

TRENDS

The ALA Center for the Future of Libraries works to identify trends relevant to libraries and librarianship. New trends will be added as they are developed.

This collection is available to help libraries and librarians understand how trends are developing and why they matter.

AGING
ADVANCES

ANONYMITY

BADGING

COLLECTIVE
IMPACT

CONNECTED
LEARNING

DATA
EVERYWHERE

DIGITAL NATIVES

DRONES

EMERGING
ADULTHOOD

FANDOM

FAST CASUAL

FLIPPED
LEARNING

GAMIFICATION

HAPTIC
TECHNOLOGY

INCOME
INEQUALITY

INTERNET OF
THINGS

MAKER
MOVEMENT

PRIVACY
SHIFTING

RESILIENCE

ROBOTS

SHARING
ECONOMY

UNPLUGGED

URBANIZATION

To: Sioux City Public Library Trustees
From: Betsy Thompson, Library Director

Date: January 15, 2016

The American Library Association's LIBRARIES TRANSFORM initiative has, through the ALA Center for the Future of Libraries, identified the following trends that are relevant to libraries and librarianship. I've listed each of the 23 trends below, along with a short version of the Initiative's perspective on why it matters.

To see the full colored dot picture of these trends, and to see footnotes of supporting sources, you can click around at <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/trends>.

Highlighted words indicate trends that either Bonnie McKewon, our Strategic Planning facilitator, or I think have the most implication for Sioux City Public Library.

Trend: Why it matters to libraries

Aging Advances: An increasing life expectancy will require adequate retirement income and access to health care for aging adults. Adults may continue to work past traditional retirement ages. For libraries, this could mean a change in the profile of their users . . . and in the profile of . . . library professionals.

Anonymity: Anonymity, wherever it occurs and for whatever reasons, may be easily used to promote racist, sexist, offensive, and horrible sentiments. Libraries and librarians may fill a growing need for open dialog and reputable information.

Badging: As badging systems continue to recognize learning that happens across a wide environment, including out-of-classroom learning, libraries of all types may be called upon to support the development of badges for learners.

Collective Impact: Libraries and librarians are frequently considered key collaborators for projects that address big social issues – literacy, educational attainment, economic resurgence, health – and may increasingly be approached to participate in projects that utilize a collective impact model. Additionally . . . librarians may seek to reframe library issues and priorities to align with the big social issues with which society struggles.

Connected Learning: By encouraging exploration and interaction with resources, connected learning may re-engage learners with some of the fundamental benefits of libraries, including access to a broad range of information and the freedom to learn at one's own discretion.

Data Everywhere: Libraries, as organizations that collect data and that are interested in improving products and services, may find opportunities to use data for their own purposes or may be asked to share their data with businesses, governments, or other organizations. Both propositions could pose ethical challenges related to user privacy and intellectual freedom.

Digital Natives: Digital natives have grown up with internet access and depend heavily on mobile devices, are heavy consumers of social networking services . . . and multitask across devices and between work and entertainment. Combined, these characteristics may require libraries and librarians to adapt services and programs to the new unique needs and expectations of digital natives.

Drones: Google has included drones along with balloons (Project Loon) and low orbit satellites as possible means of providing internet access . . . Drones could help improve outreach efforts, delivering resources to the geographically isolated or homebound, providing deposit collections to areas affected by disasters . . . or even connecting expert researchers via video-equipped drones.

Emerging Adulthood: Publishing trends, including the “New Adult” genre, demonstrate the opportunities for services and products marketed to those in between established young adult and adult categories. Libraries might also begin thinking about programs and services that capitalize on this demographic, borrowing some ideas from young adult services (video games, media, socials) and adult services (career resources) to appeal to this category.

Fandom: Fandom refers to a community of people who are passionate about something. As cultural institutions that preserve and provide access to books, video, music, and an increasing array of media, fandoms may be obvious partners in promoting literacy, engagement with culture, and media creation.

Fast casual: While many credit the popularity of fast casual [in restaurants] to its affordability, it is also seen as reflective of changing consumer values, including desires for more social and aspirational experiences. Libraries that emphasize not only the affordability and value of libraries, but also the social and experiential value of library programs . . . to capitalize on the popularity of the fast casual concept.

Flipped learning: Transitioning to a flipped learning approach may require a significant amount of work for educators, including finding time and resources for recording, uploading, and managing lectures. These might all be services that librarians . . . might be consulted on or proactively seek to support.

Gamification: Gaming offers an important opportunity to develop emerging and traditional forms of literacy. . . . players are motivated to seek out information about how games work, including communicating with experts, watching or creating tutorials, or reviewing how-to texts. Libraries, recognized as spaces for interest-driven learning and self-directed discovery, are ideal for the type of learning and discovery promoted by games. Equally important, libraries as public gathering spaces can capitalize on the benefits of co-play . . . in small groups, or large classes.

Haptic Technology: The integration of haptics [tactile experience] may add a new descriptive feature into information objects, requiring libraries to rethink their systems for classifying, retrieving. . . . New research may reveal a benefit to children’s tactile interaction with screens and the feedback they receive as important factors in the acquisition of information.

Income Inequality: Income inequality has been growing markedly for the past 30 years. As income inequality widens, so too does the “achievement gap” in education. A [Stanford University study](#) found that the achievement gap between rich and poor students on standardized tests is 30 to 40 percent wider than it was a quarter-century ago. In an economy where income potential is dependent on educational achievement, programs that combat the “achievement gap” – pre-school, tutors, summer camps, after-school activities – will be recognized as opportunities to also address income inequality.

Internet of things: As connected objects proliferate, consumers may have technical questions about their use or will require new skills to implement and manage the devices. Reflecting on this [K.G. Schneider] “makes me concerned that as the digital divide widens, people left behind will be increasingly invisible and increasingly seen as less than full humans.” Implications for privacy abound and while many may evaluate the trade-off for improved quality of life worth the relinquishing of privacy, other may not. This may become more complicated as objects enter the public arena – light posts that monitor noise and foot traffic – where individuals have fewer opportunities to avoid these invasions.

Maker Movement: Libraries, traditionally collecting institutions that provide access to materials created by others, may now adopt new functions, providing communities with opportunities to create or co-create content for an individual’s own use, for use by the community, or for inclusion in the library collection. Local governments may capitalize on the maker movement as an opportunity to revitalize manufacturing, build small businesses, attract investment, or even revive neighborhoods or centers.

Privacy shifting: The less technologically skilled – but also the technologically obsessed – may need to be made aware of the privacy concerns raised by new technologies. . . . Younger generations may lead a change in society's value for privacy or they may grow into current values. . . . A middle ground may be sought where information sharing is promoted, but with a goal of developing robust online identities, developing community, and advancing personal goals. . . while still preserving certain amounts of privacy.

Resilience: As . . . governments adopt resiliency as a strategy for addressing potential disasters, libraries may need to align their facilities, services, and programs to demonstrate a resilient strategy. Resilience requires community involvement – encouraging individuals to make decisions that help prepare for and prevent the impact of disasters, providing resources and information to help them make informed decisions, and offerings programs and services that allow individuals to respond to issues as they arise. Libraries and information professionals may be ideal partners or providers in helping individuals adopt resilient practices in their communities.

Robots: Maxine Bleiweis, executive director of the Westport Library, "Robotics is the next disruptive technology coming into our lives and we felt it was important to make it accessible to people so they could learn about it. . . . From an economic-development perspective and job- and career-development perspective, it's so important."

Sharing Economy: Libraries have been leaders in demonstrating the value and potential for free/shared resources and spaces. As the sharing economy advances and moves in new directions – electronic devices, transportation, tools, education, equipment – the roles that libraries play as sharers may need to change and adapt. Cities and governments will likely see opportunities in the sharing economy to help improve the experiences of citizens (e.g. bike share programs). Libraries may have the opportunity to align themselves with sharing economy services (repair cafes, garden sharing, work spaces) that promote social good.

Unplugged: Libraries may capitalize on users' perceptions of libraries as quiet spaces, marketing at least some space in their buildings as places to unplug, concentrate, and focus. This may be a rebranding from "quiet reading spaces" to "unplug zones" or "digital escape spaces" that capitalize on the trend's language. Programming and services that encourage quiet reflection or that limit the use of technology may become novel and popular as they contrast with the everyday connectivity that people normally encounter

Urbanization: The growth of cities may provide more opportunities for employment and pathways to higher personal success. It could also lead to the further concentration of wealth and increasing disparities.

WHY LIBRARIES ARE TRANSFORMING

BECAUSE THERE ARE MORE THAN 14,400,000 SEARCH RESULTS FOR THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

BECAUSE MORE THAN A QUARTER OF U.S. HOUSEHOLDS DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER WITH AN INTERNET CONNECTION.

BECAUSE WHY SHOULDN'T YOU BE ABLE TO BRING YOUR GRANDE CARAMEL SNICKERDOODLE MACCHIATO?

BECAUSE THE WORLD IS AT THEIR FINGERTIPS AND THE WORLD CAN BE A SCARY PLACE.

BECAUSE STUDENTS CAN'T AFFORD SCHOLARLY JOURNALS ON A RAMEN NOODLE BUDGET.

BECAUSE EMPLOYERS WANT CANDIDATES WHO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WEB SEARCH AND RESEARCH.