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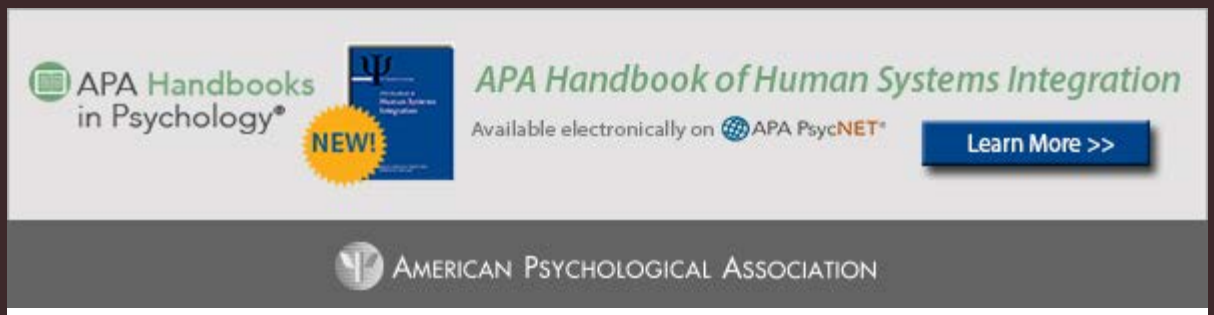
American Library Association • May 19, 2015



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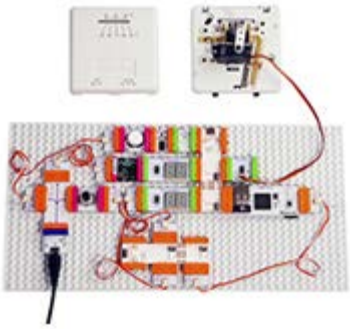
In Practice: Making for STEM success



Meredith Farkas writes: "Libraries don't necessarily need to invest in expensive tools like 3D printers and laser cutters to promote STEM. Tools like Makey Makey, Squishy Circuits, Cubelets, and Raspberry Pi are affordable options to get kids creating and programming robots, game controllers, and other cool technologies. They are also accessible to librarians with a small amount of tech savvy and the ability to search the web."...

American Libraries column, May

Supporting the USA Freedom Act of 2015

Adam Eisgrau writes: "Not all civil liberties advocates are pushing for passage of this year's version of the USA Freedom Act. The ACLU and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, while not urging members of Congress to vote against H.R. 2048, are urging them to take other measures. These views by respected long-time ALA allies have caused some to ask why ALA is actively urging its members and the public to work for passage of H.R. 2048. The answer is found in four words: policy, politics, permanence, and perseverance."...

District Dispatch, May 15; The Hill, May 5

Sponsored Content

The Oscars of the Audiobook World

The Audies, sponsored by the Audio Publishers Association (APA), is the United States' premier awards program recognizing distinction in audiobooks and spoken-word entertainment across a variety of categories. The 20th Annual Audie Award finalists, representing 30 categories, were announced on February 11. The 2015 winners will be recognized on May 28 in New York City at the Audie Awards Gala, hosted by award-winning author Jack Gantos. Nominations were bestowed on over 160 titles from 36 unique publishers. Browse a selection of nominated works.

Shifting gears: Rochester's BookBike

In April, Rochester (Minn.) Public Library launched the BookBike outreach program. RPL's BookBike, a little library on wheels, will visit locations within a one-mile radius of the downtown library this spring, summer, and fall. Pulled by library staff on bicycles, the BookBike offers library books, library cards, program information, assistance with digital materials, bike trail maps, and fun incentives for kids....

ALSC Blog, May 19

Rare book experts join forces to stop thefts

Thefts of rare books, maps, and manuscripts from national libraries have sparked such alarm that international experts are joining forces to stop any further vandalism to the world's cultural heritage. Lawyers, librarians, booksellers, and auctioneers will descend on the British Library on June 26 for a major conference whose title, "The Written Heritage of Mankind in Peril," conveys the seriousness of the problem....

The Guardian (UK), May 17

Laura Bush Foundation grants

Former First Lady Laura Bush visited Blackshear Elementary Fine Arts Academy in Austin, Texas, on May 18 to announce the 2015 library grants from the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. More than $875,000 is being distributed to 131 school libraries across the country. This includes the eight middle schools that each received a $7,000 library grant last October as a part of the George W. Bush Institute's Middle School Matters program....

George W. Bush Presidential Center, May 18

ALA Diversity and Outreach Fair

This year's ALA Diversity and Outreach Fair, on June 27 in the Exhibits Special Events Area at the 2015 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco, will highlight innovations in library services to people experiencing poverty and homelessness. Additionally, two task forces of the Social Responsibilities Round Table have joined forces with a wide array of member groups and the San Francisco Public Library to coordinate a book drive that benefits several Bay Area community organizations....

Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, May 18

Library homework help: What works, what doesn't

Jim Lynch writes: "According to the 2013 Digital Inclusion Survey, almost all US public libraries now offer online and in-person homework assistance. There are two commercial tutoring services in use by libraries currently. Several libraries, such as the Delaware and Los Angeles library systems, use Tutor.com's Live Homework Help. The other main commercial service is Brainfuse HelpNow, which is used by the Seattle and San Diego library systems."...

TechSoup for Libraries, May 18

Let the kids learn through play

David Kohn writes: “In many schools, formal education now starts at age 4 or 5. Without this early start, the thinking goes, kids risk falling behind in crucial subjects such as reading and math, and may never catch up. But a growing group of scientists and educators say there is little evidence that this approach improves long-term achievement; in fact, it may have the opposite effect, potentially slowing emotional and cognitive development, causing unnecessary stress, and even souring kids’ desire to learn.”...

New York Times, May 16

16 top resources for coding in the classroom

Joy Nelson writes: “As cool as technology is, its intricacies and inner workings are sometimes intimidating, especially for young people. However, when students get past that obstacle and see the value of computer science—specifically coding—they gain a broadened perspective and the potential for a rewarding career in the tech field. These 16 resources will help you teach your students the basics of coding and provide tips on how to keep them interested.”...

Edudemic, May 18

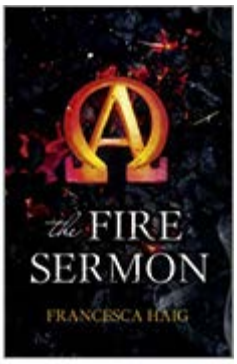
The top 10 mechanical keyboards

John Burek writes: “*All* keyboards are mechanical, in a sense. The term ‘mechanical,’ though, has a particular meaning when it’s applied to desktop computer keyboards. And among some folks in the know, the mere mention of it triggers a drool reflex. A keyboard with a mechanical key switch contains springs, levers, and more robust construction. Today’s mechanical keyboards fall into two basic classes: for gaming and for productivity.”...

Computer Shopper, May 18

Best SF/fantasy titles for 2015

Brad Hooper writes: “The wide range of time, place, and theme within the science-fiction and fantasy genres is well evidenced in the following outstanding examples reviewed in *Booklist* between May 15, 2014, and May 1, 2015. For example, *The Fire Sermon* by Francesca



Haig: Fans of dystopian fiction will appreciate this adventure-filled yet character-focused tale that offers hope and explores the moral complexities involved in defeating an oppressive and backward government."...

Booklist Online, May 15

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