american libraries

May 2022

MARSHALL BREEDING'S

LIBRARY SYSTEMS REPORT
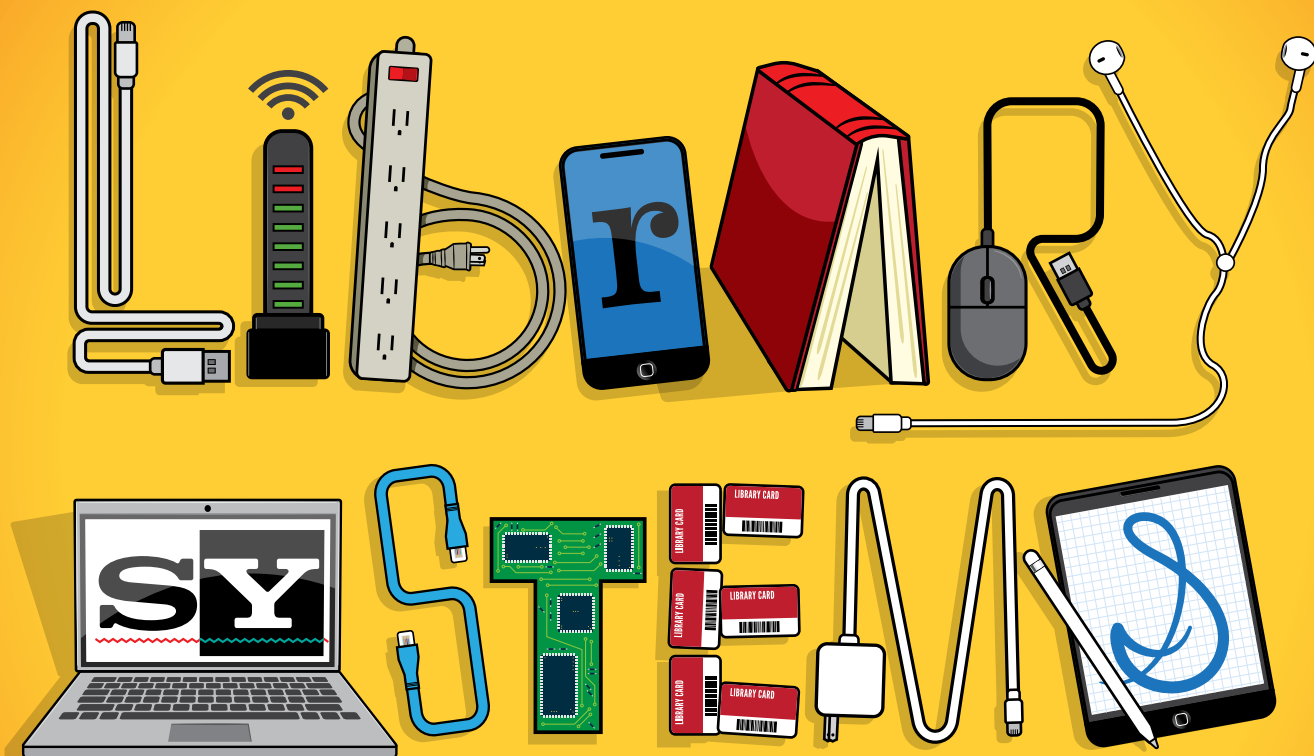
PLUS: Mariko Tamaki, Accessible
Makerspaces, Antiracist Storytimes

ALA Annual
CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

WASHINGTON DC
JUNE 23–28, 2022

The American Library Association invites you to the premier library event of the year!

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John Cho
Actor and author of "Troublemaker."

Kevin Eastman
Comic book artist and co-author of "The Last Ronin."

Maria Hinojosa
Journalist and author of "Once I Was You – A Memoir."

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Registration to the Digital Experience includes on-demand access to a total of 60 sessions through August 31, 2022. Learn more on our website.

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COVER STORY

2022 Library Systems REPORT

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BY Marshall Breeding

ON THE COVER: Illustration by Tom Deja

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from the EDITOR

Rebuild, Rethink

Sanhita SinhaRoy

Following two years of the pandemic, it appears 2022 will be a rebuilding year. In our annual Library Systems Report (cover story, p. 24), Marshall Breeding writes that recent industry events have challenged established trends. Whether it's private equity groups permeating the library technology sector or large companies now representing a bigger share of the market than ever before, "the stage seems set" for transitions, Breeding predicts.

Many young adults are preparing for transitions too. In "A Career Path for Youth" (p. 36), we excerpt a Public Library Association (PLA) webinar about how some libraries are providing workforce readiness programs to young people after pandemic disruptions.

Speaking of PLA, if you missed our coverage of its conference in Portland, Oregon, catch up at bit.ly/AL-PLA22. Managing Editor Terra Dankowski joined more than 4,800 people in March for one of the first major face-to-face ALA conferences in two years.

Throughout the issue, we explore topics related to accessibility. Nearly 41 million Americans have a disability, and their needs must be considered when discussing equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives in library services and facilities, Amelia M. Anderson and Abigail L. Phillips write (On My Mind, p. 49). As they note, "It does not need to be a big-budget renovation" to make spaces more accessible.

Though funding certainly helps. As you may know, ALA will award $7 million in accessibility grants to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities (Update, p. 8)—part of the Libraries Transforming Communities initiative led by the Public Programs Office.

In "A Sense of Support" (p. 14), Annemarie Mannion reports on how some libraries are curating accessibility collections for young patrons and their caregivers to provide judgment-free zones where all children are accepted.

From a shifting library tech sector to innovative programming nationwide, library workers continue to stay informed, improvise, and evolve to best serve their communities.

Sanhita

> Nearly 41 million Americans have a disability, and their needs must be considered when discussing EDI initiatives in library services and facilities.

School Librarians Are Essential

Successes serve as beacons of hope for bringing librarians back to schools

Patricia "Patty" M. Wong

Recent advocacy victories in Washington, D.C., and Boston show what is possible when communities rally around the issue of funding more school librarians.

Strong school libraries and certified school librarians play an essential role in student learning. And for decades, school librarians, teachers, parents, and students have advocated their importance to school board members, as well as to local, state, and national lawmakers. Nevertheless, positions for school librarians have declined.

A study from 2021 (bit.ly/SLaccess) shows that the number of school librarians in the US decreased from 52,545 in 2009 to 42,279 in 2019—a 19.5% drop. The investigators went on to note that school librarians were most likely to be absent in rural and Hispanic districts, as well as in districts with poor and minority students.

Like many of you, I am a staunch advocate for school librarians. I began my career in youth services in public libraries, so I know how essential librarians are to academic success. That's why, despite the headlines, I'm hopeful. In fact, recent advocacy victories in Washington, D.C., and Boston show what is possible when communities come together around this important issue.

Later this year, District of Columbia Public Schools could require all schools in their system, regardless of size, to have a librarian on staff. This hard-won milestone comes more than a decade after the district cut funding for librarians in schools with fewer than 300 students. And it comes three years after principals were permitted in 2019 to take funding meant for librarians to close budget gaps or fill other staff positions.

By August 2021, after strategic organized support among the city's school librarians and allies, D.C.'s city council introduced a budget amendment to allocate $3.25 million to ensure all schools have a librarian on staff. The amendment would return librarians to 36 schools, nearly half of them in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

The amendment passed, but funding was assured only for fiscal year 2022. To ensure continuity, the D.C. Council introduced the Students' Right to Read Amendment Act of 2021 in October. If passed, the act would require all D.C. public schools to have librarians.

Meanwhile in Massachusetts, a legislative commission in 2018 released the results of its study of the state's library programs that showed numerous inequities in school libraries. It found that many libraries were closed in urban districts and that rural and urban districts had limited computer access. The urban-suburban divide is especially stark: During the 2019–2020 school year, Boston had one full-time librarian for every 6,700 students, while the nearby wealthier city of Cambridge had one for every 295 students.

A 2021 survey (bit.ly/BPSlibs) found that 40% of public schools in Boston don't have a functioning library in their buildings. So, advocates were delighted when the Boston School Committee—the governing body of Boston Public Schools (BPS)—approved in October the BPS Library Services Strategic Plan (bit.ly/BPSplan) to phase in librarians for almost all BPS schools by 2026. On March 23, the committee approved BPS's $1.3 billion budget, which includes $3.6 million for 33 full-time librarians.

Still, there are challenges. With news that Boston's school superintendent will step down at the end of the school year, some worry a new administrator may have different plans for the funds.

Successful efforts in Washington, D.C., and Boston serve as beacons of hope for those working hard to bring librarians back to schools. Both ALA (bit.ly/ALA-SLtool) and the American Association of School Librarians (bit.ly/AASLtool) have advocacy tools in place to help you start—or continue—to advocate for school librarians in your district, town, city, or state. Your voices are being heard. Keep raising them. **AL**

PATRICIA "PATTY" M. WONG is city librarian at Santa Clara (Calif.) City Library.

Literacy as Liberation

Centering reading in library work

Tracie D. Hall

We opened an adult literacy program in the basement of the old Carnegie branch I managed, almost four months from the day Merlene, one of our regular patrons, confided that she'd been pretending her eyesight was too poor to read the directions aloud to her truck driver husband when she accompanied him on trips.

Opening the program had been a last resort. After learning that many outlets for adult reading instruction had gradually disappeared in the neighborhoods where need was greatest—and that none were in libraries—my colleagues and I took matters into our own hands. We transformed an underused library space into a modest but thriving literacy center that eventually garnered recognition from the state literacy network.

The truth is that I, then a new branch manager, hadn't exactly gotten the green light to offer literacy instruction. Rather than explicitly being told "no," I was told that function was expressly different from the work of librarianship. I have never accepted that argument.

Library services should not be limited to those with the ability to read. There are people who do not have the ability—and others who don't have the access—to read. Both groups deserve our attention and advocacy.

Formerly enslaved abolitionist and suffragist Frederick Douglass is famously quoted as saying, "Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." The slave or Black Code laws that prevailed in Douglass's day not only criminalized reading and writing for enslaved Black people with the threat of jail and corporal punishment but also prohibited their instruction.

From Alabama to Virginia, states levied fines as high as $500 (the equivalent of $11,300 today) for teaching Black people to read. Literacy was considered so direct a threat to slavery that an 1867 *Harper's Weekly* editorial asserted, "The alphabet is an abolitionist. If you would keep a people enslaved, refuse to teach them to read."

That link between literacy and self-determination holds today. In some US cities, as much as 20% of the adult population cannot read at a 5th-grade level. Worse, we as a society have come to accept and even normalize low literacy in some population segments despite its dire consequences. According to the National Institute for Literacy, 43% of adults with very low literacy skills live in poverty, and 70% of adult welfare recipients have lower-level literacy skills.

Adults with limited literacy are more likely to leave school early, face incarceration, and have a higher mortality rate than people with adequate reading skills. A 2007 Northwestern University study (bit.ly/NU-LowLit) proclaims, "Low literacy equals early death sentence."

The Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts, allowing individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. And ALA's Committee on Literacy uses a framework that includes digital literacy, health literacy, financial literacy, information literacy, and media literacy, calling out the distinct literacy needs of adults, teens, young children and their families, English-language learners, and justice-involved and recently released individuals.

Over the next year, ALA will deepen its focus on the connection between adult literacy and socioeconomic mobility. I look forward to discussing that inextricable link in my next column. **AL**

> Adults with limited literacy are more likely to leave school early, face incarceration, and have a higher mortality rate than people with adequate reading skills.

TRACIE D. HALL is executive director of the American Library Association. Reach her at thall@ala.org.

Recognizing Work

Regarding "Work Made Visible" (Jan./Feb., p. 51), I was struck by both the importance and timeliness of the column.

As libraries continue to expand service offerings and reimagine existing ones (often in labor-intensive fashion) in a pandemic environment, there remains an overemphasis on our materials and circulation statistics. The danger of this, as author Rachel Ivy Clarke makes clear, is "If we focus exclusively on the retail value of materials, we render the labor that goes into providing services invisible."

With staff stressed and morale dipping, it's more important than ever to recognize work. Additionally, libraries are a service industry that often fails to measure the cost and return on investment of our services when communicating with stakeholders. To that end, the prototype value calculator Clarke provided is an important step toward correcting this oversight.

Kudos to Clarke and the full research team of Alexandra Grimm, Katerina Lynn Stanton, and Bo Zhang.

Nick Tanzi
Centereach, New York

The Right Side of History

Thank you to ALA for having Colin Kaepernick as the closing speaker for LibLearnX ("Representation 'Is Only a Start,'" The Scoop, Jan. 25).
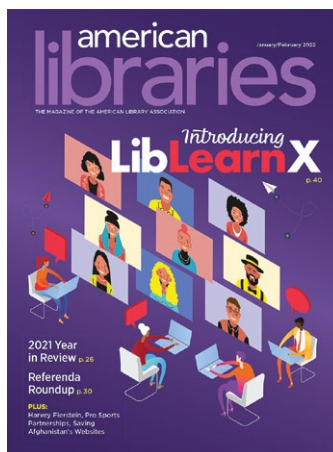
As we muddle through the complexities of equity, diversity, and inclusion and learn about and incorporate equity and inclusion practices into our work, sometimes we err on the side of what is safe. We are working to change organizational norms and create an inclusive culture within our organization, locally at our libraries, and within communities.

It meant more than you know to see and witness Kaepernick speak as a part of LibLearnX and on behalf of ALA. ALA did the furthest thing from shying away; our organization understood his importance and relevance.

I've been researching the historical treatment of Black people by libraries and librarians. There are some harsh realities our organization's members and affiliates will need to reconcile with. But years from now, some researcher is going to look at ALA and see that we stood on the right side of history supporting Kaepernick as a part of our professional growth. They will see we didn't cower, and our professional organization's moral arc bent toward justice and humanity.

Tiffeni Fontno
Worcester, Massachusetts

A Legacy of Equity

It was a surprising pleasure to read "Decolonizing the Catalog" (Nov./Dec. 2021, p. 38). It reminded me of one of the first people I met at my first meeting of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) at an ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition in the late 1980s.

I wonder if the authors (and others dealing with issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion) are familiar with the lifelong work of Sanford "Sandy" Berman, who served as head cataloger at Hennepin County (Minn.) Library from 1973 to 1999. Berman has long been an outspoken critic of Library of Congress Subject Headings and in 1971 edited *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People,* which contains correspondence, publications, photographs, presentations, books, journals, and articles written by him, and contributions from other authors that use his indices or that cite his work.

Berman's body of work touches on topics including improved subject access to

library materials; archaic and prejudicial LC subject headings; African American, women's, LGBTQ, and alternative library materials; his experiences as a librarian in Uganda; his years with Hennepin County Library and SRRT; African libraries and Jewish and African American librarians; public libraries; international librarianship; censorship; indexing; and his clashes with Hennepin County Library administration.

I also recommend Tina Gross's enlightening and informative interview with Berman, published in a 2017 issue of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly,* which sheds light on the importance on Sandy's dedication to wanting things done correctly and justly.

Frederick W. Stoss
Buffalo, New York

Bird Words

In "Programming on the Fly" (Sept./Oct. 2021, p. 10), Jessica Vogelgesang reports on birdwatching programs at Wood Memorial Library and Museum in South Windsor, Connecticut. What an apt source for an article about birdwatching programs, considering that her surname means birdsong in German!

Sharon Adley
Cedar Lake, Indiana

Defending Wikipedia

At University of South Florida's School of Information, students have been holding Wikipedia edit-a-thons and adding to Wikipedia for many years.

Each year the issues described in "Stop Source–Shaming" (Sept./Oct. 2021,

p. 49) come up. Collectively our students have added thousands of edits to topics in library history, human rights, and cultural heritage, especially pertaining to Florida.

Kathleen de la Peña McCook
Athens, Georgia

Laying Down Arms

When I read the February 16 edition of AL Direct, I was displeased to see a headline about "targeting" programs to tweens.

I understand the language of business tends to reflect the language of war. Unfortunately, however, we live in a time when many of us (and by "us" I specifically mean Black people in the United States) feel like we have literal bull's-eyes on our backs.

For the last several years, I have been on a mission to encourage people—beginning with those in my immediate sphere of influence—to think about the effect their words have on others. I've been working intentionally to eliminate militarized terms from my vocabulary. So, *targeting* people becomes *centering* a particular demographic. *Bulletpoints* become *list items. Aiming* or *shooting* for a certain goal becomes *prioritizing* or *working toward.*

I wish ALA would work to minimize the casual use of military language in our everyday speech and deliberately and intentionally make better choices. Words matter. Language matters. People matter. Black Lives Matter.

C'mon, do better.

Eboni A. Johnson
Oberlin, Ohio

Libraries Transforming Communities to Distribute $7 Million in Accessibility Grants

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC), a project of the American Library Association (ALA), announced on March 3 that it will grant more than $7 million to small and rural libraries to bolster accessibility of facilities, services, and programs to better serve people with disabilities.

ALA President Patricia "Patty" M. Wong said in the statement that the funding "represents an important next step in ALA's commitment to serving small and rural libraries as well as emphasizing the essential connection between accessibility and our work in spreading the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion."

Funded by a private grant, this new phase of the project—known as Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities—will mirror previous LTC programs. Past phases have been supported by the private donor and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), with partners including the Association for Rural and Small Libraries and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation.

Beginning in November, ALA will accept applications for grants ranging from $10,000 to $20,000. Libraries are required to identify their primary audience and host a conversation with grant stakeholders to improve library services.

"With this grant, ALA solidifies its position as the largest nongovernmental funder of library services as well as library workforce and professional development in the nation, and the second-largest regranting agency to libraries outside of IMLS," said ALA Executive Director Tracie D. Hall in the statement. "Further, the focus of this work asserts the Association's goal of forwarding the critical issue of accessibility for library users."

"The ability to respond to community needs is a critical skill for 21st-century library workers," said Melanie Welch, interim director of ALA's Public Programs Office, which will oversee the grant. ●

Speakers Announced for 2022 Annual Conference

Actor and author John Cho and journalist and author Maria Hinojosa will present at the 2022 ALA Annual Conference and Exhibition, to be held June 23–28 in Washington, D.C.

Cho will discuss his first book, *Troublemaker*, a young adult novel following the events of the 1992 Los Angeles riots through the eyes of 12-year-old Jordan as he navigates school and family, highlighting the perspectives of Korean Americans. Cho's acting career has spanned more than two decades, from his breakout roles in the Harold and Kumar movie series and *American Pie* to recently starring in *Searching* and the Netflix series *Cowboy Bebop*.

John Cho

Hinojosa will discuss *Once I Was You*, a memoir sharing her intimate experience growing up Mexican American on the South Side of Chicago and perspective on immigration. Her journalism career has spanned nearly 30 years; she has reported for PBS, CBS, WGBH, WNBC, CNN, and NPR and anchors *Latino USA*. The young readers edition of *Once I Was You* will be available in August.

Maria Hinojosa

Tribal Libraries Considered in E-Rate

In a statement released January 27, ALA praised the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) unanimous vote to update the definition of *library* to include tribal libraries, clarifying that they are fully eligible for the universal service School and Libraries Program. Better known as E-Rate, the federal program provides eligible libraries and schools with a discount of up to 90% on telecommunication and internet access costs.

"Tribal library connectivity is a lifeline for people on tribal lands, where residential broadband is sometimes nonexistent," said Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums President Susan Feller in the statement. "Removing obstacles to E-Rate eligibility is an obvious starting point for tribal residents' access to digital collections, e-government services, legal information, distance learning, telemedicine, and many other essential community services."

According to the FCC, about 15% of tribal libraries currently participate in E-Rate. While the previous definition of *library* was a major obstacle for tribal libraries to apply for funds, advocates pointed to additional factors, including

ALA Announces Support for Ukrainian Libraries

On March 1, ALA and its divisions announced support for its members' Ukrainian colleagues, stating that it will work with the global library community to answer the appeal from the Ukrainian Library Association to provide accurate information defending democracy and freedom of expression.

ALA has adopted into its policies Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers."

ALA will continue to encourage its members to help raise public consciousness regarding the ways disinformation and media manipulation are used to mislead public opinion. It also further encourages librarians to facilitate awareness with collection development, library programming, and public outreach that draws the public's attention to alternative sources of information dedicated to countering and revealing disinformation. ●

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tribal libraries' unfamiliarity with the program.

New Virtual Option Available for Annual Conference

On March 17, ALA announced the Digital Experience, a new virtual offering for individuals who are unable to attend the in-person 2022 Annual Conference and Exhibition June 23–28 in Washington, D.C.

Guests of the virtual offering will have access to 42 education sessions, 14 News You Can Use sessions, and four main-stage speakers, all streamed live directly from the conference center.

Registration includes on-demand access to these 60 sessions through August 31. For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/ALA-virtual-reg.

ALA's in-person Annual Conference will feature more than 160 education sessions and more than 12 thought leaders and celebrity speakers who will appear on the mainstage. The event will also include more than 550 exhibitors, 80 author

presentations, a podcast booth, free advanced reading copies, and more.

Student Loan Forgiveness Available for Library Workers

ALA issued a press release on January 31 encouraging library workers with federal student loans to review their eligibility under the US Department of Education's Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Library workers in school, public, academic, and other contexts with federal student aid may be eligible for the waiver, known as the Temporary Expanded PSLF (TEPSLF).

Under the current PSLF program, federal student loan borrowers employed by government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations providing public library services or school library services, are eligible to have their federal student loan balance forgiven after making 10 years of qualifying loan payments.

Borrowers must submit necessary paperwork (studentaid.gov/pslf) by

October 31, when TEPSLF ends. ALA is encouraging library workers to attend free webinars hosted by the PSLF Coalition (pslfcoalition.org/temporary-waiver), of which ALA is a member, to learn more about the process. For more information, visit bit.ly/ALA-pslf-2022.

Women's Suffrage Grants Awarded to 25 Libraries

ALA announced on January 28 that 25 libraries were selected to participate in Let's Talk About It (LTAI): Women's Suffrage, a grant program designed to open conversations about American history and culture through an examination of the women's suffrage movement.

LTAI—which celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2022—is a biweekly reading and discussion program carried out over 10 weeks with a local humanities scholar. The chosen libraries, representing 23 different states, will each receive a $1,000

AASL Signs Letter Opposing Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation

On February 24, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) signed an open letter to state legislatures around the country calling on them to halt discriminatory, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. AASL joins at least 20 associations in signing the letter, representing more than 7 million youth-serving professionals calling on lawmakers to reconsider these policies.

The letter AASL signed reads, in part: "As organizations committed to serving the best interests of all youth, we are deeply alarmed at the torrent of bills introduced in state legislatures around the country this year that would directly harm LGBTQ+ youth, particularly transgender youth."

"AASL stands up for the rights of each learner to access materials that will help them to think, create, share, and grow," said AASL President Jennisen Lucas in the February statement. "This includes respecting the dignity of each learner who enters our space or asks for our assistance. Providing environments for all learners to grow into their authentic selves is the best way we can support our goal of promoting inclusion." ●

stipend to support the program, 10 copies of five theme books, access to programming guides and support materials, and virtual training on the LTAI model. The program is supported by the NEH.

ALA, Estée Lauder Companies Partner to Help At-Risk Youth

On February 7, ALA announced it has partnered with Estée Lauder Companies to support Writing Change, a pilot grant project to build literacy and digital skills for at-risk youth. The project is a three-year global literacy initiative inspired by Amanda Gorman, an award-winning writer, the youngest inaugural poet in US history, and an ambassador for Estée Lauder.

ALA will receive funding to support Writing Change grants that will support projects at 12 libraries in the country. Those libraries will partner with local artists to develop arts programs that build literacy and digital skills for young people at risk of low educational or employment attainment. Applications will open in spring 2022.

Airwaves For Equity Coalition Launched

On February 23, ALA and eight of the nation's digital equity organizations announced the launch of Airwaves for Equity, a coalition focused on asking Congress to dedicate the net proceeds from future FCC spectrum auctions to support efforts in digital literacy and inclusion.

The coalition consists of ALA, the Benton Institute for Broadband and Society, the Center for Rural Strategies, Common Sense Media, Consumer Reports, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, Public Knowledge, the Open Technology Institute at New America, and the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition.

Airwaves for Equity proposes that a substantial portion of wireless spectrum auction revenues should endow a Digital Equity Foundation that provides sustainable funding for initiatives such as local digital navigator programs, increased access to telehealth, and other efforts to close learning gaps.

Leaders on the US Senate Commerce and US House Energy and Commerce committees from both parties have expressed support for this proposal. The FCC's auction authority must be extended this year.

ALA Calls for Actions toward Racial Healing

ALA released a joint statement with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) calling on its collective membership to observe and take action for the sixth-annual US National Day of Racial Healing on January 18.

The organizations called on members to devote a Healing Hour of discussion, education, and reflection; share insights on organizational missions in pursuit of racial justice with the wider community; and review resources within each organization to spark conversations and thinking.

The National Day of Racial Healing is part of a larger movement for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT), a political and cultural concept developed by Gail Christopher and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. It is embraced by more than 300 organizations in academic, artistic, civic, and faith coalitions who want to establish a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation.

New Members Appointed to ALA Executive Board

ALA Council has elected Kathy Carroll and Sara Dallas to serve on the ALA Executive Board. Elected board members will hold a three-year term from July 2022 to June 2025.

Carroll is library director at Westwood High School in Blythewood, South Carolina. She was 2020–2021 AASL president and currently serves on the Transforming ALA Governance Task Force and the ALA Working Group to Condemn White Supremacy and Fascism as Antithetical to Library Work. She is a 13-year ALA member and a 2007 Spectrum Scholar.

Dallas is director of Southern Adirondack Library System in Saratoga Springs, New York. An ALA member for more than 25 years, she is chair of the ALA Core Values Task Force, an ALA councilor at large, and serves on the Sustainability Committee and Committee on Legislation. She has also served on the Public Library Association's board of directors and has chaired the ALA Committee on Professional Ethics.

Resource to Help Librarians Address "Problematic" Authors

On January 24, ALA's IFC released "Addressing Challenges to Books by Problematic Authors," a Q&A resource to guide librarians on what it means when an author is labeled "problematic" and how such labels can impact intellectual freedom.

The resource draws on ALA's Library Bill of Rights and the Intellectual Freedom Manual and explores the critical issues surrounding book challenges around authors labeled as problematic, especially as these issues arise. The guide also answers the question of what role the library worker has in educating users about authors labeled as problematic in a way that informs them while maintaining impartiality. That role can help assist readers in reviewing and assessing content when they're on their own.

Other topics addressed in the new resource include the role of special collections and special libraries; the responsibilities of public libraries that receive government funding; requests for collection removal by authors and publishers, particularly based on allegations of racism or sexual impropriety; and the inclusion of problematic authors in school curricula or on reading lists. To view the full Q&A, visit bit.ly/ALA-challengedauthorsqa.

ALA Produces New Field Guides on Privacy

On March 15, ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) and Privacy Subcommittee announced the release of Privacy Field Guides, a new collection of free resources providing library workers and trustees with an accessible roadmap for user privacy. The guides discuss the importance of privacy, how to improve digital security practices, how to protect users' privacy, and more.

Funding for the Privacy Field Guides was provided by IMLS. Each guide is designed to work in school, public, and academic libraries, and can be downloaded at bit.ly/ALA-privacyfg. ALA Editions will publish a complete set of the Privacy Field Guides for purchase in summer 2022. AL

200 US Libraries to Receive American Rescue Plan Funding

ALA announced February 15 that it has awarded $2 million in humanities funding to 200 libraries nationwide as part of a grant-making program to relieve libraries recovering from the pandemic.

With money from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the libraries will use funds to anchor themselves as strong institutions for humanities and centers of learning, conversation, and connection. Each library received a $10,000 grant through ALA's program American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grants for Libraries.

"Libraries have faced significant hardships throughout the pandemic—from budget cuts to staff furloughs to building closures—especially in our communities of the greatest need," said ALA President Patricia "Patty" M. Wong in the statement. "This crucial support from NEH will enable our beloved institutions, and the dedicated people who run them, to rebuild and emerge from the pandemic stronger than ever."

"Strong public libraries are at the heart of healthy communities," said NEH Chair Shelly C. Lowe. She added that ALA's help distributing NEH American Rescue Plan funding has been instrumental in assisting libraries in "recovering from the financial impact of the pandemic, and strengthening their role as local centers of humanities learning, research, and public programs." ●

CELEBRATE BANNED BOOKS WEEK

September 18–24, 2022

Books unite us. Books allow readers to spread their wings. Stories give flight to new ideas and perspectives. Censorship locks away our freedom and divides us from humanity in our own cages.

Banned Books Week is an annual event that celebrates the freedom to read and draws attention to the harms of censorship. Use these liberating materials to stimulate discussions and bring readers together to support the freedom to read. Learn more at **ala.org/bbooks**.

BOOKS UNITE US

CENSORSHIP DIVIDES US

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Books Unite Us 2022 Poster

BOOKS UNITE US

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#BannedBooksWeek

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BOOKS UNITE US

CENSORSHIP DIVIDES US

Top 10 Most Challenged Books of 2021

The American Library Association tracked 729 challenges to library, school, and university materials and services in 2021. Of the 1,597 books challenged or banned, here are the top 10:

1. **Gender Queer** by Maia Kobabe
FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT, CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

2. **Lawn Boy** by Jonathan Evison
FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT, CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

3. **All Boys Aren't Blue** by George M. Johnson
FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT, PROFANITY, CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

4. **Out of Darkness** by Ashley Hope Pérez
FOR DEPICTIONS OF ABUSE, CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

5. **The Hate U Give** by Angie Thomas
FOR PROFANITY, VIOLENCE, CONSIDERED ANTI-POLICE, "INDOCTRINATION OF A SOCIAL AGENDA"

6. **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian** by Sherman Alexie
FOR PROFANITY, SEXUAL REFERENCES, USE OF DEROGATORY TERMS

7. **Me and Earl and the Dying Girl** by Jesse Andrews
CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT AND DEGRADING TO WOMEN

8. **The Bluest Eye** by Toni Morrison
FOR DEPICTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

9. **This Book Is Gay** by Juno Dawson
FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT, PROVIDING SEXUAL EDUCATION

10. **Beyond Magenta** by Susan Kuklin
FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT, CONSIDERED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

ALA.ORG/BBOOKS

Most Challenged Books of 2021 Bookmark

FIELD REPORT 2021

BANNED AND CHALLENGED BOOKS

ALA American Library Association
OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM
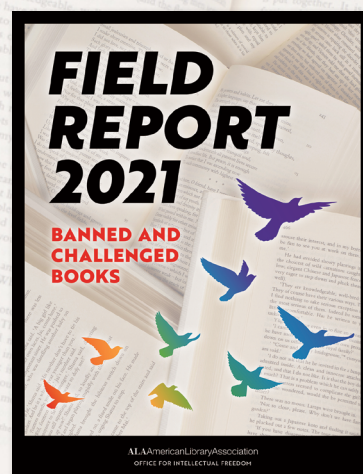
Field Report 2021

An excellent handout, with descriptions of public challenges and the unprecedented movement toward censorship in school libraries.

BOOKS UNITE US · READ
CENSORSHIP DIVIDES US
BOOKS UNITE US
READ A BANNED BOOK
CENSORSHIP DIVIDES US · READ

Books Unite Us Bracelets

I read banned books.

I Read Banned Books Rainbow Sticker Roll

I read banned books.

I Read Banned Books Purple Sticker Roll

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TRENDS

A toddler at Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library (AHML) enjoys tummy time while playing with Peek-a-Boo Mirror, a sensory toy in AHML's collection.

A Sense of Support

Libraries curate accessibility collections for young patrons and their caregivers

BY Annemarie Mannion

When her son brought home speech cards from elementary school to help him better learn and articulate words, Jen Taggart could barely see what the cards depicted. The cards had been duplicated and the images were blurry, says Taggart, head of youth services at Bloomfield Township (Mich.) Public Library (BTPL).

That experience more than 13 years ago inspired her to start BTPL's Youth Accessibility Support Collection, a set of items designed to meet the needs of children with various types of disabilities and learning needs. Since 2009, families have been borrowing from the collection, which includes adaptive toys, sensory storytime boxes, speech therapy cards, and skills development sets. It also includes books and other media, including fiction and interactive titles for youth and non-fiction works on accessibility and disability topics for caregivers.

Increasingly, libraries across the country are assembling accessibility support collections to better assist the developmental needs of their youngest patrons, including those who are neurodivergent and have sensory processing issues.

In 2019, Sunderland (Mass.) Public Library (SPL) used a $7,000 grant to start its Sensory Toy Collection, which comprises toys, games, learning tools, and comfort objects that provide sensory stimulation. While the toys are particularly helpful for people on the autism spectrum, Library Director Katherine Umstot says all children can use and benefit from the items.

"It's so important for people in the autism community to feel welcome in the library and to have resources that make them feel recognized," Umstot says.

Breaking down barriers

Before SPL started its collection, the library surveyed local schools, special education teachers, therapists, parents, community organizations, and others to learn what sorts of resources would best meet the needs of neurodivergent youth and their families in the district. Through this research, the library learned that 5% of children enrolled at the local elementary schools are on the autism spectrum.

SPL decided to create a lending collection specifically geared to children in this population. The 40 items the library purchased include weighted blankets and stuffed animals, fidget toys, and cards that show kids how to move

Photo: Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library

> "A therapist or parent might want to try a tool but not want to sink their money in it only to find out it doesn't work."

MARIA PAPANASTASSIOU,
youth services assistant manager at Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library

their bodies to form letters of the alphabet.

In October 2021, Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library (AHML) started an Accessibility Support Collection of its own, after Youth Services Assistant Manager Maria Papanastassiou attended a presentation by Taggart about BTPL's collection. AHML's 350-item collection includes toys designed to support motor, social, cognitive, visual, and auditory skill development; therapeutic and adaptive technology tools; and interactive books for children in different developmental stages.

Papanastassiou says the library had already been serving children with special needs and their caregivers through a collaboration with C.I.T.Y. of Support, an organization that assists families navigating the needs of children in therapy. The partners had offered developmental play groups and opportunities for parents to meet for coffee, and Papanastassiou saw an accessibility collection as another way to advocate for these families. C.I.T.Y. of Support provided a $10,000 grant for the project.

In the month of the collection's debut, 50% of the equipment was checked out, Papanastassiou says. She notes teachers and therapists—as well as parents and children—are using the items, which can be expensive to purchase. For example, adaptive toys, or toys that have been modified to improve ease of use for kids with disabilities, can cost about $300 each.

"A therapist or parent might want to try a tool but not want to sink their money in it only to find out it doesn't work," says Papanastassiou. "Sometimes someone might need something for a short while but not forever."

Meghan O'Brien, a patron at AHML, has a daughter who is on the autism spectrum and has ADHD, and says she often uses items in the collection. One game her family has checked out—*Let's Talk Cubes*—has helped her daughter become more verbal.

The game involves rolling dice that have questions on each face. The dice are thrown, and everyone discusses a question that is revealed, such as "What is your favorite color?" O'Brien says her daughter tends to wander away from the dinner table, but when they play the game, she stays.

"I've noticed it helps her start and engage in a conversation," O'Brien says. She adds that she has also used books from the collection to help her other children better understand why their sister learns or handles situations differently than they would.

Collection as compassion

The librarians who have spearheaded these collections say a

Older Americans Month

1963
Year President John F. Kennedy established May as Senior Citizens Month, now called Older Americans Month.

16,000
Number of older adult patrons that Toronto Public Library called for wellness checks during the pandemic as of March 2021. The library had set a goal to call all 35,000 of its senior cardholders. These 10-minute outreach calls were designed to help older patrons navigate resources that had been moved online and boost their spirits during a time of isolation.

2030
Year when all baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—will be at least 65 years old.

43%
Percentage of baby boomers in the US who visited a public library or bookmobile over a 12-month period, according to a 2017 Pew Research Center study. This figure compares with the 45% of Gen X and 53% of millennials who had used a public library or bookmobile during the same period.

51 million
Number of US adults age 50 and older who play videogames, according to a 2019 AARP study. This figure grew by more than 10 million between 2016 and 2019. ●
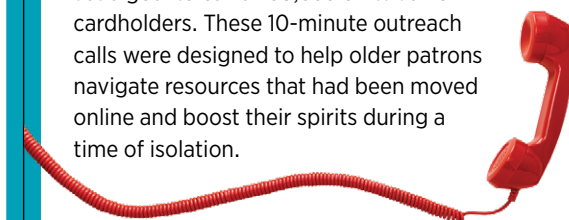
An Aunt Flow period product dispenser and signage in a restroom at Jersey City (N.J.) Free Public Library's Miller branch. The library has offered free period products thanks in large part to donations.

Period. End of Story.

Librarians help get the word—and the products—out

BY Lara Ewen

"That time of the month." "On the rag." "Shark week."

The euphemisms range from coy to absurd, but library workers and others want to make talking about menstruation—and accessing products related to it—as straightforward and shame-free as discussing hand-washing.

"The products are important, and normalizing the conversation is important," says Eiko La Boria, founder and CEO of The Flow Initiative, a New Jersey–based organization devoted to stamping out social, cultural, and economic inequities associated with "period poverty." She says libraries are a natural partner for her organization's outreach: "I wanted to implement greater access, and I thought, 'Libraries.'"

Accessibility, availability

Currently in the US, menstrual products are not covered by food stamps or federally funded health programs like WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Some states, however, are considering legislation to change that. In the meantime, many people struggle to afford the products, says Amanda Donovan, director of marketing and communications for the eight-location Spokane (Wash.) Public Library (SPL).

"Lack of access can lead to school or work absences and can cause stress and anxiety," Donovan says. When Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed a 2021 law requiring schools, colleges, and universities to provide free period products in all women's and gender-neutral bathrooms, Donovan decided to build on that initiative. She thought: "We're like a school. They should be free here, just like soap or toilet paper."

Yet La Boria, whose organization works with the 10-location Jersey City (N.J.) Free Public Library (JCFPL) system, says that it's not just about addressing the needs of low-income populations. Affordability is one thing; sheer availability is another.

"Menstrual equity has no regard for your socioeconomic status," she points out. "The richest woman on the planet has gone to the bathroom [on some occasion] and not had access to a period product."

Grants and donations can help cover the costs involved. Rachel Paulus, LGBTQ community outreach librarian for JCFPL, says La Boria's organization received a donation of 40,000 pads in June 2021 from U by Kotex via the Alliance for Period Supplies—which donates period products to women in need. These pads were subsequently distributed throughout JCFPL's branches. In addition, medical supply company Hospeco donated dispensers, installed them at cost, and provided an additional 1,200 products for free.

For libraries that need to start from scratch, Jillian Martinson, audience development manager for Elkhart (Ind.) Public Library (EPL), says Friends groups are a good resource when grants are unavailable. EPL's Friends group provided funding for the library system's five locations, allowing Martinson to buy

Photos: Jenna Toulantis

everything she needed from menstrual supply company Aunt Flow.

"We use $200 dispensers that include tampons and pads, and there are 500 of each product in each [dispenser]," Martinson says. "For a year, for all five locations, it costs $2,400." She adds that for libraries without funding, Period.org—an organization created to provide menstrual products to communities in need—may be a possible resource.

SPL's Donovan, who also buys supplies from Aunt Flow, used her facilities budget to cover the expense of providing period supplies. "We prioritized and normalized this practice by including it in our budget, just as we would for toilet paper or soap," she says.

Information, please

One challenge, Donovan says, was her own discomfort with the subject. "It was a mental roadblock for me," she says. "I had to get up the courage to bring it up and to talk about periods to these male managers."

Paulus says some people also questioned the need for free period products. "You just have to educate people," she says. "It affects people everywhere. Seventy percent of teen girls say they miss class because of something period-related. I want to pass on this information so people can think about it."

The educational component is also about wording that removes stigma from periods, Paulus adds: "Male staff asked if we could [use other words], like 'sanitary products.' And I said no. Periods are periods. That's what it's called."

Martinson says it's also important to include period products in all restrooms—not just those designated for women, so that trans men and nonbinary people will also have access. "It's about providing

> ## "[Period products] should be free here, just like soap or toilet paper."
>
> **AMANDA DONOVAN,** director of marketing and communications at Spokane (Wash.) Public Library

dignity," she says. Pads and tampons at her library are clearly labeled *menstrual products,* not *feminine hygiene products.* "We also have signage that talks about moon cycles," she says, "so people can ask about this without calling attention to themselves."

Library guests may have different comfort levels when it comes to talking about and asking for period products. "No matter how progressive you are, [talking about them] may feel private," Donovan says, "so we hang a bag of products in the all-gender stalls, the wheelchair stall, the men's rooms, and the staff restrooms." She also placed discreet signage throughout the library, indicating products are available.

La Boria says for these programs to have wider success, the conversation needs to be opened to everyone. "You have to include men," she says. "The majority of elected officials are men, and these are the people you have to lobby to and speak with." She is creating a step-by-step toolkit that she hopes to make available via social media to help as many people as possible.

Ultimately, Donovan adds, the goal is to normalize the conversation about periods. "We're setting the example," she says. "We're hoping other libraries follow suit." AL

LARA EWEN is a freelance writer based in Brooklyn, New York.

crucial step in creating one is to learn what your community's needs are.

"Meet with your schools, with special education staff, with families, and with the disability community," Taggart recommends.

Umstot says a collection doesn't have to be expensive or even very big at the beginning to be of value to patrons. "Start small," she suggests. "Just buy a couple things and see how kids interact with and use them."

For instance, Umstot was surprised that a weighted blanket in her library's collection got less use than some small brushes with different textures. "[I guess] people don't like sharing a blanket, even though we wash it between uses."

Items in each of the libraries' collections are disinfected after each use. (Though, early in the pandemic, some items at BTPL were not available for checkout, Taggart says, because the library didn't have the capacity to sanitize materials.)

The librarians agree that one of the most positive aspects of the accessibility collections is that they make children with special needs and their caregivers feel more welcome at their libraries.

In other settings, O'Brien says it is not uncommon for her and her daughter to feel judged, especially if her daughter expresses frustration or has outbursts. She has discovered that her library is a judgement-free zone, where she and her children are accepted.

"Just the fact that the library felt the need to have this collection is important and makes me feel more comfortable," O'Brien says. "They are compassionate and understanding that every family has different needs and kinds of lives." AL

ANNEMARIE MANNION is a freelance writer in the Chicago area.

Juana M. Flores, children's librarian at the Kings Highway branch of Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library (BPL), reads to kids on September 30. Flores is one of the founding members of BPL's antiracist services meetup.

Antiracist Storytimes

Programs for kids spark and normalize conversations about race

BY Emily Udell

In September 2021, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library (BPL) saw its first chance since the pandemic started to hold an in-person event—and used that opportunity to showcase antiracism work and programming it had explored over the past two years. As part of the Brooklyn Book Festival and in collaboration with the Brooklyn Children's Museum, BPL presented two antiracist storytimes, along with a mini protest march, a selection of books that could be checked out, and other activities related to themes of race and social justice.

"It was just joyful," says Jessica Ralli, coordinator of early literacy programs at BPL. "It was a very diverse crowd and majority nonwhite." About 75 families attended the event, which was minimally marketed because of concerns about gatherings amid the spread of the Delta variant of the coronavirus.

"The content was timely," says Ralli, "and people were excited that the library and museum were being open and honest in a way that was developmentally appropriate and kid-friendly."

Laying the foundation

Around the country, some libraries are hosting antiracist storytimes and incorporating antiracist practices into existing storytimes. Others are inviting educators to train staff on how to begin the work needed to pursue such programming.

In the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and other Black people, some libraries began looking for ways to dismantle racism within their own institutions. Offering programming to meet the needs of communities grappling with news headlines about racism and social injustice—including parents looking for ways to talk with their children about these issues—was critically important.

Ralli says BPL began laying the foundation for its part in the book fest by creating a working group of librarians interested in antiracism topics. Trainers brought in to talk with the group included musician and broadcaster Uncle Devin, who presented on the racism embedded in many children's stories and narratives, and Woke Kindergarten founder Akiea Gross, who presented on what the recent movement in abolitionist education looks like for young children.

BPL's marketing team created a logo that librarians at their 60 branches could use to brand any storytime or other programming, for adults or for children, as antiracist. "The idea is: 'If you build it, they will come,'" Ralli says. "If we create this tag, they will add it to their calendars."

High demand

Like some of the trainers who visited BPL, Denver Public Schools Library Services Specialist Janet Damon coaches parents and community members on how to talk with kids about topics such as race,

implicit bias, and the characterization of Black people in children's literature. She founded Afros and Books, an organization that advocates for access to books that explore diverse experiences.

Damon also hosts workshops with library systems across the country "to help them prepare to offer antiracist storytimes or to help parents understand antiracist and antibias practices for caregivers," she says. Despite these efforts, only a few library systems are "operationalizing these practices into a full-fledged antiracist storytime offering," she says.

Polarizing public fights over the teaching of critical race theory and other issues may be giving some libraries cold feet about advertising any programming as explicitly antiracist, especially in more conservative communities, Damon theorizes. But library workers remain highly interested in the training.

"When the pandemic was starting and the nation was starting to wrestle with the experiences of Black people, it was parents asking libraries [about] how to talk to their kids about what was happening on a national level," Damon says.

"It is important to talk about race with children. It doesn't have to be a taboo subject."

ELIZABETH ZANDSTRA,
youth services librarian at Grand Rapids (Mich.) Public Library

Experts say it's never too early to talk with kids about racial differences in developmentally appropriate ways. A 2021 Boston University study (bit.ly/BostonUStudy) found that many parents misjudge when children first begin categorizing and ascribing characteristics to people based on race. Children may begin processing the concept of race before they're even a year old; adults typically overestimate that age by four and a half years, according to the study. This misconception, along with factors like their own discomfort or fear of inflicting unintentional harm, may cause adults to delay conversations.

Talking authentically

At Grand Rapids (Mich.) Public Library (GRPL), staffers decided to put on a virtual storytime called Let's Talk about Race when in-person events were on hold during the pandemic. Before, they were already incorporating social justice tips into regular storytimes to help model ways for parents to broach these topics with kids.

"The first three times I brought these tips up, it was intimidating," says Elizabeth Zandstra, youth services librarian at GRPL. "But it is important to talk about race with children. It is good. It doesn't have to be a taboo subject."

Zandstra, who is white, also stresses the importance of white librarians becoming involved with this work: "It's important that it's not just up to our Black coworkers."

In addition to holding antiracist trainings for staffers, experts recommend having institutional resources and support in place to deal with any challenges that might emerge.

"Do some background work and figure out what your own ideas are

on race and racism," Zandstra says. "Set yourself up for success—have some tips set up [in advance]."

While working as a librarian, Jessica Anne Bratt, GRPL's assistant director and author of *Let's Talk about Race in Storytimes* (see p. 50), started developing a framework and resources that could help other professionals celebrate diverse identities and normalize conversation about differences.

"I wanted to figure out if storytime was a space where you can build up empathy, especially around race," says Bratt. "I would get my Black families coming up and thanking me and saying they felt seen. I would get my white families saying they didn't know that was okay [for them to discuss]."

Her book provides tools for starting conversations, as well as self-reflecting and unpacking some of the baggage needed to approach the topics of race and justice authentically and without doing harm or appearing self-righteous. "Storytime is a space of power," Bratt says. "And you can still have fun." AL

Two-year-old Jaiah flips through diverse children's books at a restoration project at Barr Lake State Park in Colorado on May 22, 2021. Janet Damon, library services specialist for Denver Public Schools, provided free books for the event.

EMILY UDELL is a freelance writer based in Indianapolis.

Patron Xander Dianen returns a wagon to Summers County (W.Va.) Public Library. The wagons help users without access to transportation carry groceries up a steep hill (inset).

An Uphill Battle

A public library in West Virginia shines a light on rural food deserts

n November 2021, the Hinton (W.Va.) Police Department took to Facebook with a complaint. The department said shopping carts abandoned across the city were an "ugly sight" and warned residents that removing these carts from a store's property was unlawful and would come with penalties. Summers County Public Library Director Austin Persinger read the post and its comments and saw a deeper problem in his Appalachian community—one that he set about addressing in a simple way.

BY Austin Persinger

At the core of library work are stories. We listen to our patrons' stories when we perform a reference interview, readers' advisory, or a community needs assessment. We interpret these stories to supply our users with the best information and resources to fit their situation. Often, this is simple, but other times this requires close listening and careful attention.

Last November, our local police department wrote on Facebook that it had received complaints about misused and abandoned shopping buggies strewn about Hinton, our city of 2,800 people. Some community members commented on the thread that the buggies were an eyesore and stores were finding it hard to recover lost property. The police, using the tools at their disposal, threatened disciplinary measures for what it referred to as the unlawful removal of buggies. I thought this was a knee-jerk reaction and not the best solution for the situation.

I read this story through the lens of a rural librarian conducting a reference interview. What I was being told was that the city and stores suffer because people steal and abandon shopping buggies. But the story that I heard was that there are lower-income people in our community who take these carts because they live in a food desert and lack reliable transportation.

Stores in Hinton lie at the bottom of a steep hill. The sidewalk is inadequate and dangerously close to traffic. Depending on where someone lives in the city, going to the store might be one-to-six miles round trip. A gallon of milk and sack of potatoes can weigh about 13 pounds. There is no simple or comfortable way for people to carry their groceries home. Buggies make the trip marginally better, but when they're being pushed uphill on a broken sidewalk—instead of on the polished floors they were designed for—the trip still isn't easy. After walking many miles to get groceries, walking many more to return a shopping cart seems exhausting and unreasonable.

The complaint bothered me, so I entered the conversation to talk about the concept of the Library of Things—that our institutions can loan so much more than books—and how Summers County Public Library could help. I began soliciting donations on various Facebook pages and through the local newspaper for a fleet of lightweight, collapsible

People tell us they are grateful we are assisting them in a real way.

utility wagons that cost about $100 each. Project Buggy Buddy had a fundraising goal of $1,200; community response to the idea was enthusiastic, and we raised $2,000. We began checking out six wagons within a month and have six more on order.

The wagons in our fleet are designed to go over rough surfaces, and a five-day checkout period removes pressure to return them immediately after a trip. We don't charge fines if wagons are returned late—though, in the first four months of lending, all of them have been returned on time—and we allow renewals if needed. The program has been successful: It is popular among users, is eliminating the guilt and fear of harassment for taking buggies, and has engendered goodwill and renewed interest in the library.

People tell us they are grateful we are assisting them in a real way. One patron said that using the wagon allows them to buy items in bulk, which has helped them save money on groceries.

We have myriad needs and problems here in Appalachia. Lack of transportation may not be the biggest, flashiest, or first problem one thinks of, but it causes an undue burden in our communities. Our crowdsourced fleet is a Band-Aid on the issue—our way of alleviating the problem in a small but helpful way. Solving the rural infrastructure problem may be too big and complex for me and my library, but I am happy to get the wagon rolling. **AL**

AUSTIN PERSINGER is director of Summers County (W.Va.) Public Library.

Mariko Tamaki

Eisner-winning author on publishing LGBTQIA voices, collaboration, and censorship

Mariko Tamaki's skill at portraying the queer teenage experience has earned her many awards, including the Michael L. Printz Award and a Caldecott Honor for *This One Summer* (illustrated by Jillian Tamaki) and Eisner Awards for *Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me* (illustrated by Rosemary Valero-O'Connell). Her unflinching approach to telling these stories has also landed her books on challenge lists. Tamaki took some time after her session at January's LibLearnX conference to talk with *American Libraries* about her latest book *Cold* (Roaring Brook Press, February), her new comics imprint Surely Books, and what it's like having her works contested.

BY Carrie Smith

Your new book, *Cold,* is about two teenagers: the ghost of a boy and a girl who wants to solve his murder. What drew you to writing your first murder mystery? I've always loved reading mysteries, but the element of suspense wasn't something I had ever focused on in prose. After a few years of writing superhero comics and working on the "ticking clock" in that medium, I thought it would be interesting to do that in a novel. A lot of things I write start off as a test of myself and then turn into a full-on obsession.

Collaboration is a big part of creating graphic novels and comics. How does it compare with the process of writing alone? All writing involves collaboration. I have been fortunate to work with amazing illustrators, colorists, and letterers, not to mention incredible editors who have labored with me on both comics scripts and prose books. A graphic novel is a creative work created by two people. My main job as the writer is to make sense and then to be as supportive as possible while the illustrator does the heavy lifting. The difference between novels and comics is that with novels, there's such a density of things to keep track of. Which is maybe why I write such short novels.

You recently became curator of Abrams's Surely Books imprint, which focuses on bringing more LGBTQIA voices into comics. What are your hopes for the imprint? I hope the legacy of this imprint is incredible work by diverse artists and writers whom I have learned so much from. Our first book, *Lifetime Passes,* by Terry Blas and Claudia Aguirre, is a hard candy shell covering a sweet story, and it is so different from our second—the very complex and compelling story that is *Flung Out of Space,* by Grace Ellis and Hannah Templer. As a curator, looking at what kinds of stories queer creators want to tell and how they choose to tell them gives me a glimpse of what queer comics are and can be.

Book challenges are making the news again, with a particular focus on those that address race and queer experiences. Some of your books are frequently challenged. **What advice do you have for teens whose access to these books is limited?** I find book challenges frustrating as they play out in public because it is a conversation about books instigated by a group of people who mostly do not read the books they are challenging. I have had amazing conversations about subjects like race, class, gender, and sexuality with people who have read these books. So I would say to kids, "Keep having those conversations. Challenge people who challenge books."

What are you working on now? I have a project for DC Comics, and I've started my next murder mystery. I've got a graphic novel with Jillian Tamaki coming out at some point and a queer retelling of *Anne of Green Gables* coming out sooner. So stay tuned. **AL**

"Many decades ago, one of my daughters came out as gay. And for me, I didn't know how to react to this because I grew up in ... an extremely prejudiced family. And guess what? I turned to books. The very first thing that I did was to tell her I loved her no matter what. The second thing that I did was to go to the library."

LULU DELACRE, in "Authors of Color Speak Out against Efforts to Ban Books on Race," ABC News, Dec. 3, 2021.

"There's this fakeness that's been put over everything. There's this sheet of like, 'Let's just cover it and we're past that. We're done with that. There aren't any long-lasting effects of racism and discrimination in this country.' But there are, and it is so hard to get anybody to be real, to talk about that and to be uncomfortable about that."

EDHA GUPTA, in "These Students Helped Overturn a Book Ban. Now They're Pushing for a More Inclusive Education," *The Washington Post,* Feb. 24.

"The criterion of prizing for the Newbery ... is the same as it was a century ago, but the librarians choosing the books are not as they were. While the earliest children's librarians saw themselves as gatekeepers for literature, today's youth services professionals see themselves as information facilitators and youth advocates."

SARA L. SCHWEBEL and **JOCELYN VAN TUYL,** "The Newbery Medal Is 100. It's Smuggled Some Real Duds onto Our Library Shelves," Slate, Jan. 21.

"If I can't be myself, seven hours a day, five days a week, then I'm going back in the closet, and I can't do that. It's not good for my own mental health. And I don't think I can bear to see the students struggle and want to ask me about these things and then have to deny them that knowledge. That's not who I am as a teacher."

NICOLETTE SOLOMON, in "From Book Bans to 'Don't Say Gay' Bill, LGBTQ Kids Feel 'Erased' in the Classroom," NBC News, Feb. 20.

"IF I COULD WRITE WORTHWHILE BOOKS IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WOULDN'T UPSET ANYONE, I WOULD. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT KIND OF WRITING HAS MOSTLY PROVED NOT WORTHWHILE."

MELISSA FEBOS, "A Big Shitty Party: Six Parables of Writing about Other People," *Kenyon Review,* Mar./Apr.

2022
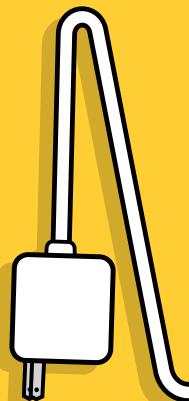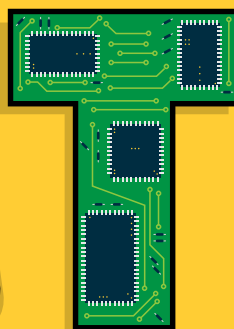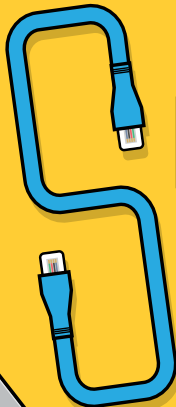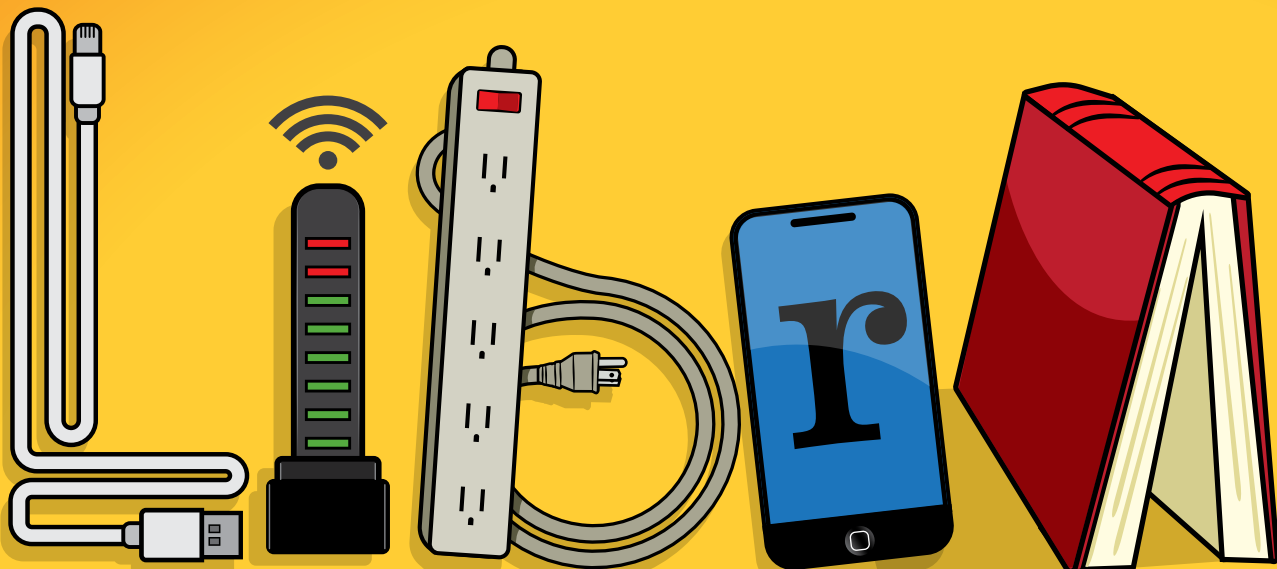
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An industry disrupted | BY Marshall Breeding

Events of the last year have reshaped the library technology industry. Previous rounds of acquisitions pale in comparison to the acquisition of ProQuest by Clarivate, which has propelled the leading library technology provider into the broader commercial sector of scholarly communications. This deal signals that the gap in size among vendors is widening, as ProQuest businesses Ex Libris and Innovative Interfaces also join Clarivate.

The emergence of such a large business at the top of the industry has accelerated consolidation among mid-level players that aim to increase scale and efficiency to remain competitive. This was a banner year for consolidation of midsize competitors, with more acquisitions than any prior year.

These deals raise concerns about weakened competition, but they may also enable new industry dynamics that will spark innovation and synergy within the broader research and education landscape. Small companies with visions for innovation often lack the resources to deliver, which larger companies can provide. Increased investor and stockholder involvement, however, translates into pressure to maximize profits and growth. The way these competing dynamics play out has important implications for libraries.

Bucking the trends

Certain events in 2021 challenged established trends. For instance, Follett Corporation took a step away from the pattern of family-owned companies retaining businesses i ndefinitely, divesting Follett School Solutions and Baker & Taylor. The FOLIO project aims to slow the momentum of Alma's charge through academic libraries, inviting the question: Can a newcomer disrupt the success of a proven solution that has more than a decade of continuous development?

Some disruptions happen more gradually. Library management systems based on open source software show steady growth. Koha, especially when supported by ByWater Solutions, continues to make inroads among US public and academic libraries.

The high-stakes changes in academic libraries contrast sharply with the public library technology sector, where products offer only slight differentiation. Integrated library system (ILS) products serving public libraries tend to evolve rather than transform, with institutions layering on additional products to modernize customer interfaces and build channels for enhanced patron engagement.

Smaller libraries are well served by companies offering affordable, increasingly sophisticated systems. These businesses add important texture to the industry, addressing niche areas ignored by the larger players and delivering systems and services to libraries with modest budgets. While their economic impact is small relative to the overall industry, their practical contributions are invaluable.

Clarivate buys ProQuest

In a move with massive implications for libraries, **PROQUEST** has become part of **CLARIVATE,** a large, publicly traded

Notable deals

- **CORNELL UNIVERSITY** in Ithaca, New York, has switched from the Ex Libris Voyager ILS to FOLIO, with support from EBSCO Information Services.

- **CULTUURCONNECT,** which includes almost all public libraries in the Flanders region of Belgium, has begun implementing OCLC Wise, moving from multiple incumbent systems.

- **LIBRARIES IRELAND,** comprising all public libraries in Ireland, has selected Civica Spydus to replace the Sierra ILS that it had been using since the inauguration of the countrywide library management project.

- **MONTGOMERY COUNTY (MD.) PUBLIC LIBRARIES** has switched from Symphony to Koha and Aspen Discovery, with support from ByWater Solutions. This system, with 21 locations serving more than 1 million people, is the largest in the US using Koha.

- **QUEENS (N.Y.) LIBRARY** chose SirsiDynix Symphony, replacing an Innovative Virtua ILS in place since 2008. The library serves 2.3 million people across 65 locations.

- **ST. LOUIS PUBLIC LIBRARY** (SLPL) and the **ST. LOUIS COUNTY (MO.) LIBRARY** have selected Innovative's Polaris as a shared ILS. The county library system previously used Sierra; SLPL will migrate from Symphony.

- **UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY** migrated from now-defunct Kuali OLE to FOLIO, with support from Index Data.

- **UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI LIBRARIES** has implemented FOLIO with support from EBSCO Information Services, moving from an Innovative Sierra ILS. ●

company in the scholarly communications and intellectual property sector. The $5.3 billion transaction, announced in May 2021, exceeds any previous deal in the library space. Clarivate—as well as competitors Elsevier and Digital Science—has a growing interest in scholarly communication workflows and analytics. The merger was pitched to investors as one that could lead to

$100 million in cost savings, likely to be achieved by reducing overlapping facilities, sharing administrative systems, streamlining executive structures, and reducing other personnel. Libraries will be on watch as to whether efficiencies are gained at the expense of technology development or support services. ProQuest resides under Clarivate's Science division, which offers

content and analytics products including EndNote, InCites Benchmarking and Analytics, Publons, ScholarOne, and Web of Science.

This move takes industry consolidation to a new level. Mergers and acquisitions in the library tech sector before 2015 mostly involved consolidation of direct competitors, as in the case of SirsiDynix. The next phase saw library technology vendors merge into larger businesses that offered content and different products and services to libraries. ProQuest's acquisitions of Ex Libris and Innovative followed this pattern. The acquisition of ProQuest by Clarivate, however, brings one of the largest library-facing companies into the broader industry of scholarly communications and research.

Consolidation has not created monopolies in these cases, though dominant vendors have emerged. The acquisitions of Innovative by ProQuest and ProQuest by Clarivate both faced scrutiny by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). An FTC review delayed completion of both mergers; SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) and other open access advocates campaigned against the ProQuest merger, predicting harm to libraries through diminished competition. However, the FTC's ultimate approval of both deals indicates that these moves fall within regulatory bounds and may signal tolerance for other large-scale events.

Business integration has thus been allowed to proceed. Not surprisingly, the executive structure of the companies has been streamlined. Jerre Stead leads Clarivate as CEO, having shepherded the company's formation through its merger of Clarivate Analytics with Churchill Capital Corp. The dual executive structure of the Intellectual Property and Science divisions has been consolidated from two presidents to a single chief product officer, Gordon Samson. ProQuest

CEO Matti Shem Tov left the company following a period in the advisory role of emeritus CEO. Ofer Mosseri has become Ex Libris general manager. Yariv Kursh continues as general manager for Innovative. The question is: Will Clarivate be able to retain the expertise that drove the success of ProQuest, Ex Libris, and Innovative?

The process of integrating ProQuest into Clarivate is expected to take a year or more to complete. Ahead of the merger, both Ex Libris and Innovative reported substantial development efforts and sales.

EX LIBRIS continues to see strong sales for its Alma library services platform. The 182 contracts signed in 2021 brought total installations to 2,261. More organizations signed deals for Alma than in any previous year. Primo was selected by 176 libraries, bringing installations to 2,910; another 55 libraries subscribed to Summon in 2021, bringing its total to 860. Summon and Primo offer distinctive user interfaces but both are based on the Ex Libris Central Discovery Index (CDI) for article-level search results. Ex Libris made 43 new sales of its Leganto reading list application. The nine sales of Ex Libris's research services platform Esploro has increased total installations to 37. Supplementary products, either bundled with Alma for new installations or as add-ons for existing customers, represent an important part of the Ex Libris sales strategy.

Ex Libris has made extensive enhancements across its product portfolio, including support for controlled digital lending in Alma, deployment of a new metadata editor, and creation of a Cloud Apps framework that enables customers to create tools and functionality that run within Alma. Significant improvements were reported for Primo and Summon, both of which rely on CDI's more than

4.5 billion records. Additionally, Ex Libris added new features to Esploro, Leganto, RapidILL, Rapido, and Rosetta, all of which continue to see new sales.

INNOVATIVE, part of ProQuest since 2020, operates mostly independently from Ex Libris. Innovative's products have been widely used in recent years, especially by public libraries. Sierra is used predominantly by public and academic libraries and has wide geographic reach. Polaris targets public libraries and consortia in the US and Canada. Newcastle Libraries in Australia selecting Polaris in January marks the company's first sale outside North America.

The launch of Vega reflects the drift of Innovative's customer base toward

public libraries. This platform delivers new patron-facing interfaces and services designed specifically for public libraries. Vega operates with Sierra and Polaris, offering expanded capabilities and a much-improved user experience compared with the Encore discovery interface introduced in 2006. The Vega LX suite includes Vega Discovery, which is expanding its capabilities for patron engagement.

Last year, Innovative signed 130 contracts for Sierra and 82 for Polaris, which included some renewals; 45 organizations representing 390 library locations subscribed to Vega. Support continues for the SkyRiver cataloging service, which gained three new subscribers for a total of 20. Seven new institutions joined INN-Reach networks, increasing its reach to 1,700 installations. Innovative offers the Summon discovery service in partnership with Ex Libris. The integration of Summon with Encore essentially replaces Encore Duet, which had offered integration with EBSCO Discovery Service.

Ex Libris reported a workforce of 921, a decrease of 52 positions from last year. Innovative saw its workforce increase from 254 to 270.

Axiell acquires Infor

AXIELL, a global company providing technology and digital media products and services to public libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural organizations, continues to expand through both the creation of new products and business acquisitions. In January 2022, Axiell acquired the Library and Information Solutions division of Infor. Not well known in the US, Axiell ranks among the top library technology companies globally. Its workforce of 368 is similar to SirsiDynix's personnel numbers.

This acquisition further extends Axiell's reach in the library technology

sector, which includes a modest presence in the US and Canada. Infor's library products, V-smart ILS and discovery service Iguana, further expand the company's diverse product portfolio. Axiell's library offerings include a mix of ILS products used mostly within specific regions and countries in Europe, such as Aurora, BIBDIA, BOOK-IT, Mikromarc, OpenGalaxy, and WeLib for school libraries. In 2016, Axiell launched Quria as its strategic next-generation platform for public libraries. Axiell plans to continue long-term development and support for its other ILS platforms while providing Quria as its main offering for new customers. Axiell has also assumed responsibility for development and support of Infor's former products, which will help libraries using those products to eventually adopt Quria.

Axiell reported 57 new sales of Quria, increasing total customers to 80, representing sites in France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK. The company formed an agreement with Demco Software in 2020 to market and

> The emergence of such a large business at the top of the industry has accelerated consolidation among mid-level players that aim to increase scale and efficiency to remain competitive.

support Quria in North America. Demco's efforts were not realized, and the agreement eventually dissolved. Although Infor's presence in the US and Canada was limited, it represents a possible foothold for the introduction of Quria.

Breaking from family business

Francisco Partners acquired FOLLETT SCHOOL SOLUTIONS in September 2021 as it was divested from family-owned FOLLETT CORPORATION, which has operated since 1873. In a surprising move, Follett School Solutions continues to use the Follett brand despite its organizational independence. Under Francisco Partners, Follett School Solutions operates as two divisions: Paul Ilse oversees technology and Britten Follett leads content, with the latter's ongoing involvement lending continuity. Both leaders report to a board of directors installed by Francisco Partners. Britten Follett withdrew from the Follett Corporation board.

Following its ownership change, Follett School Solutions discontinued its practice of conducting book fairs, launched in October 2017 as an alternative to the Scholastic Book Fairs service that has been active since 1981. Online book club company Literati purchased the Follett Book Fairs assets in January.

Follett School Solutions is the leading provider of technology solutions in the K–12 school sector. Francisco Partners specializes in tech and has other companies within its portfolio involved in education, including Renaissance and Discovery Education. Francisco Partners owned Ex Libris from June 2006 to April 2008 and acquired VitalSource Technologies from Ingram in June 2021. Compared to the generally conservative business strategies of family-owned businesses, Follett School Solutions may be positioned for more ambitious

development and global marketing under its new owner. Partnerships or synergies may arise among the educational technology companies that Francisco Partners holds.

Meanwhile, Follett School Solutions continues to increase its market share in the K–12 school library sector. The 558 contracts signed in 2021 represent 4,525 school libraries, increasing the total number of libraries using Destiny to 81,098—about eight times the market share of its nearest competitor in the US. The company employs 1,763 people.

In another high-profile move, Follett Corporation divested Baker & Taylor, acquired in 2016, to an investment group led by Baker & Taylor President and CEO Amandeep Kochar. Under Follett, Baker & Taylor ceased distributing books to independent bookstores to focus on its role as a supplier to public and academic libraries. Baker & Taylor offers the Axis 360 ebook lending service for public libraries.

In February, Follett Corporation was itself acquired by Jefferson River Capital, a private investment company. The acquisition included the Follett Higher Education unit, which provides e-commerce and point-of-sale solutions through the virtual and physical campus stores it operates.

Other industry transitions

SOUTRON LIMITED, launched in the UK in 1989 by Graham Beastall, and **SOUTRON GLOBAL,** founded in 2012 by Tony Saadat, have merged under majority ownership of Bloom Equity Partners. Saadat leads the merged company as CEO and is a minority investor. Soutron Global provides technology products for corporate and other special libraries and information centers. Besides its flagship Soutron ILS, the company has recently launched an AI-based enquiry management and document summarizer tool and continues to enhance its Discovery product. Soutron made 28 new sales for its ILS product, bringing total installations to 307.

In April 2021, **LUCIDEA** acquired Bailey Solutions, a UK company offering the Simple Little Library System and Know-All Matrix. This transaction marks Lucidea's first expansion outside of North America. The company, formerly known as SydneyPLUS, had previously acquired brands in the special libraries sector, including Cuadra Associates, Eloquent Systems, and Inmagic Canada Software, as well as companies offering technologies for law firms, such as Incite Software Solutions, LawPort, LookUp Precision, and Questor Systems. Bailey Solutions will continue to operate as a separate business, with customer data stored in the UK. More than 3,000 organizations in 50 countries have implemented Lucidea products to date. Recent developments include the launch of the PrestoWorks knowledge management application and PrestoWorks Publisher for web publishing, representing the latest products in the Inmagic family. Lucidea is privately owned by its founder and CEO, Ron Aspe.

ENVISIONWARE, a company providing sorters and other automated materials handling equipment, self-service kiosks, and other RFID products, was acquired by Volaris Group in July 2021 from its founder Mike Monk. Volaris Group is an operating company of Constellation Software, a large, publicly traded company that has acquired more than 400 companies across six operating units. Monk continues as CEO of the EnvisionWare brand.
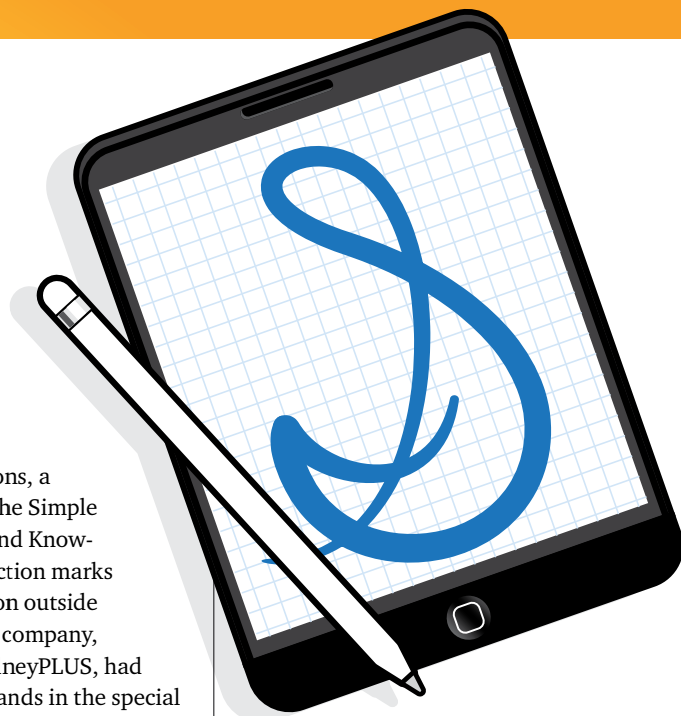
EDUCATION SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS (ESS) is a UK-based company acquired in August 2021 by ParentPay. ESS offers Library Management Cloud, which is used by public and academic libraries in the UK and was formerly branded under the product names Capita LMS, Soprano, and Talis. ESS was previously owned by Capita, which specializes in local government software and services, from 2011 through 2020. The sale of ESS was supported through an investment by Montagu Private Equity.

INSIGHT INFORMATICS, a privately owned company in Australia, was acquired last August by Knosys Limited, a public company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. Insight Informatics offers the Libero ILS used in Australia and Germany.

BARATZ, a Madrid-based company that offers the AbsysNet ILS, was acquired in June 2021 by Total Specific Solutions, another operating unit of Constellation Software. Prior to the acquisition, Baratz spun off Albadoc, its archive management line. Baratz is developing ODA, a new catalog and discovery service that

the company plans to finalize and release in 2023. Following that split and under new ownership, Baratz reported 30 employees in 2021, down from 61 in the previous year. The 42 new sales for AbsysNet increased total installations to 3,031.

Rounding out the top tier

EBSCO INFORMATION SYSTEMS

has a broad portfolio, including database, content, and technology products. EBSCOhost ranks as one of the foremost subject-oriented citation and full-text database platforms. EBSCO Discovery Service is the leading index-based discovery service, covering the complete body of scholarly literature. Employing a global workforce of almost 2,000 people, EBSCO ranks as one of the largest library-focused companies.

Rivals EBSCO and ProQuest both hold many content and technology offerings, but EBSCO was the larger company prior to the Clarivate acquisition. EBSCO's business strategies center on its database, content, and discovery offerings, while ProQuest has deeper ties to technology, especially following its acquisitions of Ex Libris and Innovative. In contrast to ProQuest's aggressive expansion, EBSCO has made smaller-scale acquisitions, including Stacks in 2019 and Zepheira in 2020. ProQuest's tech products are part of its core business, whereas EBSCO focuses on technologies that expand and maintain its database and content business.

EBSCO is a major force behind the development of open source platform FOLIO, collaborating with a broad
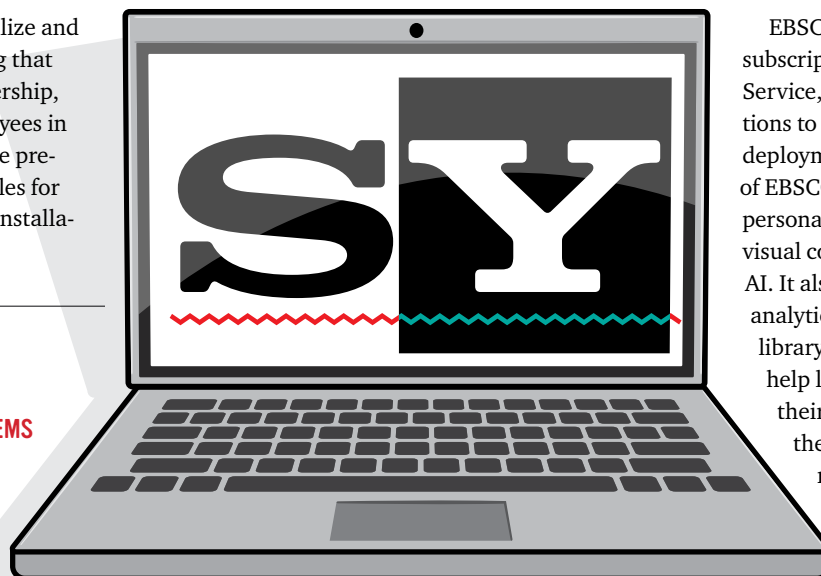
range of libraries and companies. Those efforts are bearing fruit as more libraries implement FOLIO, either as a full replacement for an incumbent ILS or for the management of electronic resources. FOLIO competes with OCLC WorldShare Management Services, Ex Libris Alma, and other proprietary library services platforms. EBSCO does not own or control the FOLIO software but it is a major stakeholder and has contributed substantial financial and development resources.

EBSCO offers hosting and support services for more than 50 libraries using FOLIO, both directly to libraries and through business partners. ByWater Solutions, for example, provides support for some libraries that use EBSCO FOLIO hosting. The growing number of libraries using FOLIO remains a small fraction compared with those that have implemented Alma or WorldShare Management Services. EBSCO's revenue opportunities are diluted by other providers; for example, Index Data offers independent commercial services and providers for implementing FOLIO without hosting or support services.

EBSCO reported 1,669 new subscriptions for EBSCO Discovery Service, bringing total installations to 12,700. EBSCO began deployment of an updated version of EBSCO Discovery Service with personalized interfaces and a visual concept map powered by AI. It also introduced Panorama analytics, a tool that taps multiple library and campus data sets to help libraries build and manage their collections and prioritize their services. The company reports progress on an enhanced book-ordering platform that will eventually succeed its longstanding GOBI Library Solutions service and EBSCOhost Collection Manager.

Many of **OCLC**'s activities fall outside library systems and technology, such as its involvement in the REALM (Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums) project that is researching the implications of COVID-19 for library materials and services, its OCLC Research reports, the training and educational activities of WebJunction, and the programs of the OCLC Research Library Partnership. Operating as a nonprofit, OCLC sustains its operations through fees charged for its products and services, grant funding, and returns from its investment portfolio. Its European division operates as a for-profit organization. The overall organization's 2021 revenues totaled $218 million, a slight increase over $215 million in 2020. OCLC invested $35.5 million in research and development in 2021, 22% of which went to products classified as management services, including WorldShare Management Services (WMS) and OCLC's multiple ILS products.

WMS, launched in 2012, is OCLC's main product for academic libraries.

It builds on WorldCat with its massive representation of library holdings and bibliographic records, providing comprehensive management for a library's print and electronic resources. WMS falls into the same product niche—library services platforms for academic libraries—as Ex Libris's Alma. In a deeply consolidated industry with limited alternatives, it provides healthy competition, even if it has not achieved as large a market share as Alma.

Currently, almost 700 libraries use WMS. In 2021, 44 library locations, split between North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, became new subscribers. Last year OCLC delivered more than 200 enhancements, with more than 70% of those in response to customer feedback. WMS has attained FedRAMP authorization, a qualification needed for serving some US government agencies. A new partnership with Talis, a product of SAGE Publishing, enables full integration between WMS and Talis Aspire, a course list application.

OCLC offers Wise as its strategic platform, or community engagement system, for public libraries. Its design integrates patron-centered personalization and marketing with the core capabilities of an ILS. Wise builds on the bicatWise technology acquired from HKA in 2013, used by most public libraries in the Netherlands. Cultuurconnect in Belgium selected Wise in 2018 as the library management system for almost all public libraries across the five provinces of the Flanders region and Brussels. Cultuurconnect serves more than 300 library locations and 7 million residents, ranking as one of the largest consortia in Europe. These libraries share a single instance of Wise, and a phased implementation of the project continues.

OCLC launched Wise in the US in March 2018 and attracted nine libraries as early adopters. By February, seven had placed Wise into production. No additional US sales were reported.

WorldCat Discovery provides the patron-facing interface for libraries using WMS and can be used independently. OCLC completed a redesign of WorldCat Discovery in 2021, including interface improvements to better comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Agreements with 11 new content providers have increased the central index to 377 providers, expanding its coverage to 4.3 billion items. Additionally, the release of a new Premium API package for WorldCat Discovery has enabled libraries to create customized interfaces and workflows.

OCLC's current portfolio of resource-sharing products includes WorldShare Interlibrary Loan; ILLiad, which automates processing for interlibrary lending and requests; and Tipasa, a web-based service for managing those requests. In 2021, an additional 26 libraries implemented Tipasa, increasing total subscribers to 373. Further, OCLC recently launched Express, a new digital delivery program with more than 1,000 libraries participating, as part of WorldShare Interlibrary Loan. The program enables

> Recent events have reshuffled the mix of ownership arrangements, and public companies represent a larger share of the industry than ever before.

fast delivery of materials to its suite of resource-sharing products using smart fulfillment. As of last July, more than 160,000 digital copies have been delivered through the service, with an average turnaround time of 10.4 hours.

OCLC acquired Capira Technologies in 2020. Development of CapiraMobile continues, including a specialized CapiraCurbside option for contactless pickup of library materials. OCLC has also made improvements to its remote access and authentication utility EZproxy. Many libraries using locally hosted instances of EZproxy are shifting to OCLC's hosted service. OCLC recently launched EZproxy Analytics, implemented by 56 libraries in 2021.

From midsize to open source

INDEX DATA has a long history of involvement with open source technologies in libraries and has developed open source components used within many library products. The initial architecture for FOLIO was developed by Index Data and funded by EBSCO. The company also provides hosting and support services for FOLIO independently from EBSCO. Some of its FOLIO clients include Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and University of Chicago (both migrating from now-defunct Kuali OLE), Simmons University in Boston, and institutions associated with the Fenway Library Organization consortium. Spokane (Wash.) Public Library recently migrated from Horizon ILS with support and hosting services from Index Data.

Index Data has been a participant and key developer for Project ReShare, a resource-sharing initiative supported by software based on the FOLIO code base. Consortia implementing ReShare with services from Index Data include the Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation and

ConnectNY. Index Data led development of the Library Data Platform reporting and analytics tool that can be used with FOLIO and in other environments.

SIRSIDYNIX is one of the largest companies in the industry focused on technology products and services. Unlike competitors Ex Libris and Innovative, it has remained an independent company, under the ownership of ICV Partners since 2015.

With Symphony and Horizon as its core ILS products, SirsiDynix developed BLUEcloud, a suite of applications that provide modern, web-based interfaces for staff functions, including Enterprise, a patron-facing portal. BLUEcloud applications support both ILS products, an important strategy to retain libraries concerned that support for Horizon may wane in favor of Symphony. Horizon installations are falling, but not precipitously (777 last year, compared with 813 in 2020 and 1,719 at its peak in 2004). The company issued 91 contracts for Symphony in 2021, including some renewals, and reported 2,374 total installations—a bit lower than the 2,423 in 2020. Sales last year were strong for add-in products, including Enterprise (82), BLUEcloud Mobile (46), and eResource Central (36).

SirsiDynix continues to market and support EOS.Web, used mostly by special libraries. Used in 850 libraries, EOS.Web installations are down from a peak of 1,137 in 2014, as special libraries have been hit hard by the consolidation of corporations and medical facilities.

Although academic libraries represent only 22% of Symphony's customer base, they are a critical component of its business. In 2021, SirsiDynix tapped into the realm of open access scholarly content, creating CloudSource OA as a new discovery service. CloudSource enables libraries to assemble collections of open access content, including open

educational resources that can be easily discovered and accessed by patrons. The service is based on an enhanced version of Enterprise and an index of open access resources derived from sources such as Unpaywall and Crossref. Copies of PDF documents reside in the SirsiDynix cloud, eliminating the need for link resolvers or other authentication barriers that complicate access. CloudSource does not require that a library be a Symphony or Horizon customer.

SirsiDynix positions CloudSource as a service that can significantly reduce a library's costs in content and discovery services. Development is under way for CloudSource+, which will include results from a library's subscription-based content. CloudSource comes bundled with BLUEcloud Course Lists, which enable instructors to easily incorporate open access materials in the classroom. SirsiDynix reports that 41 libraries have subscribed to CloudSource, including 29 added in 2021.

Last year, SirsiDynix delivered 23 new product releases. The company is making enhancements to Enterprise to improve underlying technical architecture and add new features.

> The high-stakes changes in academic libraries contrast sharply with the public library technology sector, where products offer only slight differentiation.

THE LIBRARY CORPORATION (TLC) continues to be owned and managed by the family that founded it in 1974. TLC's stability contrasts sharply with the drastic changes impacting other entities in the industry. The company employs 118 people, a slight increase from last year.

TLC specializes in technologies for public and school libraries, including Library•Solution for public libraries and schools and CARL•X for larger municipal libraries and consortia. Nine library systems representing 46 locations selected Library•Solution in 2021. The company reports that 46 customers also migrated from earlier versions of Library•Solution that use client software to the current web-based product, TLC•Cloud Services. This hosting solution was launched in 2020 and is based on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure. Last year, one additional library selected CARL•X. Another seven libraries (representing 258 locations) shifted to cloud installations of CARL•X.

TLC partnered with Solus for the creation of its new mobile app TLC•GO!, which features branding and customizations for each library. Besides catalog search and patron features, the app supports curbside pickup, digital library card registration, and online payments.

CIVICA, part of a larger technology business serving local government agencies, offers the Spydus ILS for public libraries and schools. Spydus has some business in the US but is a major player in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and the UK. The recent selection of Spydus for Libraries Ireland further boosts its presence there. In 2021, six new library systems in Australia selected Spydus. Civica's library business has 497 employees, many of whom are involved in supporting school libraries in Singapore. Recent enhancements to Spydus have included new capabilities for managing library-sponsored book

groups and improvements to the archives module for managing digital and physical special collections.

AUTO-GRAPHICS develops and supports the interlibrary loan system SHAREit and the VERSO ILS. One of the oldest companies in the industry, it was founded in 1950 and has 32 employees. Auto-Graphics is publicly traded under its parent entity Agent Information Software Inc.

VERSO, used mostly by small and midsize public libraries, saw five new contracts in 2021, increasing total installations to 543. No new installations of SHAREit were reported last year; 6,200 library locations currently use the service. Auto-Graphics reported ongoing development for both SHAREit and VERSO, including search enhancements to improve performance and related results suggestions on both platforms. VERSO now supports the latest version of the OverDrive API and supports content enrichment from Syndetics Unbound.

BIBLIOCOMMONS, part of Volaris Group since February 2020, specializes in user experience technologies for public libraries. Its suite of products includes BiblioCore (a web catalog with integrated social sharing features), Biblio-Web (for the full deployment of a library website), and BiblioEmail (for automated marketing), along with BiblioEvents and the BiblioApps mobile app. The company's Digital Experience Platform bundles BiblioWeb, BiblioEvents, and BiblioEmail as an integrated offering. New subscriptions made in 2021 include 13 for BiblioCore, 14 for BiblioWeb, 11 for BiblioApps, four for BiblioEmail, and 14 for BiblioEvents.

Last year, BiblioCommons created a new version of the main page that displays titles in BiblioCore and updated default sharing settings to address privacy issues. The company also added a Personalized Promotions feature in BiblioWeb in partnership with Chicago Public Library. A new version of BiblioApps has been developed and deployed to subscribers. BiblioEmail now comes bundled with BiblioWeb at no additional cost.

EQUINOX OPEN LIBRARY INITIATIVE—a provider of hosting and support services for Evergreen, FulfILLment, Koha, and other open source library products—has been a nonprofit since 2016. The company recently expanded its portfolio of supported products to include CORAL, an open source electronic resource management application, and SubjectsPlus, a tool for management of staff directories, research guides, and other library website components.

Equinox supports 815 library locations using Evergreen, with eight installations added in 2021; most of those customers participate in consortia. The company completed 23 Evergreen development projects last year. Additionally, Equinox supports Koha for 52 library sites. Equinox engages in initiatives to support open source communities, and recently launched its equinoxEDU educational program.

BYWATER SOLUTIONS entered the open source arena in 2009, offering hosting and support services for Koha. The company has become the established leader in this niche, providing services to 1,485 library locations, with 36 contracts added in 2021. ByWater Solutions continues to make inroads with new customers that span a range of library sizes and types. In recent years, larger libraries have selected ByWater Solutions for Koha and Aspen Discovery. Reflecting this growth, the company added five new positions in 2021, increasing its workforce to 35. ByWater Solutions works closely with the global Koha community that collaboratively develops this software.

In 2019, ByWater Solutions had expanded its services to provide support for Aspen Discovery, a catalog interface based on the VuFind code base that is optimized for public libraries. Aspen Discovery was designed to provide a more advanced and user-friendly discovery environment than a catalog built into an ILS. When ByWater Solutions acquired Aspen Discovery three years ago, the product was used in 128 libraries; installations now stand at 590. Recent implementations of Aspen Discovery include Coastline Libraries, a consortium in Oregon (Koha); MAIN, a consortium of 49 public libraries in New Jersey (Polaris); Porter County (Ind.) Public Library System (Sierra); and SWAN Library Services, a consortium of 100 libraries in Illinois (Symphony).

PTFS provides technology products for libraries and government agencies. Bibliovation, launched in 2015, is used by public, academic, school, and research libraries, including some in the US government. The company's content management system Knowvation includes full-text discovery and support for geospatial data.

PTFS reported 23 contracts for Bibliovation—including 21 new customers—increasing total installations to 471. Last year the company also completed Bibliovation 7.2, which features the ability to support a union catalog with members in multiple time zones and

better integration with Knowvation's digital content management module. Based in Rockville, Maryland, PTFS employed 102 people as of 2021.

TIND was launched in 2015 to commercialize software developed by CERN; the company currently employs 15. Kari Paulson joined TIND as its chief operating officer last year. In 2021, Matt Hall was appointed as vice president for business development and Andrew French as vice president for product development. New clients include the Folger Shakespeare Library, which selected the TIND ILS to replace Aleph, and East Hampton (N.Y.) Public Library and Charlotte (N.C.) Mecklenburg Library, both of which selected the TIND Digital Archive.

Despite similar names, no ownership relationship exists between **PTFS EUROPE** and PTFS, the US-based company. PTFS Europe was originally formed as a distributor for ArchivalWare, a digital archiving solution from PTFS, and its library services are based on the community-developed Koha. Libraries implementing Koha with support from PTFS Europe last year include University of West London and Manchester (UK) College.

PTFS Europe's business analytics platform Metabase has been implemented in about 10 libraries. The company also recently launched services for Aspen Discovery, with Newcastle (UK) Libraries as its initial customer. PTFS Europe partners with EBSCO Information Services to support FOLIO and continues to support Knowvation.

KEYSTONE SYSTEMS develops software and services for libraries that serve people with visual disabilities. The company's Keystone Library Automation System (KLAS) supports specialized workflows for these libraries, which serve patrons through delivery services as well as onsite. Keystone offers Scribe, an appliance for duplicating talking book cartridges and a core service of many of its customers. Recent development has focused on integration between KLAS and the catalog of materials provided through American Printing House.

CYBERTOOLS FOR LIBRARIES specializes in technologies for health organizations,

smaller colleges and universities, law firms, and other special libraries. Recent developments include enhancements to the CyberTools single-search portal and automated corrections of vendor-supplied data for subscriptions to improve search reliability.

PRIMA, based in Brazil, develops and supports the SophiA ILS used by libraries in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, and Spain. Prima was acquired by Volaris Group in 2018.

SOFTLINK INFORMATION CENTRES develops and supports the Liberty ILS and illumin research management application designed for legal and corporate information centers. Its sister company Softlink Education offers the Oliver ILS and LearnPath digital publishing platform and does not have a major presence in the US. Softlink completed nine releases with more than 250 new or improved features for Liberty in 2021; illumin has seen 100 enhancements. Volaris Group acquired Softlink in 2013 as its initial foray into library technologies.

Specializing in smaller libraries

BIBLIONIX supports small and midsize public libraries with its web-based Apollo ILS. The company is privately owned, debt-free, and directly manages the server infrastructure supporting Apollo, with no current plans to use public cloud-hosting services.

The 39 libraries that selected Apollo in 2021 increased total installations to 874. Many libraries that select Apollo migrate from larger-scale products with complex functionality not needed for smaller public libraries. Biblionix offers a resource-sharing option, recently rebranded as FlexShare, which gives libraries using Apollo options for their

About the report

T he 2022 Library Systems Report documents ongoing investments of libraries in strategic technology products in 2021. It covers for-profit and nonprofit organizations that offer strategic resource management products—especially integrated library systems and library services platforms—and comprehensive discovery products.

The vendors included have responded to a survey requesting details about their organization, sales performance, and narrative explanations of accomplishments. Additional sources consulted include press releases, news articles, and other publicly available information. Most of the organizations provided lists of libraries represented in the statistics reported, allowing for more detailed analysis and validation.

Additional personnel information (bit.ly/AL-22LSR-pi) and sales statistics (bit.ly/AL-22LSR-ss) are available at Library Technology Guides. ●

patrons to search or borrow from neighboring libraries that also use Apollo. Biblionix offers FlexShare at no additional cost and reports that it is used by 45% of Apollo subscribers. The company developed a new gallery view option within the Apollo catalog to present results with cover art instead of the original tabular format.

BOOK SYSTEMS develops and supports the Atriuum ILS used mostly by schools and smaller public libraries. The privately owned, midsize company employs 61 and is based in Huntsville, Alabama. Though 72% of installations are in school libraries, Book Systems has reported growth in public libraries.

Recent developments include mobile apps Librista 2.0 and Librista CheckIT, the latter offering patrons touchless self-checkout. Book Systems has used the Flutter development platform to accelerate the creation of its apps.

New features in Atriuum include automated workflows for quarantine protocols involving materials, integration with Hoopla, support for Comprise SmartPAY, and enhancements to features for acquisitions and interlibrary loan. Atriuum has implemented WebGL to render graphics in its Quilt catalog for children, making for a more engaging interface.

COMPANION, which offers the Alexandria ILS for schools and small libraries, has been owned and led by founder Bill Schjelderup since 1987. Alexandria is a web-based ILS used by 10,568 school libraries and 258 public libraries. The platform meets WCAG and ADA standards for compliance. Alexandria was selected by 149 organizations representing 448 library locations in 2021.

In addition to the Alexandria ILS, COMPanion offers KeepnTrack to track and report on visitor activity, a capability relevant to K–12 school libraries. Textbook Tracker extends Alexandria to help libraries and schools manage textbook inventory.

LIBRARYWORLD, known for the web-based ILS of the same name, has begun rolling out a new system, WikiLibrary. Under development for the past year, the program will be beta tested by 483 libraries. With sales beginning in November 2021, the company reported 21 paid customers by the end of the year; the product is free to libraries with fewer than 500 catalog records. WikiLibrary has been developed on a platform where new libraries can be added with minimal additional resources, resulting in a low-cost service. The company reported 49 contracts for LibraryWorld, increasing installations to 2,921.

MANDARIN LIBRARY AUTOMATION offers the M5 ILS, which is used mostly by small school and public libraries. The company is based in Boca Raton, Florida, and has 20 employees. In recent years, Mandarin has shifted customers away from local installations to its M5 hosted service, now used by 70% of its customers. Recent developments focus on new features for the M5 online catalog, circulation, and cataloging.

MEDIA FLEX develops and supports the open source OPALS ILS used mostly by school libraries, but also with many installations in church, synagogue, and special libraries. Additionally, the company partners with other organizations, such as the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services in New York, to deploy and support OPALS.

Looking ahead

Recent events have reshuffled the mix of ownership arrangements, and public companies represent a larger share of the industry than ever before. The businesses acquired by public companies have settled into seemingly permanent ownership arrangements, though post-merger integrations will play out over the next few years.

Private equity continues to make gains in the library technology sector, with Follett School Solutions and Soutron Global entering the fold. Many organizations have found exits into public companies. Moreover, private equity firms usually look to hold their portfolio companies temporarily, selling to other investors or companies seeking expansion through strategic acquisitions.

Most small and midsize companies continue under the ownership of their founders or families. Will these arrangements endure? Or will these companies eventually transition to private equity ownership or get acquired by larger entities when their founders retire?

The stage seems set for other transitions, including further consolidation that will play out over the next year or so. Expect more strategic acquisitions into aligned businesses rather than lateral changes in ownership. **AL**

MARSHALL BREEDING is an independent consultant, speaker, and author. He writes and edits the website Library Technology Guides.

A Career Path for Youth

PLA webinar focuses on boosting youth workforce preparedness and engagement

No question: The coronavirus pandemic has warped the educational path for today's young adults, in turn affecting their readiness for the workforce. In the past, many young people have sought out part-time employment in areas such as the food service industry or seasonal employment, sectors that have been hit hard by the pandemic. These jobs not only provided needed income but also skills training in pursuit of college or career readiness. Now, after more than two years of COVID-19 restrictions and school disruptions, many young adults face the necessity of working to help support their families.

An October 2021 webinar convened by the Public Library Association (PLA) and members of LibsWork, a national networking group focused on workforce and small business development, explored the ways in which libraries can support young people as they enter the workforce amid these ongoing challenges. Librarians and workforce development professionals shared how such programs are helping young people develop essential skills and experience, including work-based learning opportunities, apprenticeships, and more.

Panelists included Kate Aubin, head of youth services at Providence (R.I.) Public Library; Janelle Duray, chief operating officer and executive vice president of Jobs for America's Graduates; and, representing the Division of Career and College Readiness at the Maryland State Department of Education, Marquita Friday, director of career programs, and Jennifer Griffin, career programs and apprenticeship specialist. The moderators were Larra Clark, deputy director of PLA and the American Library Association's Public Policy and Advocacy Office, and Lisa Shaw, workforce development specialist for rural and small libraries at Maine State Library in Augusta.

What does the youth workforce look like? How many are unemployed, and how is that measured?

JANELLE DURAY: If we look at the percentages over the past 20 years, we're seeing youth unemployment at the start of the millennium in the single digits. And that's good. But then it more than doubled during the Great Recession; young people were hit the hardest in 2008. It took several years for us to get back to those single digits. And then of course, COVID-19 hit, so there was a tremendous spike.

Janelle Duray

All in all, we're moving in the right direction but we're not quite back to the prepandemic levels of 9.1% youth unemployment. Significantly, unemployment rates for Black and Brown youth are higher than what we see among white youth.

But unemployment numbers count only those who are considered part of the labor force—those who want a job and can't find one. A different number—the labor force participation rate—tells us that many youth are not looking for jobs. Youth unemployment might be at about 10%, but the youth labor force participation rate in July of this year was only 60%, meaning 40% of 16-to-24-year-olds across the country are not employed and are not seeking employment.

What kinds of barriers to employment are young people running into?

LISA SHAW: In a recent survey we were involved with, which had more than 200 young people responding, those who were working were asked what sorts of barriers they were encountering. In some cases, they said no barriers. But there were a lot who did indicate some barriers.

Lisa Shaw

For many respondents, lack of transportation was huge, especially in rural areas where there's no public transportation to speak of. Young people are afraid of taking on debt for higher education or for transportation or housing. They see their parents still paying off student loans or car payments.

Not understanding what skills were needed for a particular job—or not having skills they think are needed—is another barrier. Lack of technology, whether it's broadband connectivity or even cell service, or a lack of equipment in the home, was another obstacle. Some also mentioned social anxiety with regard to in-person interactions as a problem for them.

DURAY: Supporting young people is not just about connecting them to jobs. You have to focus on the whole human and reach them where they are, understand what challenges they may have that prevent them from securing employment, and start there. And if you take this learner-engaged, wraparound-services approach, which I think public libraries do, adding and engaging other community partners, you will see successful outcomes.

How do you plan workforce readiness programs *with* youth rather than *for* youth?

KATE AUBIN: About six years ago, Providence Public Library applied for an Institute of Museum and Library Services leadership grant. Prior to that we had no real teen program to speak of. In doing research and running focus groups, we saw how important it was for youth to get paid and learn workforce skills at the same time. So we developed Teen Squads— driven by youth interests—to focus on work readiness, development of 21st-century skills, and connected learning opportunities.

One of our biggest goals was to talk a lot about people skills—those soft skills that employers consistently say people coming into the workforce lack. Candidates might have strong hard skills but lack in areas like teamwork, communication, critical thinking, perseverance, and engagement in their own learning. So we make sure to embed

Kate Aubin

these in all of our programs. We also have a content instructor that focuses on hard, industry-specific skills.

Another goal we have for our teen programs is that they provide work exposure. We have guest speakers who talk about different industries that they come from, and about how there's no one way to get onto a specific career path. They talk about their backgrounds and what skills they use in the workplace. We try to make sure these guest speakers look like the youth in our program—we serve a lot of youth of color. We want them to see these are opportunities they can pursue themselves.

> **"All of our programs require a big investment of time so they involve either a stipend or a paycheck. Offering youth wages for their time and for the work they put in is important."**
>
> **KATE AUBIN,** head of youth services
> at Providence (R.I.) Public Library

All of our programs require a big investment of time, especially the Teen Squad programs and our summer employment programs, so they involve either a stipend or a paycheck. Offering youth wages for their time and for the work they put in is important.

At the end of every Teen Squad program, the young people present their final projects to the community and their friends, peers, and library staffers. They get the pride of showing off their work and being able to explain it to others, and they also get to practice presentation and public-speaking skills.

How helpful are career and technical education (CTE) programs?

MARQUITA FRIDAY: They have come a long way over the years. And currently, at least at the Maryland State Department of Education, when we think about CTE, we think about opportunities that will really engage students. We want to make sure our programs are aligned to high-skill, high-wage, high-demand careers. We want students to be able to earn an industry-recognized credential or a postsecondary credential that will allow for advancement in a specific career cluster. We're looking for opportunities that will lead students into careers that will give them a sustainable, family-supporting, livable wage.

A number of years ago, we developed a CTE library project in which we partnered with local school systems and their nearby public libraries. The point was to be able to bring awareness and knowledge about CTE to parents, to other people within the school systems, to policymakers, and to the broader communities.

We gave small grants to school systems. Funds could be used to create posters about CTE to put into public libraries, for example. And there was always a kickoff event that would include the state superintendent of schools, people from the local chamber of commerce, and people from the local libraries. CTE students had the opportunity to

Marquita Friday

talk about what they were able to do with their CTE program of choice, whether they were still in high school or recently graduated. If they were a recent graduate, they talked about how their CTE program helped shape their plans. We did nine of these events, which means that we hit over a third of our school districts.

What about apprenticeship programs?

JENNIFER GRIFFIN: Apprenticeship Maryland is a program that we started in 2015. After the two-year pilot, we saw that it needed to continue, so we made it a CTE program, meaning students can use it to meet graduation requirements. We are thrilled about that. We started by writing a program of study and gave it out to all our school systems. They can decide

if they want to participate or not. Once they fill out the paperwork and it's approved, they can start it. And I'm very happy to say that out of the 24 local school systems in Maryland, 20 are currently offering it.

Basically, the program allows students to start doing a youth apprenticeship while in high school. It's available for students who are at least 16 years old, juniors or seniors. There's a lot of flexibility: Students can start as early as the beginning of their junior year or even the summer before, if they're 16. They continue working until they graduate. The best part about this is that they are paid by the employer and that it is at least minimum wage. The program also includes related instruction that is dictated by the business.

Jennifer Griffin

One company that came on board during the pilot, an autobody company in Frederick County, had the same problem as everybody else in the United States: They couldn't find workers, so they decided to become a youth employer. They did the paperwork and were approved by the school system, and it is five or six years now since the program was implemented. The school system now is the only pipeline they use to hire employees.

They usually have 10 or 12 students who apply for one or two positions every year. Once those students graduate from high school, they can continue working for the next few years as an adult apprentice, and the company pays them to get a two-year degree at the local community college. It's a win-win.

FRIDAY: There are many ways for public libraries to partner with local school systems and community colleges to provide CTE information. If there is an apprenticeship coordinator in your state, for example, you can invite that person to come to the library to talk about opportunities for young people. That's a good way to find out what workforce development initiatives are happening in your state.

If you're having people from the school system or a community college coming into the library for employment information sessions, you want to time it appropriately. When we did the CTE library project, for instance, the sessions always happened in November, December, and January because at the secondary level, students start signing up for classes in January. We wanted to put the event close to the time students were signing up.

What steps can libraries take to enhance youth workforce readiness, even if they're stretched and funds are limited?

AUBIN: We all know from working in libraries that capacity is limited. There's so much to do and so little time and so few people to do it. The way we approach partnerships is we make sure we're at the table. We go to a lot of different

meetings even if it feels like maybe that's a weird place for a library to be. We see what people are doing and how it might connect to what we want to do. It takes a lot of time to get people to think of the library as not just a place for books. But once they see all our assets, it becomes a clear, no-brainer partnership.

Partners can run workshops and give feedback on projects. They do tours of their workplaces and talk about career paths. Using partners takes some of the work off our hands and exposes us to other adults in the community. We reach out to our library staff and board members to find partners. Everyone has great networks and it's foolish not to use them. Find out who else in your community is already doing this work and assess possible resources. You might find someone who wants to partner with you so you aren't responsible for the whole load of it. If you have some space but don't have money, maybe find someone who has money but needs space. See what needs you can help each other meet.

We're lucky to have leadership that believes in what we're doing and supports us to make things happen. If you're going to do this work, you need to make a case for it to your supervisors, administration, and board. Once they see the value, it can change everything.

It's hard work, I'm not going to lie. It took us a lot of time and effort to get where we are. But the youth who have come out of our programs are always asking us, "What's next? What can we do? What new program are you going to offer? How can we stay involved?" It really is about building relationships with young people so that they see the library as a place for them. AL

Rightsizing Your Collection

Make the academic collection management process more intentional and user-centric

BY Mary E. Miller and Suzanne M. Ward

Academic librarians have long grappled with issues of collection size, quality versus quantity, and maintaining a core collection. In previous eras, libraries provided access to content by acquiring and owning print copies of titles to allow immediate access to users.

From a national perspective, we now understand that collections are hugely redundant and large portions go unused. Collections were built on a just-in-case basis over the course of centuries; when items needed to be close at hand and out-of-print titles were difficult and expensive to acquire, this was the best strategy to ensure access.

This strategy is no longer sustainable. But more importantly, it no longer serves the best interests of most academic library users. Today, collections—both print and digital—are only one component of a vast array of services academic libraries provide, including research support, data repositories and data research services, publishing services, performance and creative spaces, and much more.

The realities of space and resource availability and the demand for new services are forcing even the largest and best-funded academic libraries to acknowledge that they cannot, in fact, keep everything. They must make irreversible decisions about discarding an unprecedented amount of material accumulated over the past century.

At the same time, relatively little is known about the long-term impact of current withdrawal practices on the future quality of legacy print collections. There is a significant risk: If we all weed our collections individually and with little or no coordination, we'll be left with a de facto national collection built on whatever remains.

From weeding to rightsizing

Rightsizing is an approach to counteract that bleak future. It is an ongoing process that maintains a collection's optimal physical size by balancing such factors as:

- building current collections that have a high potential for use in the short and medium terms
- choosing electronic resources over print ones for most new acquisitions
- identifying local collections of distinction
- removing low-use titles that are widely held by other institutions
- participating in shared print programs to reduce the number of lesser-used titles held in a consortium or region, while retaining enough working copies to meet occasional demand
- withdrawing titles in physical formats that duplicate user-preferred, stable electronic access to the same material

Rightsizing, at its core, is a method for prioritizing which content libraries should keep, including titles of local and regional significance and titles that are held by very few other institutions. It usually involves an awareness of regional and consortium partners' needs to conduct these same activities, and it employs a variety of collaborative approaches for collectively meeting users' needs for less-used material. This process uses data decision tools to create candidate lists for withdrawal and retention that take into account many variables, including local criteria and the holdings in other institutions and trusted digital repositories.

Rightsizing is not the ruthless culling of a library collection, nor is it just the tentative and apologetic removal of "safe" material like old editions of textbooks and superseded reference works. It is a strategic, thoughtful, balanced, and planned process whereby librarians shape a

collection by taking into account factors such as disciplinary differences; the impact of electronic resources on study, teaching, and research; the local institution's program strengths; previous use based on circulation statistics; and the availability of backup print copies within the region for resource-sharing. Rightsizing is determined by an individual institution's mission, scope, priorities, and responsibilities; a rightsized approach for one institution might be too conservative or too aggressive for another.

While rightsizing does, generally, result in the reduction of browsable print collections through the intentional application of criteria and use of analysis, the term *rightsizing* encompasses much more than this. Through the same thoughtful processes used for the removal of collections, the library may identify rare materials it wishes to physically preserve, digitize, or transfer to special collections. The library may also identify groups of materials that it wishes to commit to retain, either as part of a shared print program or on its own.

The best of intentions

The rightsizing approach suggests intentionality throughout the collection management process—that the same care used in the initial process of selecting materials should be used throughout the life of an item. It is a holistic, data-informed approach to responsibly managing physical collections that allows libraries to thoughtfully determine not only what must be withdrawn, but also what should be retained, such as titles of local and regional significance and titles that are held by very few other institutions.

For decades, many academic libraries have deferred routine periodic analysis and strategic withdrawals. Alternatively, some libraries have built extensions and storage facilities and filled them with low-use material that is widely duplicated elsewhere.

One of the positive aspects of deferring this collection maintenance, however, is that both technology and national infrastructure are

> The realities of space and resource availability and the demand for new services are forcing even the largest and best-funded academic libraries to acknowledge that they cannot, in fact, keep everything.

finally advancing to a point where libraries can more easily make decisions about whether to retain or withdraw large portions of their collections while ensuring that users will still be able to get hold of the materials they need. No longer must each individual library weed in a vacuum, nor must staff physically handle every single piece during the decision-making process.

Today librarians can easily compare local holdings across a consortium, region, country, and the world to make data-driven batch decisions that are based not just on local circulation figures but also on factors such as the relative scarcity of some print titles, the holdings of specific peer or partner libraries, full-text availability from a stable vendor, and many other considerations.
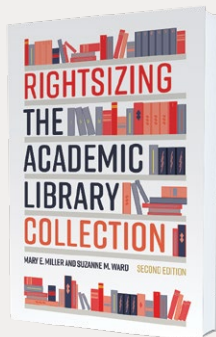
This is excerpted from *Rightsizing the Academic Library Collection, 2nd edition* by Mary E. Miller and Suzanne M. Ward (ALA Editions, 2021)

Improving the user experience

The reasons why libraries rightsize their collections are many, complex, and often interrelated. Space is an obvious reason; any growing physical collection cannot continue to occupy the same finite space indefinitely. Coupled with this is the need to use library space differently, or pressure to meet other campus priorities by finding space for new or expanding programs and services.

Large libraries that in the past seldom discarded anything have found that over time their collections have grown enormously, and the cost of maintaining low-use material has risen out of proportion to the utility of having it available onsite or nearby, especially when much of this material is now available in digital equivalents.

Maintaining no- and low-use material also represents real opportunity costs: In what other ways might the library have spent those maintenance funds for better-used and more appreciated programs, services, and materials? Even when comparing the cost of storing collections onsite with remote storage, there are significant costs associated with keeping low- or no-use materials on browsable shelving.

Obsolescence is another major reason for rightsizing. The information in some books eventually goes out of date, although at different rates for different disciplines. Some parts of a library collection are now in less desirable formats, such as microform, and many other items are outdated, physically deteriorated, duplicated in newer and preferred formats, or unused because of program changes or other reasons, such as a lack of local academic interest. Users increasingly prefer—or will at least use—electronic resources, which provide 24/7 access when visiting the library is inconvenient or impossible, as is the case with the growing number of distance learners.

A further concern is that as collections grow and age, users will find it increasingly difficult to identify and locate relevant material on crowded shelves. Some studies have shown that books located on the uppermost and lowermost shelves are used less frequently than books shelved at more easily accessible levels. Circulation staff must spend more time shifting books to try to make more room. Crowded stacks may also be prone to shelving errors, thus requiring more staff hours for shelf reading.

While recovering space, removing unpopular formats, and avoiding further building costs are all important reasons to rightsize a collection, at the heart of any rightsizing project stands the core value that the effort is being undertaken to improve the user experience. Libraries can facilitate browsing by students and faculty and increase the relevance of the existing collection to current curricular needs by removing dated or irrelevant titles from open shelves.

Rightsizing projects should ideally be undertaken in the same user-centric spirit as collection development: as a complement to the activity of building the collection to meet user needs. Rightsizing shapes the collection to help users find relevant, up-to-date material quickly and easily, and provides access to publications that users prefer in a paper format.

Collective collections

A growing number of libraries also view contributing to the collective collection as a key component of user-centered rightsizing activities. Collective collections, also known as shared print programs, involve mostly academic or research libraries collaborating to retain, develop, and

provide access to their physical collections. By consolidating the retention of little-used items across multiple institutions, libraries can protect the scholarly record while reclaiming library space and reducing the costs of maintaining duplicate titles.

In 2014 OCLC issued *Right-Scaling Stewardship: A Multi-Scale Perspective on Cooperative Print Management,* a report that looked at the issue both from the perspective of one of the member libraries and from the perspective of the entire consortium. The authors stated that shared print strategies not only focus on reducing redundancy among member libraries but can also identify both local and group strengths.

For example, while the print book collection at Ohio State University Libraries in Columbus duplicated much of the other consortium members' collections, researchers also found that each local collection had a significant element of rare titles that were not widely held by other partners. They noted that, when it comes to titles, "uniqueness is rare, but rareness is common."

The report concluded that "managing, providing access to, and preserving the collective print book resource must be a shared responsibility, because no single institutional collection (or even group-scale resource) has a reasonable approximation of the complete corpus of material, either overall or in any particular subject area."

Lingering questions

When rightsizing, a single library should keep titles that are rare or scarce—that is, only a few copies remain within a prescribed set of institutions—even if local patrons no longer use them. Not only will these titles be maintained for the scholarly community in general, but they will also form at least part of the library's contribution to future cooperative print-management efforts. Research suggests that 75% or more of the print books in any given North American

region are held by five or fewer libraries in that region, meaning that scarcity is fairly common.

But a large question concerns the number of print copies that should be retained and where they should be located. While undertaking a rightsizing project, a common issue that staff at Wesleyan University Library in Middletown, Connecticut, heard was: "Yes, the books being considered for withdrawal are held by at least 30 other libraries in the United States—for now. But what if some or all of those libraries decide to withdraw their copies?" By participating in formal shared print programs with a memorandum of agreement that copies will not be withdrawn without consultation with other members, libraries can begin to address this type of concern.

Rightsizing is not a perfect process, and inevitably there will be a few mistakes, especially with large, retroactive projects that involve tens or hundreds of thousands of volumes—or even in the routine collection maintenance that rightsizing also requires. But none of these errors are irreparable if librarians focus on withdrawing low-use books that are widely held in print elsewhere, or on journals that either have electronic equivalents or are readily available through interlibrary loan.
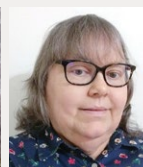
Developing and building a consensus for thoughtful and strategic withdrawal criteria reduces the likelihood of many errors. It is important to focus on the overall benefits of reducing the physical collection, rather than agonizing over the few items that may need to be borrowed or replaced later. AL

> Rightsizing is determined by an individual institution's mission, scope, priorities, and responsibilities; a rightsized approach for one institution might be too conservative or too aggressive for another.

MARY E. MILLER is director of collection management and preservation at University of Minnesota Libraries in Minneapolis. **SUZANNE M. WARD** retired in 2017 from Purdue University Libraries in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Pairing Up

Peer mentorship offers approach to retaining librarians of color

BY Taylor Healey-Brooks and Michelle Lee

TAYLOR HEALEY-BROOKS is African American collections and community engagement librarian at the Douglass-Truth branch of Seattle Public Library.

MICHELLE LEE is research and instruction librarian at Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia. Her focuses include diversity in academic libraries, student engagement, and peer mentoring.

Research across many fields has shown that having a mentor can be crucial for people of color. Mentoring can lead to knowledge, experience, networking opportunities, and increased job satisfaction. One of the most important things mentoring offers is a sense of community and emotional support in one's career.

Research demonstrates that people of color in libraries benefit from having a mentor with a similar background, but it can be difficult for new librarians to find such a person with years of training (bit.ly/DiversityMentorship). Because of the lack of diversity in librarianship (in 2020, approximately 83% of credentialed librarians were white) and problems retaining librarians of color, it can be challenging for new librarians to find a mentor with ample experience in the field. Peer mentoring—a relationship in which the participants are at similar points in their career—can help fill this gap by providing mentees with opportunities to build community, share knowledge, and support other librarians of color.

We, the authors, represent a successful peer mentoring relationship. We met as staff members in an academic library and learned that we were both interested in obtaining MLIS degrees and becoming librarians. What started out as friendly conversation developed into professional camaraderie as we worked together on committees, proofread each other's essays for scholarships and grad school admissions, and even researched and presented on the benefits of peer mentoring at the National Conference of African American Librarians. We've also been able to support each other emotionally through difficult events like microaggressions, bullying, and isolation in the workplace.

Other resources on peer mentorship in libraries show that our experiences are not unique. At the 2016 National Diversity in Libraries Conference, Genevia Chamblee-Smith and Christian I. J. Minter's poster presentation "Beyond ARL Diversity Initiatives: Peer Mentoring" (bit.ly/PeerMentoringPoster) cited research showing that participants in two Association of Research Libraries (ARL) diversity initiatives received peer mentoring from other members of their cohort after those programs ended.

Through surveys and interviews, Chamblee-Smith and Minter learned that 58% of survey participants received peer mentoring from within their cohort and found the experience helpful. Benefits included increased self-confidence, a more developed community or support system, help in career decisions, new skills, and greater resilience.

Peer mentorship is especially crucial for early-career librarians. Although there have been various diversity initiatives for people of color to enter the profession, many of those librarians leave relatively early in their career. The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries webinar "Why I Left the Profession" (bit.ly/ASERLwebinar) details many concerns, but most importantly it tackles the truth about retention in librarianship from an equity, diversity, and inclusion perspective. Mentorship can provide support through difficult times in one's career. For new librarians of color, having a mentor who shares their cultural background can help them establish a bond and build connections, factors that help increase retention.

Research has also shown that minority librarians place more importance on formal mentoring programs than their nonminority counterparts do (bit.ly/DiversityMentorship). Likewise, peer mentoring can help fulfill a critical need by providing mentoring relationships and communities of shared knowledge, which help to support and retain librarians of color.

Institutions, too, can foster peer mentoring by giving them proper credit. Often, librarians and information professionals of color participate in a great deal of invisible labor, including mentorship of their peers. Libraries can ensure that those relationships are respected as much as formal mentorship is. As data on peer mentoring in libraries is scarce, institutions should prioritize it as a rich area for future study and support it by allocating more resources to these valuable relationships. **AL**

> Having a mentor who shares a similar background can help build connections.

Taming the Wild Web

Digital design begins with education

BY Laura Solomon

LAURA SOLOMON is library services manager for the Ohio Public Library Information Network and a W3C-certified front-end web developer.

A lot of my job as a front-end web developer comes down to education. Sure, I spend a lot of time designing websites and writing code. Much of that work wouldn't happen, though, if I didn't pave the way with information. This is a little-known truth for most web designers: Educating the client is often one of the first—and most important—steps of the design process. I've found some library clients express desire for design elements that aren't in their best interests, thinking something looks "cool" even though it doesn't necessarily serve library patrons.

Whether or not a library wants a specific element on its site may be irrelevant; the web design and user experience fields are now based on the science of usability, not subjective judgments.

Back in the early days of the web, a fair amount of design work happened in a vacuum, lacking real guidelines and data. Fortunately, the medium has matured, and rules can now be applied objectively. Not everyone knows this, however.

I've heard all of the following comments from libraries recently:

- "Nothing should be more than three clicks from the homepage." (No data supports this theory.)
- "Carousels are awesome!" (These rotating images can be attractive but may load either too quickly or too slowly for some users.)
- "We know what our users think and how they use our website." (Statements like this are almost always based on staff anecdotes alone.)
- "We need graphics to jazz up the site." (Some graphics hamper usability and ADA compliance.)

Why do these myths persist in libraries? Perhaps because so many of us grew up with the web, we were initiated in the very early days, when it was a veritable Wild West. Not everyone realizes that those days are long gone and there are real sheriffs in town.

Another reason? Some truths are hard. The fact that carousels turn off users doesn't square with the love affair many libraries have with them. Users often don't need or even like graphics, which some think takes much of the fun out of web work. Mythology persists, even in an industry devoted to the dissemination of information, because it can be hard to give up what's comfortable.

Yet another factor contributing to these myths' endurance: Library people spend a lot of time looking at the websites of other libraries. Just because one library does something doesn't make it right. That library may be operating under the same outdated or myth-based assumptions you are. If you want to know what really works, look at websites in industries that live or die by whether people buy their services or products online or rely heavily on online donors. Those companies and organizations depend on the science of usability and often have invested significant funds to make sure users have a frictionless experience.

Take a look at metrics to determine why users are coming to your site. Chances are, you'll be unpleasantly surprised. In general, most people go to a library's website for access to their account, to search the catalog, to get the library's phone number and address, and to see program information. Anything else is pure frosting.

> Look at websites in industries that live or die by whether people buy their services or products online.

As information professionals, we should seek studies and evidence on user experience and web design rather than rely on our own preferences or anecdotal evidence.

My hope is that by the time I retire, whoever comes after me will have to do a lot less myth-busting in libraries. In the meantime, let's all be information professionals: Let's put aside our outdated views and our own convenience to create better websites for users.

Adapted from "Thinking Differently about Library Websites: Beyond Your Preconceptions," Library Technology Reports vol. 58, no. 3 (Apr. 2022). Read more at bit.ly/ALA-LTR. AL

Achieving Relevance

Codesigned services boost
the impact of our work

BY Linda W. Braun

LINDA W. BRAUN
is a California-based consultant and a past president of ALA's Young Adult Library Services Association.

A few months ago, I walked past a public library displaying a banner that read: MORE THAN BOOKS. I wondered to myself, "What exactly does that mean?"

On the surface, the staffers who decided to put up the banner most likely wanted people passing by to know that libraries provide a variety of services that go beyond checking out materials. Perhaps they also hoped that if members of the community knew more about these services, they would perceive the library as a relevant institution. Yet you would have no idea what offerings their library has from that slogan.

These days, there is much pressure to show and market the relevancy of our work. What exactly does it mean to be *relevant*? We could say it means that something must have a bearing on *the matter at hand.* There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to being relevant to our communities; what is important to one group of people may not be to another.

Further, relevancy cannot be achieved in a silo. Staffers must connect with the public to uncover community assets and service gaps before developing or advertising resources.

In most communities, for example, early literacy is considered a *matter at hand.* But not all children and caregivers have the same needs when it comes to early literacy. Library workers must ask questions of stakeholders to learn what is wanted at the current time and under the current conditions. Using these connections and this knowledge, youth services staffers can then design relevant services with stakeholders as part of the process. Without input from local communities, programs and services may be poorly attended or underutilized.

A few years ago, a large library system in the Pacific Northwest started a sensory storytime program in several of its branches. At one location, the children's librarian found that very few families who lived in the neighborhood, which has a significant Somali population, attended the storytime. She approached community organizations and businesses to figure out why attendance was so low.

The librarian learned that the immigrant families who lived near her branch did not have the same attitudes toward neurodivergency as people who had been living in the US for a longer period. Some didn't know what autism was, while others held different views of behavior and socialization dynamics or preferred not to address the issue outside the home. The sensory storytime was not culturally appropriate and therefore not relevant to this neighborhood. After the librarian had more conversations with community members, she worked with them to create services that better met the early learning needs of the area. This included more traditional storytimes in languages spoken by the population of the neighborhood and opportunities to bring families together for informal learning and community building.

By contrast, codesigning programs with your community from the start—and prioritizing its needs early in the process—can lead to relevant and successful services. In 2020, youth services staffers at Austin (Tex.) Public Library teamed up with members of the Austin Youth Council to determine how to meet the needs of young people in the city and provide support for those who work with youth. What resulted was the creation of a priority dashboard (bit.ly/AL-YMdashboard) that guides work on issues such as mental health, self-advocacy, civic engagement, and digital access. The dashboard reflects services that have been improved through the partnership while acting as a launch pad for both partners to continue this collaboration.

How do we show people that libraries are relevant? Sometimes this requires staffers to explain and reframe the impact of programs and services. But libraries will have a difficult time demonstrating the value of their work if these programs and services aren't built in and with the communities they serve. AL

> Staffers must connect with the public to uncover community assets and services gaps before developing resources.

Meeting Every Maker

Enhancing accessibility in makerspaces

BY Amelia M. Anderson and Abigail L. Phillips

The US Census Bureau reported in 2019 that 40.7 million Americans—or about 12% of the population—have some sort of disability. Libraries work hard to meet the needs of patrons and staff with disabilities and make our facilities accessible to all, but there's one space that's too often left out of these conversations: the makerspace.

Acknowledging that gap, our research team set out to explore the accessibility of public library makerspaces. We did this through focus groups with disability advocates and stakeholders, with grant support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Every makerspace is different, we learned, but there were some common themes in our discussions with participants. We found that makerspaces are typically not designed with accessibility in mind, even though many librarians we spoke with believe accessibility should be a critical feature of these spaces. There isn't a simple checklist or starter pack for designing makerspaces to be accessible from the beginning; instead, librarians typically go back and alter the spaces to make them more accessible, which can be challenging and time-consuming. We also found that patrons with disabilities aren't always comfortable asking for help or aren't aware that making such a request is an option.

A common barrier to accessibility is having furniture that is not adaptable; table heights must be adjustable or offer multiple height choices for users. And one of the biggest things we heard was that even if the makerspace itself is accessible, it's all for naught if the building it is housed within is not. Some older library facilities are challenging to navigate, and makerspaces are often tucked away in the back of the building.

Libraries of any budget can make their spaces more accessible. It does not need to be a big-budget renovation (though, of course, there are some amazing things that can be done with a larger budget). We advocate first and foremost for speaking with members of the population you serve. Every community has different needs, and it is important to listen to input from your community members. Try to hold those conversations with patrons with disabilities themselves rather than only with caregivers or family members. Learning directly from those with disabilities will increase your ability to truly meet the needs of this population.

In our research we spoke with a diverse group of library patrons and library workers who live with disabilities about their experiences in public library makerspaces. They had several recommendations on how to improve accessibility. For patrons with mobility limitations, tables and chairs that are easily movable and convenient to raise or lower would allow greater self-sufficiency and better use of the space. For several neurodivergent patrons, the noises, lights, and crowded environment of the makerspace made it difficult for them to enjoy their experience; possible solutions include changing the lighting arrangements, allowing time for patrons with disabilities to have a more relaxed environment (even capping the number of patrons using the facility), and making accommodations for those who are sensitive to noise.

There are many ways to learn more about your library's disabled community. Comment cards are one small way to gather information. For individuals comfortable speaking publicly, consider gathering volunteers for a working group or focus group. Any opportunity to speak with these patrons is a chance to learn more about their needs.

Disability is something that can happen to anyone, and it must be part of the conversation around equity, diversity, and inclusion. We need to ensure all patrons can explore their hobbies and passions in a space that is not only accessible but also comfortable and welcoming. These considerations are critical if we wish to call library services truly inclusive. AL

> There isn't a simple checklist or starter pack for designing makerspaces to be accessible.

AMELIA M. ANDERSON is assistant professor of library and information studies at Darden College of Education and Professional Studies at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She is author of *Library Programming for Autistic Children and Teens, 2nd Edition* (ALA Editions, 2021).

ABIGAIL L. PHILLIPS is assistant professor at the School of Information Studies at University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

Diving into Diversity

## Ways to make equity a central focus in the work of different types of libraries

ALLISON ESCOTO is head librarian at the Center for Fiction in Brooklyn, New York.
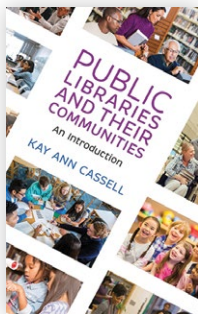
Public Libraries and Their Communities

By Kay Ann Cassell

Before a library can offer services and build collections for diverse patrons, it is important that it understands the makeup of its community. Cassell offers an introductory look at the basics of running a public library and speaks to how staffers can directly connect to the populations they serve. With topics ranging from the history of public libraries in the United States to advocacy, community outreach, and civic engagement, this is an informative and practical guide that public libraries of all sizes will find useful. Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. 236 p. $42. PBK. 978-1-5381-1270-0. (Also available as an ebook.)
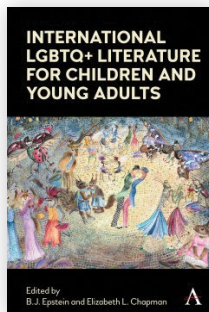
International LGBTQ+ Literature for Children and Young Adults

Edited by B. J. Epstein and Elizabeth L. Chapman

One of the most meaningful ways to serve broad populations is through curated collection development and a deep understanding of what makes a diverse collection. Epstein and Chapman examine young people's LGBTQ+ literature from around the world—including picture books, middle-grade, and young adult books—comparing representation, messaging, and the placing of queer literature in the contexts of different cultures. Essays by academics and activists offer important perspectives outside of the English-speaking market, an underrepresented area of study. This is a significant contribution to the discussion of serving all communities through collections. Anthem Press, 2021. 360 p. $125. 978-1-7852-7984-3. (Also available as an ebook.)

Let's Talk about Race in Storytimes

By Jessica Anne Bratt

Storytimes are ubiquitous in library programming and offer a great opportunity to provide diverse perspectives. Here, Bratt pairs practical information with real-world advice and examples of how to incorporate a discussion of race into storytime programming. With the goal of normalizing conversations that affect those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), this handy title provides sample activities, book lists, advice on building community partnerships, and talking points to facilitate the introduction—or continuation—of the conversation around race through storytime. This book is an informative and useful guide. ALA Editions, 2022. 112 p. $49.99. PBK. 978-0-8389-3789-1.

BY Allison Escoto
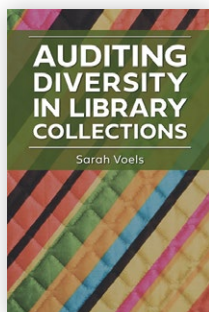
Auditing Diversity in Library Collections

By Sarah Voels

This forthcoming book discusses ways to assess collections by auditing them for diversity. The idea that library collections should reflect their communities is the basis for this informative volume, which includes case studies that delve into methods used and lessons learned. Voels provides examples of best practices from libraries that have conducted diversity audits and also cases from other industries and how they can be applied to libraries. An excellent tool for libraries interested in improving their collections. Libraries Unlimited, 2022. 140 p. $55. PBK. 978-1-4408-7874-9. (Also available as an ebook.)
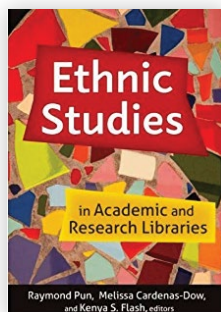
Ethnic Studies in Academic and Research Libraries

Edited by Raymond Pun, Melissa Cardenas-Dow, and Kenya S. Flash

The many ways librarians can engage with ethnic studies departments at colleges and universities are investigated here. The authors posit that though ethnic studies has a solid foundation in many institutions, libraries do not traditionally play a visible role in the direct support of those programs. This work (see Mar./Apr., p. 46) looks at ways in which librarians can create and bolster initiatives to ensure ethnic studies takes center stage in academic libraries. Topics on instruction, liaison engagement, collections, and community partnerships are discussed in the book's 20 chapters. This is a useful volume for any academic library seeking to promote well-rounded perspectives within curricula at many different levels. ACRL, 2021. 294 p. $82. PBK. 978-0-8389-3883-6.

52 Diverse Titles Every Book Lover Should Read: A One-Year Journal and Recommended Reading List from the American Library Association

Compiled by *Booklist,* ALA Editions/Neal Schuman, and Sourcebooks

This is a cleverly designed and convenient way to both keep track of a year's worth of reading and have a quickly accessible readers' advisory guide to diverse books. Described as a "book club in your hands," this journal provides a rich list of weekly reads and question prompts to help inspire discussion, along with plenty of space for writing down notes and insights. It's a fun way to incorporate reading, collecting, and sharing BIPOC authors and their stories. Sourcebooks, 2021. 224 p. $12.99. PBK. 978-1-7282-4485-3. AL

SOLUTIONS
Products and services

Digging Deeper
Text and data mining platforms for research libraries

BY Carrie Smith

Each year over the past decade, research output has grown steadily, according to the National Science Foundation. Researchers looking to parse vast amounts of available data are turning to text and data mining platforms, which use machine learning to analyze data sets for relationships and patterns. Many vendors are now offering software designed specifically for exploring their—as well as libraries' own—collections. Here we talk with three library workers about their experiences with these platforms.

Gale Digital Scholar Lab allows users to do text analysis without writing code.

Gale Digital Scholar Lab

USER: HILLARY RICHARDSON, coordinator of undergraduate research and information literacy at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus
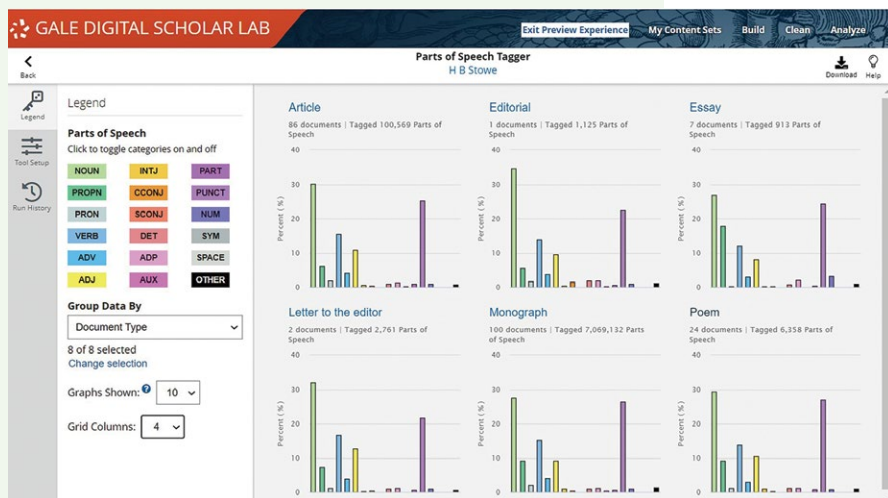
What is Gale Digital Scholar Lab?
It's a way for us to engage with some of Gale's digital primary collections through text analysis tools.

How do you use Gale Digital Scholar Lab? I teach an introduction to digital research class and the digital studies practicum, and we use the Digital Scholar Lab to help us get across some of those competencies. We first used it to investigate some of the primary source collections that we have access to through Gale. We've also begun to upload some of our own collections, including the Smith Family Papers, which includes about 6,000 letters and diaries from 1908 to about 1977. Students are using text analysis tools like sentiment analysis, topic modeling, and n-gram analysis to see if they can discern patterns in the Smith letters.

What are the main benefits?
If you wanted to do sentiment analysis without the sentiment analysis tool in Digital Scholar Lab, you'd have to know a little bit about Python, which has a steep learning curve. Having something like the Digital Scholar Lab helps lower the barrier to this type of analysis. My hope is that this tool will be a springboard for people to learn on their own and deepen their knowledge of things like topic modeling.

What would you like to see improved or added to the platform? The process of uploading something and adding it to a tool to be analyzed was a little bit clunky, but Gale has been troubleshooting that. I'd also like to be able to embed a dynamic text analysis visualization—not just an image file—into a digital exhibit.

SUBMISSIONS
Want to review a product you're using?
Contact Carrie Smith at casmith@ala.org.

Nexis Data Lab

USER: STEPHANIE LABOU, data science librarian at University of California San Diego in La Jolla

What is Nexis Data Lab? Nexis Data Lab is a platform that allows users to use text and data mining techniques on the content from LexisNexis. It lets users search for and select up to 100,000 documents, then analyze those documents in a Jupyter Notebook interface. Users can write their own Python code or adapt existing sample code provided in the interface.

How do you use Nexis Data Lab in your library? We are currently in the trial phase for Nexis Data Lab. We've received positive feedback from the test users so far for ease of use in accessing and analyzing content.
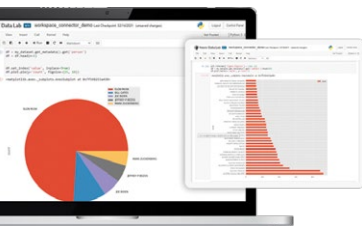

Nexis Data Lab lets users analyze documents using text and data mining.

What are the main benefits? The primary benefit is really access—this is the only way to programmatically analyze a large number of documents from LexisNexis, which is something we get requests for a lot in our library. Plus, from my experience, analyses run extremely fast in the notebook environment—there are no delays or lags that sometimes occur with web-hosted analysis platforms.

What would you like to see improved or added to the platform? We're looking forward to when LexisNexis's legal and business content is available to analyze through Nexis Data Lab. The primary technical update I'd like to see eventually is the ability to make even larger corpora. The limit of 100,000 documents won't be a problem for many researchers, but for those working on popular topics, especially over time, they may exceed this limit. Plus, having a variety of sample code is always useful—the more samples on popular text mining topics like sentiment analysis and topic modeling, the easier it is for users to get started.

ProQuest TDM Studio

USERS: ETHAN PULLMAN, first-year writing librarian, and **HUAJIN WANG,** senior librarian, at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh

What is ProQuest TDM Studio? TDM Studio is a data mining platform that allows you to use the text and data in the ProQuest database as well as your own while working in a coding environment with your team. It's a way to visualize the relationship between texts and data more quickly than reading.
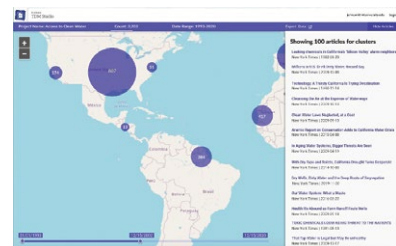
How do you use TDM Studio in your library? We use the platform for both digital humanities and science analysis. There's a basic station that you can work from for data visualization that requires no coding, but through the coding workbench you're also able to clean it up and control for things that aren't necessarily in the default options. In our Data Collaborations Lab, we have researchers using TDM Studio as the first step in creating a knowledge base using existing publications for materials science. We're doing benchmarking and literature reviews using this tool. There's also a lot of work in our English department dealing with data mining and texts.

What are the main benefits? One big advantage is being able to access and analyze ProQuest's text and data. TDM Studio allows you to directly use the data or put it into a work environment, and the workflow aspect is also good. The biggest value is the ability to identify and visualize the text to find things like relationship patterns, which is useful for people studying discourse and pattern recognition.

Users can create data visualizations with TDM Studio.

What would you like to see improved or added to the platform? We'd like to see TDM Studio include non-English and right-to-left languages. For those who work with non-English texts, it would be a great improvement. We would also really like to see a dashboard that provides information on how TDM Studio is being used. AL

PEOPLE *Announcements*

ON THE MOVE

Whitehall (Pa.) Township Public Library appointed **Susan Bielucke** director effective March 7.

Alec Chunn started as children's librarian at Tualatin (Ore.) Public Library in December.

Yolanda Cooper joined Kelvin Smith Library at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland as vice provost and Lindseth Family University Librarian in January.

Wendy Cornelisen became state librarian of Oregon March 1.

January 3 **Peter Coyl** became director and CEO of Sacramento (Calif.) Public Library.

Catherine Delneo became Vermont state librarian February 13.

January 26 **Patricia Dew** became director of Brunswick County (N.C.) Libraries.

Jason Driver joined Kitsap (Wash.) Regional Library as director February 1.

January 2 **Rachel Fetzer** became manager of Rockingham County (N.C.) Public Library's Reidsville branch.

Chester County (Pa.) Public Library appointed **Mary Gazdik** director effective January 31.

March 14 **Jake Grussing** joined Ramsey County (Minn.) Library as director.

March 7 **John Hayden** became director of W. Walworth Harrison Public Library in Greenville, Texas.

Shinae Hyun started as director of Teaneck (N.J.) Public Library February 1.

January 24 **Laura Irmscher** became director of West Hartford (Conn.) Public Library.

Kudos

Arianne Johnson Quinn, music special collections librarian at Florida State University's Warren D. Allen Music Library in Tallahassee, received the inaugural Noël Coward Fellowship from the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the Noël Coward Foundation in February. She will spend the 2022–2023 academic year in New York City with direct access to never-before-seen Coward artifacts for research. ●

Missoula (Mont.) Public Library has appointed **Slaven Lee** executive director effective April 4.

Blount County (Tenn.) Public Library named **Manuel "Manny" Leite** director effective in January.

In November **Sharon Lovett-Graff** started as children's and young adult librarian at Castleton (Vt.) Free Library.

Caroline Mandler joined Wilton (Conn.) Library as executive director in February.

Tim Miller recently became director of Rampart Library District in Woodland Park and Florissant, Colorado.

In February **Emma Monahan** became children's librarian at Nahant (Mass.) Public Library.

Murrieta (Calif.) Public Library appointed **Melvin Racelis** director, effective in January.

Pauline Shostack started as director of Geneva (N.Y.) Public Library in February.

Buffalo and Erie County (N.Y.) Public Library appointed **John Spears** director effective April 11.

January 6 **Halley Sutherland** joined New York State Library's Division of Library Development as a library development specialist.

Yvonne Tolman became head librarian at Emma Humphrey Library in Vale, Oregon, in February.

Emily Toombs joined Framingham (Mass.) Public Library as head of bookmobile experience October 18.

PROMOTIONS

University of Minnesota promoted **Erinn Aspinall** to director of its Health Sciences Library in Minneapolis in December.

March 7 **Sarah Cournoyer** was promoted to administrator of Beaver Dam (Wis.) Community Library.

Seattle Public Library promoted **Tom Fay** to chief librarian March 2.

Tilton Library in South Deerfield, Massachusetts, promoted **Holly Johnson** to children's librarian in February.

Mindy Lipsky was promoted to executive director at Pottstown (Pa.) Regional Public Library in February.

Amesbury (Mass.) Public Library promoted **Aimie Westphal** to director in February.

Chicago Public Library promoted **Robin Willard** to manager of the Blackstone branch in December.

RETIREMENTS

Honore Bray retired March 31 as executive director of Missoula (Mont.) Public Library.

In Memory

Margaret "Margo" L. Crist, retired director of W. E. B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, died December 15. As director, she installed the first public computers for internet research at the library. Prior to joining UMass, she served as assistant director of libraries at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, assistant director of Boston Public Library (BPL), regional administrator for the Central and Western Massachusetts Resource Sharing Network, and research and branch librarian at BPL's Charlestown branch. Crist served on many committees across the Association of Research Libraries and ALA and was previously on ALA's Executive Board.

Karl Sanford Kabelac, 79, who held several positions in the special collections department at University of Rochester's (N.Y.) Rush Rees Library between 1968 and 1998, died October 22. During his career and in retirement, Kabelac published articles and compiled several bibliographies and indexes on local history and served as chair of the Rochester Regional Library Council's Local History Committee.

Anne R. Kenney, 72, university librarian emerita at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, died February 5. Kenney was a recipient of ALA's Hugh C. Atkinson Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement in library automation or management, in 2014. In her 30 years at Cornell, she earned a reputation as a digitization pioneer, developing standards that were widely adopted starting in the 1990s. She coauthored three books on preservation and digitization, published more than 50 articles and reports, and was a regular speaker on digital imaging and preservation.

Marvin Kierstead, 84, librarian at the law firm Wiley Rein from the mid-1980s until retiring in 1995, died December 31.

Catherine Ann Liptak, 90, longtime reference librarian and director at Virginia (Minn.) Public Library until her retirement in 1993, died August 7. Liptak was an ALA member for 62 years.

Jean-Barry Molz, 95, director of public services at Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library for 33 years until retiring in 1996, died November 22. She provided leadership at the library as it expanded from 10 to 24 branches, instituted face-out shelving and flexible floor arrangements, and implemented a computerized card catalog. Molz also served for 13 years at Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. ●

In December **Rebecca "Becky" Drew** retired as librarian at Island Falls (Maine) Public Library.

Debra Futa retired as executive director of St. Joe County (Ind.) Public Library March 31.

December 31 **Jill Jean** retired as director of Kitsap (Wash.) Regional Library.

Karen Jones, technical services librarian at Lewiston (Maine) Public Library, retired in February after 33 years with the library.

Martha Simpson retired as head of children's services at Stratford (Conn.) Library February 18.

Elaine Tai-Lauria retired as executive director of Wilton (Conn.) Library in January.

In December **Maurice "Reecie" Tate** retired after 41 years as director of Brunswick County (N.C.) Libraries.

AT ALA

ALA's Information Technology unit promoted **Shakir Akbari** to deputy director February 21.

Mariel Colbert, program officer for the Chapter Relations Office, left ALA January 4.

February 2 **Jordan Dubin,** awards coordinator for the Association for Library Service to Children, left ALA.

January 27 **Stan Kessler,** IT data analyst and reports specialist, left ALA.

Diana Panuncial joined *American Libraries* as associate editor February 28.

Chris Simon, *Booklist* production editor, left ALA in December.

February 15 **Brian Willard,** deputy director of IT, left ALA. AL

In January **Julie Cavacco** retired as children's librarian at Tilton Library in South Deerfield, Massachusetts, where she worked for 20 years.

Heather Cover, special projects librarian at Homewood (Ala.) Public Library, retired December 31 after 26 years of service.

Suzy Daveluy retired as community services director after 32 years with Stockton–San Joaquin County (Calif.) Public Library in December.

Stranger than Fiction

Long before the popularity of true-crime podcasts, there was *True Detective,* a pulp magazine published from 1924 to 1995 that, at its peak, chronicled real-life crimes for millions of readers. Edward S. Sullivan, an editor for *The Los Angeles Examiner* and a *True Detective* correspondent, would arrive at a crime scene with his notebook and camera, find out what he could from law enforcement, and begin his own investigation into what really happened.

In early 2020, University of Southern California (USC) Libraries acquired Sullivan's personal archive of 1,200 photographs and 50 meticulously annotated case files: murders, assaults, stick-ups, forgeries, grifts, kidnappings, and other criminal acts spanning from the 1930s through the 1960s.

"Given the rest of our holdings—which focus on the social and cultural history of Los Angeles and collections on things like policing, crime, some noir fiction—this archive seemed to fit with the scope of what we call our regional history collection," says Suzanne Noruschat, Southern California studies specialist for USC Libraries Special Collections.

Storytellers have long been fascinated with this city of contrasts: Hollywood glamour and a sunny, carefree image belied by a dark underbelly of violence, corruption, and civil unrest. Noruschat urges researchers to bear that context in mind as they explore materials that might be disturbing.

"These are collections that, yes they're about crime and punishment in Los Angeles—but they're also about race, they're about inequalities in the city," she says. "These kinds of collections provide a great insight into the nature of our community." **AL**

THE BOOKEND showcases librarians, their work, and their work spaces. For consideration, email americanlibraries@ala.org.

Photo: Anne-Marie Maxwell

Freedom Lifted

Justice at Work