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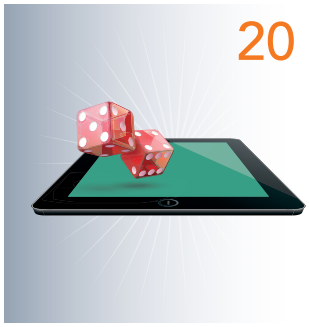

Commentary

A Bit of Optimism

by Alan S. Inouye

I'm feeling upbeat about the future. Yes that's quite a shocker, considering that I work in Washington, D.C. But on the digital content and ebook front, there have been some signs of hope. ALA Past President Molly Raphael opens this issue by reflecting back from the doom and gloom of several years ago to the present in "Ebooks—Getting There … But Not There Yet." Raphael provides personal perspective on how ALA leadership and the Digital Content Working Group (DCWG) engaged with publishers and others. Based on three years of Pew Internet Project reports, Kathryn Zickuhr and Lee Rainie provide perspectives on the rise of digital services in libraries in "A New Way of Looking at Public Library Engagement in America."

Featured next is "School Library Ebook Business Models." Christopher Harris, Ric Hasenyager, and Carrie Russell discuss the diversity of such models in the school library market and how, in some respects, it is more advanced than the library trade ebook market. Roger Rosen writes in "Digital Resources in School Libraries: A Publisher's Perspective" that school libraries and librarians are the catalysts for enabling digital content in the K–12 context.

On the digital content and ebook front, there have been some signs of hope.

How can libraries best contribute? In the ebook realm, libraries play a key role in advancing the exposure and discovery of works. In "Ebook Discovery: The Library/Publisher 'Sweet Spot'," Larra Clark discusses how libraries can bolster their discovery capabilities and their awareness, based on a workshop held at the 2014 Digital Book World conference. Publishing is expanding and changing in fundamental ways. Peter Brantley continues his writings for this *American Libraries* series with "Beating the Odds: Building a Publishing 'Maker' Culture," in which he explains why today's book business will become obsolete and thus provide new opportunities for libraries.

The long-term and big picture are featured in Roger Levien's "Through the Google Glass, Dimly." Levien focuses on how to conceptualize the revolution in digital content, which facilitates envisioning where libraries fit in the reading ecosystem. Robert Rua provides a sidebar illustration in "Brave News World," based on a project at Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library.

Certainly not all is well by a long shot, as we face many challenges with respect to digital content. However, we've made some progress, and libraries enjoy a considerable array of opportunities. While some external (and internal) forces may be difficult to affect, we do have the ability to influence a number of the important directions about the future of digital content in libraries. Much hard work remains—deciding which opportunities to pursue and then focusing our resources accordingly. ▮

—Alan S. Inouye, director of ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy and program manager of ALA's Digital Content Initiative

american libraries

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EBOOKS

Getting There ... But Not There Yet

An overview of ALA's path to progress

Flash back to just three years ago. Chances are, if you were working in a library at that time, the rapidly changing issues around access to digital content challenged you and your library.

To be sure, information in digital form had been in libraries for decades. Libraries had become quite adept at not only acquiring but also applying finding aids to that information. What confronted us in 2011 was different.

People were increasingly looking for digital content for their e-readers and mobile devices. And they were turning to libraries, expecting that just as they had been able to borrow print books, they would also be able to borrow ebooks. Libraries were trying to keep ahead of this trend and began allocating more of their materials budget for not just databases but also ebooks. The problem was that many ebooks were not available to libraries for purchase. Libraries and publishers, as well as authors, found themselves in this new digital ecosystem, with all the players trying to sort out business models that would work for them.

This transformed environment had a major new obstacle: Some publishers, especially some of the biggest ones, were not making their ebooks available to libraries *under any terms.* In early autumn 2011, of the then–Big Six publishers, only Random

By Molly Raphael

House and Penguin were making all their ebooks available under the same terms (perpetual ownership and reasonable price) as their print publications. Earlier in the year, HarperCollins had created a brouhaha in the library world by changing the acquisition terms of its ebooks for libraries from licensing to 26 circulations before an ebook would have to be purchased again. Then in late autumn 2011, Penguin suspended its sale of ebooks to libraries after the leading aggregator (OverDrive) signed an agreement with Amazon for the Kindle version of ebooks to be lent by libraries. (Penguin's concern related to information that would be available to Amazon as a part of the agreement, which Penguin believed violated its contract terms with OverDrive.) Hachette Book Group was making only its backlist available; Macmillan and Simon & Schuster were not in the library ebook business at all.

What a nightmare for libraries and their users! As the world was turning more and more to ebooks, libraries were struggling to meet demand, even in the number of ebooks they had. Add to this situation that often most of the bestsellers—which are in highest demand in libraries—were simply not available under any terms to libraries. Library leaders were frustrated and angry as they tried to manage their way through this completely unacceptable situation.

Meanwhile, the American Library Association (ALA) had several committees and units trying to address digital issues. A special ALA task force had identified and reported on some of the critical issues during the first half of 2011. Library leaders and other ALA members were frustrated by their inability to change this ebook environment.

Two strategic decisions at ALA during the second half of 2011 focused on digital content issues, with access (or lack of) to ebooks commanding the spotlight.

First, a sustainable, coordinated response demanded a presidential-level working group, with representation from key stakeholders. Thus, then–President Elect Maureen Sullivan and I appointed the Digital Content and Libraries Working Group (DCWG), which organized itself in autumn 2011. ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) has provided strong staff support for DCWG's work. DCWG held its first face-to-face meeting at the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting. From the beginning, we knew we needed knowledgeable, multitalented, committed professionals who would tackle their charge with passion, vigor, and a sense of urgency. During the past 30 months, DCWG has more than met expectations, proposing a variety of solutions for some thorny issues.

Second, in late 2011 we also realized that these digital issues could be advanced more quickly if ALA's top leadership played a major role. We needed to change the status quo by raising the visibility of libraries and the struggles they were having in acquiring ebooks. Early in 2012, ALA's top leaders held a series of meetings with executives of several large publishers in New York. We were aided in our plan by the Association of American Publishers (AAP), which not only helped open doors but also arranged for ALA leaders to speak at gatherings of AAP members. Our goal was to open dialogue and push for greater access to ebooks for libraries. We knew that any success we might have would be through persistence in pressing our case. We also knew that we needed to coordinate our work with DCWG and other entities that were trying to advance the library digital agenda as well.

> We discovered we had much to learn about the publishing world, and the publishing world had much to learn about libraries.

Those first efforts to reach publishers felt as if we were traveling through uncharted waters. We did not know what to expect. We wanted the conversations to be productive, so we felt it would be better not to push too hard.

At the same time, we knew we carried the frustrations of—and yes, in some cases, anger from—the library world, so we wanted to be forceful in making our case. We found that we had much to learn about the publishing world, and the publishing world had much to learn about libraries. Misconceptions characterized both sides. We also began to understand in a very concrete way what impact antitrust laws had on how publishers operated. As library leaders, we came from a world that generously shared successes with one another. In the publishing world, sharing was at worst illegal and at best not a wise business practice. We quickly understood how we could help publishers understand the library world better by sharing information about library use, policies, and practices.

Our presentation to the AAP's annual meeting in March 2012 was a great opportunity. Speaking to leaders from publishing houses large and small, we spread the word to a wide audience about the value of their ebooks being in libraries. We had been told that there might not be many questions, that publishers often would not raise issues in that kind of forum. But there were so many questions and such clear engagement by many in the audience that we knew we had at least opened more opportunities for dialogue. When one publisher asked me after the talk if we would write a letter supporting the publishers in the lawsuit that had recently been filed by the US Justice Department against several publishers and Apple, I replied by asking if his company would start

making their ebooks available for libraries to purchase. He smiled and replied, "Good point."

We also were beginning to benefit from more competition for ebook aggregators. In early spring 2012 at the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference in Philadelphia, we held discussions with OverDrive, Baker & Taylor, 3M, and Ingram. We knew that competition would be beneficial for libraries, giving them alternatives for acquiring ebooks.

Other players were also involved in helping move our digital agenda forward. The Pew Internet and American Life Project reported on studies documenting that library borrowers were also book buyers. Some libraries—such as Douglas County (Colo.) Libraries and the State Library of Kansas—were trying their own solutions. Each effort helped provide information and strengthen our arguments. In Kansas, moving from one platform to another was being tested, an issue that had not been tested before.

We began opening doors for discussions that would not have been previously possible or even fathomable. We also had the opportunity to engage with other parts of the book ecosystem besides publishers and aggregators, such as authors and author groups, agents, booksellers, and smaller publishers who were making ebooks available to libraries. Each conversation led to new understandings and often to steps forward.

Our approach changed as time moved on. As we became less patient, we expressed our frustration more publicly. After our first meetings with publishers, then–ALA President Maureen Sullivan described our September 2012 meetings as "frank, thought-provoking, cordial, and productive." Throughout the next year, we pushed for progress on multiple fronts. DCWG produced tip sheets on digital rights management (July 2012); guidelines on developing business models for library ebooks (August 2012); and media outreach toolkits (November 2012). We stepped up efforts to keep members informed, and we gathered information about their ideas at such events as the Virtual Membership Meeting (June 2012) and the Virtual Town Hall on ebooks (October 2013). Regular programs and updates brought out large audiences at ALA, PLA, and state association conferences.

> Each change in the publishing ecosystem has helped us gain a better understanding of what changes might be coming next.

Those of us who attended those first meetings saw the power of understanding the perspective of others. I think we were all surprised by comments from some people in the publishing world about how they thought libraries worked. And I suppose we were also surprised by some of the very basic issues that we grew to understand about the publishing world.

Thinking back to our first meetings, I remember feeling good that we had scheduled a meeting with Random House, which was selling all its ebooks to libraries. At that meeting, we were given a heads-up that Random House would be raising its prices but maintaining the terms of perpetual ownership for ebooks. So when it did raise prices shortly afterward, we should not have been surprised. We learned, however, that our assumptions about what amount the increase would be were far from where they actually landed. Lesson learned: Be careful about the assumptions we make, even when we are somewhat prepared. Each change in the publishing ecosystem has helped us gain a better understanding of what might be coming.

No one who has been involved in these efforts thinks we have made progress fast enough. In fact, we have continually shared our results, as well as frustrations, in regular reports. One of the most welcomed comments we have received many times over the past 30 months is praise from the library community for the way that ALA leadership has continued its focus on access to digital content and ebooks. From the beginning, we involved incoming leadership as well as current leaders. Thus, not only did Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels and I participate in the first meetings but so too did then-President-Elect Maureen Sullivan, as well as DCWG Cochair Robert Wolven and OITP's Alan Inouye. When leadership changed after the 2012 ALA Annual Conference, the new president was prepared to take the lead and brought in new President-Elect Barbara Stripling, who has continued the focus during her presidency.

ALA presidents have noted that events often determine the focus of ALA leadership rather than a focus selected by the current president.

One lesson that emerged very early in our work: The model we had of ALA leadership raising the visibility and engaging in high-level talks—coupled with a strong, cross-interest working group focused on issues that were clearly on the minds of the library community and ALA members—has served us well. ALA can be most effective when it engages in priorities that run across the library world and finds real solutions to existing problems through engaging members in addressing those issues. Much work remains to be done, but we can say that ALA has made a difference in helping libraries and librarians find solutions for working in the digital-world ecosystem. Onward! ▮

MOLLY RAPHAEL *was president of the American Library Association in 2011–2012.*

BY KATHRYN ZICKUHR AND LEE RAINIE

A New Way of Looking at Public Library Engagement in America

Gaining insight into how libraries fit within American culture

The Pew Research Center's Internet Project has intensively studied the changing world of public libraries for the last three years. The first stage of our research explored the growing role of ebooks, including their impact on Americans' reading habits and library habits. Our second stage examined the full universe of library services, as well as what library services Americans most value and what they might want from libraries in the future.

Photo: Jens Goepfert / Shutterstock.com

In March, we released a report from our third and final stage of research—the fruits of a representative national survey of 6,224 Americans ages 16 and older. It explores public libraries' roles in people's lives and in broader American culture—how libraries are perceived, how they are valued, and how people rely on them. The provision of digital content is certainly a key element of the services that make libraries useful.

Using the data from our previous report on **how people value libraries in their communities**, our analysis divides Americans into nine groups that reflect different patterns of public library engagement along a general spectrum of high (30% of the population), medium (39% of the population), low (17% of the population), and nonengagement (14% of the population).

This approach is a little new for us. Our previous reports have explored topics such as **what people do at libraries and library websites** or **how Americans value individual library services** based on traditional factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, and household income. But this typology moves beyond basic demographic descriptions.

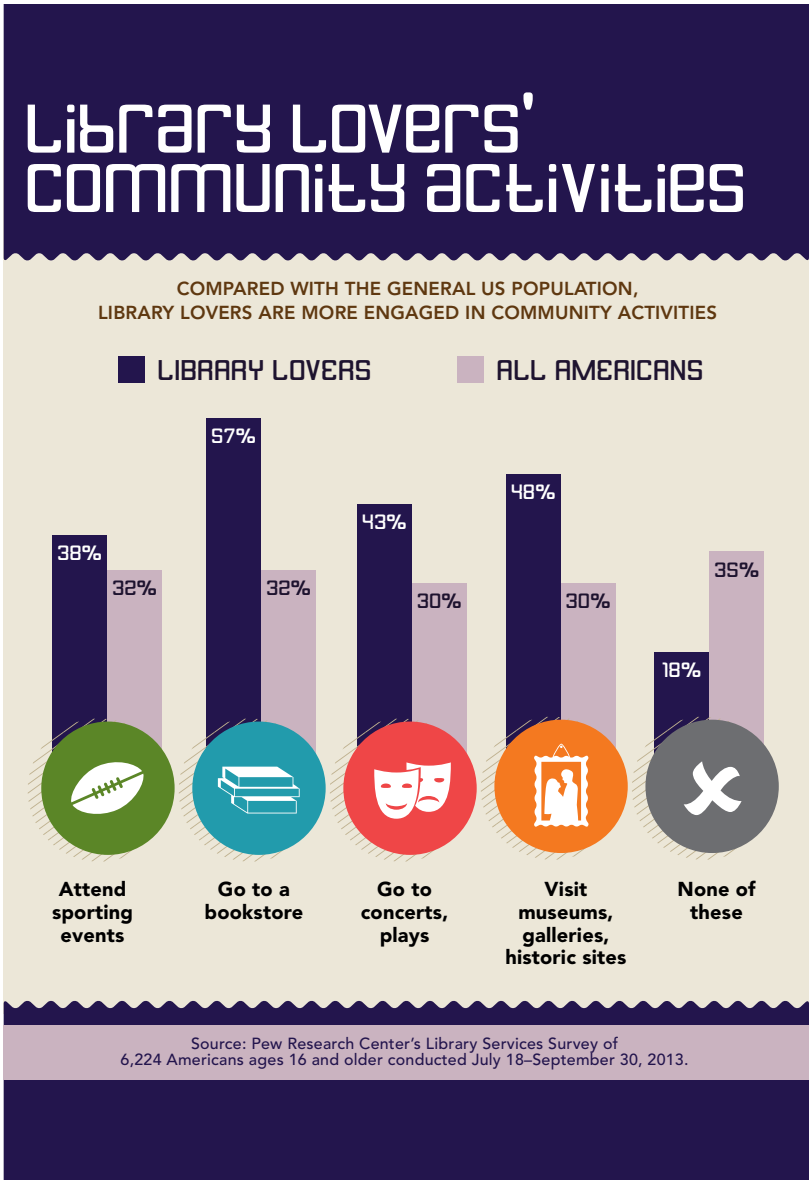
Instead, we used statistical analysis to cluster individuals into groups based on their usage of, views toward, and access to libraries, in order to discover larger insights about how libraries fit into American culture. This type of work more fully embraces the idea that people's information needs and practices shape their library use as much or more than their skin color, their age, the type of community they live in, or their socioeconomic circumstances.

The table on page 8 provides an overview of the typology groups.

Looking closer at each stratum of library engagement, we find that the two high-engagement groups, **Library Lovers** and **Information Omnivores**, include people who value and utilize public libraries most heavily—those who say that libraries play a major role in their own lives and in the lives of their families, who think libraries improve their communities, who are avid readers and think libraries play an essential role in encouraging literacy and a love of reading. In addition to being highly engaged with libraries, members of these groups also tend to be active in other parts of their communities. They are more likely to know their neighbors, visit museums and attend sporting events, and socialize with families and friends on a regular basis.

> The two groups that are highly engaged with public libraries include people who are also active in other parts of their communities.

On the other hand, those who are less engaged with public libraries may be less engaged in their communities overall. Particularly for the low-engagement groups **Not for Me** and **Rooted and Roadblocked**, along with the nonengagement groups **Distant Admirers** and **Off the Grid**, lower



Public Library Engagement Typology

Group Overviews

Group Name	% of US Population Ages 16+	Major Characteristics
HIGH ENGAGEMENT ~80% used a public library in the past year		
Library Lovers	10%	Members of this group report frequent personal use of public libraries, along with high levels of household library use. This group includes many parents, students, and job seekers; members tend to be younger, with higher levels of education.
Information Omnivores	20%	This group has the highest rates of technology use, as well as the highest levels of education, employment, and household income. They have high levels of personal and household library use, but their visits to the library are less frequent than Library Lovers.
MEDIUM ENGAGEMENT ~50% used a public library in the past year		
Solid Center	30%	Centered in smaller towns, this group is similar to the general US population in most measures. About half have used a public library in the past year; most view libraries positively.
Print Traditionalists	9%	This group contains the highest proportion of rural, Southern, or white respondents. It is similar to Solid Center in many measures, except that its members tend to live farther away from libraries. They also have positive views about libraries' roles in communities.
LOW ENGAGEMENT ~30% used a public library in the past year		
Not for Me	4%	This group is distinguished from other low-engagement groups by its members' strikingly negative views of libraries. In particular, they are far less likely than most other groups to say public libraries are important to their communities.
Young & Restless	7%	This is a relatively young group, and few of its members have lived in their neighborhoods for very long. Their most striking feature is that only 15% know where the nearest public library is located.
Rooted & Roadblocked	7%	This group generally views public libraries positively, but many face hurdles in their lives that may prevent them from engaging with libraries. They tend to be older, and many are living with a disability or have experienced a recent illness in their family.
NONE Have never personally used a public library		
Distant Admirers	10%	Though members of this group have never personally used a public library, they view libraries quite positively—perhaps because many say other family members use them. Many also say that various library services are important to them and their families. They tend to be older and are often living in lower-income households.
Off the Grid	4%	Members of this group tend to be disengaged from their communities and social life in many ways. Many live in rural areas, and just 56% use the internet. Most have very low household incomes, as well as low levels of education—only one in 10 has graduated from college.

Source: Pew Research Center's Library Services Survey of 6,224 Americans 16 and older conducted July 18–September 30, 2013. Percentages sum to 101% because of rounding.

rates of library use and lack of familiarity with libraries seem to coincide with lower patterns of social and civic engagement in other areas of their lives. Members of low and nonengagement groups are often less likely to participate in similar community activities, such as visiting museums or patronizing bookstores, and more likely to report having difficulty using technology; they also tend to be less comfortable navigating various types of information, such as finding material about government services and benefits.

Other insights in the data

One of the main new insights we get from this kind of analysis is a fuller picture of how people's lives tie (or don't tie) to information and communities. There are definitely "information haves" and "information have nots" in the United States. The recurring insight throughout the report is that people's library habits do not exist in a vacuum. Americans' connection—or lack of connection—with public libraries is part of their broader information and social landscape.

These patterns are particularly prominent in the high-engagement categories, which contain many of these (often overlapping) groups. In contrast, the low and nonengagement groups tend to be more distinct in the circumstances surrounding their lack of library engagement. For instance, looking only at low-engagement groups (which include people who have used a library at some point in their lives but not recently), there are:

■ **Not for Me:** Respondents who tend to dislike public libraries and are more likely to see them as irrelevant to modern life;

■ **Young and Restless:** Young people who generally feel positively about public libraries but are relatively new to their neighborhoods and unlikely to know where their local library is located;

■ **Rooted and Roadblocked:** Older adults who generally think libraries are good for their community but may have obstacles in their lives, view libraries as somewhat difficult to use, or otherwise think that libraries are not personally relevant to them at this point in their lives.

Beyond the descriptions of individual groups, another common thread in the data is that socioeconomic status is often tied to library engagement in some key respects. Broadly speaking, **adults with higher levels of education and household income are more likely to use public libraries** than those with lower household incomes and lower levels of education. However, among those who have used a library in the past year, **adults living in lower-income households are more likely to say various library services are very important to them and their families** than those living in higher-income households.

> People's library habits do not exist in a vacuum. Americans' connection with public libraries is part of their broader information and social landscape.

These findings echo in several ways:

Life stage and special circumstances are linked to increased library use and higher engagement with information: Deeper connections with public libraries are often associated with key life moments such as having a child, seeking a job, being a student, and going through a situation in which research and data can help inform a decision.

Highly engaged library patrons are also more likely to use newer technologies, including e-readers and tablets: A common narrative is that Americans are turning away from libraries because of newer technology, but the data shows that most highly engaged library users are also big technology users. In fact, members of the groups with the highest levels of library engagement are more likely to own e-readers than most lower-engagement groups, and almost half (46%) of Information Omnivores (the second-highest engagement group) own tablets.

The most intense library users are also the most frequent bookstore visitors: The Library Lovers group represents the most highly engaged users in the typology. Its members are also big readers: Most of them read books daily, and they read an average of 27 books in the past year. And despite their generally higher levels of library use and the fact that most prefer to borrow books rather than purchasing them, 57% say they visit bookstores regularly. That is a higher proportion than any other group.

The most highly engaged library users are most likely to make frequent use of library websites: Roughly eight in 10 members of the highest engagement groups have used a library website in the past year, compared with 30% of the general public. And about half of Library Lovers use one at least once a week.

It has been a great pleasure to work with the library community for the past three years. We hope librarians will find this material useful as they discuss the role of libraries in their communities and make plans for the future. ▮

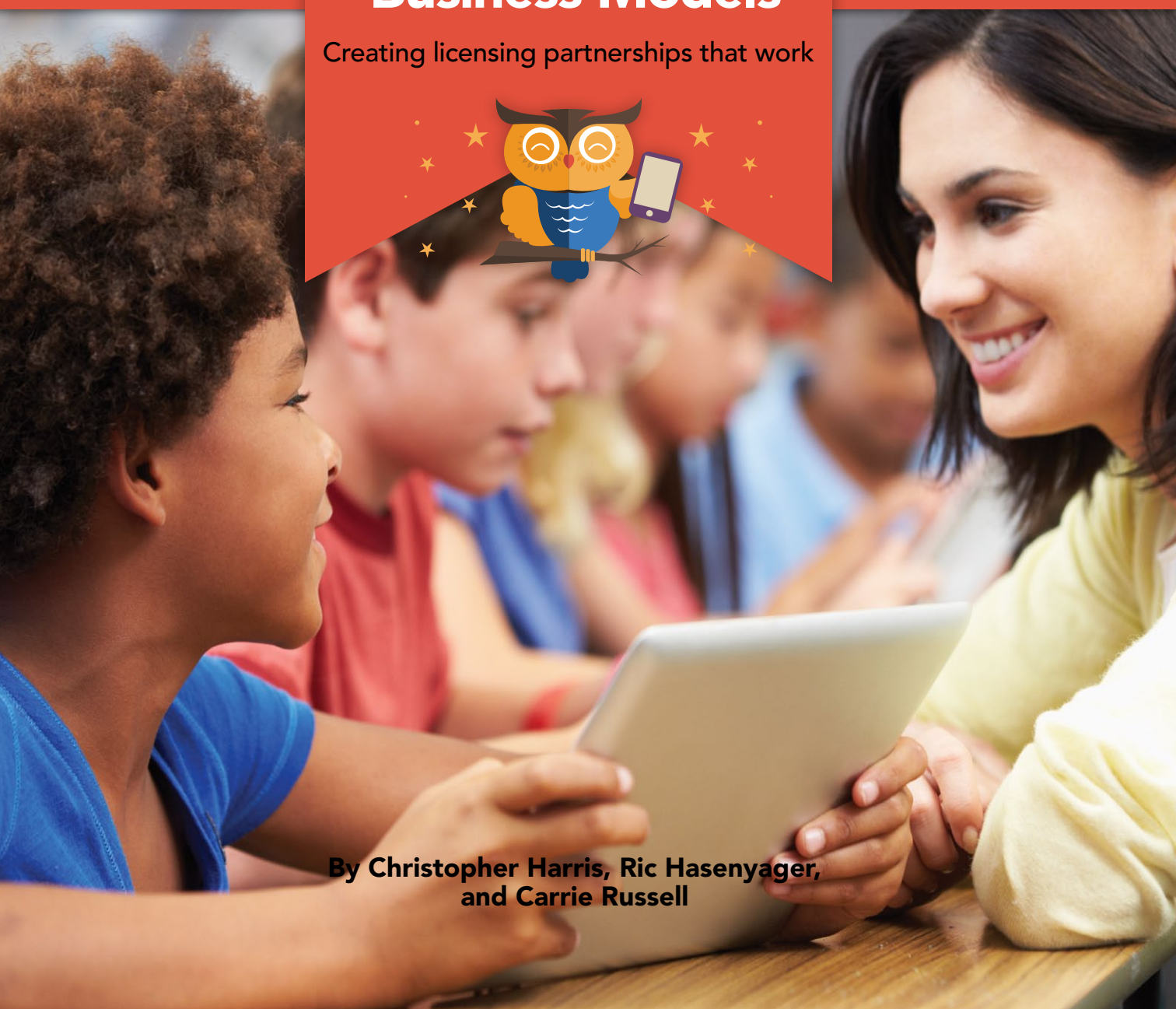
KATHRYN ZICKUHR *is research associate at the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project.*

LEE RAINIE *is director of the project, which has studied the social impact of digital technologies since 2000.*

SCHOOL LIBRARY

Ebook Business Models

Creating licensing partnerships that work



By Christopher Harris, Ric Hasenyager, and Carrie Russell

Much attention has been paid to library lending, the availability of ebook titles that public libraries can purchase, and the business models associated with ebook acquisition. When we consider school libraries and ebooks, we discover a very different situation—greater access to the ebooks that school libraries collect, a greater variety of business models, and a library/publisher relationship that is more congenial.

Public libraries, for the most part, collect trade books—nonfiction and fiction bestsellers and other titles with broad appeal—but the dollars they spend account for only a relatively small portion of the total trade market. Although school libraries still desire and purchase trade books, the bulk of the collections budget is allocated to K–12 educational materials, making school libraries the large majority of buyers for K–12 educational resources. Consequently, school libraries have more market power to influence ebook availability, pricing, and contract terms than public libraries.

In addition, K–12 ebook publishers generally are not huge subsidiaries of international multiconglomerates—as are many trade publishers, such as Random House or Hachette Book Group—with the resources available to deemphasize the public library market if desired. Rather, they are small, often independent businesses that work closely with their school library customers in order to survive. This is not to say all is dandy in the school library market. Increasing numbers of K–12 publishers have "sell-direct-to-parent" business models that compete for many of the same resources that libraries ordinarily acquire, taking advantage of the growing home-schooling trend. K–12 ebook publishers also sell resources to schoolteachers, bypassing "library central," where cooperative buying and discounts keep prices down. Still, many of these publishers have been selling resources exclusively to schools and school libraries for years. Thus, a collaborative approach to acquiring digital materials has been less contentious and has resulted in a variety of mutually beneficial business models.

It is much more common, for example, to find resources licensed for unlimited simultaneous access from K–12 publishers. These publishers have also been more active in developing their own platforms, though there are some intermediaries who provide aggregator platforms, such as 3M, and are willing to work with school libraries. This section will review five different business models: unlimited simultaneous access, one-to-one licenses, pay-per-use rentals, subscription services, and online retailer platform models.

School libraries have more market power to influence ebook availability, pricing, and contract terms than public libraries.

UNLIMITED SIMULTANEOUS ACCESS

The most common business model for ebooks in school libraries, at least in terms of informational texts aligned with classroom instructional needs, is an unlimited simultaneous access license. As you might expect from its name, content is made available for use by an unlimited number of simultaneous readers within a school or school district. This makes it easy for a teacher to use an ebook with a whole class of students in a computer lab, mobile laptop cart, or handheld-device setting. The licenses often include home access to the resources as well.

This type of license tends to be priced per site—usually defined as a school building, though in some cases a single building can contain multiple schools. This pricing structure can lead to inequity for smaller schools with smaller budgets as they end up paying the same price as larger schools while having a lower potential for use. However, some publishers are offering district-level pricing for all schools in a district, thus providing access to materials for all students at a single, reasonable price. When selecting a simultaneous access model, much will depend on the schools' organizational structure and how their operations are governed. EBSCO is a vendor that

offers this model. Some options allow the library to retain copies as long as an account is maintained.

ONE-TO-ONE LICENSES

Fiction in school libraries, as in public libraries, is more likely to be licensed on a one-to-one basis so that each ebook is limited to a single reader. Access is typically enforced through digital rights management (DRM) and the checkout process. This model is more likely to be encountered when ebooks are delivered through an aggregator or third-party host, such as OverDrive. At this time in the one-to-one market, intermediaries provide a service (maintenance and the application of DRM) that individual publishers cannot provide because of a lack of resources and expertise. This suggests that a possible reason for the prevalence of the unlimited simultaneous access business model (above) may be dependent on the difficulty and expense of maintaining and applying DRM in the one-to-one model.

To reflect the needs of classrooms, some content is licensed under a modified one-to-x model, where a single book purchase allows three, five, or some other number of concurrent users. The three-user model seems to dominate, though many schools often look for and negotiate seven copies to accommodate five or six students and a teacher in a reading group. In other cases, publishers will list two versions of ebooks with an aggregator: single-user and multiuser. The multiuser version is often sold as an unlimited-access site license for three to five times the cost of the single-user price. This again suggests a more liberal and open approach, recognizing that the cost in time, effort, and money of restricting access can often outweigh the benefits to a publisher as well as efforts to accommodate various needs.

PAY-PER-USE RENTALS

An emerging business model is built around a pay-per-use rental of an ebook for a set price per checkout. School libraries establish an account that is then debited a set amount ($1 is common) every time a student reads a book. Students tend to be limited to a set number of simultaneous checkouts and may be restricted to an annual checkout limit to control costs. An example is Brain Hive, where a library joins as a member with no upfront fee. Libraries pay only the $1-per-use amount for the content over a particular period of time (school semester, annually, etc.). Libraries can buy some of the content permanently, with a pricing structure in part determined by how many uses have already been made. This model has been successful in bringing some titles, particularly nonfiction, from the Big Five trade publishers into school libraries, though access to fiction titles has been limited so far.

Compared with the high prices for ebooks from some trade publishers, this model can provide significant savings. Leaving aside platform costs (if they are charged), an $84 single-user ebook only breaks even versus a $1 rental after almost three-and-a-half years of two-week loans. Pay-per-use can also be a cost-effective way for librarians and students to explore some of the fiction offerings from independent publishers. These models may also offer extras like reading comprehension exams, bookmarking, and note-taking. An additional fee is charged for some of these services.

From a technical standpoint, the primary example of this model currently requires an always-on internet connection to maintain secure access from outside the school. The loan period can be set by the library, though there is no price discount or other benefit to selecting a shorter loan period at this time. Readers are allowed to read up to 25% of a book before a paid checkout is charged.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

The smaller, independent publishers that provide resources for school libraries have developed another model for an annual subscription to a large list of ebooks. In this way, ebooks are being treated much more like a subscription database service, a business model with which schools and school libraries are very familiar. The subscriptions usually offer unlimited simultaneous access to a defined set of ebooks for a single year for a flat fee. Each year, a new and different set of ebooks is available through subscription. TumbleBooks, McGraw-Hill Professional, and Storia from Scholastic are examples of this model.

The benefit of this model is that it allows instant delivery of a larger set of books as compared with the slow development of a set of perpetually licensed books. In essence, the library is amortizing its collection development costs but with the associated risk of losing access to a large chunk of content in the case of budget cuts. At the same time, though, the subscription model suggests that the titles are being updated and refreshed annually, so this can be a way to avoid the issue of weeding digital titles.

All the models above are designed to work on desktops, laptops, and notebooks. Some subscribed book collections, also ready-made packages, are aligned to Common Core State Standards or the curriculum, such as Rosen Classroom and Britannica Digital Learning, popular with homeschool users.

ONLINE RETAILER PLATFORM MODELS

School libraries have an option for accessing content from the Big Five publishers that is not currently available to public libraries. The three major online bookseller/ebook reader platforms have each developed education business models that school libraries can use. The offerings from Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble are very distinct and serve different usage models. Most of the differences can be attributed to the DRM employed by each online retailer. In all cases, ebooks are licensed under a consumer model with one-to-one access and none of the publisher restrictions that public libraries endure.

> Publishers are very aware of the needs of the K–12 audience and are creating new formats that allow students to interact with content.

AMAZON

The Amazon education platform, Whispercast, is built around accounts and attached devices. Books are licensed for use by a named account designated by an email address. This is presumably a student or staff email, though generic accounts can be created as well. A serial-number-designated device owned by the school is then attached to an account, thereby granting access to the content on a device. Devices can be moved between accounts to allow different content on a specific device. To replicate a library lending model, however, a school would need to create an account for each book purchased to allow flexible delivery to any device. Even though publishers like Macmillan and Random House offer trade publications suitable for K–12 education, Whispercast is preferred and often used instead because of its efficiency and scope.

APPLE

The DRM used by Apple is the most open in terms of trusting the school to appropriately deliver content from up to five authorized computers to school-owned devices. This means that iBooks has the most flexible access of the three models and is the only one that can really replicate print lending in a library.

BARNES & NOBLE

The Nook education platform provides a high level of support for class sets, reading groups, book clubs, and other situations where a single (or set) of books is going to be read by a defined group of readers. Under this program, Nooks are placed into groups and then content is purchased (one-to-one copies) for each Nook in the group.

CONCLUSION

Although school libraries face many of the same issues that public libraries do with trade publishers, school librarians have many options, especially relating to K–12 nonfiction publishers. These publishers have opened their business models to create partnerships with their primary customers by offering attractive options that benefit a school's instructional needs. One reason why nonfiction publishers are more willing to work with the education market is in part because of their mission to support the informational text needs of the classroom; however, what may drive this even more is the nature of nonfiction text. These types of resources need to be updated more frequently through weeding. These same publishers are very aware of the needs of the K–12 audience, and they are leaders in creating new formats that allow students to interact with content. Multimedia and content-creation tools are innovative methods for turning flat text into content-rich experiences—including education applications, scenarios, and rich media. These allow students to interact with text in ways that cannot be done with traditional print or flat digital editions. It is this type of innovation that takes texts to the next level and creates an exciting time for our readers. ■



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DIGITAL RESOURCES IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

A publisher's perspective

By Roger Rosen

As a publisher of educational materials for students in K–12 schools for more than 34 years, I've collaborated closely with school librarians who deliver content and programming to the populations that we both serve.

With the advent of the digital revolution and the opportunities and challenges that this disruption provides, the school librarian is one of the most prepared professionals to make momentous choices on behalf of students. These choices comprise a broad range of options that include hardware, software, age appropriateness, access, pricing models, collaboration with classroom teachers and administrators, evidence of efficacy, and—perhaps most importantly—strategies for student engagement. The passion and enthusiasm with which my colleagues in the school library setting have

embraced change and introduced new pathways of learning have inspired our publishing team.

Indeed, most of my colleagues work closely with the school librarians, who are the greatest enthusiasts of their publishing programs. Librarians are often enlisted to help craft the design, navigation, customization, and interactivity of a publisher's digital learning solutions. This protocol is now a well-established norm in my company, Rosen Publishing Group. Our latest subscription resource, Digital Literacy, had considerable editorial guidance from Michelle Luhtala, library department chair at New Canaan (Conn.) High School. She is a national authority on building youth digital citizenship skills, and her development of our lesson plans for teachers and librarians was deeply informed by her own innovative curriculum development. Practitioners know what works.

Close collaboration with librarians informs everything we do, and it is not limited to content creation but also includes impassioned advocacy on behalf of the profession to raise awareness about the vital role that school librarians play in the lives of their students. In this past year alone, my company has convened round tables in six different cities, bringing together key stakeholders within the community to concentrate on literacy, libraries, and funding issues.

Publishers are also citizens, and I find myself very much in sync philosophically with the concerns regarding social justice and equity of access that our librarians grapple with every day.

In an era when more than 16 million children in the United States—22% of all children—live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, the school library, when properly resourced and wired, is the nexus of many pathways toward the realization of dreams. The school library is a safe and dynamic place that can provide professionally curated content to every student—content that, once mastered, prepares kids for college and their careers.

In the 21st century, digital literacy competencies are vital to securing a meaningful future in this e-information and socially networked age. Access to a connected computer is not enough. The role of the professional school librarian in matching students' needs and interests with the appropriate resource and the right engagement strategies is an essential part of the relationship.

This innovation of engagement is demonstrated by Limitless Libraries, a partnership between the Nashville (Tenn.) Public Library and Metro Nashville Public Schools that fosters resource sharing and ultimately improves student access to learning materials. Hope Hall, librarian at Hillsboro High School in Nashville, articulates how they have embedded access to the right resource with a mode of use that ensures student engagement. "I show Rosen Digital's Teen Health and Wellness resource at every freshman library orientation," she says. "I stress the confidentiality of using Teen Health and Wellness and its accurate information. I tell them to share with friends and family, and I show them the free hotlines and local resources. I ask students to download the free mobile app. Then I show them how to utilize it, and I see them go right away to using it."

Digital literacy competencies are vital to securing a meaningful future in this e-information age.

Students have many learning styles, and exploring which resources will light their fire—whether interactive ebooks with content creation tools or electronic databases that include student writing—is founded on the school librarian's professionalism in knowing the resources available and the individual interests and aptitudes of any given student. I personally have interacted with many visionary school librarians who have pioneered such innovative programs as gaming and learning, creating school makerspaces, and guiding citizen journalism projects for publication. Often, the enhancement of a teen's innate digital savvy is advanced by programming from the school librarian who has leveraged this prior knowledge. It is precisely this responsiveness that has altered the landscape of the kinds of services and resources made available within the school library and stewarded by the school librarian, as so deftly articulated in a recent report published by ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association titled ***The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action***. The librarian's role embraces "this expanded definition of literacy [and] impacts the types of services, programs, and collections that libraries provide, as well as the nature of the work that library staff perform."

To those who say that in a world of mobile devices the physical library and the librarian are no longer relevant, I must object vehemently. Nothing can be further from the truth.

For those who do not have access to the benefits that the digital revolution can provide, the library is the go-to destination for digital empowerment, training, and discovery. In a world in which so many of our professionals have lamentably shown deep moral failings, the librarians of our society have maintained a level of unrivaled integrity and are the curators whom I trust the most to separate the music from the noise.

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EBOOK DISCOVERY

The library/publisher "sweet spot"

BY LARRA CLARK

Libraries and publishers are in the business of connecting readers and authors. Bestsellers make up the majority of traffic in public libraries, but how can libraries, publishers, and others in the ecosystem team up to help readers discover the best fit for their tastes?

This is the brass ring that supports a diversity of thought and reading experiences, creates markets for more authors to survive and thrive in their profession, and elicits the joy of finding a new title for a reader. It is also a clear way for librarians to further demonstrate their professional value in a world of information abundance.

Ebook discovery through libraries was the theme of an American Library Association–sponsored workshop at Digital Book World (DBW) in New York City in January 2014. I joined a talented team of presenters—including Nora Rawlinson from EarlyWord, publishing consultant Maja Thomas, and Wendy Bartlett from Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library (CCPL). We had two goals: increase awareness of how libraries support discovery and brainstorm new opportunities to enable discovery through libraries. It was a broad-ranging conversation about the physical and digital assets libraries can mobilize, and we flagged several issues for further consideration and development. Because the DBW session was geared to a nonlibrary audience, the following summary supplies

arguments that librarians can use to demonstrate their value in the 21st-century reading ecosystem. It will also serve as a jumping-off point for exploring how libraries can enhance their resources and foster new partnerships.

PHYSICAL ASSETS

Many libraries begin developing young patrons' reading habits early with lap-sit and storytime programming. Summer reading programs and promotions like Teen Read Week encourage reading for pleasure, while adult literacy efforts ensure that millions of people will become confident readers. Creating a love of reading is vital, particularly as almost one in five people recently reported not reading a single book in the past year, according to the Pew Research Center. Literacy is one factor, but gaming, social media, and streaming video increasingly compete for people's time and interest. On average, library users read 20 books in a year, compared with 13 books for nonusers.

Libraries are often characterized as physical places that offer information access, but in a deeper sense they encourage information discovery. Our 16,400+ public library buildings, for instance, are "discovery centers" that remain indispensable as many brick-and-mortar bookstores close. The Codex Group, for example, has found that while book purchases are frequently made online, most of these buyers discover the titles elsewhere. Maja Thomas emphasized this message during the DBW panel, pointing out how library displays and programming promote books—including publishers' backlists—and help build the fan base for genres and authors even more successfully than online retailers.

A physical space in the digital age serves as a hub where people can connect with physical collections, librarians, and their neighbors. Public libraries host more than 3.75 million programs in a year, attracting nearly 87 million people. Library programming supports cultural and civic engagement and exposes people to print materials and digital media on such themes as Women's History Month and the anniversary of the March on Washington. Library spaces also give patrons opportunities to use technology and build digital literacy skills. Technological innovations are continually emerging, and libraries play a role in extending their reach beyond early adopters.

A physical space in the digital age serves as a hub where people can connect with physical collections, librarians, and their neighbors.

Digital displays promoting new e-titles, QR codes linking to book reviews, or public events connecting readers with one another and authors (in person or by videoconference)—all of these physical and virtual resources make libraries a third space of discovery beyond home and the workplace.

DIGITAL/VIRTUAL ASSETS

Library "virtual branches" are an increasingly vital complement for people to connect with information and resources whenever they find it most convenient—including when the physical building is closed. New York Public Library, for instance, now draws 22 million web visits in a year, the second highest of any city agency. This continues to grow as libraries expand their reach with social media and seek greater integration across platforms to improve usability. Library websites are the most common transaction point for circulating digital materials. In 2013, six libraries exceeded 1 million digital checkouts through OverDrive. CCPL has seen its digital circulation grow from 35,000 to 806,000 in three years' time.

Wendy Bartlett and Nora Rawlinson shared some examples of libraries that are actively expanding their digital services.

- Libraries are partnering with distributors to improve ebook browsing, checkout, and reading on a range of devices all within a library catalog entry, rather than force a patron to visit a vendor site. CCPL patrons can now read book samples right out of the catalog, which could account for a 25% increase in circulation in January 2014 over the previous year. Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library also reports an increase in circulation as a result of its catalog integration work with 3M.

New "discovery layers" break down silos and feature the kind of displays that grab users' attention. Rawlinson contrasted the Chicago Public Library website before and

after implementing the BiblioCommons discovery system to show how the library is better equipped to feature new or award-winning titles and staff picks.

The user experience is also the focus of ReadersFirst (readersfirst.org), which in January 2014 released its *Guide to Library E-Book Vendors,* rating how well each vendor makes the ebook experience seamless for readers and responds to library needs through software enhancements.

Noted as still missing from the library mix are the ability to integrate and offer easy access to book trailers and other online extras like reading guides or coloring-book pages for young readers.

■ Another example of a digital analogue is a portal that serves as an online "reading room" for kids and teens. This online space leads them directly to youth titles, bypassing adult titles and their covers. These materials are still included in the main digital library for anyone to browse for ebooks across the collection.

■ Library content must be easily accessible via mobile websites and apps. Geared for smartphones and tablets, mobile-ready access points have helped improve the process of downloading digital content. Library app collections become a fast channel for promoting titles and other library resources and services.

Two library services recently recognized as cutting edge translate the physical browsing experience into the virtual realm: the Orange County (Fla.) Library System's (OCLS) Shake It! mobile app and Scottsdale (Ariz.) Public Library's Gimme! mobile website and search engine. With each shake of their device, OCLS readers get recommendations from across the catalog, check availability, and place a hold on or download chosen materials. Gimme! asks readers to select from a menu that includes "gimme a clue" or "gimme liberty or gimme death" to retrieve staff-selected titles that range from *The Face on the Milk Carton* and self-published ebooks to *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly.

■ Social media technology is a growing part of the mix, with Pinterest and Facebook playing major roles in promotion and community engagement. CCPL, for instance, hosts a weekly "Night Owls" session with a librarian "talking books" with readers. Harris County (Tex.) Public Library encourages discovery through its "Book of the Day" feature on its Pinterest account, as well as compiling and sharing staff picks.

Library readers' advisory both uses and goes beyond digital algorithms to ensure that the right title finds the right reader at the right time.

LIBRARIAN EXPERTISE

Library staff members are at the intersection of the physical and the virtual. Recent research from the Pew Research Center found that people see librarian assistance as a top library resource. In addition, the DBW audience clearly valued the expertise and reach of thousands of librarians who work in public, school, and academic libraries.

Librarian readers' advisory both uses and goes beyond digital algorithms to ensure that the right title finds the right reader at the right time. Cuyahoga County, for instance, offers two customized, online readers' advisory options: 3 for 3 and Read Intuit. In 3 for 3, readers share the last three books they read and liked, and librarians suggest three more. Read Intuit digs more deeply into reader profiles with questionnaires tailored to adult, young adult, and kids' titles. Customized lists of titles are then emailed to readers and placed in the "my lists" section of their online library accounts.

Both Bartlett and Rawlinson talked about using digital advanced reading copies (ARCs) from services like Edelweiss or NetGalley as a discovery tool for librarians. Combined with advance reviews from publications like *Booklist,* ARCs allow librarians to test-drive, order, and promote new titles before they are published. These services also help drive traffic and conversations on Rawlinson's EarlyWord website (earlyword.com); the recently launched LibraryReads website (libraryreads.org) corrals readers' advisory library picks.

Book awards that range from Caldecott to Printz to Carnegie recognize and expose high-quality writing to readers of all ages. ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Teen Book Finder app (ala.org/yalsa/products/teenbookfinder) increases the visibility of these award-winning titles.

ON THE HORIZON

Fluidity

The publishing and lending ecosystems continue to blur lines and roles. More authors are self-publishing. Libraries are building their own digital content distribution platforms and even taking on some local publishing roles. Amazon lends ebooks to its premium subscribers, and we can imagine other players will introduce similar options to their product mix. While Simon & Schuster is the only publisher currently requiring that a purchase option be included with library lending, "buy-it-now" options for patrons, as well as other commercial partnerships, could provide some compensation or credit for libraries that connect authors and readers. Partnership opportunities—with indie bookstores and digital start-ups—likely will abound for the nimble library. At the same time, serial subscriptions and mobile reading apps will again challenge how we acquire, expose, manage, and build our collections.

Data and privacy

Customization and location-aware recommendations are increasing popular services that demand personal data. How will libraries both protect and leverage patron data that we manage or that may be in the hands of third-party distributors? Some libraries are beginning to allow patrons to opt into personalized offers and recommendations by turning "on" their circulation history to library staff.

Other data-related questions that arose in the DBW session included analyzing turnover rates more closely, gaining a better understanding of how long a patron will wait for a title and whether a patron will return to the library collection after an extended wait, and finding out how readers engage with books—something that circulation stats alone can't tell us. What data can help us better serve our readers or make us more valuable to commercial vendors, and what is the trade-off? These questions swirl around Big Data usage in general.

Crowdsourcing

One theme from the DBW session could be seen as a complement—or a challenge—to librarian expertise. Bartlett and Thomas talked about the value of patron-driven acquisition. Readers can bring titles to the librarian's attention that might otherwise have been missed—the classic benefit of crowdsourcing. "This is an example of the way the world has dramatically changed: Instead of top-down decisions, user desire can bubble up and influence purchases," Thomas noted.

Crowdsourcing can also be a driver for discovery. Users often want to share their passion for a book by developing their own book trailers for the library website or inserting reviews or user tags into library catalogs. Suggestions from DBW included encouraging patrons to develop and share their lists of favorite books, asking them to describe two emotions they felt on reading a specific title and share this somehow with other readers, or examining the reading lists of other community members for ideas on acquisition and programming.

Promoting discovery appears to be a rich vein for librarians to mine as we hone our expertise and publicize our value in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

The DBW session ended on an optimistic note for opening a new front for discussion among librarians, publishers, and others around ebook discovery. Rawlinson and Thomas noted that publishers and librarians live in separate worlds, often driven by conflicting forces. Could further conversations about improving discovery build productive new bridges? Promoting discovery appears to be a rich vein for librarians to mine as we hone our expertise and publicize our value in the 21st century.

We'd love to hear from you: How is *your* library promoting discovery of digital content? Email the ALA Digital Content and Libraries Working Group at dcwg_input@ala.org. ▮

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Beating the Odds

BUILDING A PUBLISHING "MAKER" CULTURE

By Peter Brantley

Opportunities abound for libraries to connect with communities

For ebooks, it seems, if all is not well, then it is better than it might have been. For the past few years, ebooks have taken an increasingly larger share of the book market in the United States. The rate of growth has recently slowed, but the overall proportion of digital sales continues to rise. Libraries have fairly effectively, though not without a struggle, preserved their lending rights for ebooks through persistence, public relations, and hard negotiating.

I think all is not as well as it might seem, and there are new opportunities and choices ahead. We are on the cusp of witnessing the full impact of the internet on the book business, and it will sweep away much of what we understand today about publishing.

The pull of tides

The internet compels two countervailing trends. The most obvious in recent years has been a tremendous centralization of consumer traffic into platforms that seek to monopolize as much user activity as possible. Apple—with iTunes, iOS, and its App Store—wants your experience of online media and social sharing to be wholly theirs. Google—through Android, the Play store, and myriad web and mobile social tools—similarly wants to have control over your online personae. Amazon, while not as ubiquitous in traditional productivity tools, is interested in being your online store of choice for a vast array of goods and services.

For a publisher of books, music, or video, selling through anyone but these major actors is merely snacking at the dinner table. The large internet platforms promise discoverability, integration of experience, and the tantalizing hope of a digital archive service for the content we purchase

Consider the ramifications of a marketplace that has consolidated from Big Five publishers to only a Big Two-and-a-Half. Because that very well is likely to happen.

or license. Although it is certainly possible to buy an ebook from a niche vendor or directly from a publisher, integrating it into a library or reading application is not for the fainthearted; it remains a task for the passionate or the technically savvy.

We are beginning to see ebook subscription models arise, such as Oyster and Scribd. However, these are emerging in the presence of strong, established ebook platforms, and I would not expect them to succeed beyond narrow niches; the pull toward general media platforms, for most users, is likely to be irresistible. The economics of creating book subscription models that encompass general trade, education, professional, and affinity markets like romance or science fiction is difficult; these are well-differentiated audiences. It is no wonder that the most successful subscription services, such as Safari Books Online for technical books, have catered to small and very dedicated communities.

There's one other ramification resulting from this trend toward media consolidation, and it is both less obvious and more insidious. As consumers, we have become increasingly attracted to purchasing goods online. It's simple to do. Prices are usually below those in local markets; shopping time for middle-class consumers is squeezed in the vice of a difficult job market; shipping is fast and getting faster; and platforms like Amazon's have introduced a range of "Look inside" features to reduce the disadvantage of not being able to handle a product before its purchase.

There are losers in this transition, and bookstores are among them. The loss of the Borders bookstores in 2011 after a prolonged bankruptcy had an effect on publishers far greater than having to mark down the loss of unsold inventory. Consumers buy things they see, particularly if they encounter them repeatedly. Publishers and authors lost thousands of "impressions"—the visual impact of a reader seeing a book—across hundreds of stores, day in and day out. As readers turn toward Amazon to buy books, and as the ebook share of the market grows, the harder it will be for Barnes & Noble to keep its own chain of stores alive. Should that chain fall, in two years or five, something beyond another markdown of inventory is likely to happen.

Impressions matter to publishers. If, today, publishers are able to produce 800 bestsellers every year, then in an absence of big retail bookstore chains, they are only going to be able to generate enough attention for 200 titles to break through. (These numbers are for illustration only.) In a vast and crowded online marketplace, readers will not see the same number of book impressions as they do today. Regardless of the literary merit of those big titles, losing a significant portion of them will have a devastating effect on publishers' bottom lines. More consolidation will ensue, people will lose their jobs, and general trade publishing will look very different than it does now.

As libraries struggle to arrange attractive licensing deals for ebooks, consider the ramifications of a marketplace that has consolidated from Big Five publishers to only a

Big Two-and-a-Half. Because that's likely to happen. Think about it the next time you buy a book on Amazon.

The rise of the masses

But there's another trend wrought by the internet, and in many ways it is potentially democratizing. Whether that is a chimerical offering depends in part on the choices we make as readers, and whether libraries can pivot to assume a new role as publishing transforms itself. This trend is not about publishers, and it is not really about books: It's about authors and writing.

The big thing that happens with the internet is that, over time, the tools that enable us to communicate with one another become simpler. In the beginnings of the web, being able to craft HTML for a website was a highly technical skill. The rise of blogs enabled almost anyone to write through online platforms like LiveJournal, WordPress, and Blogger. Although the modal form for these platforms was the short essay, they were the harbinger of a vast explosion of alternative tools for expression that now encompasses Twitter, Medium, Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube.

At the same time as a burst of new essay- and story-writing platforms is emerging, authors have a vast new range of opportunities for self-publishing fiction, novellas, and novels. Companies like the Canadian-based Wattpad have seen a rapid explosion in submitted stories; 10 million readers come to the mobile-friendly site every month, and more than 500 writers have submitted works that have been read more than 1 million times. This is a community of avid readers, and it is largely invisible to the traditional Big Five publishers; yet this is a community that the internet has made possible.

Alongside these new venues, independent writers are self-publishing digital books and occasionally breaking through in grand style. Hugh Howey serialized an apocalyptic story called "Wool," and then packaged it as a novel when sales started to take off. He ultimately sold print rights to a traditional publisher, retaining the digital rights, recognizing that he could earn higher royalties and market his own works by exploiting the recognition he had already received. *Wool* has sold millions of copies, both in digital and print, worldwide.

Fan fiction writers and self-published authors have established their own online communities, such as KBoard's Writers' Café, to share tips and successful practices, ask questions, and seek advice. Much of the added value of traditional publishers in the form of editorial assistance, proofreading, marketing, cover design, packaging, and formatting is either being assumed by the author or outsourced to a growing number of independent professionals who are providing services to this sector. Because authors earn more for every book independently sold than they would with a traditional publisher, there's an incentive to roll the dice and make it on your own. But it's not just you; there's a whole community around you to help.

Another interesting outcome for these writers is that, with success, more opportunities open up. Authors who may have published profitable, full-length novels with traditional publishers are finding that they can use the independent ecosystem to publish a novella that wraps up a loose thread from a romance or science-fiction series, explore what happened to an intriguing but otherwise minor character, or revisit an established fantasy world via a short prelude to the events covered in major works.

This is publishing with a small "p." But there's a thornbush in the garden, and it remands us to the trend that we started off with: the rise of media platforms. No matter how well-known you might be as an independent writer, you are almost certain to sell your books in places that consumers can find them, readily purchase them, and read them easily. Overwhelmingly, that's likely to be Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) program. It's no accident that KBoard, the host of Writers' Café, is dedicated to "all things Kindle"—that's where books are sold, even if the conversations with fans are taking place elsewhere.

Maker publishing

The control of the ebook market by major platforms like Amazon, Apple, and Google is a problem if you care about diverse points of access to literature. It's a problem for libraries because they are not able to license much self-published literature from OverDrive or 3M, which deal primarily with established publishers and take only a subset of titles from most indie ebook distributors (though now all 200,000 Smashwords titles are available through OverDrive). Independent literature is published most often in Amazon's KDP by thousands of individual authors. Ebook distributors are encountering a numbers problem, even beyond their inability to entice Amazon to willingly give up reader traffic when it can directly handle both selling and lending transactions. Amazon, strictly speaking, does not need publishers; they can publish directly, and in fact, they are. Libraries are not part of that picture today.

There is a new and exciting opportunity for libraries to create community publishing initiatives by building relationships with local authors.

But in a new way, I think they can be. We are living in an increasingly flat, global world where access to content is common, and authors want to address the largest possible audience. Working outward from their community, libraries can help connect authors to readers, and assist the publishing process in ways that have not before been widely available. They can start by assembling packages of tools and services for writers, including local editors, proofreaders, and graphic artists, making publishing easier and more straightforward. ALA's Digital Content and Libraries Working Group has a forthcoming white paper, "Public Libraries as Publishers," by Kristen Batch, which canvasses these early efforts.

Even more fruitfully, there is a new and exciting opportunity for libraries to create community publishing initiatives, with a small "p," by building relations with local authors and sponsoring their attempts to reach a wider world. A library on the Mexican border can foster and raise awareness of the vibrant border literature that bridges complex allegiances of ethnicity, class, and gender in a way that no established publisher could. In eastern Oregon, a library can explore themes of the drought-stricken West, generational pressures on ranching and farming, and Native American communities. Any library can hold a "booksprint"—a group collaboration that produces a finished book in three to five days, guided by a facilitator—to generate a publication on a local issue or a local perspective on a global one. As a community agency, the public library is uniquely positioned to inform, connect, and collaborate with other community organizations.

With the emergence of new publishing tools, public libraries are able to be publishers for themselves. In essence, we can build a Maker culture for local publishing. Although it does not attenuate the market power of Amazon, it provides necessary curation and establishes a forum for individuals who would be otherwise challenged to find place and presence. Libraries can serve as a locally branded publishing imprint, establishing credibility and stature for their authors. This does not reshape the commercial publishing world, but it does something more vital: It ensures a voice for the commonweal. By connecting local authors with the world, public libraries unite the world with their communities.

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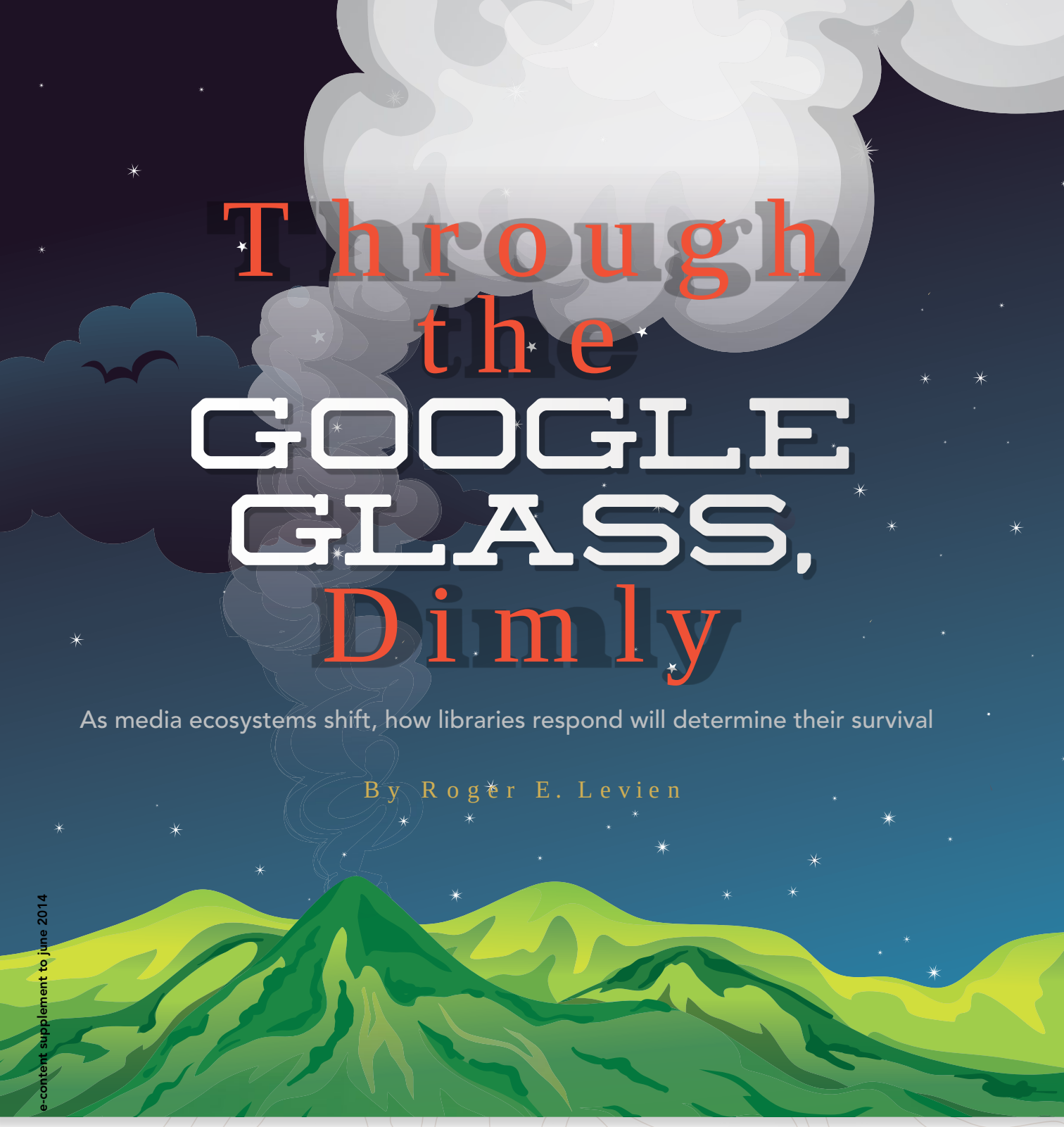


Through the GOOGLE GLASS, Dimly

As media ecosystems shift, how libraries respond will determine their survival

By Roger E. Levien

Young librarians beginning their careers this year will retire in 2054 from public libraries vastly different from the ones they enter. A continual storm of disruptive changes will affect the role and form of the public library. In response, public libraries will have to profoundly alter what they do and how they do it.

Indeed, the most important quality of the public libraries that will prosper in the coming decades will be adaptability—the capacity to move ahead in the face of external disruptions.

What kind of public library, if any, will the beginning librarian of 2014 retire from in 2054? What distinctive benefits will it deliver that will earn it a continuing place in its community? This article examines the external changes to which the public library must adapt during the next four decades. Changes in the five domains that affect the public library—information technology, media, the media ecosystem, society, and the economy—will be far-reaching and disruptive. My emphasis here will be on the first three. (My forthcoming book, *Surviving the Cyber-Storm: How Libraries Can Thrive in the Cyber Era,* contains a more complete discussion of the changes in all five domains and what libraries can do to adapt to them.)

Let us now put on our advanced Google Glass—the one that offers a dim and somewhat fuzzy view of the future—to observe, if only in rough outline, the forces that are shaking each of those domains and how they, in turn, will exert forces on the library.

The Cyber Era

Let's begin with technology, specifically information technology, whose development has recently brought us into an entirely new era of civilization—the Cyber Era, which succeeds the more than five-century-long reign of the Print Era. This new era is characterized by the ubiquitous digital accessibility of virtually all of mankind's knowledge, culture, art, and entertainment—the sum of which we shall, for brevity, refer to as "information." The Cyber Era has lifted the constraints of price and place on access to information, vastly democratized its publication, and significantly reduced the intermediary role of editors and publishers.

The transition to the Cyber Era began with the open availability of the world's information on the World Wide Web in the 1990s. It was given global scope by wireless phone and computer networks and was completed when the iPhone (2007) and iPad (2010) liberated access to information from fixed locations—the home, office, or library. In the Cyber Era we carry access to the global wealth of information on our persons. Portals to much of the content of the world's libraries are in our pockets, purses, or packs, traveling with us wherever we go.

To sharpen our vision, let's consider the technology most directly relevant to libraries: the "cybermedia system." It comprises three fundamental subsystems: (1) a structured store of information, accessible through (2) a global communication system, by (3) personal devices. Although a competent cybermedia system currently exists, advances in information technologies during the next 40 years will greatly improve each element. Mobile smart devices will be lighter and have higher-quality displays and more natural interfaces. Virtually all of the world's public information will be accessible. Global communication systems will have greater capacity and speed, be more economical, and will reach everywhere.

> The most important quality of the public libraries that prosper in the coming decades will be adaptability.

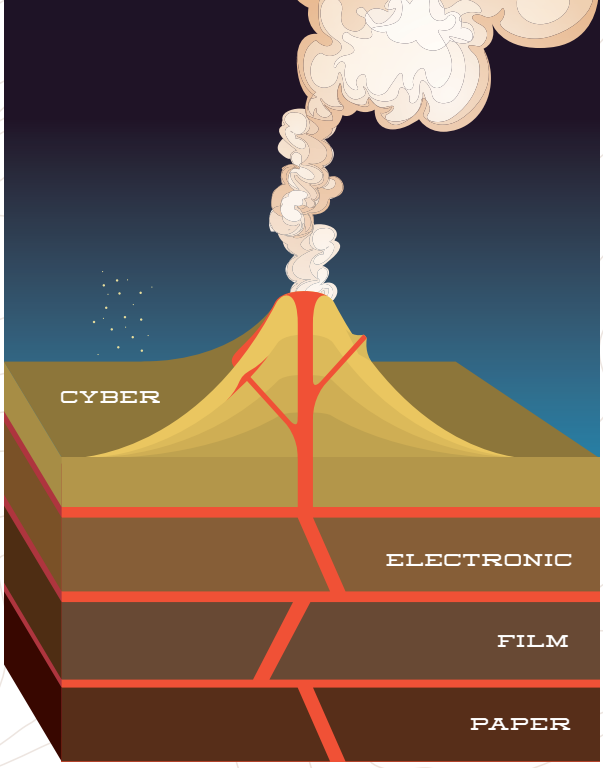
From paper media to cybermedia

Paper was revolutionary when it replaced bone, bamboo, and silk in China in the 2nd century as the substrate for writing, and even more revolutionary when it enabled the invention of movable-type printing in Germany in 1450. In contrast to the bulky scrolls and codices of earlier times, the paper substrate enabled the creation of truly portable and affordable paper media, giving birth to new genres: the literary book, the monograph, the textbook, the newspaper, and the magazine. These became vessels for the collection, transmission, and storage of new bodies of knowledge and culture.

Consequently, printed media has been the core asset of public libraries since their founding—the collection and circulation of books, magazines, and newspapers their principal reason for being.

But the media substrates of the future will be smart display devices, whether in the form of miniature watch faces or eyeglass displays, as smartphones or tablets, or as vast wall-size and even stadium-size screens. Smart display devices are as capable as paper of showing finely detailed text and images in full color. In addition, they can display moving subjects with accompanying sound, even in 3D or virtual reality; connect to other media in multidimensional hypertext structures; and enable the viewer to interact with the displayed object. What's most significant, smart displays have removed the last barriers to publication. In conjunction with web-based sites and services, anyone can use an application on a smart display device to write, perform, capture, or create something from anywhere and publish it to everyone in the world, no editors or publishers required. Twitter, YouTube, WordPress, and Facebook are among the services that empower them.

Consequently, smart display devices have vastly expanded possible media types, creating a new world of cybermedia. Even at this early stage of their evolution, a Cambrian-like explosion of cybermedia and genres has begun.



In recent years, the plates underlying media "continents" began to shift, knocking them into one another. A Cyber continent began to engulf the others and bring a new ecosystem to life.

The Cambrian explosion of cybermedia

Alternatives to paper as a substrate for media are not new. The first non-paper-based media—movies, radio, audio recordings, television, and video recordings—debuted in the 20th century. But the iPhone's arrival in 2007, followed by the iPad in 2010, was something different. For the first time, *portable* media devices had good connectivity to the internet and phone networks; high-quality displays; a touch interface, including a virtual keyboard; access to web-based media stores; and a supercomputer to run complex apps. They were the first mobile cybermedia devices. They, and their competitive technology cousins in the Android and Microsoft families, sparked an explosion of new mobile cybermedia forms.

Many cybermedia devices were already available on desk- or lap-bound devices. The genres were numerous, among them the online store catalog, the crowdsourced encyclopedia, and the dynamic newspaper or magazine. But desktops were still confined to a room, and laptops were part-time companions, weighing down briefcases and backpacks when meeting or class demanded. Mobile cybermedia devices have broken the bonds of place and time; they are light and capable enough to be with us full-time, serving most of our needs wherever we might go.

Cybermedia, such as websites, blogs, tweets, online games, streaming music, streaming video, ebooks, audiobooks, social networks, GPS programs, search engines, and dynamic books, are all now resident on mobile smart devices, accessible to anyone around the globe with a smartphone or tablet. Smart media devices, smaller and lighter than books, can emulate books but also televisions, music players, game machines, and other media devices. Their multimedia capabilities and supercomputer competence offer creators a completely flexible canvas for inventing cybermedia, which the million-and-a-half apps available for iOS and Android devices vividly demonstrate. This Cambrian explosion of cybermedia and genres raises significant questions for the public library:

What, if any, examples of these new media forms and their genres should the library collect? While many libraries have map collections, some historical, some practical, is it sensible or even feasible to collect Google or Bing maps, GPS devices or their map data, satellite images, or street views? Similarly, newspapers are now creating continually changing web and mobile cybermedia versions that incorporate video and interactive graphics and hyperlinks. Which of those should be collected? (See the sidebar on p. 27.) What should libraries do with the numerous blogs that greatly enrich understanding of such subjects as politics, economics, photography, astronomy, and, of course, libraries themselves?

Indeed, given the many other routes to access media now available, should or can access to collections remain central to the library's role? More and more media of all types will reside in the cloud where various agencies (some commercial, some public interest) will make them available for downloading or streaming for free, for purchase, by subscription, or for rental. The library will retain the advantage of offering free access to some commercial media, but will various low-cost subscription- and advertising-supported alternatives substantially reduce that advantage, especially in the eyes of the taxpaying supporters of the library?

Nor will money be the scarcest resource for most potential library patrons. Rather, it will be attention. There have always been competitors for the time of potential readers, among them radio, film, and television. But smart digital devices deliver those and add social media, tweets, games, news sources, blogs, and many other media forms to the list. How will the library continue to earn its patrons' attention against this always-at-hand, all-in-one competition?

Yet these challenges are not the most significant ones facing the public library. Those come from the ongoing reconstitution of the media ecosystems on which it depends.

The shifting tectonic plates of media

A media ecosystem comprises all the individuals and organizations that participate in the creation and distribution of a media species. In the Print Era, media species and their ecosystems could be thought of as grouped on separate and distinct "continents" according to their substrates.

BRAVE NEWS WORLD

BY ROBERT J. RUA

Like others in the newspaper industry, Ohio's largest circulating newspaper, Cleveland's *Plain Dealer,* faces significant challenges resulting from a decline in print advertising revenue. As the industry transitions to new, more digitally focused business models, daily newspapers around the country work to maintain their subscriber base as they find new ways to deliver the news. While libraries have long served as purveyors of free and open access to news and journalism in a variety of formats, the role that libraries must play in supporting digital literacy becomes increasingly relevant when news is more squarely situated in the online environment. Libraries have an opportunity to add significant value to communities in this brave new digital world.

Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library (CCPL) identified an opportunity to support a community in transition when, in April 2013, the *Plain Dealer* simultaneously announced the reduction of its home delivery service, from seven to four days a week, and the launch of a new, daily e-edition.

When the *Plain Dealer* adopted the e-edition model, CCPL identified two clear community needs:

1. Many residents' access to the daily news would be limited with the reduction in home delivery;
2. Navigating the e-edition would be especially challenging to those with limited computer skills.

Through an innovative partnership with the Northeast Ohio Media Group (NEOMG), the newly formed company responsible for the *Plain Dealer*'s sales and marketing, CCPL is addressing those needs by creating new opportunities for lifelong learning and civic engagement. The library has opened access to the *Plain Dealer* by making its e-edition available free of charge as a splash page on more than 700 public access computers in library branches. In addition, the library is collaborating with NEOMG to host free digital literacy workshops at every CCPL branch over the next year. As a result, CCPL branches have become go-to destinations for residents seeking assistance with accessing and navigating the e-edition.

Looking ahead, CCPL is developing news literacy programs to teach customers how to be informed consumers of news media, engage in virtual community forums, and contribute their own content to digital news platforms as "citizen journalists." With a $50,000 grant from NEOMG, the library will install flat-screen digital media players and interactive "touch tables" in its new Parma and Warrensville Heights branches—technology that will be used to stream local news content and engage customers in making the most of digital platforms as forums for public discussion.

Additional opportunities to connect community members with the *Plain Dealer*—including live streams of editorial meetings and panel sessions with reporters on topics of local interest—provide new ways of keeping residents informed. The library's collaboration with NEOMG not only improves access to information and supports digital literacy in northeast Ohio, but it affords customers unprecedented opportunity to look inside the news stories of the day.

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The book, newspaper, and magazine ecosystems occupied the Paper continent; television and radio ecosystems settled on the Electronic continent; and the Film continent held the motion picture and still photography ecosystems. These ecosystems differed greatly, depending upon the differences among the processes used to create, market, and sell each media species. Then, in recent years, the plates underlying the continents began to shift, knocking the continents into one another, sending shock waves through their ecosystems. Soon the movement's cause, a new continent, erupted with volcanic force, flowing over the existing continents and disrupting their ecosystems. The Cyber continent, while slowly engulfing the others, was bringing a new cybermedia ecosystem to life.

Just as cybermedia integrate all of the features of print, electronic, and film media into one system that resides on smart display devices, so the cybermedia ecosystem is bringing all the previously distinct media ecosystems

together. Over the coming decades, previous distinctions among media ecosystems arising from different processes for creation, production, manufacturing, and distribution will disappear. In the Cyber Era, there is little distinction among these processes with cybermedia, whether they are reminiscent of books, videos, music, or film. The creation of cybermedia by individuals and teams will use similar digital hardware and software tools; and sales will occur through multiple media venues like the iTunes Store and Amazon, rather than single-medium venues like Netflix and Barnes & Noble.

For libraries, a critical question is the future of books and their ecosystem, of which libraries are an integral part. Certainly, book authors will exploit the new possibilities opening to them when more and more of their readers use smart display devices. No longer limited simply to text and still images, some are already choosing to incorporate moving images, audio output and input, interactivity and linkage, or integrated computation when it makes their textbook, poetry, mystery, romance, self-help book, or monograph more effective or compelling. To do so, they will have the help of new book authorship and production software, such as Inkling Habitat or Lucidpress and their evolved descendants and competitors. The future will certainly see extended books and other media mix-ups in the mainstream.

The critical question for readers, and for libraries, is whether there will be reliable institutions to sift the wheat from the chaff.

Traditional books will require only good editing and illustrations, but extended books will require larger, multiskilled teams like those common in the film world. Their creators will draw from an online pool of writers, editors, book designers, illustrators, animators, audio specialists, marketers, and other experts to bring their concepts to life. Books will be distributed primarily online using one of a variety of marketing or sales sites offering differing levels of service: at one extreme, simple listing and e-commerce; at the other, near publisher-like combinations of editing, design, illustration, marketing, and fulfillment. A variety of payment mechanisms will be employed: sale, lease, rental, subscription, or advertiser support of downloaded or streamed books or their chapters. In general, the creation of simple and extended books will be relatively simple and many will enter the market. (See Peter Brantley's article on p. 20 for more on future directions of ebooks and authors.)

The critical question for readers, and for libraries, is whether there will be reliable institutions to sift the wheat from the chaff and lead readers to the quality media they need. Clearly, this is a familiar realm for libraries and one that holds the promise of adding value for patrons overwhelmed by the choices available to them. But because of the volume and complexity of media available, it is a challenging one for individual libraries as well. Perhaps the library community will find a means to prepare or collect media assessments for use and local customization by public libraries. But the topic has many layers, and sadly, on this the view through the Google Glass is dim.

What can be seen clearly, however, are the challenges that libraries will face as serial disruptions shake the domains on which they rest. ▮

ROGER E. LEVIEN *is president of Strategy and Innovation Consulting and author of Confronting the Future. This article is a preview of his forthcoming book on the future of public libraries.*

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