

# american libraries DIRECT

American Library Association • July 25, 2017

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## It starts with library cards

Jeffrey T. Davis writes: “The romantic appeal of library cards is hard to deny. A look at the hashtag #firstlibrarycard on social media will turn up stories, photos, and enthusiasm about the milestone of receiving one’s first card. Whether they’re used or not, library cards are tokens of belonging and potential. They come with privileges and responsibilities and a whole new relationship to the world. They’re a big deal.” The [author discusses](#) how libraries are using the library card to establish close community bonds....



*American Libraries* feature, July/Aug.

## Applications open for Libraries Ready to Code

ALA has opened the application period for grants to develop public and school library programming that promotes computer science and computational thinking among youth. The grant opportunity, [announced](#) in June, is the latest phase of the [Libraries Ready to Code](#) initiative of ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy, sponsored by [Google](#). [Proposals](#) will be accepted through August 31. The Ready to Code project team will host an informational webinar on August 1; [Register](#) to participate....

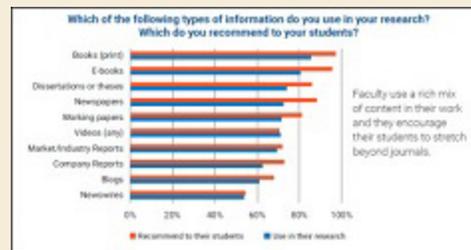


*District Dispatch*, July 24; *AL: The Scoop*, June 23

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## Researchers demand more diversity in content sources

Research and teaching increasingly depends on a mix of content types beyond traditional scholarly journals, a recent ProQuest survey finds. The survey demonstrates that library collections with a variety of content sources align more closely to changes in user needs and expectations—with the most dramatic shift in the demand for multimedia content. In 2014, only 39% of respondents were incorporating video as part of their information gather. In 2017, use has rocketed up to 71%. Read the [white paper](#) to view the full research findings.



## Newsmaker: Reshma Saujani

Reshma Saujani (right) is not a coder, but that didn't stop her from founding Girls Who Code, a nonprofit that has—in its quest to confront the gender imbalance in tech culture—taught thousands of girls in schools and libraries across the US such skills as computer programming, career confidence, and community involvement. *American Libraries* spoke to Saujani at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, just a few highway exits from where she grew up....



*American Libraries Trend, July/Aug.*

## Save staff time

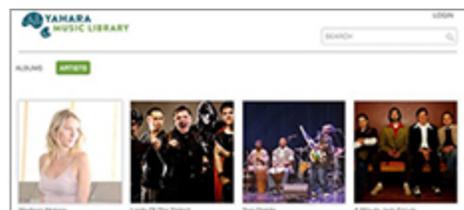
Staff time is a valuable resource, and automating certain tasks can allow staff members to focus on tasks that need a human touch. Automatic book sorting and self-checkout are not new ideas, but innovations in these areas continue, providing new ways for libraries to maximize their return on donated and discarded books, minimize the footprint of self-checkout, and maintain their collections—and save staff time....



*American Libraries column, July/Aug.*

## How to succeed in the online local music business

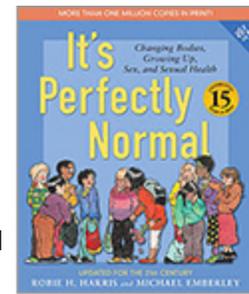
Kelly Hiser writes: "[Rabble](#) is a startup based in Madison, Wisconsin, that builds online local music collections with public libraries. Our open-source platform, MUSICat, helps librarians connect with local musicians to collect, curate, license, and publish music. We work with an amazing group of library partners. Rabble will turn three this fall, and we're pleased that we're still around. I credit Rabble's success largely to the care we bring to our work with librarians and musicians."...



*The Library As Incubator Project, July 25*

## 15 years after a challenge

Valerie Nye writes: "Some of the most difficult challenges to library material that librarians have to deal with happen when one censorship issue snowballs and encourages multiple groups of people to challenge multiple books over several years. Jerilynn Williams is the library director of Montgomery County (Tex.) Memorial Library System. She encountered a series of challenges by groups opposed to material in the library, beginning in 2002. I asked Williams about her experiences and the lessons she learned."...



*Intellectual Freedom Blog, July 25*

## Snopes is in deep trouble

Brittany Levine Beckman writes: "Just as [Snopes](#), one of the oldest fact-checking sites, seems to have hit its mainstream stride, it gets tangled in a [dramatic legal mess](#), one that involves lots of finger-pointing, alleged backstabbing, and a contentious divorce. It's the kind of [backroom drama](#) that tends to play out in secret until someone files a lawsuit. Now we have not one but two lawsuits, and on July 24 a cry for help. Snopes has become the go-to site for debunking internet hoaxes since its inception in 1995."...



*Mashable, July 24; The Guardian (UK), July 25; The Atlantic, July 24*



## James Richard Shinn, 1980s rare-book thief

Susan Falciani writes: "On the evening of December 7, 1981, Dianne Melnychuk, serials librarian at the Haas Library at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, noticed an unfamiliar gray-haired man of early middle age lingering around the card catalog near her desk. He had attempted to appear inconspicuous by way of nondescript, almost slovenly dress, but at almost six-and-a-half feet tall, with a 225-pound frame, he stood out. A few months earlier, a photo of this man, who went by the name James Richard Shinn (right), had appeared in an article."...



*Atlas Obscura, July 20*

## The death of search?

Michael Nuñez writes: "Google recently launched a personalized [news feed](#) on the company's flagship app, and it will soon roll out to browser versions. The update is a huge deal: First, it will be the most radical change to Google's famously simple home



page since 1996, or at least since its big push behind Google+, which began in 2011 and

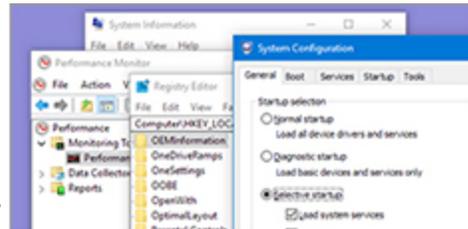
has since been deemed a failure. It also positions Google to compete directly with the Facebook News Feed, which generally provides the same type of information.”...

*Mashable, July 19, 24*



## Useful system tools hidden in Windows

Chris Hoffman writes: “Windows contains a variety of system utilities that are useful, but well hidden. Some are buried deep in the Start menu, while others you can access only if you know the right command to run. You can launch most of these tools easily if you know their names—just search your start menu for the name of the tool, and you’re good to go. Regardless of how you launch them, these tools can help you do everything from diagnose crashes to examine system performance to improve security.”...



*How-To Geek, July 24*

## An open letter to people who don’t read diversely

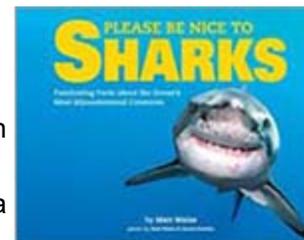
Rebecca Renner writes: “I love old, dead white men. There. I said it. F. Scott Fitzgerald is my boy. Tolstoy, Dickens, Steinbeck, Orwell, and Nabokov: Give me all the books. I even have a Vonnegut quote tattooed on my wrist. But because of that love, for the longest time I experienced a very narrow sliver of what literature has to offer. The worst thing about that was that I didn’t know it. One of the most important reasons why I now try to read diversely is because I believe in the power of story. Story is transformative.”...



*Book Riot, July 25*

## Shark Week: Take a bite out of a book

Louise Lareau writes: “If I could go back in time, I would never have watched *Jaws*. I cannot say that I was a big fan of sharks to begin with, but watching that movie changed my view of the ocean forever. It’s sad really, because sharks are fascinating. People are more likely to be killed by a disease-carrying mosquito, lightning, a toilet, a bee sting, a vending machine, a tornado, or the flu than they are a shark. The library has dozens of children’s books about sharks. Here is a short list to get you started.”...



*New York Public Library Blogs, July 24*

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50 E. Huron St.  
Chicago, IL 60611  
800-545-2433, ext. 4216

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