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E-CONTENT SUPPLEMENT
TO JUNE 2015

THE MAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

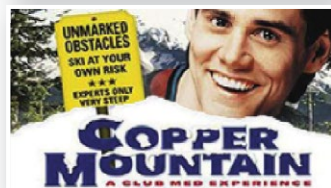
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Taking Action, Making Progress,
Moving Ahead
BY ALAN S. INOUE



Taking action, making progress, moving ahead

by Alan S. Inouye

Now that all Big Five publishers are licensing their ebooks to libraries, ALA is able to broaden its advocacy to include licensing terms as well as more strategic and long-term issues. In her article, Carolyn Anthony, director of Skokie (Ill.) Public Library, outlines the continuing work of ALA's Digital Content Working Group.

Challenges and opportunities abound. For example, Tim McCall, a former vice president at Penguin Group USA, writes about the education market as the next big wave for content distribution disruption, while Cooperative Press publisher Shannon Okey urges librarians to consider the win-win possibilities in working with the many independent book publishers.

The library community needs more proactive advocacy for information policy.

What about designing and building systems to advance library engagement with digital content? Micah May and James English, both of New York Public Library, describe an important effort to simplify user interfaces and increase

integration of library services and resources for ebooks and other digital content. In her article, Larra Clark, deputy director of ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy, discusses projects that will leverage libraries as a platform to build more knowledgeable communities. More broadly, Maura Marx, acting director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and Trevor Owens, a senior program officer at IMLS, outline the national digital platform of resources to promote the use of digital content among libraries.

Information policy is the theme of the last four articles. Columbia University librarian emeritus James Neal argues that the preservation of born-digital content needs attention if libraries are to fulfill an important component of their mission. Social networks are changing the way privacy in the digital age is conceptualized, concludes Eric Hellman of Unglue.it, and thus a much more powerful and beneficial user experience is possible. ALA President-Elect Sari Feldman and Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library's Hallie Rich find that libraries will need a new kind of professional to truly engage customers in the future.

The library community needs more proactive advocacy for information policy. Vailey Oehlke, director of Multnomah County (Oreg.) Library, and I provide an update on the ongoing Policy Revolution! initiative that focuses on a national public policy agenda, active engagement with decision makers and influencers, and upgrading ALA's capacity for policy advocacy. This theme—taking action, making progress, and moving ahead—is the main takeaway from this supplement. What can you do to move our profession forward? ■

—Alan Inouye, director of ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy and program manager of ALA's digital content initiative

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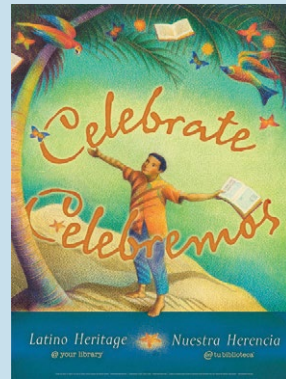
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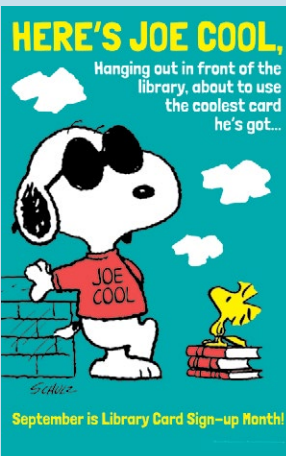
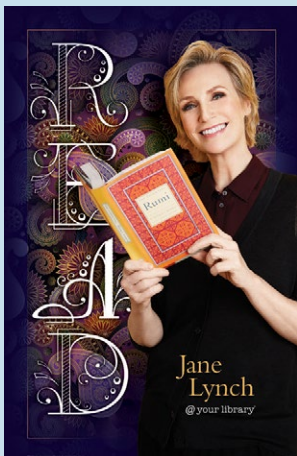
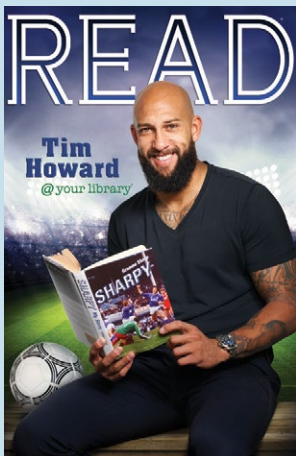
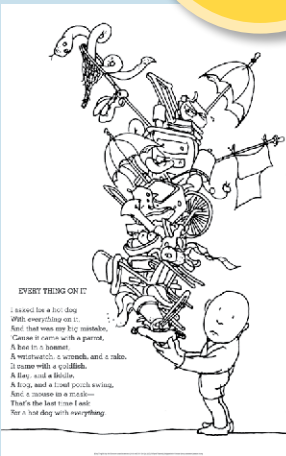
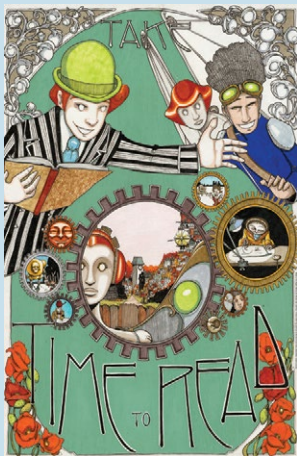
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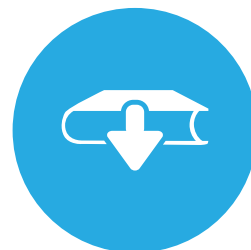


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ALA's DCWG, Ebooks, and Directions

Success brings new challenges

By Carolyn Anthony



At

the American Library Association's (ALA)

2014 Annual Conference and Exhibition, the Digital Content Working Group (DCWG) announced that all the largest publishers now offer their full ebook catalogs to libraries. This was a great accomplishment to note, reflecting the strong leadership of DCWG cochairs Sari Feldman and Robert Wolven over a three-year period. Indeed, Sari and Bob were recognized by *Publishers Weekly* in "Notable Publishing People of 2014," November 28, 2014. Erika Linke and I stepped up to assume cochair responsibilities, becoming familiar with the DCWG and issues yet to be resolved.

Two issues came to the fore in the fall. Adobe Digital Editions experienced a privacy breach that led to unencrypted personal information being transmitted online. DCWG responded, and the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) and ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) assisted with technical and policy advice. Adobe took quick action to address the problem. ALA was able to make some connections with personnel at Adobe as a consequence of the interactions.

Once brought so clearly to light, the privacy issue regarding ebook use continues to be a topic of concern. Questions about privacy policies and protection have been raised. There is a need for increased transparency by vendors in the collection and use of data regarding reader behavior and a need for privacy protections for readers. LITA expressed interest in pursuing privacy issues and looking at the current status of National Information Standards Organization (NISO) standards.

The other matter concerned the "buy it now" (BIN) button that transferred from Simon & Schuster's pilot test of selling ebooks to libraries to become general practice in their extension of sales to all libraries. Some libraries objected to the requirement to offer a sales option as their policies did not allow for such sales, even if a percentage of sales were to come back to the library. Simon & Schuster agreed to make the



BIN button optional and announced the news in a press release coordinated with ALA.

In early December, a delegation of ALA leadership met with some of the key stakeholders in New York City, including Penguin Random House, Macmillan Publishers, Hachette Book Group, New York Public Library (NYPL), and the Metropolitan New York Library Council. The delegation was led by ALA President Courtney Young as well as President-Elect Sari Feldman, ALA Past President Barbara Stripling, Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels, Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) Director Alan

S. Inouye, and DCWG cochairs Erika Linke and me.

Overall, the meetings were positive experiences. The publishers and other groups expressed explicit interest in collaborating with ALA and libraries. In all instances, these groups emphasized the value of libraries and librarians in the discovery and marketing of titles and authors, urging library staff to become more engaged in the publishing ecosphere. The meetings served to maintain relationships between ALA and the publishers, while giving DCWG some direction regarding work to be done. The ALA delegation also met with the Library Simplified team at NYPL and hopes to have a continuing relationship with this project as it completes beta testing and launches in 10 library systems.

The subgroups of the DCWG are Business Models, Preservation, and Nonbook Media.

The Business Models subgroup has been active in identifying issues, with several figuring prominently. There is concern for the user experience. While individual aggregators have made improvements to user experience, a certain amount of friction is deemed desirable by publishers. Improvements to discovery and an integrated search of content from multiple sources are two aspects of the user experience most often cited for improvement.

Another concern is for perpetual access to all titles. Librarians have expressed the desire to be able to move content from one aggregator to another if a change of vendors is made. Others find the variations in publishers' policies onerous, including the need to track some titles for replacement after a given

The publishers and other groups expressed explicit interest in collaborating with ALA and libraries. In all instances, these groups emphasized the value of libraries and librarians in the discovery and marketing of titles and authors, urging library staff to become more engaged in the publishing ecosphere.



number of circulations. Pricing of ebooks continues to be a concern, as many are offered to libraries at rates multiple times that of the price for consumers. It is clear that no single pricing model will meet all libraries' needs, and a call for options has been heard. The options might include such terms as a perpetual access copy of a title at one price, with additional copies at a reduced price for meeting temporary need—for a given publisher. Some prefer “pay as you go” pricing as offering more control to libraries than upfront charges for a given number of circulations that may not be fully utilized, leaving taxpayer money on the table. Other options—such as discounts for a quantity of copies of a given title, negotiated price for a “one book/one community” title, and special pricing for short-term needs, such as for a summer reading program—have been raised. Also, although there has been improvement in the terms of access for consortia, there are still concerns about inconsistencies in policy and practice among the publishers.

To expand the offerings of digital content to the public, some libraries have turned to mounting servers to host titles from midsized, small, and independent publishers as well as self-published works by local authors. There are considerable costs for developing a custom digital content hosting and access system, particularly when it needs to function across multiple different integrated library systems. Several state consortia are being closely watched for their experience. The State Library of Kansas started contacting publishers directly in 2010 when it wanted to move titles from one aggregator to

another. It succeeded in transferring 69% of the titles and went on to adopt the use of the enki platform for midlist titles from about 200 publishers and several thousand self-published titles from Smashwords.

Califa is a consortium of about 220 public libraries in California that also uses the enki system. It has negotiated directly with publishers, holding firm to a policy of not paying above retail, and has even been able to get discounts up to 40% in some instances. The enki platform uses a modified version of open source software (VuFind+) as its discovery layer and Adobe Content Server software to store metadata and handle digital rights management (DRM) functions. Titles are available in EPUB and PDF format.

The MA eBook Project was launched in November 2013 by the Massachusetts Library System, with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The project offers recent popular titles from a commercial aggregator, a collection of older and local titles via Biblioboard, and about 125,000 academic and professional titles from EBL through a common interface. Not all titles are viewable on mobile e-reading apps. The start-up costs were more than \$300,000, with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) footing \$150,000 of those costs. The plan is to offer the service to all public library outlets in Massachusetts, with the libraries contributing an amount based on population served, with an equalization factor for relative affluence. The Massachusetts model offers concurrent access to some titles while limiting the number of lending days per title per year.

Civic Agenda EU published *A Review of Public Library E-Lending Models* in December 2014. The publication is based on a survey of current e-lending practice in

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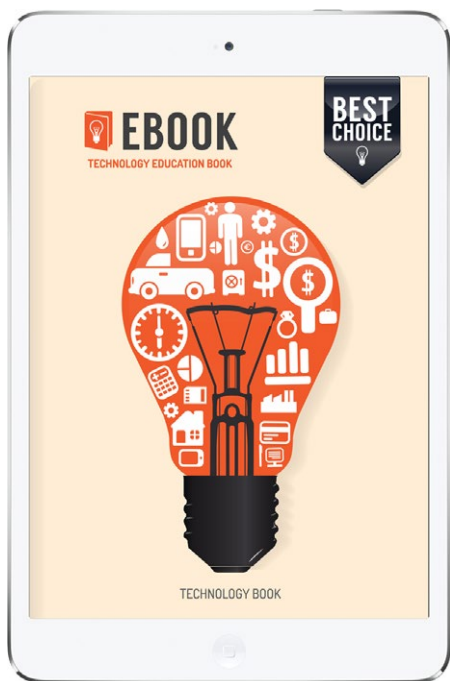
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OF THE SALES
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countries throughout the European Union, Canada, and the US. Of 18 e-lending models, 40% operate solely on single-user licenses while 27% operate hybrid e-lending models. Typically, a single-user license is applied to frontlist titles while multiuser licenses are used for older titles, titles in the public domain, and self-published content. Another 22% of the programs studied operate pay-per-loan models, which allow for simultaneous use. The challenge of such a model is anticipating demand and budgeting accordingly. Programs using such a model have built-in safeguards of limits on the number of simultaneous loans, or temporary suspension of access. An analysis by University of Amsterdam Library Science Professor Frank Huysmans speaks of “rising user expectations of on-demand access to digital content.” There are more national e-lending programs in Europe, most of which receive some national financing.

We have seen further progress, though clearly the library ebook market is still far from mature.

One of the most successful programs is in Sweden, where libraries account for 85% of the sales of ebooks (see Civic Agenda EU’s *Review*, p. 59). That system uses a pay-per-loan model with variable prices depending on the age of the title and the highest price paid for a title in the first four months.

Theoretically, there could be benefits to publishers if libraries paid a fee to carry backlist titles that have exhausted their print sale run. The Civic Agenda EU’s *Review* cites figures from the *Global E-Book Report 2014* and OCLC’s *The Big Shift* (2013) indicating that in the US, public library expenditures account for about 5% of the domestic publishing trade and a bit more than 1% of the commercial ebook market (see Civic Agenda EU’s *Review*, p. 70). With such a small portion of the market, a continuing challenge for US libraries is to build on libraries’ demonstrated value in discovery for newer authors and midlist titles as well as promoting a culture of reading that promotes the reading of books and other longforms.

As new cochairs, Erika and I focused first on continuing ALA’s ebook work with the largest publishers. As noted above, we have seen further progress, though clearly the library ebook market is still far

from mature. Continued attention, collaboration with publishers, and pressure from the library community will be needed for some time. However, as the 2014–2015 year progressed, we were able to provide increasing attention to some other important issues, namely digital preservation and nonbook media. Though the challenges remain formidable, so too are

the opportunities. We look forward to the coming months and greatly appreciate the strong support and interest from ALA leadership and members and from the library community at large. ■



CAROLYN ANTHONY
is cochair of ALA’s Digital Content Working Group, director of the Skokie (Ill.) Public Library, and immediate past president of the Public Library Association.



Digital Library 2.0: Continued Expansion of the UNIVERSE

More disruption is on the horizon

By Tim McCall

Calm has settled over the digital library lending landscape.

What a difference from a few years ago, when the prevailing view was that of a broken system needing some serious attention. Publishers put forward new, innovative business models; platform providers responded by enhancing their services; and librarians waited patiently (or sometimes not) for access to titles while their patrons did the same.

It all worked out more or less the way these things should. The commercial market adjusted to digital disruption and did so because all parties had a stake in it and, therefore, a vested interest in finding solutions. It got a little noisy, but big change often starts that way.

And now, we find ourselves in a new quiet, with questions about what might come next. One thing is certain: There is no status quo in digital content distribution. Change is sure to come and for quite some time. But having settled the primary issue of full access to the catalogs of trade publishers, what comes next should be a calmer, mutual process of steady innovation (see “ALA’s DCWG, Ebooks, and Directions” by Carolyn Anthony on page 4).

One of the most interesting conditions of the current market is the diversity of terms under which content is distributed. It’s

procured with download limits, various time limits, in perpetuity, and as library databases with multiuser access rights, all with a wide range of attendant pricing. I’ve heard from librarians that it can be bewildering navigating the various rights across publishers in order to effectively manage their collections. But it’s doubtful that there will be any sort of contraction or favor given to any single set of terms. Diversity is not only here to stay, but it will likely increase.

It turns out that neither the library market nor publishers’ catalogs are homogeneous entities. Public libraries spearheaded the access issue, and so the first models to emerge were designed for them. But public libraries are only one type in a disparate set of institutions with different missions.

Publishing houses, too, are just as disparate, with catalogs containing varying degrees of owned content, licensed content, and public domain content, each requiring a different set of custodial responsibilities. And, of course, digital media is slippery and oh-so-flexible. It can be an ebook or a subscription or a stream, a full work of nonfiction or a chunk. It can be read in the library, read on the web, or downloaded from hundreds or thousands of miles away. All this diversity begs for a diverse set of terms in order to fully exploit the distribution



Strategy

potential of content for publishers and fully satisfy the missions of libraries. And, though maximized penetration of content may not always be the end goal (after all, free access rarely means all you can eat anywhere, anytime), sometimes it's going to matter.

For example, consider the library that limits its purchases to either limited-access content or perpetual-access content. Scarce funding at a small municipal library or a mission requiring perpetual digital copies at a research library can make this choice necessary. Whatever the reason, the current reality is that some titles aren't purchased for lack of a business model that the library can support. Sometimes that's fine. But as publishers move further away from the big bang and have more data to analyze, they might decide that some titles need broader library penetration than current models can provide. The data may say that it's not an either/or question of limited versus perpetual access. Sometimes, on some titles, publishers may want to offer both.

And what about subscription? Library subscription arrangements have been around for a long time. They probably look quite different from the subscription models some publishers are testing in the consumer trade. But the emergence of subscription as part of the general conversation around monetization and distribution is significant and may bleed into publishers' musings for libraries. It can't work for all content, but an attractively packaged and valued subscription for wholly owned or branded public domain content (much of which isn't currently purchased by libraries at all) could bring incremental revenue and ancillary brand marketing benefits.

And then there are variations on limited access. Right now, most models from large trade publishers limit access to no more than a few years (generally speaking). Is there any commercial sensibility for longer-term access? Say five-year, 10-year, or even 20-year access? Or some multiple of

downloads greater than 26? Perhaps a download number that can equal the number of students in a given classroom?

The question isn't hypothetical. Educational disruption is pressing this issue right now. Digital books and learning platforms are going to become important in school libraries and classrooms. And there are a host of use-cases in education that haven't been contemplated by any of the nascent library models. Things like long-term trade book and textbook adoption may require a guaranteed three-, five-, or seven-year term of access. Conversely, group reading assignments may require short-term access of weeks or months. And what about the generally accepted one-copy, one-user model? It probably won't make sense in all use-cases in the classroom, so we might as well add to the mix concurrent user access, whiteboard projection, and digital social interactivity. And consider that schools, like libraries, aren't homogeneous. There will be plenty of individuality in the needs of classrooms from school to school, city to city, state to state. And all of that disparity will give rise to a supply chain service made up of players with various capabilities, providing services that are far from homogeneous.

Education is going to drive the next wave of content and distribution innovation for institutional consumption, requiring additional flexibility from suppliers. And since maximized penetration in this market is going to be important for many publishers, there's sure to be a lot of testing and piloting of new opportunities. As the path to market grows more complex, the bewildering array of options will need to be navigated, and there will be no rest for the weary.

But as the market matures, tools will be created to manage the complexities. It won't happen overnight, and there will be headaches. But it will be worth it, because a flexible, versatile, reliable supply chain creates the greatest enterprise potential. And that potential is key for content providers and libraries to maximize all of the opportunity that their unique relationship promises. ■



TIM MCCALL has focused extensively on digital issues in his 20-year career in the publishing industry, most recently serving as vice president of online sales and marketing for Penguin Group USA.

Small publishers are mighty when it comes to meeting specific niche content needs. The long tail is real, and even the most rarified material will eventually find an audience if it's available somewhere.

Specialized, smaller publishers can and should work with libraries to create value-added possibilities for both partners.

When collection budgets are squeezed and shelf space is at a premium, digital collection assets can shine ... assuming they're available and affordable. Librarian Jessamyn West wrote at librarian.net in a 2012 article "Let's Be Honest about the Ebook Situation" (bit.ly/169oeyP) that several large publishers, including Macmillan, Simon & Schuster, and Hachette Book Group, refused to sell or license ebooks to libraries. Two years later, all three had made their full ebook catalogs available. However, even access to every big publisher's catalog won't guarantee material for every possible library audience; frontlist title acquisition is driven by anticipated sales numbers and focuses on mass-market appeal rather than meeting the needs of smaller interest-based communities.

When I joined the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) board, I thought my company, Cooperative Press (which primarily publishes knitting books, with a backlist of about 40 titles), would be the most specialized publisher represented. I was wrong. Some of my fellow board members have fewer than 10 books in print, whose firms target audiences that will zero in on any title published in their genre, be it sport-specific weight training (Rob Price of Price World Publishing) or caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's (Brenda Avadian of The Caregiver's Voice blog). Continued small publisher success demonstrates there is a market for these



Building Out the Book Niches

How small publishers and libraries can connect

By Shannon Okey

specialized titles; how best to bring them to library patrons is another question altogether.

Currently, the easiest search method is through an existing ebook aggregator company such as OverDrive. Collection Development Analyst Rachel Kray notes that OverDrive actively encourages independent publishers to make their titles available through the service. "We partner with more than 5,000 independent publishers, creating a comprehensive scope of niche and specialized materials. These independent publishers are vitally important to libraries using OverDrive."

The ability to find small publisher content is vital (if you can't find it, you can't buy it or lend it), and licensing services have created their own library-specific means of discoverability. Kray points out the added benefit of curation services by OverDrive's staff librarians, designed to make purchasing easier by creating lists of suggested titles. "Smaller, independent publishers are featured in virtually every list created," Kray affirms. "Lists can range from broader topics like new and popular fiction to more specialized lists, such as books about birdwatching in South Carolina. Librarians can request specific topics as well."

Libraries are also contracting directly with smaller publishers to add to their collection. The Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library (AADL) system started reaching out in 2014, and immediately scored wins for its patrons via its direct licensing program. By not limiting its accessions to books, AADL opened up an entirely new audience for digital library lending.

Anna Hrachovec, author of the Mochi-mochi craft book series, remarked: "I thought it was a brilliant idea when the Ann Arbor District Library proposed that they license my knitting patterns as digital downloads. It's really a win-win-win: The library gets to offer something unique to

their cardholders, I get a licensing fee, and the knitters in Ann Arbor get free patterns. Plus, I see it as a way to reach a new audience with my work and maybe even inspire some nonknitters to take up the craft.”

Erin Helmrich of AADL noted one year ago that when Hrachovec’s original post announcing the partnership (bit.ly/lax2tuJ) was picked up on Facebook by LibraryLinkNJ, a multitype library cooperative, it immediately spread far and wide. It appears that social media can be an important means of finding licensable content as well.

AADL’s direct licensing also successfully addresses another problem inherent in the current ebook ecosystem: availability. Yes, larger publishers may have made their books available via major



reach out for it is. Frankly, small publishers face similar discoverability problems. It is advantageous to place your books where books can be found; even large bookstore chains shy away from ordering small publisher books, and returnability status is an issue for margin-focused retailers. Library licensing solves a host of these related problems.

In addition, one of the biggest challenges for smaller publishers enrolling with larger lending programs (such as OverDrive’s) stems from minimum title count requirements. Novels and primarily text-based books are simple to convert to multiple digital formats, but heavily illustrated how-to titles are not (and discussing ebook standards and formats is an entire conversation unto itself).

Working directly with libraries such as

The proliferation of digital music over the past decade has shown us that making and distributing music is not the problem—finding and keeping an audience willing to reach out for it is. Small publishers face similar discoverability problems, but library licensing solves many of them.

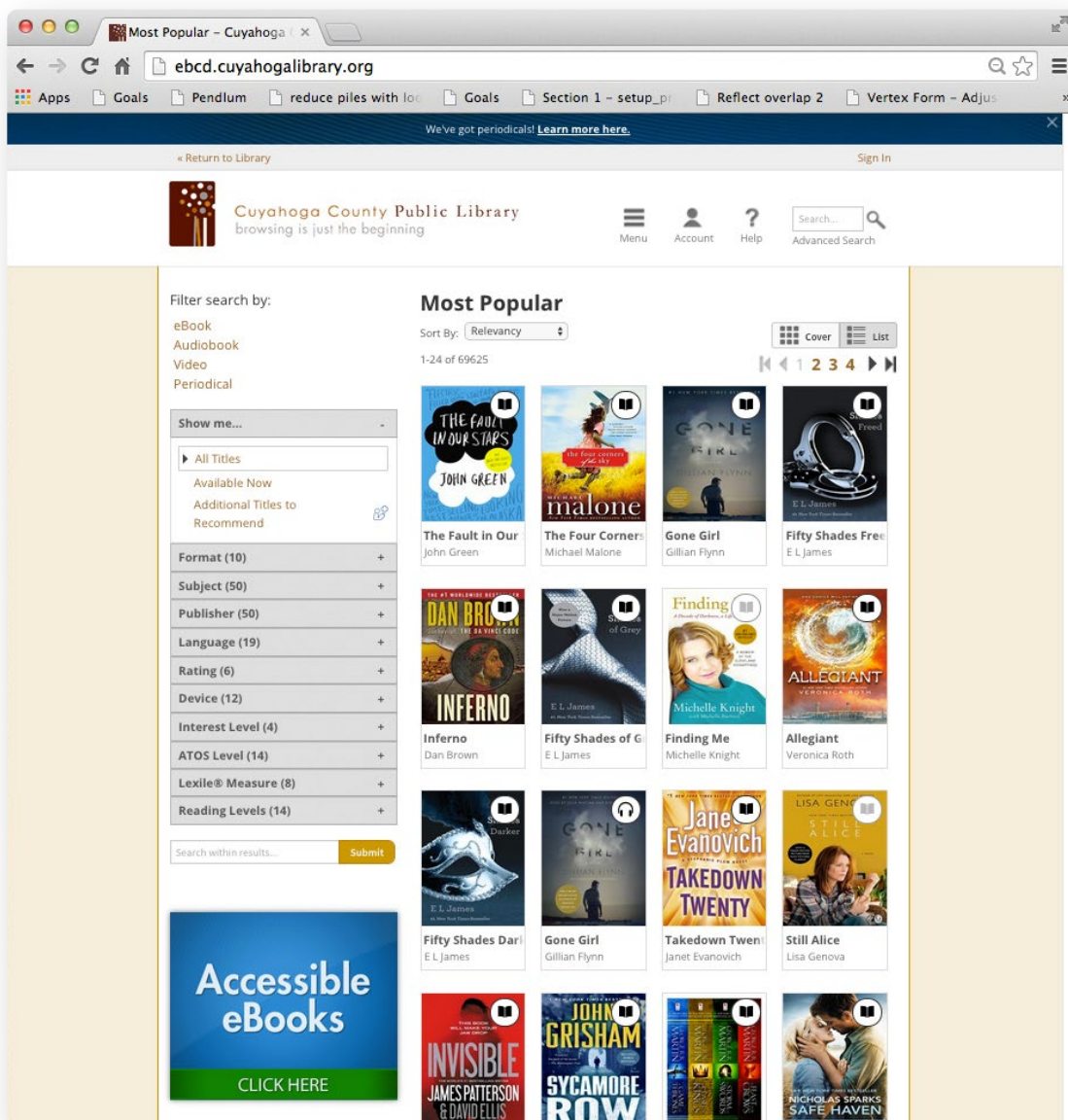
services, but with one-checkout-at-a-time being a common restriction, perhaps only 26 patrons per year can benefit from the purchased title, given two-week checkout periods. Eli Neiburger, deputy director of AADL, warns against dedicating disproportionate resources to ebooks when the adoption curve for them has flattened so quickly: The restrictive licenses offered elsewhere further limit their usefulness to all patrons in a given library system. Ann Arbor’s program does not place download restrictions or expiration dates on titles, yet participating publishers still net a considerable premium for a book the library may never have otherwise purchased in print.

The proliferation of digital music over the past decade has shown us that making and distributing music is not the problem: finding and keeping an audience willing to



Ann Arbor’s can circumvent this issue, since they are accepting popular, easy-to-create file formats such as PDFs, but this brings up the problem of scale: As a smaller publisher it’s easier to deal with one provider than dozens when operating without a dedicated marketing or contracts department. The same problem applies to libraries contracting with publishers. The industry needed a clearinghouse to connect small publishers and librarians. Our own Readtailor program (readtailor.com) was designed to address this issue but currently lags far behind existing vendors in available title counts as the program is less than a year old.

Unfortunately, the publishing industry has yet to live up to the possibility Booktailor waved in front of us more than a decade ago, that of fully customizable, on-demand publishing. In the meantime,



libraries can develop programs such as the Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library's Indie Ohio Anthology (bit.ly/1KGhqpY), powered by SELF-e, which collects self-published works by local library patrons and makes them available for lending. This is part of *Library Journal's* SELF-e public library ebook discovery service, designed to create and sell curated modules nationwide.

Outside of the established lending framework set by OverDrive, Baker & Taylor (Axis 360), 3M (Cloud Library), and Ingram (MyiLibrary), as well as Readtailor,

where else can libraries find books from smaller publishers? IBPA has nearly 3,000 members, ranging from self-published authors to large companies. Visit the IBPA booths at BookExpo America, ALA conferences, or elsewhere and see the print books in person, then ask for publisher contact information and follow up. Participation in these industry events is a good "gatekeeping indicator" to show commitment to quality publishing, so don't be shy about approaching other small presses or collectives who are exhibiting if you'd like to start a licensing program of your own.

After ALA's 2015 Midwinter Meeting and Exhibits, *Publishers Weekly* specifically noted that smaller presses were more prominent than ever at the awards ceremony. The magazine's site booklife.com, targeted toward self-publishing authors, features reviews of submitted titles. And speaking of awards ceremonies, another good option for finding smaller publishers for direct licensing is to review the results of various specialty book awards each year: IBPA has the Benjamin Franklin Digital Awards, Romance Writers of America has RITA, *Writer's Digest* has an annual self-published book award, and even more specific awards are available in just about every possible topic. Curated email lists such as The Fussy Librarian (bit.ly/1DcJd0G) and BookBub (bit.ly/1FqvL8W) can deliver the specific

independently published ebook genres you're looking for right to your inbox.

Don't forget to ask your patrons too. Many librarians have purchased print copies of Cooperative Press books after recommendations from their branch's knit night's members, for example. Rachel Kray notes that libraries can use OverDrive's [Recommend to Library](#) feature for this very purpose: "It allows library patrons to browse the entire OverDrive catalog and recommend titles for the library to purchase, thus allowing smaller publishers to put their titles directly in front of their intended audience."

No matter where you find them, books from smaller publishers can have a big impact on your digital lending program. ■



SHANNON OKEY is the publisher at Cooperative Press (cooperativepress.com), "instigator" at readtailor.com, and author of more than a dozen books. She is currently serving on the Independent Book Publishers Association board, and has presented on niche publishing at both South by Southwest and O'Reilly's TOC publishing conference. You can find her online as @knitgrrl almost everywhere ... when she's not working on her next book.

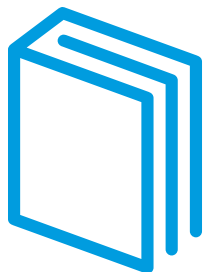


CLICK, CLICK, READ

Building a library-owned delivery channel for ebooks

By Micah May and James English

What If



libraries could offer their books only through locations outsourced to for-profit vendors? And what if patrons had to go to different locations to find the collections purchased from each vendor?

Then, before reading, what if users had to navigate a complex registration process that could take well over an hour and create user accounts with the for-profit providers, who then try to sell them books while they browse for something to borrow?

While some libraries have outsourced library services to private contractors, this approach has been controversial, and most libraries would never accept this kind of commercialized and fractured service model for print books. We shouldn't accept it for e-content either.

Libraries are in a time of historic transformation in which the transition from print to electronic media is reshaping public services. We believe it is incumbent on libraries to build new capacities to support new service models. Among the most important of these is the capability to serve our ebook collections directly to our users.

Ebooks are the fastest-growing format type at the New York Public Library (NYPL) and at many libraries across the country. To

keep up with rising demand, library spending on ebooks grew at a compound annual growth rate of 38% for the past four years, from \$30 million in 2009—according to a Public Libraries Survey conducted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—to more than \$110 million in 2013—according to a 2013 estimate from the Primary Research Group's report on library use of ebooks.

Despite this rapid growth, library ebook use still lags far behind retail ebook sales, suggesting that libraries have the opportunity to circulate far more ebooks than they currently do. As of 2012, ebooks made up only 7% of circulation at US public libraries, according to a February 15, 2014, *Library Journal* report by Janet Hoffert. In the same year ebooks accounted for nearly a quarter of trade publishing revenues, and by 2013 more than half of unit sales, according to a July 2014 Book Industry Study Group report by Ted Hill and Kate Lara titled *Digital Books and the New Subscription Economy*.

Even more important than faster growth in circulation is the chance to vastly improve the user experience for patrons borrowing ebooks. While vendor-supplied offerings have improved somewhat in this regard, borrowing ebooks can still require many steps and may take far too long.

A new delivery channel

In 2012, recognizing that there was an opportunity to do better by building a library-owned delivery channel that would simplify and streamline the borrowing process, NYPL joined nine partners to propose just that to IMLS. We

The goal of Library Simplified is to eliminate complexity in the borrowing process including minimizing the need for users to log in or register with third-party vendors. It will also avoid locking content to the particular device the user downloaded the content on. It will allow all the libraries that have purchased ebooks from more than one vendor, including OverDrive, 3M's Cloud Library, and Baker & Taylor's Access 360 product, to seamlessly serve all those collections through a single application. Users will simply search or browse for a title, borrow the book, and read it, all in three clicks or less. Libraries will no longer

**LIBRARY SPENDING ON EBOOKS
GREW AT A COMPOUND ANNUAL
GROWTH RATE OF 38% FOR THE
PAST FOUR YEARS.**



received a \$500,000 National Leadership Grant, which NYPL matched, and began work on [Library Simplified](#).

Maura Marx, acting director of IMLS, said, “We support work toward a national digital platform for libraries, and we believe that open, shared e-content solutions such as Library Simplified have the potential to be an important part of that platform. I’m thrilled we were able to help support this work in particular and excited to see libraries begin using the Library Simplified app. We are inspired by libraries’ ability to continuously innovate as they seek to improve services for all types of users.”

have to send patrons to different apps to access content purchased from different vendors or require users to establish online accounts, usernames, or passwords with multiple commercial providers. Perhaps most fundamentally, Library Simplified offers libraries the opportunity to bring ebook services in-house, serving patrons through an app the library owns and can customize and control.

“The Library Simplified app lets people focus on reading instead of setting

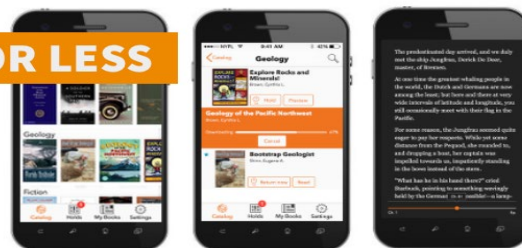
*Libraries are in
a time of historic
transformation in
which the transition
from print to electronic
media is reshaping
public services.*



Library Simplified

IN 3 CLICKS OR LESS

Discover Library eBooks
Borrow Immediately
Read Anywhere, Anytime



up accounts and navigating multiple apps and interfaces. Just like our print collection, it should be easy to borrow and read an ebook, regardless of where it came from,” says Amy Calhoun of Sacramento (Calif.) Public Library, a Library Simplified partner.

An NYPL-based team led by product owner James English (coauthor of this article) and starring crack developers Leonard Richardson and John Nowak was formed in 2013. The team has been

quietly working to build the library’s dream ebook solution, which is simple, easy to use, open, and interoperable and is in the final stages of development.

In the process, the team has engaged the larger digital publishing industry to form collaborative relationships with industry veterans such as Bill McCoy of the International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF) and Radium Foundation, and Hadrien Gardeur of Feedbooks and Open Publication Distribution System (OPDS). As a result of these collaborations, the application will take advantage of all latest advances in EPUB 3, EDUPUB, and the Open Web. EPUB 3 and EDUPUB are industry standards for digital content publication, and Library Simplified will be one of the first ebook reading applications to take advantage of these emerging standards. It will also showcase advanced cross-platform rendering technology from the Radium Foundation. Together these innovative

new technologies will support improved accessibility, portability, and interoperability.

Discoverability

Another important advancement is Library Simplified’s use of OPDS. This new open protocol is based on the same Open Web standards that helped newspapers and journals expose and publish their content online. The Library Simplified team is working to extend the OPDS standard to make sure it accommodates library lending and is compatible with

new commercial e-reading platforms, such as Mantano, Aldiko, and others. The resulting extension of OPDS provides a standard open architecture for the machine-to-machine interface between circulation services, metadata services, and content hosting services. By using OPDS, libraries can expose their content to the web and to third-party interfaces, as well as their own online catalogs and websites using a stable open standard (as opposed to proprietary vendor APIs). This will help make library collections more discoverable online and also reduce the degree to which libraries are locked to any single vendor.

Back in control

In order to simplify the account experience and put libraries back in control of their relationships with users, Library Simplified will be using an Adobe Vendor ID to validate users, so patrons will no longer have to create or remember an Adobe user identification number. This is an important first step, and as Library Simplified developer Richardson explains, “Library Simplified really gives libraries’ relationships with their patrons back to them instead of those relationships being held by a third party.”

Accessibility by people with vision and hearing impairments has also been a priority. The team is working closely with advocacy groups like the Daisy Consortium and leveraging the EPUB 3 format to ensure that Library Simplified offers the best possible experience for the hearing and visually impaired.

In order to ensure that publishers are supportive, Library Simplified will support multiple digital rights management (DRM) regimes. It will launch with Adobe DRM and, over time, add other DRM options—including Sony’s URMS and the open source Radium Content Protection technology—as those options mature and gain acceptance. Since the DRM will be applied on the distributor’s server before a file is passed to the Library Simplified application, neither libraries nor their distributors will need to seek any permission from publishers or modifications to their publishers’ contracts, nor will libraries need to modify their agreements with distributors.

Another priority has been empowering libraries and their staff members to serve readers through recommendations and readers’ advisory, putting the librarians back in library ebook service. We created browse lanes in Library Simplified for staff picks and readers’ advisory lists.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

1

TRY LIBRARY SIMPLIFIED. Deploy the app at your library and let us know how it goes. We are excited about the impact on users and want to hear from you about how we can support broad adoption by libraries.

2

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK. We think Library Simplified will be great, but recognize that no app is perfect, especially on its first release. We want to hear from you about what’s working, what’s not working, and what features or functionality you’d most like to see added.

3

GET THE WORD OUT. Tell your library colleagues about Library Simplified and encourage them to try it or at least learn about what it can do.

4

GET BEHIND OPEN STANDARDS AND DEMAND GREAT APIs FROM VENDORS. Library Simplified can only aggregate content if the vendors who supply content make it available through APIs. Today OverDrive and Axis360 (Baker & Taylor) offer adequate APIs, and 3M has made needed enhancements to its API. ILS vendors are further behind with regard to ebook support and open architectures. In the future we plan to integrate content from Ingram, Feedbooks, BiblioBoards, and others, but that can’t happen until those companies build APIs that support library lending. In short, robust APIs are a top priority and a must-have for Library Simplified to work. It is important that libraries that think they may want to use Library Simplified communicate to providers that APIs are a priority in their buying decisions.

5

STAY TUNED. Check the Library Simplified project website (librarysimplified.org) or contact the team to learn more about the latest development in Library Simplified and other exciting related developments that will help libraries own and improve their e-content service.

When asked about these features Lynn Lobash, NYPL's manager of reader services, explained, "When staff members read something that makes them want to shout and insist everyone read it, they submit that title as a staff pick and it becomes part of the browse lane. Our staff reads widely across audiences (kids, young adults, adults), genres, and formats, and any title that moves them qualifies as a staff pick. This is what makes our staff picks so much broader than what you see on Amazon or at Barnes & Noble." Staff members who submit picks are asked to include a brief annotation describing what about the book makes it exemplary.

The readers' advisory lists are similar except that they are created from questions asked by real readers. "We throw one question a week out to our staff and all their recommendations are compiled into a list. Much as in class when one student asks a question, many in the class benefit from the answer, we believe the same is true for readers' advisory questions. For example, we created read-alike lists for readers who like Haruki Murakami and readers who enjoyed the *Game of Thrones* series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*," explains Lobash.

Readers' advisory has long been a staple of librarianship and we are excited to reintroduce it to our ebook service. As Lobash explains, "Readers look to librarians for recommendations. They see us as expert advisors who can help navigate the thousands and thousands of titles from which to choose. One of the trickiest and most rewarding tasks at the library is matching readers with a book they will enjoy, and many of our staff members really shine at it."

Available to all

Although the Library Simplified app has been designed by NYPL and its grant partners and built by the NYPL team, one of the key goals of the project is to allow library systems to use it, so the application will be open source and available to libraries everywhere to customize and launch for free.

To make it easy for other libraries to deploy, Library Simplified will be packaged as a virtual server, and libraries that want to create their own implementation of it will have multiple options. They can set up their own version on their own servers or in the cloud. Once the application is deployed, libraries will be able to configure it to their ecosystem of vendors and technologies through simple settings. Each library will link its version to its own content service provider accounts (OverDrive, 3M, or Baker & Taylor). The team has tried to make deployment of the application as easy as possible and we believe it should be well within the capabilities of most libraries. Alternatively, if libraries don't want to or can't host their own instance, NYPL can likely do this work for them. We are in the process of developing this service model; if you think your library is interested, reach out to us to discuss what you need and how we can help.

In addition to vast improvements in the user experience, Library Simplified can open doors for libraries to begin exploring alternative content sourcing strategies. Many systems and consortia, including those in Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts, and North Carolina, are building open access and licensed content collections for use by constituents statewide. Library Simplified is designed on the principle of interoperability and meant to support an ecosystem with a mix of different content sources, including both content sources from vendors and self-hosted collections, so Library Simplified will allow libraries to aggregate content from multiple sources (for example, a statewide collection hosted by a library system along with a locally procured collection from a vendor). This will enable libraries to support regional authors and publishers through self-hosting projects while preserving access to existing commercial services without having to make trade-offs that fracture the user experience.

We hope you will join us as we launch Library Simplified and turn the page on a new era of library e-content service. ■



MICAH MAY is director of business development at New York Public Library (NYPL) and is charged with developing and launching innovative new offerings. May has a BA in philosophy and political science from the University of Colorado-Boulder and a JD from Harvard Law School. Before joining NYPL in 2009 as director of strategy, he spent four years working as a management consultant at McKinsey and Company.



JAMES ENGLISH is the Library Simplified product owner at NYPL. He has a BSE in systems engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, and an MBA from the Goizueta Business School at Emory University. Prior to coming to NYPL in 2013, he was COO and CEO for two different software companies building web, mobile, and wireless enterprise technologies and applications for government, defense, and commercial customers.

No better time than spring to tackle some weeding.



Weeding Tips: The Importance of a Collection-Development Plan.

Vnuk, Rebecca (author).

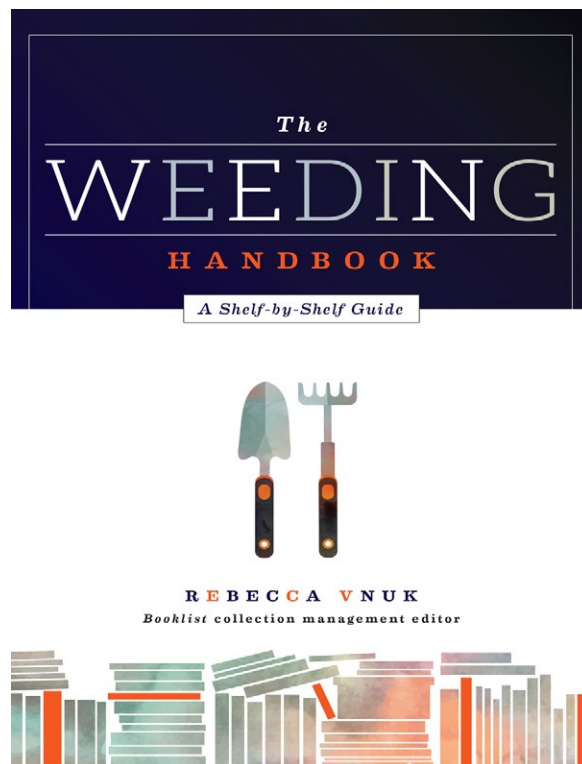
FEATURE. First published [January 31, 2014 \(Booklist Online\)](#).

As I've mentioned in previous "Weeding Tips" columns, a collection-development plan is something that every library needs, especially when it comes to weeding. Many librarians feel a sense of unease or uncertainty when they approach weeding. We all want reassurance that what we're discarding isn't something that will be needed. We want to know we've made the right decisions.

What helps with those decisions is a solid collection-development plan or policy. (For all intents and purposes, the terms are interchangeable, although you may find a policy document is shorter than a full "plan.") Having a plan in place puts everyone on the same page and can save a lot of time and frustration at all stages of the weeding project. Although it can't tell you what individual titles to keep, it can give you firm guidelines of what should—and shouldn't—remain on your shelves.

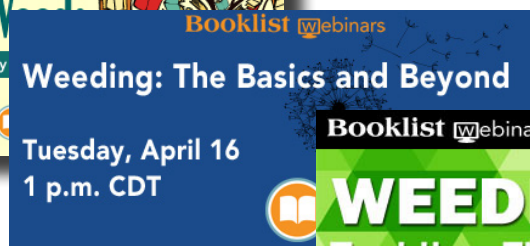
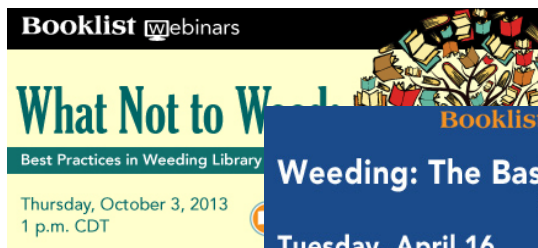
Read the articles.

bit.ly/WeedingTips



Buy the book.

bit.ly/WeedingHandbook



Watch the archives.

bit.ly/WeedingWebinars

Booklist
PUBLICATIONS



Empowering Libraries to Innovate

Knight Foundation challenges libraries to prototype digital innovation

Much of the national public conversation around digital content and libraries has focused on ebooks from large publishers. Over the past few years of advocacy, the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries have made significant progress in improving library access to the ebook catalogs of trade publishers and improving the customer experience of using these collections (see articles by Carolyn Anthony on page 4 and Micah May and James English on page 14).

At the same time, ALA and libraries have been exploring additional options for empowering our users to discover and publish digital content, considering privacy and preservation concerns, and expanding the lens of focus to other forms of digital content. The most recent round of John S. and James L. Knight Foundation challenge grants intersects in several of these areas.

In fall 2014, the Knight Foundation asked: “How might we leverage libraries as a platform to build more knowledgeable communities?” The foundation was “seeking projects that build on the transformational power of libraries and use their ideas, principles, and assets in innovative ways to help people learn about the world around them and engage in the places they live.” With nearly \$3 million available, the challenge closed with 676 applications and 46 finalists and [ultimately funded](#) 22 projects—several of which intersect with improving access to digital content and platforms.

“These projects are experimental and ambitious,” said Chris Barr, media innovation director at the Knight Foundation. He added that if some of them are seeded, people will try new things in their own spaces. “That’s the spirit of the prototype fund—let’s quickly try something,” he said. “It can fail, but let’s make sure we can learn as we do it. We’ll iterate and try something else in the process. The pace has changed with the internet, and it demands we work faster and smarter in trying new things.”

The projects also demand and reflect new levels of collaboration among libraries and library consortia, software and content developers, disciplines, and individual community members.

By Larra Clark

GITenberg

The most directly relevant project to ebook access and libraries may be [GITenberg](#), which intends to help libraries use and maintain Project Gutenberg's (PG) 45,000 public domain ebooks to serve their communities—with [GitHub](#), a code-sharing and hosting platform. Past member of the ALA Digital Content Working Group (DCWG) and founder of Unglue.it [Eric Hellman](#) (see his article on page 34) is a project lead.

"A strong team needs to play good defense and good offense. DCWG has done a masterful job of playing defense—keeping libraries relevant and strong in the face of a publishing industry that wasn't thinking much about the consequences of its approach to ebooks," Hellman said.

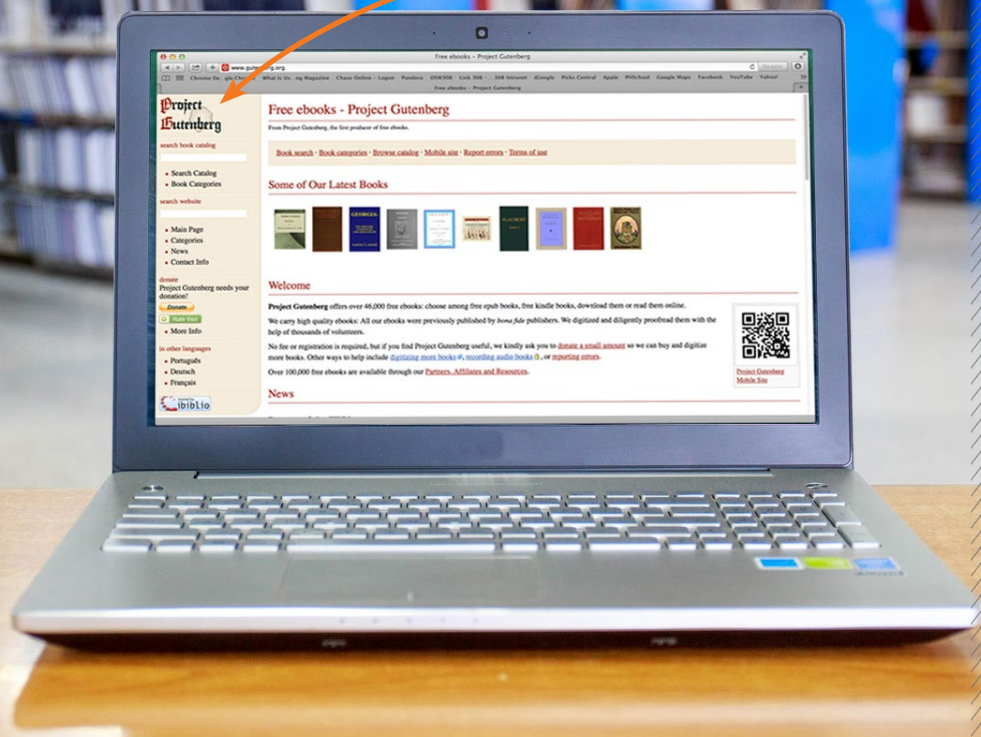


"These projects are experimental and ambitious. That's the spirit of the prototype fund—let's quickly try something. It can fail, but let's make sure we can learn as we do it."

—Chris Barr, media innovation director at the Knight Foundation

"You can think of GITenberg as one player working on the offensive game—bringing the strengths of libraries to new games and new playing fields. The public domain books that are the focus of GITenberg don't have a fixed rulebook hammered down by publishers. They belong to all of us, and we have the opportunity to help them shine in digital form by taking care of them, together."

PG offers 45,000 public domain ebooks, yet few libraries currently use this collection to serve their communities. According to GITenberg's proposal, "Text quality varies greatly, metadata is all over the map, and it's difficult for



45,000
PUBLIC DOMAIN
EBOOKS ARE OFFERED
THROUGH PROJECT
GUTENBERG, YET FEW
LIBRARIES CURRENTLY
USE THIS COLLECTION
TO SERVE THEIR
COMMUNITIES.

users to contribute improvements.” The project seeks to make PG books more easily ingestible and understandable to library catalog systems and workflows by sustainably producing MARC records, integrating attractive book cover images, and working to make a source control system for the books more friendly to librarians and their patrons.

Hellman notes that one key challenge for libraries in creating access to digital content is that “the library world has depended on vendors to make things for them.” Building new information environments is similar to making movies in that it requires a coordinated cast of players (e.g., artists, writers, actors, set designers) to create success, Hellman said. “It can’t just be a software developer or cataloger—that won’t get you very far. We need all kinds of talents coming together. Our biggest challenge will be to figure out how to translate a software engineering workflow (GitHub) into a library-friendly workflow. That’s where we particularly need people who *don’t* know software engineering to help us.”

GITenberg is building on work by groups such as PG, Distributed ProofReaders, and the Open Source Software community, as well as exchanging ideas with New York Public Library’s Library Simplified project, the Internet Archive, and the broader Unglue.it team. Librarians can learn more and get involved through the [GITenberg Google group](#).

Journalism Digital News Archive

On the preservation front, the [Journalism Digital News Archive \(JDNA\)](#) is working to develop a replicable model for preserving and establishing sustainable access of born-digital news content. In line with James Neal’s manifesto in this issue (see page 30), the University of Missouri (UM) Libraries and Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) are beginning to act in saving the “first rough draft of history” by partnering with the Missouri Press Association, Newz Group, Investigative Reporters and Editors, and the Center for Research Libraries.

The project and funding of a shared position between the UM Libraries and the Journalism Institute began with loss—namely 16 years (1986–2002) of digital news and photos from the *Columbia Missourian*. Unlike content digitized by scanning analog media, born-digital has no physical surrogate to serve as a fallback. A recent survey by RJI found that 27% of US newspapers have experienced significant losses of news content. Smaller newspapers, often in rural or minority communities, are more vulnerable due to limited resources or expertise for saving their content. The disappearance of news, birth announcements, obituaries, and feature stories represents a loss of history and cultural heritage.

The pilot project has two parts. In the first three phases, JDNA will undertake research to understand

the markets for news content and determine the nature of the content available from the small newspaper content creators. This information will determine the relationships the project builds and the systems needed to collect, process, market, distribute, and monetize the news content during part two. The second part will include marketing the pilot to a broader consortium of newspapers to increase participation, thus testing the full operation of the model, and developing competitive revenue streams to ensure its sustainability.

“I don’t know if we’re naive or gutsy, but most people just give up [on a project this big],” said Edward McCain, digital curator of journalism at UM. “There are issues with publishers and copyright, legal questions, lack of awareness of the problem and technical tools needed, network security, lack of standards, and more. But I have a feeling that this is the right time for us to be addressing this, with Knight coming in and other government entities beginning to see this as a tsunami. Otherwise, we are blithely throwing away our heritage into a black hole.”

OTHER KNIGHT-FUNDED PROJECTS THAT INTERSECT WITH DIGITAL CONTENT CONCERNS INCLUDE:

1

[Culture in Transit](#), which will take shared digitization technologies and expertise to libraries, archives, and communities throughout the metropolitan New York area to digitize and share the city’s cultural heritage online with the world. Project partners, led by the Metropolitan New York Library Council, will use the metro area’s public transportation network to reach under-resourced organizations and communities often excluded from contributing to the nation’s digital cultural memory because they lack equipment and technical support. Content will be uploaded to the Digital Public Library of America and other large-scale initiatives, such as Internet Archive, and the project hopes to establish clear pricing models, guidelines, and documented tips and tricks that can be replicated nationwide. »

27%
OF US NEWSPAPERS
HAVE EXPERIENCED
SIGNIFICANT LOSSES
OF NEWS CONTENT.



2

[Building Libraries Together](#) is an effort by the Internet Archive to create a new framework and toolset to allow communities to more easily upload and share digital content. Citizen-archivists would help build collections, enhance metadata, and join like-minded communities in deciding what history gets archived and made accessible to everyone, forever, for free. These citizen-archivists include libraries and museums as well as nonprofits, individual collectors, historical societies, and government agencies.

3

[Indie Games Licensing](#) will establish a model digital aggregator that streams indie games (open or subscribed) to libraries and enables communities to engage in game creation. The project from Concordia University's TAG Research Center will conduct research and implementation for a pilot project that seeks to build an open source solution that will host digital files and stream 25 to 50 games to two pilot libraries in North America; devise open contractual solutions to ensure proper licensing and remuneration for game creators; and create a mechanism to catalog, index, and share information about games.

4

[Library For All](#), a cloud-based platform that works in low-bandwidth environments to make a library of culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate content available on any device accessible to those in developing countries. The project released an Android version of its application in Haiti, with 1,000 titles mainly in Creole and French, in September 2014. While not available for US use, the project expansion bodes well for many libraries across the globe.

The Knight News Challenge can be seen as a small “venture capital” fund for seeding innovation at a time when the speed of technology change demands more and faster experimentation. The foundation invites us to consider how libraries might work together and with other technology partners to develop our own solutions to barriers we see impeding digital opportunity in our communities. Beyond a single challenge (or really a series of challenges related to developing more informed and engaged communities), the Knight strategy offers a learning opportunity for other foundations and institutions to consider new strategies and approaches for prototyping and scaling promising projects. Many states, for instance, use a similar model for leveraging Library Services and Technology Act funding to underwrite local library technology innovation, as well as statewide collaboration and scalability. How can we apply this thinking more broadly and develop a pipeline to accelerate diffusion and sustainability for successful pilots?

One place everyone can start is to learn more about and consider participating in one or more of the Knight-funded library innovation projects at [newschallenge.org](#) and through programs planned for the 2015 ALA [Annual Conference](#) in San Francisco. ■



LARRA CLARK is deputy director of ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP). She oversees OITP's telecommunications portfolio and the Program on America's Libraries for the 21st Century, as well as supporting a range of grant-funded collaborations.



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futuring and
innovation
techniques

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connections
with colleagues from
all types of libraries,
doing all kinds of
library jobs, at all
levels

Books,
media, and
**100s of
authors**

Informal
learning,
formal
learning

"News You
Can Use,"
updates, policy
priorities, strategies
for engaging
decision-makers
and influencers

Innovation-spurring
deep dives
(piloting at 2016
Midwinter), pre-
conferences, and
institutes

Award
announcements
and celebrations

New products,
technologies,
and services with
expert vendors
in the
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The National Digital Platform for Libraries and Museums

Collaborating on tools and services across organizations

By Maura Marx and Trevor Owens

Picture the following diverse scenarios: A librarian in Utah develops and shares a plugin for an open source repository system that is reused by libraries in three other states; a curator in New York City improves the documentation for open source exhibition software that is used by staff members at museums and libraries around the country to create more dynamic presentations of historical artifacts; a network of libraries bands together to develop a common system that makes it easier for other libraries to provide Americans access to ebooks; a nonprofit organization develops and runs a series of workshops to equip librarians around the country to install, deploy, configure, and connect open source tools to acquire, preserve, and provide access to digital objects; a regional library association runs a residency program to place recent library school graduates into positions at cultural heritage organizations in order to run significant digital curation activities and share what they learn.

In each of these situations, staffers work to solve local needs for their institutions' communities and constituencies. These professionals are also contributing directly to regional and national efforts. The local work at each of these organiza-



**\$8.8
MILLION**
**PRESIDENT BARACK
OBAMA'S BUDGET
REQUEST FOR IMLS FOR
2016 INCLUDES A
TARGETED INCREASE FOR
THE NATIONAL DIGITAL
PLATFORM**

tions is making use of and contributing to the national digital platform for libraries and museums.

The national digital platform for libraries and museums has both a broad and a specific meaning. Broadly, it can be conceptualized as a way of thinking about all the digital tools, services, infrastructure, and human effort libraries use to meet the needs of their users across the United States. More specifically, it is an area of priority for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grants programs to invest in expanding the digital capability and capacity of libraries across the country.

The platform as a way of thinking

The platform isn't an individual thing. It isn't a piece of software or a website. The national digital platform is a way of thinking about and approaching the digital capability and capacity of libraries across the US. In this sense, it is the combination of software applications, social and technical infrastructure, and staff expertise that provide library content and services to all users in the US. That is, the national digital platform is a way of thinking about how all of the components and the knowledge required to use and contribute to them interact



\$67 MILLION
OF THE GRANTS TO STATES
PROGRAM HAS GONE TOWARD
DIGITIZATION EFFORTS FROM
2002 TO 2011.

with other existing platforms (commercial and open) and meet the needs of the library and museum users across the US.

As libraries increasingly use digital infrastructure to provide access to digital content and resources, there are more and more opportunities for collaboration around the tools and services that they use to meet their users' needs. It is possible for each library in the country to leverage and benefit from the work of other libraries in shared digital services, systems, and infrastructure.

From this perspective, the foundations of a national digital platform for libraries and museums already exist in a range of open source software projects and shared services provided by local, regional, and national organizations and institutions.



However, because we as a nation have conducted an enormous amount of digital library research and development over the past 20 years locally or in small collaborations but not on a national scale, this platform currently exists as a diffuse set of largely disconnected components.

The platform as an approach to funding

To date, IMLS has invested more than \$1 billion in developing and improving digital tools, services, and infrastructure for libraries. From 2005 to 2013, the Advancing Digital Resources priority of the National Leadership Grants for Libraries program has invested \$30 million in the development of digital resources. From 2002 to 2011, the Grants

to States program has supported \$980 million in information infrastructure projects, with \$67 million of that amount going toward digitization efforts. Over the years, several other public and private funders—notably the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and more recently, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation—have also made significant contributions to library digital services and infrastructure.

These investments have made a significant and lasting impact. Yet the impact remains far more diffuse than it could be. At a meeting exploring the concept of the national digital platform in New York City in April 2014, a range of experts representing all types of libraries and foundations encouraged IMLS to prioritize improving and better connecting the most promising digital tools, services, and content that have clear potential to scale up. A theme running through many of the experts' comments and discussion was that there is a clear need to shift away from supporting a range of one-off individual projects and focus more on supporting projects that catalyze and advance the capability and capacity for libraries to meet the needs of their users.

We need to bridge gaps between disparate pieces of the existing digital infrastructure, for increased efficiencies, cost savings, access, and services. To this end, IMLS is focusing on the national digital platform as an area of priority in the National Leadership Grants to Libraries program and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program. We are eager to explore how this way of thinking and approaching infrastructure development can help states make the best use of the funds they receive through the Grants to States program. We're also eager to work with other foundations and funders to maximize the impact of our federal investment.

The idea of the national digital platform is resonating beyond the library community. President Barack Obama's

budget request for IMLS for 2016 includes a targeted increase for this priority. Specifically, an additional \$8.8 million supports the national digital platform priority, which would be funded through the IMLS National Leadership Grant programs for libraries (\$5.3 million) and museums (\$3.5 million). That potential increase in funding demonstrates the timeliness of this vision.

The future of the national digital platform

The national digital platform for libraries and museums is not something that will be built from the ground up; it is a thing that already exists, at least in part. It is something that we can work together to improve. The platform exists in the range of open source software projects and shared services provided by regional and national organizations and institutions that are used by libraries across the country to meet the needs of their users. The challenge to our community is to identify missing or underdeveloped pieces, to improve how all components fit together and with other platforms, and to help ensure that librarians across the country are equipped to make the best use of those components to meet the needs of their communities.

In the near term, this involves work in a range of areas. It means further investment in successful digital infrastructure, filling gaps in that infrastructure, investing to bring practices to scale, work that engages and expands the communities of end users, and developing digital library professionals and leaders. These areas of focus are evolving through ongoing engagement with leaders representing the various sectors of the library community in the US.

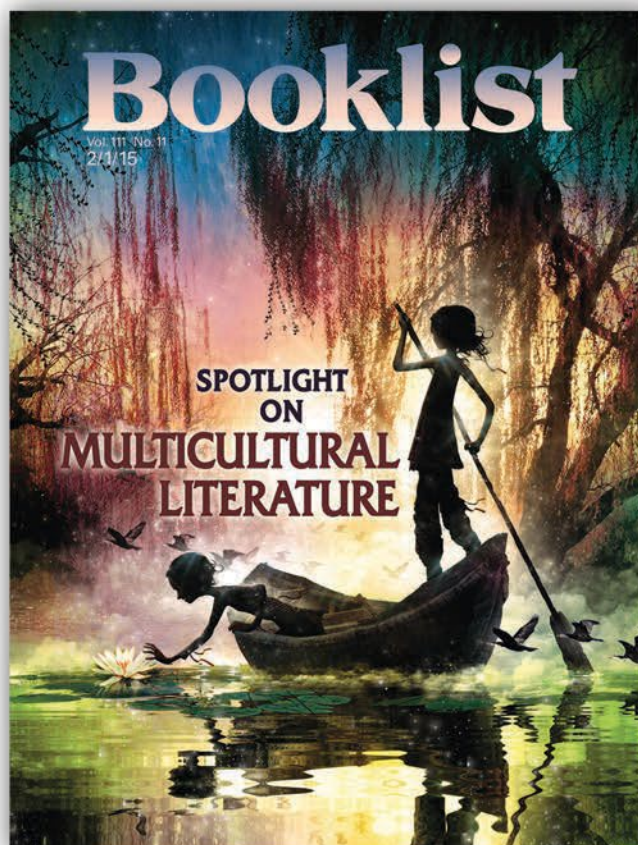
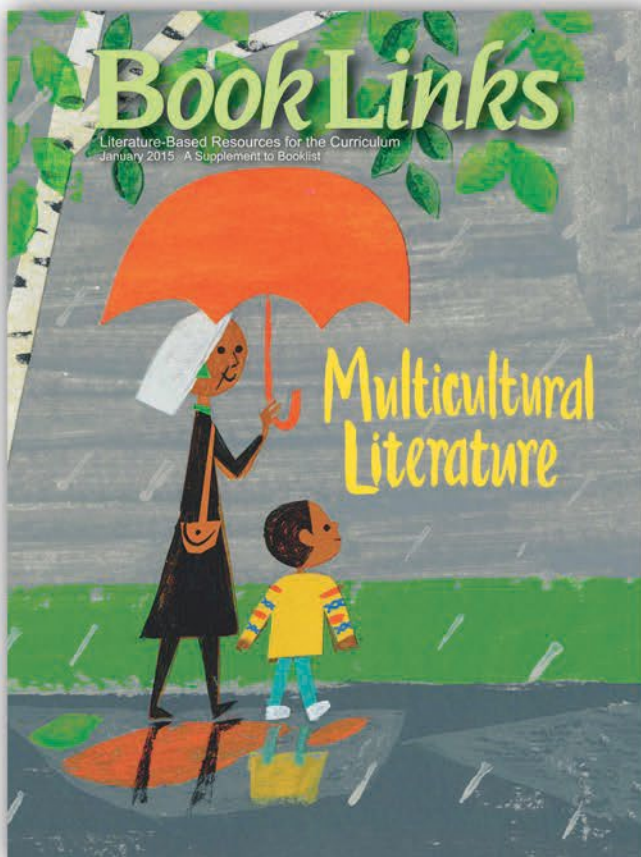
IMLS plans to continue bringing together experts on these issues from across the range of library sectors to inform the particular priority needs for the national digital platform. The IMLS website regularly posts updates—such as information about webcasts, notes, reports, and calls for proposals—that are related to this priority. ■



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Preserving the Born-Digital Record

Many more questions than answers

By James G. Neal



We are in trouble. The world is producing vast amounts of born-digital material. The volume, complexity, and dynamism of this information challenge us to think creatively about its capture, organization, and long-term preservation and usability. What is the role of the library? Is this a source of failure or opportunity for the global library community? Internet pioneer Vint Cerf warns us about the risk of a “digital dark age” if we do not develop the technologies, tools, financial resources, shared responsibilities, and will to address this risk to our cultural, scientific, societal, and community records.

This is an issue of integrity, of the collective adherence to a code and standard of values, of maintaining human records as complete, unimpaired, and undivided as possible. The ability to consult the evidence and sources used by researchers and authors will be lost if those digital records are not available. The ability to research and investigate the history and current state of our world will be compromised if born-digital materials are gone or changed. The ability to access the sources of record will be difficult if they are deposited and dispersed into multiple and disparate sites. This is the challenge of repository chaos.

At the core of born-digital content preservation and archiving are four principles. We must hold the content, the archive as repository, because we cannot preserve what we have not collected. We must enable access, the repository as persistence. We must secure the content, the archive as curation. And we must take care of the content, the repository as steward.

Born-digital content comes in an ever-expanding array of forms and formats. Consider just the following examples:

- published and licensed works such as e-journals, ebooks, e-video, and e-audio, from commercial and trade sources, from academic publishers, from the growing array of independent

- software applications, both proprietary and open source
- video games
- medical data, with the inherent challenges of patient privacy
- live feeds, like RSS and news information from around the world



publishers and distributors, and the revolution in self-publishing and self-distribution

- the output of e-government
- online learning and training materials
- research data from universities and corporations
- social media in all of its wonderful expressions
- electronic archives that come with personal papers
- organizational records, including email, manuscripts, business papers, and financial information
- websites and web documents
- pictorial images
- spatial data and longitudinal observations

- visualizations and simulations
- interoperable metadata, like MARC, BIBFRAME, and schema.org

And so on, with so many new things that will grow in intensity and intricacy.

New technologies are feeding the explosion in born-digital content. Each year Educause and the New Media Consortium publish the Horizon Report, which documents and describes important developments. Some examples from the past few years will illustrate the symbiosis and demonstrate the explosion:

- mobile devices and tablets
- cloud computing with distributed processing and applications
- geo-everything, such as geolocation and geotagging
- the personal web and customized management of online content
- linked data connecting and relating structured information
- semantic-aware applications that link meaning to answers
- smart objects and smart spaces that connect information and the physical world
- open content with wide distribution and repurposing
- massive open online learning experiences
- electronic books and the array of platforms and applications
- Big Data and big science driving new forms of research information management
- games as learning tools with participation and interaction
- visualizations that bring meaning and understanding to data

The challenge of born-digital content comes at the point when libraries are confronting critical trends. We are experiencing rapidly shifting user behaviors and expectations. We are trying to figure out how to move away from redundant, inefficient library operations and aging service paradigms. We recognize the need to achieve scale and network effects through aggregation in an environment of advanced open architecture and the acceleration of collective innovation. We are facing metadata chaos in terms of quality, currency, and accuracy. We face a new economic context and a mandate for systemic change. We are not sure how to

deal with conditions of massive surveillance, security meltdowns, threats to network neutrality, and corporate control of the infrastructures of discovery and content.

How does born-digital content fit into what libraries do? Libraries select, acquire, and synthesize information. Libraries enable users to navigate, disseminate, interpret, understand, use, and apply information. Libraries preserve and archive information. These activities are carried out in support of teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and community health and development. We respond to a societal and global mandate. How will our roles and processes be extended to embrace born-digital content, or will the massive challenges spawn a new vision, purpose, method, and system?

Quality equals content plus functionality. How do we make sure that the born-digital content is preserved but also

remains usable long term? That means that we understand and accommodate the important characteristics of digital information:

- accessibility and availability, with no constraints on time and geography
- the searchability and researchability (i.e., being able to ask new questions)
- the currency and real-time nature of the information
- its dynamism and fluidity and linkability
- the collaborative and interactive elements
- its encyclopedic potential but also its modularity
- its volatility and fragility

Born-digital resources also force us to consider the relationship among form, text, and function, where content is no longer tied to format. We are encouraged to be more sensitive to context, renderability, and versioning over time. We see the inevitability of physical and format obsolescence, the importance of authenticity and provenance, and the role of standards such as globally unique identifiers.

The scope, depth, and cost of the threat mean that individual libraries





cannot advance born-digital content preservation on their own. We need to radicalize cooperation, promoting new combinations and new public-private partnerships through national and global systemic strategies. Whether it is the creation of centers of excellence, or new thinking about mass production, or new infrastructures, or new initiatives and programs, we must start from a position of collaboration so as to maximize quality, productivity, and innovation. An excellent example of such an effort in the US is the work of the Digital Preservation Network (DPN), a backbone of diverse preservation infrastructure replication built on sound principles of audit and rights succession. We will not have the technologies, tools, workflows, or standards unless we work together in new ways.

It will be challenging to create a robust and successful born-digital content preservation capacity without new thinking about copyright. Libraries are captur-

ing and preserving digital materials as fair use. Efforts to produce new exceptions or limitations in Section 108 of the Copyright Act for purposes of digital preservation have not been successful. Our law is out of sync with technology and user needs. Where does the preservation of born-digital content intersect with orphan works, with transformative use, with the public interest? What should be the relationship between licensing and copyright limitations? What about the issue of open content and proprietary rights? How do we manage national copyright provisions in a global networked context?

How many libraries have well-developed plans for born-digital content capture, description, and preservation? How many libraries have put in place the funding to enable and sustain these plans?

How are those agencies and foundations that fund libraries and support learning and scholarship responding to the challenge? Do we truly understand user expectations for digital content and how it will be used? What digital content has persistent value, and how will we make sound conditions on what to collect and preserve? How will persistence and quality be ensured? How will collaborative efforts be structured and good governance and sustainability ensured? What is needed for operational, organizational, and architectural scalability? It is our predetermined professional role, fate, and destiny to serve society's interest and to take on responsibility through the collective library for the preservation of born-digital content. ■



JAMES G. NEAL is university librarian emeritus at Columbia University. He serves on the boards of the American Library Association, OCLC, the Freedom to Read Foundation, and the Metropolitan New York Library Council. This article is partially based on a presentation given by the author at the OCLC Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) Regional Council meeting in Florence, Italy, on February 10, 2015.

Toward the Post-Privacy Library?

Public policy and technical pragmatics of tracking and marketing

By Eric Hellman

Alice, a 17-year-old high school student, goes to her local public library and reads everything she can find about pregnancy.

Noticing this, a librarian calls up some local merchants and tells them that Alice might be pregnant. When Alice visits her local bookstore, the staff has some great suggestions about newborn care for her. The local drugstore sends her coupons for scent-free skin lotion. She reads *What to Expect When You're Expecting* at the library, and a few months later she starts getting mail about diaper services.

Unthinkable? In the physical library, I hope this never happens. It would be too creepy.

In the digital library, this future could be happening now. Libraries and their patrons are awash in data that really isn't sensitive until aggregated, and the data is getting digested by advertising networks and flowing into Big Data archives. The scenario in which advertisers exploit Alice's library usage is not only thinkable, it needs to be defended against. It's a "threat model" that's mostly unfamiliar to libraries.

Recently, I read a book called *Half Life* (unglue.it/work/143177). Uranium theft, firearms technology, and computer hacking are important plot elements, but I'm not worried about people knowing that I loved it. The National Security Agency is not going to identify me as a potential terrorist because I'm reading *Half Life*. On the contrary, I'd love for my reading behavior to broadcast to the entire world because maybe more people would discover what a wonderful writer S. L. Huang is. A lot of a library users' digital usage data is like that. It's not particularly private, and most would gladly trade usage information for convenience or to help improve the services they rely on. It would be a waste of time and energy for a library to worry much about keeping that information secret. Quite the opposite, libraries are helping users share their behavior with things like Facebook "like" buttons and social media widgets.

Which is why Alice should be very worried and why it's important for libraries to understand new threat

models. What breaches of user privacy are most likely to occur and which are most likely to present harm?

A 2012 [article](#) in the *New York Times Magazine* described a real situation involving the retail store Target. Target's Big Data analytics team developed a customer model that identified pregnant women based on shopping behavior. Purchases of scent-free skin lotion, vitamin supplements, and cotton balls turned out to be highly predictive of subsequent purchases of baby diapers. Using the model, Target sent ads for baby-oriented products to customers that the company's algorithm had identified. According to the *New York Times*, "In one case, an irate father whose daughter had received ads for baby clothes and cribs accused the store of encouraging his daughter to get pregnant. When a manager called to apologize, the father was somewhat abashed. 'I had a talk with my daughter,' he said. 'It turns out there's been some activities in my house I haven't been completely aware of. She's due in August. I owe you an apology.'"

Among the companies collecting Big Data about users are the advertising networks, companies that sit in between advertisers and websites. They use their data to decide which ad from a huge inventory is most likely to result in a user response. If I were a teen, I don't think I would want my search for pregnancy books broadcast to advertising networks. Yet that's precisely what happens when I do a search on my local public library's online catalog. I very much doubt that many advertisements are being targeted based on that searching—yet. But the digital advertising industry is extremely competitive, and unless libraries shift their practices, it's only a matter of time before library searches get factored into advanced customer models.

But it doesn't have to happen that way. Libraries have a strong tradition of protecting user privacy. Once all the threat models associated with the digital environment are considered, practices will certainly change.



Building privacy

So let's get started. Here's the process of borrowing and reading an ebook and of identifying privacy weaknesses in the processes that advertisers and their predictive analytics modeling could exploit.

1. Most library catalogs allow non-encrypted searches. This exposes ebook searches from our hypothetical teen, Alice, to internet providers between her and the library's server. The X-UIDH header (go-to-hellman.blogspot.com/2014/11/if-your-website-still-uses-http-x-uidh.html) has been used by providers such as Verizon and AT&T to help advertisers target mobile users. By using HTTPS for their catalogs, libraries can limit this intrusion. This is relatively easy and cheap, and there's no good excuse in 2015 for libraries not to make the switch.

2. Some library catalogs use social widgets such as AddThis or ShareThis that broadcast a user's search activity to advertising networks. Similarly, Facebook like buttons send a user's search activity to Facebook whether or not the user is on Facebook. Libraries need to carefully evaluate the benefits of these widgets against the possibility that advertising networks will use Alice's search history inappropriately (go-to-hellman.blogspot.com/2014/09/analysis-of-privacy-leakage-on-library.html).

3. Statistics and optimization services like Google Analytics and New Relic don't currently share Alice's search history with advertising networks, but libraries should evaluate the privacy assurances from these services to see if they are consistent with their own policies and local privacy laws.

4. When Alice borrows a book from a vendor such as OverDrive or 3M, it monitors Alice's reading behavior, albeit anonymously. At this date, it's very difficult for an advertiser to exploit Alice's use of reading apps from OverDrive or 3M. Although many have criticized the use of Adobe digital rights management (DRM) in these apps, both 3M and OverDrive use the "vendorID" method, which avoids the disclosure of user data to Adobe. At this date, there is no practical way for an advertising network to exploit Alice's use of these services. Here again, libraries should review their vendor contracts to make sure that can't change.

5. If Alice reads her ebook using a third-party application such as Adobe Digital Editions (ADE), the privacy behavior of the third party

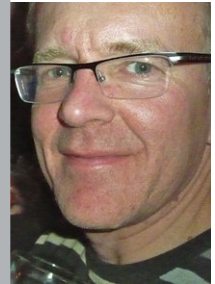
comes into play. Last year, ADE was found to be sending user reading data back to Adobe without encryption (the-digital-reader.com/2014/10/06/adobe-spying-users-collecting-data-ebook-libraries). Even today, it's known to phone home with encrypted reading data. Other applications, such as Bluefire Reader, have a better reputation for privacy, but as they say, "past performance is no guarantee of future returns."

6. If Alice wants to read her borrowed ebook on a Kindle (via OverDrive), it's very likely that Amazon will be able to exploit her reading behavior for marketing purposes. To avoid it, Alice would need to create an anonymous account on Amazon for reading her library books. Most people will just use their own (non-anonymous) accounts for convenience. If Alice shares her Amazon account with others, they'll know what she reads.

This is a classic example of the privacy versus convenience tradeoff that libraries need to consider. A Kindle user trusts that Amazon will not do anything too creepy, and Amazon has every incentive to make that user comfortable with its data use. Libraries need to let users make their own privacy decisions, but at the same time libraries need to make sure that users understand the privacy implications of what they do.

7. The library's own records are also a potential source of a privacy breach. This "small data" threat model is perhaps more familiar to librarians. Alice's parents could come in and demand to know what she's been reading. A schoolmate might hack into the library's lightly defended databases looking for ways to embarrass Alice. A staff member might be a friend of Alice's family. Libraries need clear policies and robust processes to be worthy of Alice's trust.

In the digital environment, it's easy for libraries to be unduly afraid of using the data from Alice's searches and reading to improve her experience and make the library a more powerful source of information. Social networks are changing the way we think about our privacy, and often the expectation is that services will make use of personal information that's been shared. Technologies exist to protect the user's control over that data, but advertising networks have no incentive to employ them. I want my library to track me, not advertising networks! I want great books to read, and no, I'm not in the market for uranium-238. ■



After 10 years doing physics research at Bell Labs, ERIC HELLMAN got interested in electronic publishing, launched an e-journal, started a company that built linking technology for libraries, sold that company to OCLC and worked there a few years, started blogging (at Go To Hellman), and finally decided that the important thing to do would be to make free ebooks work for libraries and everyone else (at Unglue.it).



Transforming the Library Profession

Recruiting librarianship's best and brightest

By Sari Feldman and Hallie Rich

Technological advancements are driving an increasingly interconnected global landscape, which contributes to rapid political, economic, social, and environmental change. Faster communication systems and enhanced access to information bind countries, economies, and businesses in far more complex ways than we have ever conceived. This interdependence on a global scale makes risks such as rising socioeconomic inequality particularly pernicious because of the inherent instability of weak economies and social fragility. The good news for libraries is that investment in drivers of inclusive growth—public services such as schools, libraries, and telecommunications infrastructure—represents a critically important risk mitigation strategy. Education and knowledge are essential to successful communities, organizations, and economies, and they represent the future for the information profession if, of course, library professionals keep pace with the changing dynamics of the various communities they serve.

In order to be effective in this evolving global landscape, library organizations must be nimble, creative, and customer-focused, and—above all—must embrace learning. Gone are the days when libraries cornered the market on information, delivering value almost exclusively as content providers. Library work creates value today in ways that are far more personal and collaborative. Library professionals need to be viewed as trusted advisors, but trust grows only when we build relationships with our customers. For instance, the library as provider of access to technology is insufficient if, like approximately 70 million American adults, the library customer lacks the basic digital literacy skills needed for robust online use. (See John B. Horrigan's June 2014 paper "[Digital Readiness](#).") Economic inequality most certainly plays a role in



At a time when content is not reserved to a particular conduit, library professionals must become format-agnostic information experts, providing equitable access to physical material, internet-connected devices, and online content.



digital literacy, serving both as a driver of the digital divide and a condition exacerbated by a global economy that requires digital participation. The library professional who builds relationships—one who can coach, teach, or direct the customer to resources that support digital readiness—is the one who provides value today. Library professionals support the unique information needs of library customers by facilitating learning experiences.

Now is the time for those of us within the library profession to recast the image of the library professional. It's not about replacing gray buns and glasses with pink hair and tattoos (although both images are tired tropes at this point); it's about demonstrating that library professionals see the critical difference between tracking down an answer to a question for customers and helping customers craft the questions they need to ask. Today's library is less about what we have for people and more about what we do for (and with) people. This distinction is important because communicating the value of the library professional is the only way to ensure our future viability. We must tell the story in a way that resonates with the customer, attracts talent to the profession, and secures funding from key stakeholders.

Engage customers

Today's library professionals are the “genius bar” for everyday users. From school libraries to public libraries, academic library spaces, and more, customers expect library profes-

sionals to support their information needs regardless of the format of that information. At a time when content is not reserved to a particular conduit, library professionals must become format-agnostic information experts, providing equitable access to physical material, internet-connected devices, and online content all while helping customers develop the skills needed to take advantage of the educational, economic, and social opportunities associated with technology.

While the addition of technology into the content provider space is not a dramatic transformation of

the library professional's work, we can see the meaning of “access” evolving as we increasingly help customers—be they students, entrepreneurs, or curious creatives—develop their own content and make it available to others. For example, libraries of all kinds now offer makerspaces with equipment, software, and services to stimulate content creation. As expectations and demand for experiential learning opportunities grow, library professionals are at the forefront of providing training in digital media, including animation, video recording and editing, and app development; helping indie authors self-publish content on library platforms; and supporting researchers using Big Data stores and stimulating innovation by managing Big Data repositories. The movement from consuming content to creating content is opening opportunities for the new library professional. Professionals in the academic library, school library, and public library environment are not simply making other people's great ideas and stories available to their customers; they are delivering learning experiences that inspire great ideas and stories from their customers.

To put it another way, library professionals are not just providing the menu; they are cooking the meal with customers.

Attract new professionals

As the library profession transforms to respond to an increasingly high-tech/high-touch environment, the talents and skills



embodied by all library professionals are necessarily changing. We need to recruit a more diverse and creative workforce by starting to tell a different story about the library profession and creating a pipeline of talent to deliver in the new service models for all library types.

It was difficult even a decade ago to imagine having a world of information always available in your pocket, but now it is almost as difficult to imagine not being connected to people, places, and things 24/7. One implication of this rapid adoption of mobile technology is that it's entirely possible that some individuals will never set foot into a library for the first two decades of their life.

Given this context, we need to develop a plan for bringing the best and brightest to the library workplace to be part of the transformation within our profession. How will we recruit talent when that talent's experience with library organizations may be limited to simply downloading content from their school or public library or, worse, grounded in old stereotypes of libraries as passive vehicles for content consumption? We need to clearly demonstrate how traditional library values can leverage dynamic disruptions in technology to deliver meaningful learning experiences for customers. For instance, library professionals are rallying around our professional value of open access to develop training programs that help customers access robust innovations in health care, education, and government service delivery through the growing "internet of things."

Repositioning the library professional as an educational resource for a more interconnected global community more accurately describes contemporary library work. Appealing to the interests of those who enjoy working with people, solving problems, and designing innovative approaches to tackling challenging questions will be crucial to future talent attraction.

Advance information policy agenda and advocacy

It stands to reason that information professionals deliver significant value in a knowledge-based economy. However, library professionals

have the opportunity to better engage national decision makers and influencers through strategic communication and outreach that illustrates the value of libraries in economic and social terms. Elevating awareness of the library professional's critical role in the digital age—and the expanding opportunities that still remain within library organizations—will be most powerful when we align our outcomes with the agendas of key decision makers at the national level and with funding organizations and prospective collaborators such as foundations, government agencies, and businesses.

The Policy Revolution! initiative of ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy provides critical direction to maximize the efforts of a coordinated advocacy approach. While the priority in communicating the positive and robust contributions that libraries make in the way of economic and social growth is to secure and stabilize library funding, we also see advocacy around issues of national information policy energizing our profession. The profession's core values of equitable access, privacy, and intellectual freedom have been activated in recent legislative and regulatory efforts related to broadband access (E-Rate), net neutrality, the USA Patriot Act, and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act.

Ultimately, we will be most successful as a profession when we advocate collectively and collaboratively, regardless of library type. Articulating the value of the library professional in ways that resonate with national decision makers and influencers will be most successful when we demonstrate how the library professional supports learning in the context of inclusive growth. This kind of credibility can be helpful in policy discussions that deal less with library funding and more with issues that advance the broader public interest.

Today our experienced professionals and new library workers must find their passion around people to build an educated and involved citizenry and ensure digital and economic opportunity for all. Library professionals are the essential element of strong schools, colleges, universities, and public communities. ■



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A Policy Revolution for Digital Content

Engaging decision makers and influencers

By Vailey Oehlke and Alan S. Inouye

For the past several years, the

American Library Association (ALA) has been engaged in outreach to the publishing community to advocate for improved library access to ebooks. Leading the charge for ALA is its Digital Content Working Group (DCWG), with the strong and direct involvement of the ALA Executive Board. This work is especially significant because of its proactive nature: not waiting for publishers and others to act but initiating our own action on behalf of the library community.

The poor and deteriorating state of library ebook lending in 2011 catalyzed this initiative. Waiting for publishers to take different actions would have likely worsened the conditions for libraries. A proactive policy stance must become the library community's mainstream way of thinking and operating. This is true for ebooks and large publishers, but also more generally.

The world is changing. Libraries' place in the world is changing. However, many of the people who make important decisions that affect libraries' ability to serve communities do so in ways that undermine the value and contributions of contemporary libraries in the digital society.

The need for a revolution

Contemporary libraries serve communities in multiple domains—from education and employment to entrepreneurship, community engagement, and individual empowerment—*The E's of Libraries*. Librarians are well aware of the broad and ever-expanding domain of libraries—from Big Data and 3D

printing to ebook publishing and digitizing local collections and much more.

But national decision makers and influencers are often unaware of the full range of what libraries do today, much less the great possibilities for the future of libraries. This disconnect is a strategic problem for libraries and the people we serve. National decision makers who do not fully understand the value and potential of libraries will be less inclined to support funding increases, new collaborations, or desired changes in governmental or institutional policies and practices.

At Multnomah County (Oreg.) Library, we have benefitted from establishing ongoing relationships with our congressional delegation, and this is the case for some other libraries as well. Offering members of Congress a relevant perspective and specific language that they can share with their colleagues helps create a more cohesive understanding of the issues and challenges facing libraries today. But this kind of outreach needs to become commonplace for libraries.

Just as we've had a revolution in our libraries, we need a revolution in public policy. Thus, the Policy Revolution! Initiative was born at ALA's Washington office, with sponsorship from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and partnership with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA). The core of the initiative focuses on getting national decision makers and influencers to understand how contemporary libraries can (and do) contribute to national priorities and goals and then to increase their engagement with libraries for the benefit of all.

National decision makers include:

- officials from the federal government
- executives at companies in the information and technology industries
- selected leaders in the not-for-profit sector (especially foundations)

Influencers include:

- reporters and other members of the media
- researchers



- association leaders
- fellow advocates

National public policy agenda

The initiative has three prongs. The first prong entails developing a national public policy agenda to provide guidance to the library community on its proactive policy directions. The community needs to come together on a unified policy message. If our varying libraries, library organizations, and national library leaders convey conflicting messages to Washington, D.C., New York City, or Silicon Valley, national decision makers and influencers will have difficulty understanding how libraries best contribute to important national goals or what libraries need.

The initial draft of this policy agenda was developed in fall 2014, coordinated through the initiative's Library Advisory Committee, which has broad representation from the library community. On the eve of the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits, a draft was [released](#) for public comment. At Midwinter, representatives of the Policy Revolution! Initiative sought input from multiple units of ALA. With this feedback, a final version of the national public policy agenda will be released by summer 2015.

This policy agenda is intended to represent the field, so entities in the library community would typically focus on different components of it—for example, the various ALA divisions and the Urban Libraries Council would each likely emphasize different elements than COSLA and the Association of Research Libraries. The goal is that each library organization develops its own policy priorities under the rubric of this national public policy agenda so national policy advocacy for libraries can be better interconnected and amplified.

Engagement and advocacy

The second prong is to engage decision makers and influencers more proactively, robustly, and broadly once the national public policy agenda is complete. The third prong, pursued in concert with the second one, is to develop ALA's capacity for policy advocacy. An early activity that supports



both of these prongs is the establishment of a Public Policy Advisory Council to provide advice and avenues for new collaborations with promising entities beyond the library world.

The Policy Revolution! Initiative and the policy agenda are focused at the national level. However, the agenda may well serve as a template for state and local policy thinking and planning. Once we get beyond the agenda and into engagement and advocacy, the levels become much less distinct. As the adage goes, "All politics is local."

It is imperative for libraries to embrace this collective action as a new mode of thinking and operating. As the world around us and the needs of those we serve change at breakneck speed, we must continue our proactive efforts in unison. Working together to engage decision makers and influencers at all levels will help keep libraries at the center of conversations about the health and vitality of the communities and institutions we serve.

For millennia, libraries have been trusted centers of knowledge and tools for human progress. It's up to us to inform and help shape policy decisions that will continue our proud legacy of service—now and for untold generations to come.

To learn more, visit ala.org/offices/PR-documents or send an email to oitp@alawash.org. ■



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