

Yoto Player Feedback – January 2025

Highland Township Public Library

Hi Anne, we recently started circ'ing Yoto players. We started out circ'ing just the cards earlier this year, and they have gone over really well with our patrons.

TL:DR : We circ our players as offline players, separately from our circulating cards.

We bought a Yoto 3rd gen and a Yoto Mini. For the Mini, we bought the official orange [travel case](#), and the headphones that fit inside it. We also got a jacket for the Mini. For the full-size player, we are circ'ing it in a generic, separately-purchased, latching box + charge cable.

They've each only gone out a few times but so far, no problems. It's very easy to set up the players and the only hitch so far is that initially, the player needs to start playing *each card that we own*, while connected to the internet (through your phone). It then downloads that book to itself so that it can be used offline. Our patrons (so far) just use the players as though they were 'dumb' offline players, like a CD player. Patrons check out the player and the separate cards, and kids can play just by putting the card in.

Possible problems: patrons COULD easily add their phone/device/email to the player's family group and then control the player through their phone. It's also possible they could delete all the downloaded cards from the player this way, or change settings somehow. Not the end of the world, because we could re-download the books, but that would be a pain. :) When the players come back to the library, I check (with my phone) to see if all the books are still there (no probs so far). I don't think a patron could permanently lock us out of the player; the player will always accept new users into its group.

Another possible problem: The player can only hold so many cards in its memory; then it dumps the least-recently-played ones to make more room. I don't think there's any way to tell how full the player is. We haven't hit the limit yet, but I wonder how close we are.

Most popular have been the CARDS. We circ them in batches (we usually buy packs, so like 5 Paw Patrol adventures; 4 Boxcar Children books) using [these card deck holders](#). If patrons have their own Yoto player, they can add these cards to their own player; I recently discovered they can also just scan/swipe the card and add to their Yoto library using their phone.

I don't know if this is similar to Tonies; we don't have any of those. So far our system works as offline-only, but that might be because we're one of the only libraries nearby that circ's these, and so patrons are only ever playing our (already downloaded) cards.

I hope this makes sense! I'm still learning the finer points of Yoto, but please let me know if you have any questions.

Follow up: Hi Anne, we found a flaw in our logic! Our yoto players are starting to come back with missing tracks, no longer downloaded. It looks like when someone plays one of our cards on a device NOT ours, it deletes that card from our downloads. Phew, we're going to re-think how to circ the players. :P

<https://support.yotoplay.com/en-US/sharing-or-gifting-yoto-cards-33284>

Huntington Woods Public Library

We started circulating both Yotos and Tonies a few months ago and we're frequently asked about best practices. So I created the attached document explaining what we do and why we do it that way. If you do something different with your Tonies, I would love to hear it. As you note, these are very challenging collections to set up and I'm not sure we have it all figured out yet, but overall it's working very well for us.

From Deb Hemmye:

Let me begin by saying that these have been one of the most challenging collections to add to our library. I'll also add that Yotos are significantly easier than Tonies, if you want to start with just one. With both collections, patrons can place holds, but they do not go out in delivery. Our loan period is 7 days for both with a limit of 3 Yoto cards or Tonie figurines per patron.

We went with the Yoto mini, instead of the larger size, because one of our employees had the mini, said the sound quality was fine, and its size made it very easy for her son to handle. We're happy with that choice.

We also decided that ALL Yoto cards and Tonies would go out in a pencil bag AND that the bag itself would be barcoded and scanned separately from the items in it. This was after lending our Vox books out in a bag that was NOT barcoded and spending way too much time tracking down forgotten bags. This way the bag stays on their account, so even if they return their Yoto cards without the bag, the clerk doesn't have to worry about it and they still get a reminder email about returning it.

Yoto packaging and labeling

We package each card in a clear plastic sleeve. These were from Amazon and are for sports trading cards.

Tonie packaging and labeling

Ugh! These are impossible to barcode. We tried attaching a label with just the barcode number - so a super skinny label - that we wrapped around some appendage and folded in half, but they still kept coming off. There are some figurines that simply have no place to attach a label of any kind. So we went with the big, ugly, bulky travel tags and zip ties. Sometimes even those come off, but mostly this has worked. One advantage of the big and ugly route is that it makes it very easy for people to distinguish our Tonies from their own, since some patrons already have

Tonies at home and just want more content. We also take a black marker and write HWPL somewhere on each Tonie in case the tag comes off – and even that can be a challenge.

Displays and Holds

We display ours behind our circ desk in wall hangings from a teacher's store. I believe the Yoto one is designed to be a calendar. This allows patrons to see what is currently available and easily browse them by sight, yet they are not accessible to patrons or their kids. (At least most of the time they aren't - some patrons are a bit more crafty than others, lol.) It doesn't look like it from my pictures, but the Tonie hanging display and the Yoto display are right next to each other and they are also different. We needed larger pockets for the Tonies and the little slot in front of each pocket is also handy.

Because of their weird shapes and small sizes, we decided against trying to interfile them with our regular holds. Instead, we have one hold box for Tonies and one for Yotos. We just tape the printed hold slip to their items before putting them in the box. This might not be a great solution for a large library with many holds, but it works for us.

Holds, part II. One difficulty we encountered was when a Tonie figurine was checked out and the patron wanted to place a hold on it, it was difficult to find it in the catalog. And, as part of a shared system of 50+ libraries, we figured the problem would only get worse over time. So we made a copy of each figurine's barcode and taped it to the back of the card on the hanging display. Now clerks can just pull that Tonie's card out and scan the barcode in the staff side of our catalog and get the exact item to place the hold on.

Players

We started with two Tonie and two Yoto players but they were always checked out with at least 3-4 people waiting for each. So when we received another donation, we purchased one more of each. However, we still have waiting lists of about 3-4 people for each. Sigh.

We made the decision that the players would go out with a case, player, charging cord, and headphones ALWAYS. Again, trying to simplify for our clerks. Patrons cannot (and so far have not asked to) opt out of the headphones, for example. It's always a set of all four things. Even though there is room in each case to also include some Tonie figurines or Yoto cards, we still check those out separately and in a pencil bag. Because patrons can charge the players themselves, and because we always have people waiting, we don't re-charge when they are returned.

From Shannon Rourke:

The Yotos have been wildly popular, but the experience from the library side is largely the same as the Tonies. I downloaded all Tonies to two Tonieboxes and started check out. When I decided to get a third Toniebox, it took a long time to get every Tonie downloaded because they were all checked out! I put them on hold and

it took weeks but I did finally get them all downloaded. The same happens when you add a new character. For a new character, I then needed all of the machines so I could download the tonie to each machine and that means I paid attention to the hold shelf every morning until I could get my hands on all machines. Yotos are the same. I downloaded every card to every machine so that patrons can plug and play. The challenge is adding new cards or a new machine because of the need to download all the material to each machine and the cards and machines are always checked out. Other than that, it has been smooth sailing and well worth the work.

Other things we did that have worked well:

We bought colorful zip pencil cases and check them out separately to put the Tonies and Yoto cards in. Not one missing bag yet because they are an individual check out! We made little boxes for Yoto card and Tonie HOLDS so they are on the hold shelf. We used large luggage tags for bar codes and to label each machine, card and Tonie figure. We attached them with zip ties. It makes it harder to mix in with other toys at home because there are big plastic tags on them.

Traverse Area District Library

We have been holding off from Yoto or Tonie players because of the setup process and already having a lot going on. I did a MICHLIB survey earlier in the year about Tonie boxes and there were a couple of Yoto comments. I attached those answers.

We just bought both, we've discontinued books on cd and had that budget to spend. I feel like Yoto cards are the better option as they had more books to choose from and kids won't become attached to them. - RTDL

This is a good review from a parent who has both the Toniebox and the Yoto Mini. Our library does not own either unit, but we would also be interested in hearing responses from libraries that own either of them for circulation.

<https://www.homeandontheway.com/blog/yoto-vs-toniebox-which-is-better>

- Claire, Westland Public Library

Saline District Library

My only other experience with Yoto is that we have found lost cards in our department, which indicates that they are easy to misplace.

o