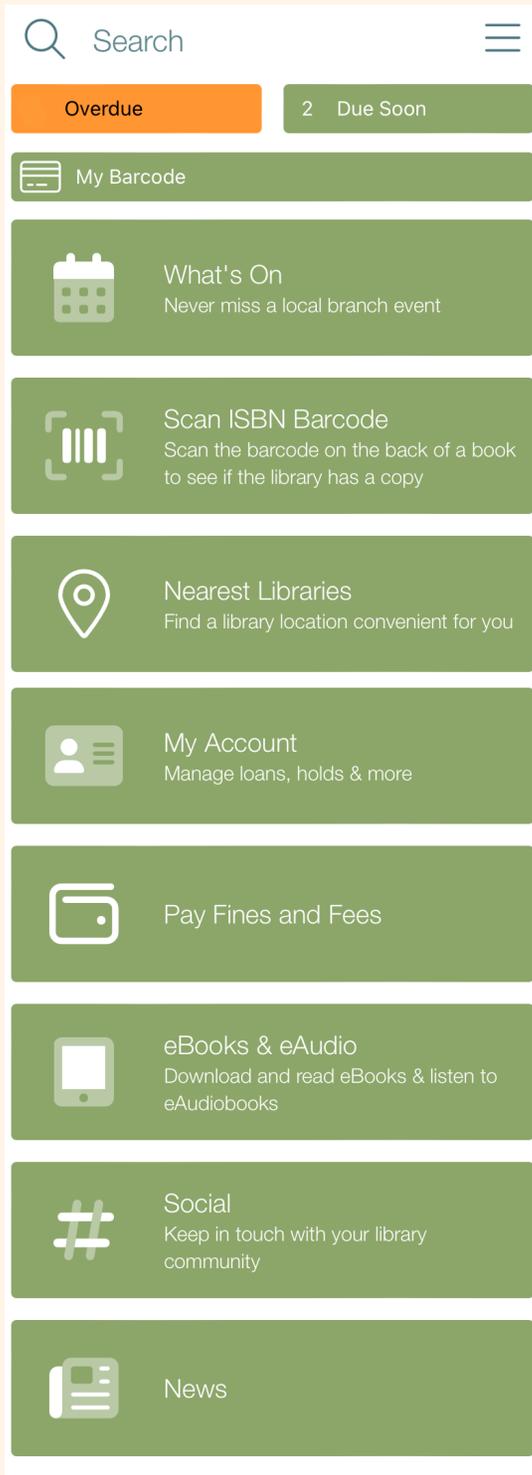# A How-To Guide for the NEW PrairieCat App

5418 Hill Rd
Richmond, IL 60071
815-678-4014
www.nippersinklibrary.org

What Does Each Button Do?

Search for physical and electronic materials
- Narrow down search results by using: "sort by," "format," "limit to," "search on," and "search in"

Display your scannable barcode at the bottom of the screen
- If you have multiple library cards linked to your account, you can view those barcodes by tapping the arrows on the right and left of the screen

This tab will take users to the library's online calendar

Using the device's camera, users can scan the barcode (ISBN) on the back of any book, anywhere, to see if the PrairieCat library system has a copy

This will show either the nearest PrairieCat library to the device (if the user has allowed location access) or all the PrairieCat libraries in alphabetical order
- Selecting a library will show that location's operating hours, location, and contact information

This button will open the side menu that can also be accessed through the menu to the right of the Search Bar. Users can view their checkouts, holds, and fines among other options. See the list to the right for more detail on the "My Account" tab

This button takes users to the payment collection site where they are prompted to log in and complete the fine payment process as usual

This tab will take users to a list of electronic resources like Hoopla or Libby. eMaterials will open in a new window.

This button takes you to your library's social media accounts

This button takes you to the most recent updates from your library

In the "My Account" tab, you can view:

- **My Details:** Shows user's name and barcode. Users can opt into Retaining their Checkout History by selecting the checkbox.
- **Checkouts:** Users can view their current checked out materials and renew them. The materials will be sorted into Overdue, Due Soon, and General.
- **Holds:** Users can view their current holds.The Select button will show a dropdown menu of options including Freeze Hold, Resume Hold, Cancel Hold, and Change Pickup Location. If one of those options is selected, the user will then select the material to apply the action.The All Holds button will show a dropdown menu of those options - Freeze Hold, Resume Hold, Cancel Hold, and Change Pickup Location. If a user selects one of the options, it will then apply to all holds. Users can also select the arrow next to the material to View Item, Cancel Hold, or Freeze Hold.
- **Fines:** If a user has fines or fees on their account, it will show here. Fines and fees can be paid in the link connected to the Pay Fines and Fees button on the homepage. It will open the payment collection site and prompt the user to log in to complete the fine payment process.
- **Linked Accounts:** This is where users can link library accounts. The + Add button at the top right will prompt the user to add the intended linked account's library barcode number and PIN. Linked accounts can be removed at any time from the account. There are no notifications to the linked account when their account is linked or removed. The linked account also cannot remove themselves from being linked. If a user would like to no longer be linked to another account without having the other user remove them, they will need to change their PIN at the library.
- **Reading Tracker:** The Reading Tracker tool in the app allows patrons to track their minutes/pages read. The timer needs to be manually turned on and off by the patron.
- **My Lists:** My Lists allows patrons to create lists within the app. This does not connect with the lists in Vega Discover.
- **Preferences:** Users can re-order the homepage buttons to their preferences. Some buttons/alerts may be pinned to the top of the screen and will remain there despite changes made by the use. The theme can be changed from Auto to Light or Dark mode and more simplified home views are available.
- **Language:** Users can change the language of the app. This will only affect non-customizable text in the app
- **Sign Out:** Users can sign out of the app at any time. If they do not sign out, they will remain logged in after closing the app