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TEEN TECH WEEK: GET YOUR TECH ON

MINECRAFT PROGRAMS IN THE LIBRARY

AUTISM? THERE’S AN APP FOR THAT

LEARNING LABS

LEARNING CURVE

AND MORE . . .
Celebrate Teen Tech Week™
March 10–16, 2013

Invite teens to Check In @ your library® during YALSA’s Teen Tech Week, March 10-16, 2013. The library is a hot spot, so remind teens to check in and check out all the technology you offer. From e-books, audiobooks, music, and movies to games, databases, homework help, and more, show off your library as the hub where teens can plug in and stay connected.

Visit the ALA Store for more details and to purchase all downloads.

2013 Teen Tech Week Digital Download Set
Set includes:
• 2013 TTW Poster File
• 2013 TTW Web Files
• 2013 TTW Programming Pamphlet

*Price per individual institution. For license restrictions and additional pricing, please visit alastore.ala.org/TTW

For more information, please visit www.ala.org/teentechweek.
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About This Cover
This Teen Tech Week™ (March 10–16, 2013), YALSA invites you to Check In @ your library!®
This year’s theme encourages libraries to throw open their physical and virtual doors to teens and showcase the outstanding technology they offer, from services such as online homework help and digital literacy-focused programs to resources like e-books, movies, music, audiobooks, databases and more. Official Teen Tech Week Products, such as the poster on the cover, are available at www.alastore.org.
Inspired! That’s what I am after reading the articles for this issue of YALS. When librarians at the Darien Library in Connecticut found out that teens were interested in Minecraft, they started a gaming group where teens got to play Minecraft and gained skills at moderating and running programs for their peers. When Lana Adlawan, in Sacramento, California, realized teens needed opportunities to tell their own stories in order to make sense of their lives, she leveraged Library Services Technology Association (LSTA) grant funding to enable multimedia production so teens get to tell stories about themselves and their neighborhoods.

Library staff serving teens are doing more than programming to help teens use and learn about technology. For example, Nassau County (Long Island, NY) Library Youth Services Consultant Renee McGrath has funds from a yearlong LSTA grant to inform her constituents about technology for youth with autism. In her article in this issue, Renee looks at apps for teens with autism and highlights the ways in which libraries can serve this part of their community. In Kansas City (MO), Jamie Mayo and her colleagues are reimagining library space, technology, and staffing to make it possible for teens to collaborate, create, communicate, and learn.

Let’s not forget Teen Tech Week™ (TTW). In 2013, TTW takes place March 10–16 and has the theme Check In @ your library®. TTW chair, Clair Segal, has lots of great ideas in her article about what you and teens can do in your library with mobile phones and other devices to “check-in.” It’s not simply a matter of checking-in on FourSquare, Facebook, or Twitter. There is so much more you and teens can do—from mobile scavenger hunts to mobile gaming.

YA library staff have come a long way when it comes to technology. In the early days of computers in libraries it often seemed there was more concern for what we couldn’t do than what we could do. While we’re still not completely free from that sense of limitation, I think you’ll find that libraries are increasingly focusing on the positive uses of technology in teen lives. TTW is a great testament to that trend. Library staffs are now highly engaged in and developing initiatives for the needs of twenty-first century young adults.

As you read this issue of YALS, I hope you’ll be as excited, invigorated, and inspired as I was in putting it together. Don’t forget you can read more on the topic of teens and tech on the YALS site, http://yalsa.ala.org/yals.
C onnect, Create, Collaborate, Technology. These four words mesh together like circuitry. When I think of technology and libraries, my mind first goes straight to the basics: checking out stuff, accessing stuff, using computers in the library to do stuff. But that’s actually a pretty antiquated notion of what librarians, and their customers, can do with technology. Technology is essential in the twenty-first century, and the way that we use it has evolved as quickly as the technology itself. We no longer use it just to access stuff, even though that’s a huge part of what we do with it. Now we use it to store stuff. We use it to build stuff. We use it make stuff.

Teens use technology in all of these ways too, and so technology has to be an integral part of working with teens in libraries. I’d like to consider for a few minutes the ways in which we see teens using technology inside and outside of libraries.

First, we see technology in teen lives through our collections. From the Pew Internet and American Life Project report released in October 2012 (http://bit.ly/pew_reading_report), we know that teens still like to read physical print books. We also know that teens are intrigued and open to the concept of checking our devices preloaded with e-books. (If you’re interested in learning more about the Pew report, and if you haven’t read it already, the YALSA blog, http://yalsa.ala.org/blog, hosted a three-part series that explored the Pew report in depth.)

Thinking about how libraries can expand on the preloaded device concept, my first thought is to revolutionize the book display. Instead of teens checking out one to five books from a physical library display, why not let them check out the entire display on a tablet or e-reader? They could check out a tablet full of zombie novels, research materials about the Civil War, or fiction and nonfiction content from a country or continent around the world!

Second, we see technology in teen lives in how teens in our school and public libraries communicate. They’re constantly online—whether it’s on a phone, a tablet, or a desktop or laptop. They’re reaching out to friends, family, and collaborators via social media. They’re reading online to find out what’s new, what’s hot, and what they need and want to know. They’re writing online about themselves, their friends, their families, and their communities. Some of them are even using technology to find new communities where they may feel more comfortable and where they feel they can fit in. Teens are also using technology to access digital library resources to do research for school projects or pursue personal interests.

Third, and this one is really cool, we see technology in teens’ lives and with teens in libraries as they use technology to hack stuff—or make stuff. Or both! Library tech aficionados, YOUmedia centers, and technology labs across the country are paving the way for granting teens access to creative technology and opportunities that allow them the freedom to explore their worlds and their interests, meet others with similar interests to share ideas, and create individually and collaboratively. For example, teens in libraries all over the country are using phone cameras and software to make their own book trailer videos. Libraries are utilizing online programs like Scratch and Gamestar Mechanic to teach teens game design mechanics and to create their own online games. Others are using circuitry and thrift store finds to teach kids to build their own robots.

Technology can also help libraries teach media literacy. By exploring, unpacking and hacking music videos, commercials, movie trailers and more, teens gain a better understanding of the messages sent out by media outlets and the difference between remixing and pirating.

Finally, some libraries are teaching teens to design their own wearable electronics: T-shirts embedded with LED sensors and more. These are only a few of the great technology programs that are happening in school and public libraries across the country. You’ll read more about these types of initiatives in this tech-focused issue of YALS.

All this is to say that there are many cool things going on with teens and technology and libraries. Technology is an integral part of our work and our relationships with the age group. The opportunities to educate ourselves, our peers, and teens are limitless. Start within your comfort zone, the shallow end of the pool, or have courage and dive into the deep end headfirst. No matter what, don’t wait, take the plunge.

YALS
The ALA Washington Office (WO) has a long history of fighting for issues that impact users of all types of libraries. For decades this office has sought to raise the profile of libraries on Capitol Hill and in other policy arenas. But it is not always clear to ALA members what resources the WO has to offer. Here, I lay out five WO resources that YALSA members should know about and be using regularly.

Mobile Commons
Mobile Commons is the newest advocacy tool in the WO arsenal. By simply texting the word library to 877877, library supporters can sign up for advocacy text alerts from the WO to receive the most up-to-date information on advocacy alerts and events related to libraries. The opt-in service allows ALA to communicate advocacy messages in a quick and effective fashion using an innovative texting and calling feature. The tool enables ALA to build a mobile list of library supporters. Most excitingly, this tool gives supporters all the resources they need to advocate for libraries right from their phone.

Using the innovative “text-to-call” feature, we hope to reach supporters in new ways and increase our visibility to Congress. A text-to-call alert is quite simple. A mobile list subscriber will first receive a text message, asking for action to be taken on a particular issue (i.e., federal library funding). The user then texts back the word call whenever they are ready. After texting back, the user will receive a call whereupon answering they will hear recorded talking points for the issue. After listening to the brief message, the user will then hear which Congressional office they are about to be transferred to, and voila, the user is directly transferred to the office and is advocating for libraries.

We hope Mobile Commons will make advocacy easier and more efficient. And since all you need is texting capability on your phone (Mobile Commons does not require a smartphone), we hope this is a way more teens will get involved and feel inspired to take up library advocacy.

If you choose to sign up for this feature, we will only send you text messages pertaining to library advocacy. We envision sending two or three text messages per month out to the mobile list. It may be an action alert, or it may just be a reminder of advocacy-related programs and sessions at ALA conferences. Whatever the message, we hope to engage more members by speaking to them on a ubiquitous platform: the cell phone.

Again, to sign up, text the word library to 877877. You will receive a text asking for your mailing address (you can choose your library or home address). After that, you will officially be a part of the first ALA mobile list! You can also sign up online at http://districtdispatch.org/textalerts.

Webinars
The WO hosts a wide variety of advocacy webinars each year for library supporters. The webinars are free to all members and are archived immediately after they air live. These sessions are led by “Advocacy Guru” Stephanie Vance, who has over twenty years’ experience in Congressional affairs. She has worked in numerous offices as both a legislative director and staff director. More importantly, Stephanie has been working with the ALA for almost a decade and has spoken at ALA and state chapter conferences all over the country.

Recent webinar titles include: “They’ve Got to See It to Believe It: Getting Decision Makers into Your Library” and “Funding Cuts Got You
Down? Ten Insider Tactics for Impacting the Funding Debate (For the Better!)."

The WO and the ALA Committee on Legislation’s (COL) Grassroots Advocacy Subcommittee are constantly seeking suggestions for webinar topics. For example, we heard from members that in many places it was hard to know what the rules were concerning lobbying and advocacy. This suggestion led to “Education, Lobbying, and Advocacy—Oh My! What’s Allowed (And What’s Not) When Reaching Out to Elected Officials,” one of our best attended webinars to date. So please, send us suggestions for topics that might be of use for your library and specifically in relation to advocating for teen library services.

All archived webinars can be found under “Online Courses” in the Advocacy and Legislation section of http://ala.org. All WO webinars are free to attend and free to view afterward at any time.

Legislative Action Center and Capwiz

Even though we are excited about the potential of Mobile Commons, we will continue to use the Legislative Action Center (LAC), our Web-based advocacy platform. The LAC is where we post all of our action alerts for federal legislative advocacy items. When a supporter visits the center, they will find a specific legislative “ask,” talking points, and the preferred means of contacting their legislators for the given issue. Often, an action alert will be presented as a “call alert.” On the LAC, supporters will find talking points for the legislative “ask,” and after typing in their zip code, will be given the phone number for their legislators. It is important to know and understand the “ask” when speaking with legislators and their staff. While it is nice to ask your legislators to support libraries in general, it requires them to do very little. At the LAC, you will always find specific and measurable “asks” of your legislators so they can better understand what you’d like to see accomplished, and you can better assess if they are supportive of your goals. On occasion, we will ask for an e-mail to be sent. In that case, supporters will find an editable message than can be e-mailed directly to their legislators.

At this time, more than 70,000 library supporters rely on our e-mail notification system (called Capwiz) to receive alerts from the WO. We send e-mail notifications when we need to share the most urgent alerts. More often, we will send our notifications to segmented lists we can create in Capwiz. These lists are often created for specific Congressional districts so we can let library supporters know about important legislation moving through Congressional committees. It is essential for people to get these alerts because one of the best places to impact legislation is when it is moving through a committee.

The LAC has been an invaluable tool for the ALA for more than five years and will continue to grow in value when used in conjunction with Mobile Commons. The Legislative Action Center can be found by going to http://ala.org/takeaction. If you haven not visited the Legislative Action Center already, we encourage you to sign up for the e-mail mailing list at http://districtdispatch.org/subscribe. Just like with Mobile Commons, we do our best to respect your time and e-mail inbox. We try to send e-mail alerts infrequently and only when they pertain to library advocacy.

District Dispatch and Social Media

One of the best ways to stay up to date on the latest news and events from Washington is through our blog, the District Dispatch. The WO’s blog offers up-to-date news articles that focus on legislation, policy, and regulatory issues of importance to the library community. District Dispatch also offers instructive articles for library supporters who are new to advocacy, as well as strategy tips and how-to videos for seasoned library supporters. Library supporters are encouraged to subscribe to the advocacy blog to receive the Dispatch’s weekly newsletter.

WO staff from both the ALA Office of Government Relations (OGR) and the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) contribute posts on a wide array of subjects.

OGR staff frequently post about legislative updates on key library issues. Whether it’s federal funding for libraries, copyright legislation, or information on e-government services, District Dispatch posts are designed to give library supporters an overview of the latest developments in an understandable way. The blog is also a great place to find out about new advocacy tools like Mobile Commons.

OITP staff offer posts on the ever-changing world of e-books, telecommunications policy, and federal funding programs like E-Rate. Recently, OITP published an article announcing they are accepting nominations for an award presented to libraries using cutting-edge technology. This is just one example of the type of important announcements that appear on District Dispatch.

The District Dispatch is a great place to find out about the programs the WO has planned at conferences. When the spring rolls around, we also post a good deal of information about National Library Legislative Day, the annual ALA advocacy event, usually held in early May, where librarians and library supporters from across the country converge in Washington, D.C., to meet with members of Congress to discuss key library issues. While the District Dispatch provides updates on National Library Legislative Day, advocates who would like to learn
more about the event can find information at http://ala.org/nlld.

The WO also maintains an active presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr. We've come to know YALSA members as some of the most active ALA members on social media platforms. If you haven't already seen our social media channels, we certainly hope you'll follow us for a mix of library news, advocacy alerts, and sometimes even a little humor. Our Facebook and Tumblr pages are updated daily, and we love to interact with library supporters on all of our social media platforms.

You can visit the blog at http://districtdisaptch.org. Our Twitter handle is @ala_wo. You can find us on Facebook by searching and liking the WO. Check us out on Tumblr at http://libraryadvocates.tumblr.com.

WO Staff
Staff members at the WO are one of the best resources we have. Between OGR, OITP, and our communications team, we have a wealth of knowledge and experience that we can share with members. The WO is made up of staff members with extensive Capitol Hill experience, published authors, copyright experts, and public and academic librarians, just to name a few.

It is our goal to best serve all members of ALA so we do hope you will contact us with questions and comments. Whether you're wondering about a particular piece of legislation, want to know more about our work on e-books, or need facts and figures for an article, give us a call or send an e-mail, we'd love to help. Additionally, WO staff are available to help members with advocacy-related questions.

You can find a full staff e-mail listing at http://ala.org/wo. If you're not sure where to turn, you can always give me a call or send an e-mail, and I'll be happy to send you to the right place. My contact information is in my author bio on the front page of this article. We hope to hear from you soon. YALS

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YALSA’s Third Thursday Webinars

60 minute webinars on timely topics. Presented by experts. Commercial free.

See what we’ll be talking about this winter at www.ala.org/yalsa/webinars.

Webinars cost $29 for students, $39 for YALSA members, $49 for nonmembers. Group rates cost $195.

Webinars 24/7:

All archived webinars are free for members. They’re posted two months after the live presentation in the For Members Only section of the website and nonmembers can buy access for $19 at www.ala.org/yalsa/webinarsondemand.
Teen Tech Week™ 2013
Get Your Tech On!
By Clair Segal

Teen Tech Week™ is the time of year when we celebrate both technology’s place in the library and the librarian’s role in technology. It’s a wonderful way to start a dialogue with your teen customers, experiment with a new kind of event, and promote your services to the community. But sometimes it can feel easier to justify not celebrating than to plan and execute programming.

With everything that happens in your daily routine—everything you’re already responsible for—it’s easy to understand not celebrating. “I would do something for Teen Tech Week, but ______,” you rationalize, shrugging and making vague promises to yourself about putting something on next year. There are other things to take care of, other concerns to be dealt with. Who has the time? Money? Support?

Put that “but” away, dear librarian. Because if there’s one thing we, the Teen Tech Week Committee, excel at, it’s ideas for connecting teens, technology, and library services. This year’s theme of Check In @ your library is chock-full of ideas just waiting to be found!

Check In @ Your Library: The Best Theme Ever
Teen Tech Week themes are created to provide a framework, and your initial reaction to them can heavily steer your programming choices for the week. At first glance, creating programming for Check In @ your library, the 2013 Teen Tech Week theme, might seem like a bit of a head-scratcher. Check in? So you have your kids use Foursquare or something? Then see who becomes Mayor of the Group Study Room with the Ugly Brown Chairs?

Take another look, and as the MC advised: “[Stop] break it down.”

When your teens “check in” somewhere, whether it’s on FourSquare, by Tweeting, updating their Facebook status, or even just by sending a text to let someone know where they are, it’s through a phone. Cell phones and smartphones have become an omnipresent fixture in our teens’ lives to the point where many can’t remember life before there was “an app for that.” Try explaining the idea of a car phone to your teens and watch their faces—“wait, it was attached to the car? Like, all the time? What?”

The beauty of the “check in” theme is that it brings mobile and personal technology into your toolbox for the week. Your teens have their own devices to bring to the table—devices that are always on them, constantly accessible. That’s an incredible asset for any program you’re planning. It’s a resource you don’t have to spend any money on to access, that your patrons already know how to use, and has a thousand and one free applications. It’s hardware that’s already in hand—your teens’ hands—that you can use to plan a program that feels modern, cool, and infinitely relevant.

Mobile technology also introduces brand-new ways of moving beyond the usual “I don’t have the _____ for this” excuses. Strapped for time, money, and ideas? Find your excuse below, and let us help you find a way to celebrate Teen Tech Week this year using personal technology (and feel a lot less stress).

I Am Low on Time
The problem with Teen Tech Week is that it doesn’t come with a time machine that adds minutes to every day.

Usage is up, money is down, and the printer has jammed three times today. No one even bothered to tell you the last time—you had to find out when you walked by to go to the restroom and saw the forebodingly blinking orange light. E-mails have to be answered, staffers have to be managed, and you’ve got to accomplish at least three impossible things before breakfast, which will

CLAIR SEGAL is the Library Technology Coordinator at the Horace Mann School in New York City. She currently chairs the Teen Tech Week Committee and will be joining Fabulous Films for Young Adults in the spring. Clair wants to thank the Teen Tech Week Committee for all of their hard work this year: Donna Block, Lisa Ferneau Haynes, Shannon Lake, Karen Lemmons, Samantha Marker, and Kip Odell.
consist of half a granola bar and three cups of coffee.

Who has time to plan a week of tech? The introduction of mobile technology will be your salvation, time-strapped librarian. You have a teen base that’s constantly connected. Personal devices give your teens the ability to use the library even when not in it, whether that’s through the browser of a smartphone or texting a reference question to the front desk. Library programming no longer has to happen inside the library.

Take, for example, the old library staple of a scavenger hunt. Having a hunt in your library requires hiding the items, keeping a careful tally of everything, keeping track of teens when they say they’ve found something, and managing the teens as they’re physically hunting in the library.

Try a mobile scavenger hunt on for size. The entire city, town, school, or Internet can be your hunting grounds. Items no longer have to be pre-hidden and can run the gamut from literary (e.g., a piece of clothing your favorite character wears) to teen culture (e.g., an anime phone case) to crowdsourcing (e.g., a chair you wish we had in the library).

If your patrons have smartphones, you can use apps to plan, keep score, and execute the entire program (Scavenger Hunt with Friends has a free version available for both iPhone and Android). If teens have access to camera phones, you can have them take pictures on the go and bring them to you at the end of the hunt to have points tallied.

Now the part of the hunt that involves your time is in publicizing it to the teens, picking items for them to find, and deciding on and rewarding the winner. No bones about it, this will still take time. But you’ve removed some of the most time-consuming aspects of the program: hiding and keeping track of objects as they’re found, monitoring your teens, and drumming up attendance for a program that has an inflexible start and stop time. You’ve created a fun, easy-to-administer program that lets your teens participate no matter where they are in the world and doesn’t require a set block of time on the library’s (not to mention your own) already crowded schedule.

I Am Low-Tech on Tech Savviness
The problem with Teen Tech Week is that tech is not a good friend of mine.

You’re working in a library, and you’re good at what you do. You know your teens and their needs. You know your collection. And you know how to do what you need to know how to do with tech. You’re not tech illiterate, but you know your skills and your own comfort level. It’s not like you can plan a week of technology and then pass it off on someone else to do the actual technology part.

Who has the time to learn how to do all of this stuff for programming?

Whether you’re a digital native or a digital immigrant, we’re all here now. Technology has become an essential part of the library, and removing it would prove just as detrimental as removing your reference desk or discarding all of your paperbacks. While you may not be as comfortable with technology as you’d like to be, using mobile and personal devices means you don’t necessarily have to be.

Your teens know how to use their own phones. They may not know how to best use them, or how to utilize all of the functions, but they understand the basic workings and how to get them to do what they want. You’re trying to speak a language they already understand, and that opens up the door in a huge way for teen-led activities.

Talk to your teens before Teen Tech Week to get an idea of how they use their phones and what kind of devices they have. If your teens are generally smartphone users (iPhones, Android phones, etc.), ask your teens which apps they’re using heavily. Which ones are the best? Which would they recommend to other library users?

If you’ve got the space and time (and dedicated teen attendance), plan an app demonstration and recommendation program. Teens get up and show off their favorite apps and games, as well as share tips for how to best use their smartphones. For a more passive approach to programming, consider having an “App of the Day” board where teens write about their favorite app and why it’s their favorite. If your library has a blog, let your teens guest post their recommendations.

Customers that rely heavily on old-school feature phones (non-smartphones that can’t connect to the Internet) can be more difficult to plan for, but are no less helpful. Try thinking of them for what they can do and not what they don’t do. They can let you and your teens talk to each other and exchange short messages (via text). They enable your customers to take pictures (camera phones) and record short audio clips.

Using older feature phones, teens can snap quick photos of themselves reenacting book covers, both in the library and on their own time. They can record ten-second booktalks, making a game of how quickly they can recap their favorite titles. Even the most basic cell phone has fantastic features that you can use to your advantage; and your teens already know how to use most of them. You’ve essentially taken the tech literacy off of your to-do list and put it on your patrons, allowing them to teach each other and express themselves.

I Am Low on Funds
The problem with Teen Tech Week is that things cost money.

Your budget has been slashed. Twice. You have twice as many teens and half as many staffers as you did five years ago. Things are tight, you’re working every angle to get materials and supplies for your space, but iPads? Kindles? Yeah, okay, sure. You’d settle for having a printer that wasn’t made ten years before most of your customers were even born. Who has the money to do a week of technology programming?
I Am Low on Space and People

The problem with Teen Tech Week is that I have nowhere to put it and only two hands.

You work with teenagers all day. Maybe you’re lucky enough to have your own space for your teens, maybe not. Maybe you’re a full-time teen librarian, and maybe you split your day between talking about Full Metal Alchemist and answering reference questions at the front desk. Either way, you don’t have anywhere to put teens with technology, and you certainly don’t have the time to sit down and only do one thing at a time.

Not everyone is fortunate enough to have a teen space, and not every library has a dedicated young adult librarian. For many, space and staff power are at just as high a premium as funds and time. Solo librarians often face the same issues. If you’re an army of one, it’s hard to be on multiple battlefields at the same time.

Personal devices are just that, personal, and they go mobile with your customers. Programming can take place from anywhere at any time. Participation in everything from a trivia tournament, to a scavenger hunt, to a karaoke contest can happen off-site. Mobile devices let teens create and share content regardless of their location; find the right way to match their creativity with your own ability to organize and display their work, and you’ve got a fantastic program that requires zero physical attendance.

Cell phones can also help solve the staffing problem. By making personal devices a building block, you’ve recruited your teens into helping you administer your programming. It’s hard to put on a program and document it at the same time; when you’re in the middle of running an event, it can be nearly impossible to get away long enough to take some great pictures of your teens having fun. Armed with smartphones, your teens can snap fantastic shots of themselves having fun in the library on Instagram—ready to go for the next library newsletter or website update.

Building your programming around personal devices turns your teens from passive recipients of your programming to active attendees, and encourages participation that won’t tie up your people and places.

Now Go Do!

You want to put on programming for Teen Tech Week, you really do. This year, you’ve got no reason not to. Check In @ your library gives you all of the tools necessary to put on a fantastic program with little to no fuss, muss, time, or money. And by integrating technology that your teens are already using, your programming becomes an organic experience, part of their routine as opposed to an interruption, and that’s better for everyone.

The ideas in this article are great jumping off points on which you can build, but they are by no means all inclusive. A library is an ecosystem, and each library is as unique as a fingerprint. Everything from your customers to your location makes your space singular. There isn’t a one-size-fits-all programming guide that they hand out when you become a librarian, and these examples are no different. Tweak ideas and strategies to fit your own needs and space. Talk to other librarians on listservs and social media about what they’re doing or what they’ve done in recent years. The Teen Tech Week Committee has also put together twenty Programming Ideas for Teen Tech Week (available for download from the ALA store at http://bit.ly/ttwstore) with suggestions for all levels of difficulty. You also don’t want to miss the Teen Tech Week Ning with more ideas and resources available at http://teentechweek.ning.com/.

Have fun, and good luck. We can’t wait to see what you come up with!

YALS
YALSA’s National Forum on Libraries and Teens

By Nancy Everhart, Don Latham and Marcia Mardis

YALSA received funding to hold a face-to-face summit and virtual town hall meetings in a national initiative titled National Forum on Libraries and Teens. These events bring together practitioners, stakeholders, and experts in the library, education, and technology communities to develop a white paper on how young adult services in libraries must develop in order to meet the informational and recreational needs of twelve to eighteen year olds. The forum will focus on three areas:

1. Research (what is known about the informational and recreational needs of young adults);
2. Programs and services (what library programs need in place to support these needs); and
3. Resources (what resources are needed to enable school and public libraries to effectively meet the

informational and recreational needs of contemporary young adults).

A major focus will be on how the library community can collaborate with other organizations, including academic institutions and national nonprofits and foundations, to support the needs of young adults. The project began in October 2012, and here we’d like to provide information about the project’s importance, how it will make a difference and how you can get involved.

Why Is the Forum Important?
As all of us know, libraries are vital but challenged source of support for the growing youth population in the United States. The “Opportunity for All” study reported that youth ages fourteen to twenty-four make up 25 percent of all library users and that youth were drawn to libraries to use computers, receive help with homework, socialize, and participate in programming.1 Similarly, school libraries are available to about 62 percent of youth enrolled in public schools and youth turn to their school libraries for recreational reading, learning support, and technology access.2 However, critical library resources are endangered by widespread economic impacts on public and school libraries.3,4,5,6

Less access to libraries particularly challenges our young adults. For them, libraries are essential for social learning.7 They also gain new literacies for learning and expression at libraries, which supplements the strictures of centralized, classroom curriculums.8,9,10 Young adults also use libraries to gain workplace preparedness.11,12

Building on Past Success
In recognition of these serious circumstances, the team at YALSA

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decided that it was time to build on past efforts to raise awareness in the library community. These previous efforts include:

- The Young Adult Services Division (YALSA’s previous name) sent delegates to a White House Conference on Youth in 1960.
- In 1979 the ALA Youth Caucus sent delegates to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services.
- In 2002 the White House hosted a conference on school libraries.
- In 2003 Museums and Libraries “Engaging America’s Youth” final report was published.
- In 2008 the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) hosted a discussion on the future of museums and libraries.

These past events helped YALSA to grow as an organization, and increased awareness about young adult librarianship—a mission the current national forum will take further. The forum will enable the library community to identify and gain understanding of the steps it needs to take in order to provide effective service to young adults who live in a fast-moving and technologically based world.

How Will the Forum Help?
As we mentioned, the forum will focus on three areas: research, programs and services, and resources. The outcome of the events will be the development and dissemination of a white paper that addresses each of these areas. The white paper will be a call to action for the library and education communities and beyond.

The forum includes events that will help current and future librarians develop effective services and resources for young adults by informing current practice and graduate school curricula. The momentum, personal and professional connections, outreach and white paper produced as a result of this project will provide librarians, educators, researchers, and other community stakeholders with a framework for ensuring that libraries provide timely, progressive and excellent services to young adults in this constantly changing environment.

Virtual Town Hall Meetings
In order to provide more opportunities for members of the young adult library services community, young adults and stakeholders to participate in planning the future of young adult library services, a series of virtual town hall meetings will be held March 19, April 16, and May 21, 2013. The topics and focus of each meeting are based on the outcomes of the summit.

The open online town hall meetings will take place in YALSA’s Adobe Connect space, and all those interested in the project will be able to synchronously post information from the meetings on Twitter and Facebook in order to bring in discussion from those not able to attend. Following each town hall meeting, conversations will be posted on the project website (www.al.org/yaforum).

Young adults will be recruited from YALSA members’ teen advisory boards to participate in the town hall meetings in order to provide their perspective on the information and recreational needs of today’s young adults.

White Paper Development
Once all materials from the summit and virtual town hall meetings have been gathered, the YALSA Research Committee, headed by Florida State University’s Don Latham, in collaboration with Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Editor of the Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults will draft a white paper and circulate it for review by experts, researchers, librarians, stakeholders and the YALSA community. The white paper will outline the challenges in providing library services to young adults, the future of library services to young adults, and strategies for ensuring young adults have the
services they need from a broad coalition of organizations locally, regionally and nationally.

Meet Your Forum Team
Your YALSA team includes Beth Yoke, the association’s Executive Director as Project Director, who oversees all phases of the project and supports dissemination efforts. YALSA staff, including Nichole Gilbert, who is responsible for planning and organizing the face-to-face events, and Letitia Smith, who coordinates participation and the white paper distribution, will also support the project.

Maureen Sullivan, a talented organizational consultant will lead the summit and Linda W. Braun, a YALSA Past President, will lead the virtual town hall meetings. Don Latham, and Sandra Hughes-Hassell, will help produce the draft of a white paper on which the community will provide feedback.

Nancy Everhart and Marcia Mardis, from Florida State University’s Partnerships Advancing Library Media (PALM) Center, will undertake the evaluation efforts and ensure that the team meets its goals.

How Can You Get Involved?
Watch the forum website, www.ala.org/yaforum, to keep up on news and events.

References
Making the Common Core Work for School Libraries

A NYC Example

By Elizabeth Naylor-Gutierrez

The adoption of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) is a gift to school librarians—the CCLS emphasis on the process of learning aligns perfectly with the framework of information fluency skills that guides instruction in the library program. In the ten years that I have worked in the Office of Library Services, “I see the Common Core era” as school librarians’ best opportunity to become instructional leaders in their schools. School librarians in NYC are particularly fortunate and crucially positioned to make major contributions to the implementation of the CCLS in NYC because of two factors: the use of the Information Fluency Continuum in NYC school libraries as the instructional blueprint, and the narrow focus of the NYC Department of Education (DOE) on specific CCLS to be implemented via the Citywide Instructional Expectations.

Created by NYC librarians and the Office of Library Services under the inspired leadership of Barbara Stripling, the Information Fluency Continuum (IFC) lays out the K–12 information and inquiry skills students must master to develop into independent, college- and career-ready learners. (For links to all of the materials mentioned in this article, see the YALS site at http://yalsa.ala.org/yals.) In addition, the IFC provides formative assessments to track students’ progress toward that goal. The Information Fluency Continuum presents a practical way to implement the CCLS demand for “focus and coherence in instruction and assessment.” The Office of Library Services has seized this opportunity to provide librarians and teachers with a concrete approach to implementing the CCLS through targeted professional development, Common Core State Standards and the School Librarian: A Process for Implementation. This four-day workshop reviews the alignment of the CCLS with the IFC, unpacks the individual standards, offers lesson-building guidance aimed at meeting specific information fluency skill standards, and provides assessments to measure students’ progress toward mastering that skill. Before diving into the substance and goals of the series, a bit of context helps illuminate the evolution of these sessions.

The adoption of the CCLS is such an enormous shift in instruction that the NYS Department of Education’s “evolving, collaborative platform for educators,” EngageNY has outlined just exactly what the “shifts” are. Recognizing the magnitude of the change for educators, many organizations have offered “crosswalks” or itemized comparisons of familiar approaches to help navigate the change with CCLS. The Office of Library Services also provided a crosswalk that aligned the IFC with the CCLS and made the document available on their website (http://on.nyc.gov/Wtg90U). The similarities in the IFC and the CCLS are remarkable—both follow an inquiry approach to learning and are process, not content, driven. However, the differences are even more interesting. The CCLS describe the learning process in broad strokes—for example, Reading Standards for Informational Text, Grade 5, Key Ideas and Details 1 requires that students be able to “Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing...”

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Tips for Embracing CCLS Initiatives No Matter What School System You Work In

1. Become familiar with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Visit the official site www.corestandards.org/the-standards, read them online or print them out and take time to understand the ways in which this process approach impacts current instruction.

2. Understand that the change to the Common Core Learning Standards is ongoing. Right now no one is an expert, no team or school has it all figured out. The changeover will take time and collaboration on the part of teachers, librarians, and administrators. There is hard work ahead and everyone has a stake in it—these standards are not going away.

3. Figure out how to teach the skills required by the CCLS. As mentioned in this article, librarians in NYC schools are using the Information Fluency Continuum benchmark skills to implement the CCLS. What is the inquiry process approach in your district? The IFC (Information Fluency Continuum) has recently been endorsed by the School Library Systems Association (SLSA) and is finding an audience throughout New York State; however, other approaches (Literacy Design Collaborative, Independent Investigation Method, etc.) also work to help teachers and librarians break the CCLS into skills and assessments around which lessons and units can be built. Librarians can be leaders in connecting whatever inquiry process is being used in their schools to the implementation of the CCLS.

4. Once you have figured out how to teach the skills required by the CCLS, share the good news! Be your school’s guide to the instructional implications of the Common Core Learning Standards. Librarians have an advantage in this shifting standards landscape: we have always been focused on the process of inquiry and the skills the process requires. Teachers generally emphasize content and benefit from an instructional partner who can tease out the skills required to meet the new standards as teachers address the curricular material. Librarians should be prepared to share their journey toward implementing the CCLS through inquiry. Now is the time for reflective practitioners to collaborate in preparing our students for college and career as lifelong learners.

inferences from the text.” When we unpack this standard we find that there are many discrete skills embedded within it: identifying main ideas and details, differentiating between important and unimportant details, making inferences from facts and drawing conclusions from information are just a few that jump out at librarians familiar with the IFC. However, there is no guidance from the CCLS as to what instruction designed to elicit and assess these skills looks like. Enter the Information Fluency Continuum. Upon examination of the IFC, it becomes clear that its skills framework based on the inquiry process is the perfect complement to the CCLS and most importantly provides a clear and practical path to deliver the CCLS to students via instruction. The CCLS are broad, and the IFC is granular. It was this understanding that helped the Office of Library Services create the Common Core State Standards and the School Librarian: A Process for Implementation workshop series.

This professional development has been particularly effective because it addresses the five specific Common Core Learning Standards selected by the NYC DOE and because the five selected are particularly well suited to inquiry. The NYC DOE has identified the following standards for the 2012–2013 school year for grade six through twelve:

Literacy Focus—Reading and Writing

ELA-specific Focus Speaking/Listening and Language

- Reading Informational Text
  Standard 1: “Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.”
  Standard 10: “By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in grades six through eight text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.”
- Writing Standard 1: “Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.”
- Speaking/Listening Standard 1: “Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade six topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly” and
- Language Standard 6: “Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.”

The selection of these particular CCLS and the Citywide Instructional Expectation requirement that in the school year 2012–2013 all content area teachers must “implement two units of study aligned to the Common Core . . . adapt existing units or adapt/adopt units from the Common Core Library or other
external sources . . . include points of access for all students” creates the perfect climate for teacher-librarian collaboration. The teacher-librarian collaboration using the IFC to meet the CCLS leverages both indispensable components of instruction: the process skills provided by librarians and the content supplied by teachers. However, before we began we needed to prepare librarians to be effective collaborators with their teachers.

In the fall of 2011 we began the workshop series and by the end of the summer of 2012 we had worked with nearly two hundred librarians. The first session of the series familiarizes participants with the IFC and the CCLS targeted in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and outlines how lessons can be built around IFC assessments. In the second session the focus is on unit planning. We train librarians to unpack the CCLS and determine what IFC skills are needed to accomplish the task described and to think about what a unit plan designed to address the skills would look like. Then, armed with the Mini-Alignment for the particular grade, the Unit Planning Worksheet, the Unit Planning Template, and the ICF assessments that apply, the librarian finds a cooperating teacher to collaborate with. Session three explores the importance of a structured and reflective approach to reviewing student work. This session is grounded in the concept that the best way to improve instruction is to closely and objectively examine what students produce to demonstrate their understanding. Participants follow a consultancy protocol to look at student work produced from lessons they have taught. The final session focuses on informational text and the librarian’s role in cultivating a love of reading in students, impacting school-wide reading choices and instructional decisions and building a collection to support and extend classroom reading.

The CCLS emphasis on informational text in all grades (in grade four the split between literary and informational reading should be 50/50, by eighth grade 45/55, and by twelfth grade, 30/70) affords librarians an opportunity to demonstrate their nonfiction collection expertise and influence the instruction that goes along with navigating and deeply understanding informational text. The Office of Library Services produced a Common Core Workshop Series LibGuide that is designed to support librarians that have attended the Common Core State Standards and the School Librarian: A Process for Implementation series.

As we begin another school year, we at the Office of Library Services are applying a bit of reflection to our own practice. In working with librarians over the past year we discovered that most participants had not had the opportunity to do long-range lesson planning and needed support in that area. Therefore we designed a series entitled Collaborative Lesson Planning with Information Fluency Continuum (IFC) Assessments and required that librarians bring a collaborating teacher. That requirement speaks to the importance of the teacher-librarian partnership in building and delivering an effective lesson addressing the Citywide Instructional Expectations and also to the need to examine a critical mass of student work, which teachers typically have greater access to than librarians. We hope to offer more CCLS/IFC professional development opportunities for librarians to bring their collaborating teachers to this school year.

We are just beginning to see the effect of the efforts of librarians who participated in the CCLS/IFC professional development and the effects are heartening. One elementary school librarian explained to her principal how the IFC could be used as a framework for the delivery of CIE-aligned instruction school-wide and is now working with teachers, who supply content, to build lessons centered on IFC assessments. A middle school librarian teamed up with a social studies teacher to create a unit addressing the Citywide Instructional Expectations through debate. These collaborations are just the beginning; we expect these opportunities to increase as content area teachers are required this year to deliver two CCLS-aligned lessons.

We’ve hardly scratched the surface of the other librarian-friendly part of the Common Core Learning Standards: informational text. The expected shift in reading material is worth mentioning again: the balance between literary and informational reading is moving from 50/50 in fourth grade to 45/55 by eighth grade and 30/70 by twelfth grade. The increased importance of nonfiction texts provides significant opportunities for librarians to take a leadership role in their schools: the central school library becomes an important source of informational texts (resulting in increased visits, higher circulation, and increased or at least stable budgets), the librarian’s collection development expertise in nonfiction becomes a resource as administrators and teachers decide which informational texts will be used in the classroom and finally databases (and those who purchase and use them) will be recognized as the rich source of complex texts and scaffolding material that they are. The emphasis on informational text could be the turning point for increased and consistently effective use of the free NOVELny databases in New York State and other similar state-funded databases.

Another influential development in NYC is the MyLibraryNYC initiative that connects New York City public schools with the more than seventeen million books and other items that are a part of...
the New York, Brooklyn, and Queens Public Library catalogs. MyLibraryNYC is expected to provide access to 250,000 students in 400 public schools this year and 1.1 million students by 2015. Each of the four hundred schools currently in the program has a school librarian who is the liaison between the public library and the school community. Again, the librarian can facilitate not just the access to and retrieval of this greatly expanded pool of informational text but also guide its instructional trajectory. School librarians grounded in the implementation of the CCLS can help teachers select complex texts from this diverse and rich collection. Furthermore, school librarians continue to work with public librarians in this initiative to develop CCLS-specific tags for curriculum-related materials. Leadership opportunities abound. The only thing worse than not getting an opportunity to impact student learning is to be unprepared for the opportunity when it comes knocking. Implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards is knocking, and it is the goal of the Office of Library Services to make sure that NYC school librarians who are up to the challenge of leadership in this season of opportunity have the support and tools they need to help the students in their schools fulfill their potential and develop into an independent, college- and career-ready learners. YALS

References
2. International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), American Association of School Librarians (AASL) as well as many state departments of educations, including Tennessee, Colorado, and Connecticut.
4. All other grade bands (PK–2 and 3–5) address the same CCLS (in age-appropriate ways) except that for the PK–2 grade band students are responsible for Writing Standard 2, “Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.”
Minecraft Programs in the Library
If You Build It They Will Come
By Erica Gauquier and Jessica Schneider

Minecraft first came onto the gaming scene in 2009 when beta accounts were made available for some to test drive the program. It wasn’t officially released until two years later during the winter of 2011. Since then the game has virtually gone viral with teens and adults. The popularity of Minecraft quickly spread to the teen customers who frequent the teen lounge at Darien (CT) Library. As a result, it wasn’t too long before Minecraft caught our attention in the Teen Services Department. The common interest in Minecraft between geeks and jocks, girls and boys, goths and preps, and other unlikely cohorts is remarkable. In this way Minecraft creates the perfect opportunity for building a new program with a diverse group of teens who are already in your library.

What Is Minecraft?
Minecraft is like a virtual and ongoing game of Legos. Players mine for necessary materials in order to thrive in the game. You simply move blocks and build upon them, gathering supplies as you go. As a player gets better and gains wood from trees, wool from sheep, meat from pigs, and diamonds from the earth, the possibilities for gathering new materials and resources become greater. The game can get even more complicated if you are so inclined, allowing players to create their own modifications (mods), which leads to learning essential programming skills.

Minecraft was originally created by a Swedish programmer named Markus Persson, and is now maintained by his company Mojang. Mojang regularly provides updates to new and improved versions of Minecraft.

The program is often described as a virtual sandbox in that players have the freedom to alter the world and create how they play within the game. Everything you can ever imagine has been created in Minecraft from pop-culture riffs on The Hunger Games arena to an entire virtual world based on the best-selling Game of Thrones series—just two of the amazing recreations already in place. The Internet is rich with forums for players to discuss strategies, give advice, and host competitions. The community that sprung up around this game is a seemingly endless group of content creators, and those that are the most excited about it are definitely teens.

There is so much you can compare Minecraft to, and yet there is nothing quite like it. The basic need to hunt and gather is so primal and innate in humans that it just clicks with teens. The game is about survival and keeping watch over your property. That natural instinct to look after one’s goods is not foreign to humans in everyday society. The critical thinking piece of the game is huge. Players are constantly faced with choices that need to be made. If you don’t make good choices, it affects your chances for survival and affects your quality of life just the way it does in real life. Making good choices really is a constant struggle for adults and teens in their own lives on a daily basis.

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Minecraft Programs in the Library

Teen Communication and Minecraft
The amount of communication that goes on both through the text function on the bottom of the Minecraft screen and the verbal conversations that sail over the computer monitors is incredible. Every day we observe as teens type away into the Minecraft text box (which is basically like IM but with some code thrown in to the mix), talking to each other and giving each other demands. The computers in the teen lounge are situated around a large circular table in the middle of the room; therefore, teens who play Minecraft are all sitting near each other. While typing to each other within the game, they also carry on verbal conversations with one another in the room. Some of these teens go to school together, but most weren’t friends before they came to the library and realized that they had Minecraft in common. Some are freshman, and others are seniors who probably wouldn’t have given each other another look if it weren’t for the connection they found when playing Minecraft at Darien Library.

Getting Started with Minecraft in the Library
When we saw that many teens were coming to the library specifically to play Minecraft, we began looking for ways that the library could capitalize on the teens’ enthusiasm. We started working with themes for building projects. We had the teens work within creative mode in the game because it meant that all materials needed additions to the server can become extremely technical.

While this was fun, we noticed that what the teens really wanted to do was play in a Minecraft world together. They would quickly run through the theme of the week as fast as they could and then log on to a server and play in a more collaborative environment with other players. A server is a virtual game space hosted by any individual with the means to store the data and content of that world. This multiplayer environment, which many players prefer, is an alternative option to playing alone. After much discussion, Darien Library soon began hosting its own server and we watched in amazement as the teens started building their own Minecraft world.

As with any society, there were, of course, problems. Some teens claimed their own corners of the world and refused to let others build there. Some teens actively “grieved” (a Minecraft term meaning destroyed or vandalized) other teens’ creations. In this way the parallels between the Minecraft world and the real world are astounding, reflecting many of the social problems we face every day.

We witnessed amazing collaborations occurring among the players as well as an emerging sense of community and cooperation. Together, teens built a home base area on the server that included a library, a dock area, and a diving board among other things. It became a base for people to store supplies, regenerate when killed and meet up with other players to plan new buildings. Teens in the room encourage each other to become more skilled within the game. They give advice when someone is stuck, and willingly share supplies and give directions when other players are lost or in need. They create signs throughout the world with helpful advice or instructions. Discussions in the teen lounge about possible mods and other needed additions to the server can become extremely technical.

We quickly realized we would need to recruit a group of mature and advanced teen Minecraft players to help us monitor the server. Since the players are the ones that know the most about the game, it just made sense that we should enlist their help to advise other players, and report abuses. Most Minecraft servers need groups of moderators in order to keep the game running smoothly, and it turns out the library server is no different. As with any new program, there were some things that worked and others that did not. A large group of teens came to the first Mod Squad meeting, all interested in becoming moderators.

Moderators are given special permissions in the game, enabling them to fly and temporarily kick users off the server for a variety of infractions. We also created a moderator manual to help teens understand what the job of a moderator is and what kind of behavior we expect of them. As is the case in the real world of adults and teens, some teens use their powers for good, supporting their fellow players and helping newbies learn to play the game, while others abuse their privileges, using their powers for evil, griefing other players’ property, and kicking off players they have personal grievances with. There is definitely a learning curve when it comes to letting teens monitor themselves.

As it turned out, letting thirteen year olds become moderators on the Minecraft server didn’t exactly go as we planned. We bestowed a certain amount of responsibility and dependability on the teens. While it worked at first and certainly gave them confidence, they are, after all, younger teens. When they get mad at each other in real life, they take to the Minecraft server, using their privileges to wreak havoc on each other’s houses. Their wrongdoings were brought to justice eventually, in a Minecraft court of law. The teens themselves suggested violators...
stand trial in front of a mock jury of their peers. The trial took place in Minecraft, which is only appropriate since that’s where all of the grieving took place. This taught the teens that just like in real life, they were accountable for their actions and any infractions would ultimately have consequences.

Rather than kicking them off of the server and banning them for bad behavior, they stood trial, learned a lesson and were welcomed back after a period of time. This is the way you would teach children in real life, using actions and consequences. Minecraft is just another platform for us to use as a teachable moment when the opportunity should present itself. If your library is considering a Minecraft server with teenagers as moderators, we encourage it, but before you do, set some guidelines and bylaws and be willing to give the teens chances to make, and work through, mistakes.

Minecraft and Summer Reading
By the time Darien Library’s teen summer reading program rolled around, we knew it was essential to include a Minecraft-based event. We quickly stumbled upon a group of gamers online who had created a Minecraft world that provided Olympic-themed games for players. Since this past summer was also the 2012 Summer Olympics, we thought it would be a perfect way to combine a great summer theme and a group activity centered around Minecraft.

Before the idea was even fully formed we mentioned it to one of the teens that regularly came to the library to play. A week later he announced that he and two other friends had already begun building their own Olympic Minecraft arena. These three teens became instrumental to the success of the program, dividing up the work among themselves and working hard to keep their progress a secret from other players.

The Darien Minecraft Olympics included competitions such as archery, climbing, pig rodeo, Minecart racing and an obstacle course. We drew up a bracket on our whiteboard for each event and had teens sign up for the competitions in which they wished to compete. We hooked up a laptop to the flat screen TV on the wall to display the games for everyone who wasn’t competing.

Our three designers appointed themselves referees, monitoring each event, advising teens who got stuck and keeping everything running smoothly. We provided pizza for everyone and prizes for the winners. For the final round, winners of each event came together for a sudden death round of “Spleef,” a unique Minecraft game where players attempt to knock each other off a platform by mining the blocks beneath each player. The winners won Minecraft-related prizes, a t-shirt, a foam pickaxe and a foam sword. The teens were really engaged and excited to participate. They rooted for each other and worked to help one another through each event. Without their help and interest in the game, this program could never have gone as smoothly as it did. This was further confirmation that by bringing Minecraft into our library we made the right choice.

This program and Minecraft in general is incredibly affordable for a library to run. Minecraft accounts are about $27 each, and a program like this doesn’t necessarily require your own server space. The most costly component of the whole program proved to be the eight boxes of pizza that were purchased for this special event. It was rewarding enough for the teens to compete with their friends and show off their skills that the prizes were just an added bonus.

Minecraft provides opportunities for amazing collaborative projects with low access barriers. Anyone that knows how to use a mouse and a keyboard can play the game. Look around your library; you will even see children as young as five or six years old playing. Adults are playing, too; the amount of discussion and competition across the Internet is unbelievable. The best part is this game has created a whole community of gamers who work to create amazing things together, helping each other regardless of where they live. Whether your library patrons are first-person shooter gamers or they’re into gaming like Mario Kart, Minecraft appeals to both serious and casual players of all ages and genders. YALS
There’s a quiet revolution going on in the autism community. Tablets (such as the iPad), iPod Touches and iPhones offer portability and an economical way to communicate and learn. They help in myriad ways and have become an important part of the educational, social and emotional development of children and teens with autism. Now a person with autism can carry a device that helps them communicate and understand the world around them. For teens, there are apps that help them learn or reinforce topics covered in school and assist in homework.

Mobile Technology and the Autism Community

How has mobile technology changed the autism community? Consider this: the cost of a traditional augmentative communication device for someone who needs help with speech is equal to the cost of approximately twenty-four iPhones and is not portable. Mobile technology has not only made access more affordable, and easier, think about the fact that carrying a mobile device doesn’t automatically signal to the world that you are different, which can be especially important for teens.

At the Nassau Library System, I am in the middle of a year-long Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant to help serve patrons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). One of my tasks is to purchase iPads and load them up with apps that are suitable for children, teens, and adults with ASD. Ultimately, we will use the iPads with library staff to train them on using technology and serving patrons with ASD.

The goal of this article is to help familiarize you with some of the apps that are suitable for teens on the autism spectrum. This turned out to be a challenge for a few reasons.

- Many of the apps for the ASD community are for young children.
- Individuals on the autism spectrum present themselves at our libraries in many different ways and with very different types of challenges and abilities. This means that the playing field for apps that serve this community is large—as the saying goes, “If you know one person with autism, you know one person with autism.”
- Many of the apps require the individual user to customize it to their needs, making the app inappropriate to download to a library device.

There are many apps that are appropriate to download onto a personal device because they require some kind of customization for the individual user. Many of these have to do with executive functioning skills: scheduling, goal tracking and organization. Others help with communication and living a fuller life. For example, there is a wonderful app called Proloquo2Go that is changing the way nonverbal people communicate. Some people on the spectrum either can’t speak at all or struggle to be understood. This app has changed lives and opened the world to many who couldn’t previously communicate. It is the most expensive apps. At a cost of $179.99, you wouldn’t purchase it for your library device because it has to be customized for the individual. But you could recommend it to a parent of a teen that has difficulty communicating.

The focus of this article is on apps available for Apple devices. Android is slowly catching up, but right now Apple offers more variety and depth in their apps for teens with autism. With that in mind,

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the recommendations are for apps that are good to download to a library device and are most often available for the iPad.

Most of the recommended apps are for higher functioning teens that visit the library and possibly attend programs or participate in some other way. A wonderful book that helped me explore many apps is Apps for Autism: A Must-Have Resource for the Special Needs Community by Lois Jean Brady. I recommend this book for a library’s special needs collection. It focuses on apps for young children, but many can be used with teens as well.

I’ve looked at hundreds of apps. My research tools consisted of the book I just mentioned, searching the Apple app store, reading the YALSAblog, and consulting professionals that I know in the field of autism and/or libraries. I also reached out to families who have a teen on the spectrum. Many thanks to Barbara Klipper formerly of the Ferguson Library in Stamford (CT), for some of the app suggestions. I do not pretend to be an expert in autism (but I have educated myself over the past several years because I have a young adult son with Asperger’s), so I relied on reviews and suggestions from the aforementioned people.

As always, what works for one person may not be right for another. This is why I’ve recommended the lite (or free) version of an app when available. The best way to describe the lite version is “try before you buy.” They allow you to download an app for free. It won’t be the full version, but you can get a good idea if you like it and want to purchase it. However, lite versions usually include ads, so manage your library devices accordingly.

Social Skills and Apps for Daily Living
Poor social skills or social language are generally thought of as the classic symptom of someone with Asperger’s syndrome. This almost always coexists with other challenges and can lower social acceptance and understanding even further than just the individual’s lack of social comprehension. Apps that help an individual learn about social practices and explain the hidden curriculum of life are very helpful. The term hidden curriculum refers to the social information that is not directly taught but is assumed everybody understands. It’s the unstated rules of life that if not understood make the world a confusing place and can help isolate an individual on the spectrum. Sometimes the teen you know without any “common sense” may not understand the hidden curriculum of life. These need to be constantly taught because as we grow, they are constantly changing.

Apps that help with understanding activities of daily living (ADL) are also extremely helpful. ADL skills are things like personal hygiene and living safely and productively in a community.

Many of the apps dedicated to hidden curriculum and ADL skills are designed for young children. However, some of the best apps I found are the Conover Company’s Functional Skills System apps. This is a series of videos that have been converted to app form. The videos show young adults in various situations such as going to the library and going to a public restroom. They are very appropriate for teens on the spectrum. Each app is $.99 (High definition [HD] versions are $1.99) and covers a specific topic. Forty-two separate apps covering life skills, literacy, social, math, and work skills are available. There are free samplers of each set of skills. For example, you can download the Functional Skills Sampler, Social Skills Sampler, or Work Skills Sampler to get a sense of what kinds of skills they teach.

You can find the list of available apps by visiting the Conover Company’s website (http://conovercompany.com) or search in the app store using Conover Company.

Hidden Curriculum for Adolescents and Adults by AAPC (www.asperger.net), $1.99
Great for explaining the unwritten rules of life to teens on the spectrum, and even as one review mentions, this app can be useful to someone from another country who needs help navigating a new environment.

Middle School Confidential written by anti-bullying activist Annie Fox, M.Ed.
Autism?

Based on the printed book series of the same name, these are the first two books in the series turned into apps. Each book app focuses on a common problem and helps teens understand the hidden rules of middle school life.

**English Idioms Illustrated** by Robot Media, Free ($3.99 for two packs)

Idioms can be very difficult for someone on the spectrum to understand. The first twenty-three idioms are free, and the other two packs of seventy idioms each are available through an in-app purchase ($3.99 for both packs). Each idiom is illustrated in comic book panel style, making them very accessible to teens.

**Sensory Issues and Timekeeping**

Many individuals on the autism spectrum have difficulty processing and handling sensory inputs such as light and sound. Often you may see these individuals wearing baseball caps to block the fluorescent lights or wearing earbuds to block out the sounds around them. In addition to sensory issues, an anxiety disorder may exist. Teens on the spectrum may have difficulty waiting their turn or transitioning from one task to another. Timekeeping apps help visualize time and may help ease anxious thoughts.

**White Noise Ambience HD Lite** by logicworks, Free

While designed as a sleep aid, this app can be used to drown out the environmental sounds that are all around us—even in a library setting. Teens with sensitivity to sound may find this helpful while doing work in the library or waiting for a program to begin. All that is needed is an individual’s earbuds.

**iHourglass** by Headlight Software, Free ($1.99 for the ad-free version)

iHourglass offers seven different timer designs to choose from (some look nothing like an hourglass). Teens may like the fun visuals. However, it does not offer a countdown feature, which may mean that for some teens this app is not helpful. No worries, there are dozens of free timer apps (as well as paid apps) that you can try out. You can download a few to accommodate different needs. Each one counts a little differently and offers different aspects of timing (countdown, early warning alarms, etc.).

**Literacy and Learning**

**Web Reader – Text to Speech** by Chris Chauvin, $1.99

There are many Web reader apps, this is one of the highest rated. It will read the entire page or the highlighted text on a Web page. It will also read .pdf documents. It will even read documents that you open from Dropbox or Word in the app.

**Flashcards Deluxe Lite** by OrangeOrApple.com, Free ($3.99 full version)

This study aid is highly customizable and primarily for use by an individual. You can purchase flashcard sets from Quizlet.com and FlashcardExchange.com to support curriculum in literature, vocabulary, math and science, history and geography and more. Appropriate for all ages. Students can make their own flashcards too. The lite version has a limit of four decks and six cards per deck.

**Dexteria** by BinaryLabs, $4.99

A set of hand exercises that improve fine motor skills and handwriting. This can be used for all ages. The level of ability is more important than the age of the user.

**YouTube**, Free

YouTube can be used effectively for visual learners. Need to understand how to do something? There’s probably a video on YouTube about it. It’s also a place where you can find fun and funny videos to pass the time away.

**Khan Academy**

www.khanacademy.org, Free

Students can make use of an extensive video library, interactive challenges, and assessments from any computer with access to the Web. Their library of videos cover K–12 math, science topics such as biology, chemistry, physics, and the humanities. Each video is a digestible chunk, approximately ten minutes long, and especially purposed for viewing on a computer. All are free.

**BrainPop Featured Movie**

www.brainpop.com, Free

For the younger teen, this is a great visual learning tool. Animated movies on various topics make learning fun. One new free video is available each day. There are pre and post video questions and other fun related activities.

**Books**

**Audiobooks** by Cross Forward Consulting, LLC, Free

Offers hundreds of free audiobooks to download. There is an in-app option to purchase audiobooks not already on a device that librarians will want to disable. Please note: I was not able to review all of the available book content.

**AudioBookShelf** by Cross Forward Consulting LLC, $1.99

This is the paid version of the previous app. It includes fourteen classic titles (i.e., *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Jane Eyre*)
with an option to purchase (for $.99) the adventure pack of five classic titles (i.e., Sherlock Holmes, Tom Sawyer) are read mostly by the same readers as the free version. The only differences I can find between the free and fee versions are that the fee version includes a table of contents for each title as well as an attractive spine for each book. This makes the books slightly more palatable. Also, the fee version makes the contents of the app finite. The free version includes hundreds of other titles that cannot be reviewed for content and needs to be disabled.

Games
Games can be a good way to help with social interactions. Turn-taking and working together can help start a conversation, taking some of the pressure off of teens who struggle to fit in. Some of these will also work well as ice breakers before a program or teen advisory group meeting.

Labyrinth Lite by Exact Magic Software, Free
Great for building dexterity. Control a steel ball through a wooden labyrinth. Levels get harder as you progress. The full version is on the pricey side at $7.99.

Mr. Trivia Lite by Iron Square Games, Free
Full version is $1.99 and includes over five hundred questions. Many "aspies" pride themselves on the knowledge of "useless information" that's stuck in their brains. Lots of interactive possibilities as well as solo play available. The questions are difficult and are for an older audience.

Knots by Josh Snyder, Free
Think Twister for your fingers. It looks young, but it's actually difficult to do. Helps build eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity and encourages social interaction while playing with another person. Up to four players can play at once.

The following are classic games that shouldn't be overlooked.

What makes them enjoyable for neurotypical teens is also the reason that teens on the spectrum love them too. They're fun, relaxing and help fill downtime.

Reversi by Optime Software, Free
This is the classic strategy game of Othello in an app. There are many versions of Othello at the app store. This is the best free one I found. However, it includes a lot of ads, which is a good reason to buy the full version for $1.99. You can play with one or two players.

Tetris by Electronic Arts, $2.99
The classic video game in an app for the iPad. Addictive and fun.

Angry Birds by Rovio Entertainment
Not sure I have to describe this one. Many free versions are available. Three words say it all: simple, repetitive, and fun.

Music and Creativity

Pandora Radio by Pandora Media, Free
This could also be filed under the category of sensory-sensitive apps. Not only would it be great for a teen on the spectrum to plug into when sensory issues get overwhelming, but it could be used at the start of, or during, a program to set a mood.

Faces iMake by iMagine Machine LLC, $1.99
For the younger teen, this fun app encourages creativity by having the user make different funny faces with objects from categories like food, music, candy, and more. Great for practicing fine motor skills because items need to be placed, sized, and rotated into place. It can also be used to discuss/reinforce the different components of facial features.

Strip Designer by Vivid Apps, $2.99
This app allows you to turn photos into comic strips. Use the camera on the device or download from your photo gallery to make fun comic book stories with balloon words and special effect stickers. You can paint on the photos or draw your own sketches.

What makes them enjoyable for neurotypical teens is also the reason that teens on the spectrum love them too. They’re fun, relaxing and help fill downtime.

Bubbles Explode by Spooky House Studios, Free ($0.99 to remove ads)
There are many different bubble-popping games from which to choose. I like this one. There are sounds and music that can be turned on or off. Touch screen controls help make it easy for those who have fine motor skill challenges. The various games are fun and when you pop a particularly good bubble group, it gives you a message like "pretty pop," "great
square,” or “nice stairs.” Recommend spending the dollar to get rid of the ads.

**JELL-O Jiggle-It** by Kraft
New Services, Inc., Free
From the makers of JELL-O comes a dancing JELL-O app. It’s silly, yes, but it’s fun, easy to use, and entertaining. Pick your color of JELL-O, and either play music from your iTunes library or turn on the microphone and it will dance to music playing in the room.

**Uzu** by Colordodge Labs,
http://uzumotion.com, $1.99
A visual delight of colors, patterns, and movement that is really great for killing time or having fun with a group of people. “Points of light will shoot across the screen and fly to your command, twirling in a vortex of color and motion.” It’s suitable for one or a group of people to play. You can customize color, speed, size, and a number of other settings.

Award winning and rated as an “iPad App of the Week.”

**General Information**

**Autism Apps** (touchautism.com), Free
Because there are hundreds of apps focused on special needs but not categorized as such, it can be very difficult to find what you need. This app is designed as a comprehensive list of apps that are being used with, and by, people on the spectrum and other special needs. It can be searched by thirty categories, what’s new, and featured apps, as well as via a traditional search box. Each app includes reviews and links to information about that app.

**Volume Purchase Program**
Apple offers a Volume Purchase Program (VPP) for iTunes and the App Store. It allows libraries (qualified educational institutions) to purchase multiple copies of the same app (or book) at once. This can be helpful if putting the same app on several library devices. Many of them can be purchased at a discounted price. You can learn more at: https://volume.itunes.apple.com/us/store.

**Conclusion**
This is by no means a comprehensive list of what is available for teens with autism. Keep in mind many apps neurotypical teens use regularly also fit the needs of those on the spectrum. For example, Google Calendar and Google Maps work well for teens on the spectrum for timekeeping and wayfinding. With that in mind, I hope this article acts as a starting point to get you thinking about the kinds of apps that can work for teens with autism. Purchasing apps won’t break the budget, with so many of them costing less than three dollars, or nothing at all. The apps will be well worth the cost and demonstrate support of the autism spectrum disorder community by the library. YALS
Teen tXperts
An Evaluation

By April Layne Pavis

Sometimes you have a really great idea. One that you just know will be successful, valuable, and fun. You work out the details, implement the program, end it, and wonder just how useful and fun that actually was. You could write it off as a one-and-done program and wait for the next “big idea,” or you could analyze what worked, what didn’t work, and what could be improved to ensure that usefulness and fun are indeed the result the next time around. The latter is precisely what I and my coworkers have done in the weeks following the completion of the Teen tXpert pilot program.

The idea for the Teen tXperts was conceived at our monthly teen services meeting in January 2012. It began as a discussion of two ideas: hiring an intern for the Rust Library’s A. V. Symington Teen Center; and adding a technology helper, an extra experienced set of hands, at the reference desk to help patrons with technology-related topics such as printing, scanning, e-mail, and e-readers. We immediately understood that we had a need for technology support and extra hands, so those two ideas quickly merged into what became the Teen tXpert program, a corps of teen volunteers who would be trained on the technology that the library offers, as well as on customer service. They would then use those skills and their preexisting knowledge of technology to help the reference librarians assist patrons during adult computer classes, operate the e-reader open house, and staff the table at a technology petting zoo.

Once it started we knew the Teen tXpert program was successful in many ways, and we also knew there were bumps in the road. In order to assess both the success and the bumps, a survey was sent to every librarian who played a role in the planning and hosting of the program. Librarian responses, as well as the survey responses from the four teen tXperts, helped us see what elements of the program need correcting, if we host the program again. The following is a summary of the pieces of the program that survey respondents noted, and also includes my own observations.

Planning
After the teen librarians planned and approved the program, we took our idea to the reference librarians (who the tXperts directly supported) and the branch managers. We thought we had taken the proper route, going from bottom to top and garnering support as we climbed. In actuality, we discovered we should have gone in the opposite direction, garnering advice from the senior management team whose years of experience in establishing system-wide initiatives could have helped us tremendously in setting up the program. After that initial meeting in January 2012, we should have gone straight to the director and senior management team for their experienced opinion and overall supervision. Because of the approach we took, by the time we sought approval from administration to move forward, there was not enough time for the idea to be discussed, designed, and finalized. Luckily the director liked the idea enough to approve one library host a trial run of the program, instead of establishing it immediately as a system-wide initiative. The pilot included advertising for volunteers, hosting an orientation, and, upon the program’s completion, analyzing success. We now know that all future planning sessions need to include a senior management member who will act as liaison to the director and senior management team.

Orientation
Sixteen teen boys submitted applications to be tXperts, but four showed up for the orientation. More teens showed interest later in the summer, but we could not accept them into the program because we only had time to host one orientation. Next time I would like to host at least two orientations per branch, or if the program were to expand to the other

APRIL LAYNE PAVIS is a Teen Services Librarian in Loudoun County, Virginia, and has been working with teens in libraries since 2006. She earned her Masters in Library Science in 2010 and has the unique ability to turn any conversation into one about libraries, or a particular book or author.
branches, allow teens to attend the orientation that fits their schedule. Since the program will be the same at every branch (in terms of library policies teens must accept and follow and technology topics they will be assisting patrons with), there is no reason why a potential tXpert cannot attend an orientation at a branch other than his home branch, if his schedule necessitates.

The orientation itself will need an overhaul as well. It is critical that we cover library and county policies (confidentiality, Internet use agreement, library code of conduct) that the tXperts will face as well as topics they are not permitted to assist patrons with (resumes, online bill pay, legal/court issues). One tXpert requested in his post-program survey, “A small tutorial on how to help a library patron. Like, bring someone in who needs the actual help, and use him/her for observation.” This is a fantastic idea because many of these teens have only ever helped family members or friends use technology, not complete strangers. Future tXpert orientations will include a role-playing portion where teens will observe how a one-on-one tutoring session should function and, just as importantly, how it should not.

Teen tXperts

Two of our tXperts were brothers, just two years apart in age and grade. They had similar interests and enjoyed each other’s company, but they also liked competition and playful brothers-only banter. Occasionally we had to ask them to separate and work independently, as we were trying to put forth an image of maturity, responsibility, and ability. They were both very good at educating patrons, and at summer’s end I asked them to return for future tXperts programs. Next time though, I will be sure to schedule family members on separate shifts, or if that isn’t practical for the family from a transportation standpoint, then I will make sure to have separate projects or programs for them to work on so they are not working next to each other. That should reduce their competitive behavior.

Even with the best of intentions and detailed scheduling, not all tXperts were enthusiastic about the work they were asked to perform. One tXpert wrote in his survey, “I found the e-reader table to be somewhat boring.” He had no personal interest in e-readers and e-books, which came across in his willingness to teach patrons about the technology. I was sorry to have to ask him to work the e-reader table, but there were only so many opportunities for him during the weeks in which he volunteered. This is a difficult problem to resolve: we want our volunteers to perform tasks they are interested in and excited about, but allowing them to pick and choose based on personal interests versus the library’s needs is not helping the teen learn or helping the library serve the community’s needs. Next time I will impress upon the tXperts the importance and convenience of e-readers and e-books from the patron’s perspective, so that they can better understand why we encourage their use, and by helping teach patrons to use the e-readers, the tXperts will support the education of the community.

In future programs we will be sure to develop tasks for the tXperts to complete or explore in their downtime, such as when they are between patrons. This could be exploring and reporting on new software that the library is considering purchasing (Freading or Freegal, for example), or improving their skills in Photoshop or Microsoft Office. Their exploration of these programs can only improve their knowledge and skills for future personal use and patron interactions.

Safety

Due to the tXpert’s being minors and their relative lack of experience in working with customer service, I included in the orientation a section on safety and appropriate communication between tXperts and patrons. Moreover, in an effort to promote safety the reference librarians tried very hard to be available for the tXperts during their shifts. This was not only for observation purposes, but for intervention if the topic got too detailed for the tXpert to handle, if the patron asked too much of the tXpert, or if a patron behaved inappropriately towards the tXpert. One patron crossed the line of appropriate behavior by discussing with the tXpert the possibility of meeting during non-tXpert hours, something that I told the teens during orientation might happen, but to politely decline. The teen was more than happy to meet, as was his parent, but for the safety of the teen I requested that they schedule their sessions through the librarians and hold them within the library, and both parties complied. Furthermore, occasionally problems came up such as a busy desk or staff shortage, but in the future we will try to schedule tXperts at times when a reference librarian is completely available to them; to be able to stop what they are doing and assist the teen and the patron, if the need arises. We need to find the right balance between allowing the teen to teach, and ensuring that the patrons interact appropriately with them.

Communication

An ongoing issue was the lack of communication between myself and the tXperts. Some of this could not be avoided: they would arrive or leave when I was in my office, on leave or at lunch; or I would be in the library when they signed in, but not when they signed out. I had a
great e-mail relationship with one parent, but had a hard time getting in touch with the other tXpert or their parents, by both e-mail and phone. This created some confusion when I would verbally confirm a change in schedule with the tXpert, but he forgot or did not see the reminder e-mail, leaving the reference librarian with no tXpers (or too many) at the Tech Tuesday program, the librarian-led computer course with a rotating calendar of topics.

Next time I will establish early on that constant communication via phone and e-mail is expected. I will follow a timetable of communication and will e-mail the tXpers every Friday to remind them of their schedule for the following week. It will be their responsibility to respond by Monday morning that they received my e-mail and, if applicable, inform me of any schedule changes. This will not only help me stay on top of the schedule, but it will teach the tXpers to be accountable.

Conclusion
The Teen tXpert program was successful in that it fulfilled its mission of helping the reference librarians teach patrons how to use technology, and how to use it efficiently. The teens were given experience in teaching, the patrons were taught valuable skills, and the librarians had educated assistants aiding them. Reference Librarian Valarie Hoover said of the program, "It was great to see intergenerational friendships develop and a sense of pride and accomplishment on the part of the tXpert and adult student."

The problems came when we did not discuss the program with the director early on in the process; in making the customer service element of our orientation comprehensible; and in communicating clearly with the tXpers throughout the program. Luckily, these are the kinds of errors a librarian only makes once. Future sessions of the program will be much more successful because of the evaluation we conducted of the pilot.

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—Publishers Weekly, Starred Review

www.peachtree-online.com
Sacramento Teens Shape Their Future, One Photo and Post at a Time

By Lana Adlawan

In communities across the United States, morning headlines bombard readers with stories that provoke strong emotional responses. We process these stories and then move on with the demands in our own lives. But what happens to the people in these stories that we leave behind?

In terms of teens and their stories, what does it really mean that there is a large percentage of youth affected by some of the events covered in national news stories—growing unemployment or drastic cuts to education? What does it mean for teens when we read stories about the repercussions of growing crime rates on families and the safety of their neighborhoods? These are societal problems, but they impact individuals and their families in significant ways. Teens react to these by sharing their life stories with friends or in their school communities, and there's a common experience that is a part of our national consciousness, within this age group, that needs to be documented. Sacramento Public Library is facilitating this by empowering teens to publish their own stories with the help of twenty-first century technology.

Our program, “Preserving Our Present,” is supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and administered in California by the State Librarian. Sacramento Public Library is the fourth largest library system in California and is unique in that it serves suburban, urban, and rural populations across its twenty-eight branches. The ethnic and socioeconomic diversity across the Sacramento region also adds to the collective narrative, providing a rich tapestry of shared cross-cultural experience. Preserving Our Present focuses on teen-driven content and narrative from students across Sacramento and makes it available through the Preserving Our Present website (www.preservingourpresent.org).

The first community profiled as part of the project is the Gardenland/Northgate community, a diverse neighborhood just north of the capital. Once known for its agricultural abundance, the neighborhood is now primarily an urban hub with many of its residents living below the poverty line. Gardenland/Northgate was selected as the pilot for this project in large part because of an active group of teens working in an afterschool project through a local nonprofit, The GreenHouse, an organization that works to support residents in the area. Twelve teens between the ages of thirteen and eighteen agreed to work with their local librarian in creating content for a Tumblr site that focuses on the collection of local history, reflects the ethnic diversity of the region, highlights the teen experience, and gets teens engaged in the civic arena. In return, teens not formerly connected with library services visited two Sacramento Public Library locations; worked with Apple applications like Garage Band, iMovie, and iPhoto; and received instruction in videography and oral history interview techniques. With the help of LSTA funds, teens contributed over forty hours each in afterschool time on

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this project. The teens used two MacBook Pro computers, five digital cameras, and two digital audio recorders. As part of the educational support for this project, teens also received a tour of the technology resources at Sacramento State University and viewed historic material available in Sacramento Public Library’s archives on their neighborhood region.

The process of documenting community stories in their neighborhood and interviewing prominent community members was an empowering experience for many of the teens. One of the participants, a young man named Brayan, said, "During this project, we took hundreds and hundreds of pictures. As we were taking the pictures, I started thinking that I was just so used to living in my neighborhood and things that I had seen, but I somehow just ignored it and it woke me up in a way to see that our community needs improvements."

The results of this project included 1,600 digital photos of the community, seven oral history interviews with prominent community members and elected officials, seven personal teen blog essays, and three online photo documentaries. The significant collection of materials for the project was not the only outcome for the community. Many teens found that their own lives were changed by the interpersonal work required of them on the project. “This project has taught me respect, honesty, trust, hope and about family, community, and to be honest with the ones you respect,” Veronica, a senior in high school shared. Karla, a fifteen-year-old sophomore who conducted an interview with Sacramento’s vice mayor, Angelique Ashby, noted “we learned lots of new skills, like learning how to dress for the appropriate thing, interviewing skills, and I learned how to get along with people that I don’t really know and to put myself out there.”

The impact of the work on the local community was astounding. Many residents took pride that their neighborhood was the first to be featured in Sacramento. It also substantially changed their assumptions about youth being actively engaged in the community. After viewing the work collected for the site at a community premiere, a resident of Gardenland/Northgate for the last seven years shared that she hopes “that the youth continue to help the community and inspire others to do the same.”

The technology and educational support for Sacramento students will continue in the town of Courtland (pop. 355) in the Sacramento Delta. Teens working in partnership with their local library and various neighborhood agencies will document the stories of another active agricultural community, one that has seen tremendous growth in the number of Latino families in residence.

Stay tuned to www.preservingourpresent.org to find out more from Sacramento’s youth, working to shape their futures and community, once story at a time. YALS

Guidelines for Authors

Young Adult Library Services is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association. Young Adult Library Services is a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with young adults (ages twelve through eighteen) that showcases current research and practice relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

For submission and author guidelines, please visit www.yalsa.ala.org/yals/ and click on “Submissions.”

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Connect, Create, Collaborate
How and Why Social Media is Good for Your Library and Why You Should Join the Fun

By Michael P. Buono and Amanda Kordeliski

The YALSA Division of Membership and Promotion committee (DMP) is using social media to reach out to anyone who works with young adults and expose a broader community to the association. Social media can be used as an effective promotional tool and is a tool that can quickly and effectively reach far more association members and nonmembers than more traditional venues such as listservs and member-only Web spaces. Social media is also a way for library staff working with teens to connect with anyone interested in young adult library services—from collections, to programs, to why we do what we do.

Why Use Social Media
Librarians work passionately to serve their communities by developing quality programs and building community partnerships. Social media helps library staff serving teens connect with their communities in a variety of new ways. Social tools are a great way to expand and enhance networks, partnerships, and communication with teens, particularly because they promote transparency, engagement, and exposure.

Transparency: Transparency is what we desire in our politicians, and it is what community members desire from institutions that use public funds. With social media you can be more transparent with what you do because your conversations about programs and services for teens can be public and reach more people. Listserv conversations between teen services staff are filled with passion, provide examples of hard work, and build excitement around a book or idea, but they are just between the people who subscribe to a particular listserv. By having those same conversations via Twitter or Facebook, you can include community members and potential partners. These groups then get a taste of the passion you have for serving teens and begin to understand why teen services in libraries are important in the community.

Engagement: Social tools also make it possible to engage teens and adults in conversation. Have a conversation on Twitter about the materials in your collection that might be controversial. Engage the community—teens and adults—in the

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conversation and you give people a chance to be better informed. People like being heard, and people have greater buy-in to something when they are a part of conversations about it. This form of engagement can take place every day via social tools.

Exposure: If you expose the community to what you do through social media, you get to build support and interest. Tweeting about successful programs gives other librarians the chance to try out the program themselves and also creates positive exposure in the community. A library Facebook page filled with information about events and materials exposes teens, and the entire community, to what you do.

How to Be Successful on Social Media
Content was king in old media, and it is still king in new media. It is more important than ever that your content be timely, relevant, and creative. Regardless of the size of your staff, you have the power to become a content creation engine that sends out up-to-date and creative information to the community. What kind of content is relevant for libraries? Think about the casual conversations you engage in with patrons, and build content related to that.

Good content will generate conversations with your patrons. Post photos from programs that teens can tag themselves in on Facebook. Bibliographies, program handouts, and media lists might also be useful. Many of the traditional physical products librarians produce are examples of the content librarians can put on social media.

Easy ways to produce content include:

- Save your booklists as a pdf. Post them on your blog, link to your Facebook page, and promote on Twitter.
- Take pictures of your programs with a cell phone. Post them instantly to the Web! Worried about getting parental permission? Encourage teens to take pictures, upload them to social sites, and then ask them to tag the library on Facebook, Pinterest, or other social media platforms when they post their own photos.
- Set up a live tweet hashtag before a program, and ask teens to tweet about the program using that hashtag.
- Use other people’s content. For example, link to Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms on your social media presences when it’s college application time. Or, post information about events taking place in the community that teens will be interested in.

The content you post will be determined by your, and your fellow staff members’, skill sets and knowledge. Work with colleagues in the library to create content that matches their interests related to teens and teen library services. Encourage colleagues to brag about their programs or comment on a news article that relates to teens. If they are out of ideas, get them to champion a forgotten book or novel from the stacks to give it new life. Make sure to create a schedule for posts, and make sure that all staff who are posting on social media keep up with the schedule.

How Do You Know What Is the Right Tool for the Job?
In the fall of 2012 a social network promotional campaign was organized by YALSA’s Division Membership and Promotion Committee to promote the YALSA member survey. The committee had to use different social media platforms to accomplish different goals of the campaign. Committee members knew that choosing the right tool for accomplishing their goals was key to success. One platform does not meet all needs or reach every stakeholder, community member, or teen. A combination approach allows you to leverage technology to your advantage. For example:

- By using Google+ you can have collaborative meetings and even author or expert visits for teens. Google+ makes it possible to have multimedia conversations and integrate Google Drive and other tools. It works well for working with others in real time when it’s not possible to meet in a traditional face-to-face setting.
- A Facebook fan page is useful for advertising events, providing lists of materials and resources, and engaging in discussions that need to be more than 140 characters at a time.
- Facebook is also good for connecting community members and stakeholders to information about the value of teen services in libraries. “Like” ALA, YALSA, and other library-related resources and research on your Facebook page so that others in the community see these organizations and tools are available.
- Twitter can be useful for real-time communication with teens and others in the community. You can use hashtags to categorize conversations about books, homework topics or other things that teens are interested in. Twitter is also good for connecting community members to information on teens and what they require in order to grow up successfully.
- Blogs can be used to post book reviews, showcase programs offered in your library and provide information about important issues in your community.

(continued on page 40)
To remain relevant to our communities, we need to create increased opportunities for interactivity rather than simply collecting and making resources available. The MacArthur Foundation’s interest in digital media and learning led to their funding the Learning Labs project. IMLS and the MacArthur Foundation chose the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) and the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) to help lead this project. Along with the twelve grantees, and a handful of early adopter sites (including the Hirshorn’s ARTLAB+, http://artlabplus.si.edu; YOUmedia Chicago, http://youmediachicago.org; and YOUmedia Miami), these organizations comprise the Digital Media Learning (DML) community.

The organizations leading the project facilitated a number of virtual learning opportunities for grantees along with two in-person convenings. Site visits will be conducted in the next few months with the goal of providing specific support to help each project to move toward its goals. Overall the Learning Labs project is designed to be a multidirectional learning experience:

- with the grantees learning from experts, provided by the lead organizations; from each other via tools provided on the YOUmedia site, virtual meetings and informal contact;
- the research team learning from grantees as we report back on our trials and successes;
- and, any organizations interested in starting their own lab learning from our work through the compiled data we all provide.

Learning Labs in Kansas City
The Kansas City team is a partnership between the Kansas City Public Library and Science City, Kansas City’s science museum, which is housed in a historic Union Station train depot (a building

JAMIE MAYO is the Manager of the Central Youth Services Department for the Kansas City Missouri Public Library. She co-wrote the proposal, that landed the Learning Labs Planning Grant for the Kansas City Public Library, with Crystal Faris, KCPL Teen Services Director. She is a traditional storyteller intent on crossing over into the digital world, and is currently working on shaping the storytelling curriculum for the grant.
that has been converted into a multi-use facility, which includes restaurants, theaters, shops, and office space as well as the science museum). We began our project with a solid plan—without truly grasping the effort it would take to meet our own ambitious goals. We’ve been expanding our thinking and running hard trying to catch up ever since. In creating our concept for the lab we started out by identifying specific challenges the teens of Kansas City face. We then looked for opportunities that might help us help teens meet these challenges. We are historically a racially divided city and, in fact, a significant number of our teens rarely venture out of their neighborhoods. Many of our teens are subject to poverty or violence. Our public school system has been in trouble for years, and last year we lost accreditation. Many of our teens have been handed stories about themselves and their possible futures that are dismal.

On the opportunity side, we have a neighborhood rich in digital media companies that lies adjacent to Science City. It is located between the east and west divide of the city and many of the major bus routes run past it. Because of its proximity to the digital arts district, there is a vast wealth of knowledge and skill that can be tapped to enrich our lab and the experience of the teens using it. Science City has access to advanced digital tools; the library has free minutes of being through its collaboration with the lab. It has become clear to us that we have to change our model of operation—do great things with few resources—to a model that can lead to success now. We have to think bigger, create a compelling program unhampered by thoughts of limited funds, and share these visions with funders who can appreciate the importance of what we expect to accomplish.

The first convening of the DML grantee community was held in Chicago shortly after the grant period began, and it was a game-changer for the Kansas City project. So much information was packed into that two and a half-day convening that new understanding that it takes time to get to the ‘GO’ end. But after hearing the teens, and listening to the researchers share their observations, all of us on the Kansas City team acquired a greater appreciation of the need for, and value of, all three phases in the HOMAGO model.

Prior to hearing her story, I had been focused on the Geeking Out phase of HOMAGO, and pretty much just viewed Hanging Out as the necessary means to get to the ‘GO’ end. But after hearing the teens, and listening to the researchers share their observations, all of us on the Kansas City team acquired a greater appreciation of the need for, and value of, all three phases in the HOMAGO model.

The other teen that spoke at the convening told us point blank that if we had extra money, we needed to put it into the mentors. Previously, we intended to get volunteers from the community to teach workshops in their area of expertise and, largely, to staff the center. Now we understand that engagement with the teens is paramount in a learning lab, and that it can only be fostered over time. We are working on creating a full-fledged staffing plan that will provide consistent, engaged interaction with the teens using the lab. It has become clear to us that we have to change our model of operation—do great things with few resources—to a model that can lead to success now. We have to think bigger, create a compelling program unhampered by thoughts of limited funds, and share these visions with funders who can appreciate the importance of what we expect to accomplish.

The first convening also introduced the idea of adjacencies—those organizations,
ideas, and concepts that naturally fit together or complement each other. We were encouraged to look for these adjacencies for our projects and were even connected to some by the project leadership. Once we got back home, what we began to experience was that those adjacencies are finding us as fast as we are finding them. We now plan to create a comprehensive list of organizations that are serving teens or engaged with digital media and learning so that we can create easily navigable pathways for the teens that may have slightly different interests, that may desire additional support, or that have aged out of the opportunities they were engaged in and need the next step to open before them.

We have encountered some struggles as we have engaged in our process. Structural things that are peripheral to the plan but that are essential to success have cropped up as we have focused on creating our plan. Something as simple as finding times when five very busy people can get together to hammer things out has proven more difficult than anticipated. Language has been a challenge as well. Creating a common vocabulary between scientists and librarians has taken time and awareness. We have had to work to construct effective communication systems between the project leadership team and members of the staff and administration at each partnering organization. If there was something that I could change about our work so far, it would be to have utilized a facilitator who would have worked with us from the outset to help bring to the surface some of the things that we have learned through experience. It would also have benefitted us to have forged a very clear common vision earlier in our process.

We did realize from the outset that we needed an outside coordinator for this project. The hiring process took longer than expected, which we have learned is endemic to partnering and simply has to be accounted for at some point in the process. Things began to gather steam once our project coordinator was in place. One of our most pressing priorities was to begin getting input from the teens. Our coordinator organized a teen summit to take place at Union Station. We used the summit as an opportunity not only to engage teens, but also to engage potential allies in the community and within our own organizations.

Getting Teens Involved
The summit balanced soliciting input and gaining a sense of possibilities for the lab. We collected input on the technologies the teens already use (and how) and what might interest them in the future. We showed them four different spaces in Science City/Union Station and asked their opinions. After touring the spaces, they created two collages: one of what they want in their space and one of what they don’t. Each team presented their collages and the thoughts behind them to the rest of the group. From this, we created a document to help guide us as we explore what to include and where to locate the permanent and satellite labs.

We offered two series of three workshops on different technological activities on digital video creation, gaming design, audio recording, website design, and 2-D and 3-D animation. We made these twenty-minute sessions as hands-on as possible. To help us collect data and evaluate it, we partnered with a class at the Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration, University of Missouri–Kansas City. The evaluators observed the proceedings and offered feedback on how the different activities were received by the teens. The document they prepared offers a good foundation for soliciting pertinent information from other groups of teens whom we hope to have guiding us through the finalization of our plan.

Our most recent accomplishment was hiring our twelve-member teen advisory board. From a field of forty-nine applicants, a team of six representatives from Science City and the library chose twenty-seven for interviews. We designed a process that would allow us to observe all of the applicants at one time with the objective of seeing how well they worked together and which roles within the team they assumed. We split the group into three teams and asked each of them to work together to create a Prezi comparing two different forms of media, with the understanding that the emphasis was not on the final product but on the process.

Two staff observed each team. Three of us were assigned to a specific team for the duration of the process while the other three split their time rotating between the teams. We scored them on professional behavior, teamwork, team presentation, personal communication, and fit for the board. After the teams presented, we did an individual video interview with each teen. This proved to be invaluable as we made our final decisions, allowing those of us who hadn’t been privy to observing each candidate to have some exposure to them; thus we were all able to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process. We’ve come a long way from where we started, even though we did not make progress at the rate that we had expected. Forming a team with a partnering organization takes longer than working on a project solo. However, the strength of what we can create together will far surpass what we could have accomplished alone. From here, our focus will be on working with the teens to envision a compelling space for creating and learning and on making it sustainable. Our expectation is that we will take the plan that we will have been able to form through the funding and guidance from MacArthur and establish an enticing learning lab that will benefit not only the teens, but the library, Science City, and the community as a whole.
If you’re reading this article, you probably use (or want to use) social media in your work with teens. You know it’s the right thing to do: integrating social media into your work develops digital literacy, builds relationships, helps you meet teens where they are, and helps to provide access to information. School library staff who want to use social media with their students often start by talking to a group that can easily kill plans: worried stakeholders. There are some approaches librarians can take when discussing social media in school with stakeholders—like teachers, administrators and parents—that can turn negative conversations into productive and positive experiences.

To find out what approaches others are using I created a short survey with questions about positive discussions on social media in the school environment. I promoted the survey on Twitter, the Massachusetts School Librarians electronic discussion list and solicited librarians whom I know for responses. I found out what current research says about using social media with teens in school. I talked with a high school librarian who created a successful digital literacy curriculum. And, I curated a collection of blogs and websites to find the best current examples of work in this area.

For this article, I define social media as tools like Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube, Flickr, Shelfari, Goodreads, Pinterest, LibraryThing, Instagram, WordPress, Google+, IM, and e-mail. Stakeholders are administrators, teachers, parents, students—anyone with a vested interest in teens using social media in school.

Surveying School Librarians

In the summer of 2012, fifteen school librarians generously answered six questions about discussing social media with school community stakeholders.1 As I read the responses, it became clear that fifteen school librarians were describing fifteen unique situations taking place on a continuum. It also became clear that the idea of “using social media” has different meanings in different school.

At one end of the continuum, the discussion people engage in is about blocking. Do we set the filter to block Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr—even personal e-mail—at school so that students and teachers do not access them for personal use? At the other end of the continuum, we talk about how to use these tools in classrooms—do teachers know how to use the tools? Are they afraid of failure? In the middle of the continuum is conversation about how we use social tools in our practice to promote the library program. This is often where we model digital literacy practices for our school community.

All of the respondents described a recent conversation with stakeholders about using social media. At the “blocking” end of the continuum, one librarian reported adversarial conversations with administrators and that teachers and students feel bullied because they are blocked from using common tools like e-mail at school. But, it was reported that this adversarial relationship produced an unexpected benefit: teachers and students shared the same concerns and operated as a unit to make change in the school and with the school administration.

“No conversation, that’s the problem,” said one respondent. This librarian in a large district observes that its size precludes a conversation and, as a result, administration uses a top-down approach to decision making. A parochial school librarian explains the Diocese approves use on a case-by-case basis. Each of these schools shares a trait that makes discussion difficult: an administration that makes decisions independently, without input from stakeholders like teachers and students.

ALIDA HANSON is the Librarian at Weston High School in Weston, Massachusetts. She worked for many years in book publishing before she became a librarian. She loves new media and literature, and tweets from @alidahanson.
Survey Questions

1. Describe, analyze, or reflect on a recent conversation about social networking tools with stakeholders in your school.
2. What are some common areas of anxiety that need addressing?
3. What kinds of information and approaches elicit positive responses from stakeholders?
4. How do you define success in talking about social media policy with administrators, teachers, and parents?
5. How are you involved with writing acceptable use policies for social media?
6. Which social networking tools have you used in your library?
7. Which social networking tools do you want to use in your library?
8. Anything else you’d like to say?

In the mid-range of the continuum, discussion happens but social media is not implemented, even though there are discussions. Several librarians report talking about maintaining distinctions between teacher professional and personal social media accounts. Another group describes discussions about using social media for professional development. One librarian reported a conversation centering on administrators’ anxiety about using Facebook to communicate with students. Another reports that stakeholders are negative about using social media in school, but are eager to introduce a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. In one school, the administrators are supportive, but the parents are not. In another, the tech department is supportive, but the administrators are not. These schools recognize that social media is a force that must be acknowledged and they engage in conversations to clarify and debate, not necessarily leading to any movement or change, however.

In schools with more fully developed policies and technologies, teachers are free to use social media. In a school like this, one librarian talks to teachers about using it. Another librarian says that while productive conversation happens, “the will to use social media in the classroom is there but not the practice.” Neither of these librarians report that social media is used extensively in classrooms. Fear of failure and lack of time to learn how to use the tools are the factors that librarians think hold teachers back. Addressing these fears when talking to teachers can help to encourage them to introduce social media to their classrooms.

Defining Successful Conversations

Kendall Bontini of Waltham (MA) High School believes that “success doesn’t have to mean that all of the stakeholders agree on one path forward. In fact—that’s probably never going to happen. What really matters is that the voices of those who are most affected by these policies are heard and valued. It takes FOREVER for our policies to change in schools—we cannot allow the decisions and actions of a few to dictate policy for years to come.” In Bontini’s school, “an aggressive filter blocks any website that has to do with games/gaming, alcohol, etc.” YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, and personal e-mail are blocked, but not Tumblr, Flickr, and other photo-sharing sites. When blunt filtering excessively and arbitrarily restricts teachers and students, it’s time to stand up for your rights.

Schools with nuanced filtering have different definitions of success. One librarian reports that “[a]ny kind of open dialogue” is welcome. Jennifer Dimmick of Newton (MA) South High School says, “[w]e want to be respectful of [administrator’s] concerns and not cause rancor. If we plant the seed, then slowly tend to it by directing those opposed towards positive examples, we are confident that it will grow.” Some librarians look for results-based outcomes like “getting teachers to try it,” “focus[ing] on how it benefits students,” “administrators see[ning] educational merit or usefulness as a PR tool” and “a willingness to try something new.”

Robin Cicchetti, Director of Library and Technology Integration at Concord-Carlisle (MA) High School defines success as “the lessening of anxiety. [Stakeholders] are afraid of making the wrong decision . . . . An example from our learning commons is filtering Facebook. Initially, Facebook was filtered because it was considered dangerous, a source of bullying, and inappropriate for school. A discussion about positive ways it was used (organizing sports teams, class events, school clubs, and study groups) with examples gathered from students, the benefits of bringing it into an open space to reinforce the understanding that Facebook is not private, and helping students build self-regulation skills resulted in the filter being removed. I have heard my principal explain this to parents who asked why it wasn’t filtered. Everybody relaxed, there was less anxiety, and we succeeded in our goal not to ban social media.”

Anxious Stakeholders

If we want to discuss social media with stakeholders, we must understand their fears. Only one librarian mentioned cyberbullying as the dominant stakeholder fear. Distraction from schoolwork was cited most often, followed by “terror,” in some cases, of “inappropriate contact between teachers and students.” Lack of control is a free-floating anxiety reported by several librarians, including a fear of “students posting disrespectful information
anecdotal evidence of research, they often inspire educators to challenge themselves and lead to real change in the field. When we give stakeholders evidence of our colleagues’ social media success stories, they often think “if they can do it, why can’t we?” A beautiful facet of this approach is that we often gather these anecdotes from social media (professional learning networks on Twitter, Facebook, Nings, blogs, etc.). Be sure to point this out to stakeholders.

Luckily, as teachers and librarians, we can move social media into the classroom by creating curriculum for it. Jen Thomas, the Librarian at Bishop Stang High School in North Dartmouth (MA), uses social media regularly in her Digi Lit course. Thomas says that the course is “based on the belief that librarians are in the business of giving access to information, not blocking it. Students can make bad decisions about social media, or learn how to use it productively. The best decision I made for this course was to use Tumblr as the medium for delivery and work collection. I needed a blog and asked the class which tool to use. The students help with the design of the course. I model collaboration.”

It took Thomas three years to develop the curriculum in collaboration with the English department and a professor from the University of Rhode Island. The curriculum is embedded in a Freshman English course and counts for 10 percent of the final English grade. She encourages librarians to look at her course materials and use it for inspiration for our own courses, http://fc.dfrccc.com/~jthomas@bishopstang.com/. (You can find more resources related to this article on the YALS website, http://yalsa.ala.org/yals.)

Civic Engagement and Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs)

A minority of librarians in my unscientific survey report having input into their schools’ acceptable use policies (the policies that codify technology use in schools). This needs to be rectified, and you can make your voice heard by volunteering to be on the AUP committee. You are an important part of the discussion because you understand the strengths of social media, know how to use it and have built your career on giving access to information.

Consultant and educator Debbie Abilock thinks that schools should integrate civics education into creation of school policies. Following her suggestion, remember the very important stakeholders whose voices need to be heard: the teens with whom we work. When you volunteer to be on your schools’ AUP committee, invite students to sit at the table and join the discussion.

Talking about social media with stakeholders yields enduring rewards. Because we acknowledge and validate stakeholder anxieties, the conversations help build trusting relationships. Civic responsibility grows because the community starts to think about how to build effective acceptable use policies for social media. When locating anecdotal evidence of social media use, librarians create and strengthen their personal learning networks. Finally, as educators, we are pushed to challenge ourselves, accept failures as part of getting to success, and effect real change in our fields.

References

3. Debbie Abilock, “Is Your Ethics Policy a Quick Fix or a Civic Outcome?” KnowledgeQuest 34, no. 4. Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA).
Promote the Best of the Best @ Your Library

As this issue mails, YALSA will be announcing its award winners at the Youth Media Awards at ALA’s Midwinter Meeting in Seattle. The announcement will take place January 28. In addition, YALSA will announce its selected book and media lists for 2013.

Beginning in February, visit www.ala.org/yalsa/best to find downloadable tools to promote winners at your library, part of YALSA’s new Best of the Best! You’ll be able to download customizable bookmarks featuring the winners of the 2013 Alex, Edwards, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey, and Printz awards. We’ll also offer press releases, which you can customize and send to local publications to let teens know that award winners are available at your library. You can also download logos to use on your website or in marketing materials in your library, spine labels to apply to titles that appear in the Best of the Best, and other tools to promote the awards, as well as the Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults, Best Fiction for Young Adults, Fabulous Films for Young Adults, Great Graphic Novels for Teens, Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, and Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.

So check it out at www.ala.org/yalsa/best!

2013 ALA/YALSA Elections

YALSA’s Governance and Awards Nominating Committees have submitted the following slate for 2013. YALSA members will vote for president-elect, directors at-large, and members of the Edwards, Nonfiction, and Printz Awards Committees.

Elections will be held March 19–April 26, and will take place entirely online. Details about the 2013 election are at www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/alaelection/.

YALSA 2013 Slate
President-Elect
Sharon Rawlins
Chris Shoemaker

Board of Directors
Franklin Escobedo
Maureen Hartman
Krista McKenzie
Matt Moffett

Edwards Award Committee
Alicia Blowers
Sophie Brookover
Joy Kim
Jackie Parker
Beth Saxton
Gail Zachariah

Nonfiction Award Committee
Martha Baden
Teresa Brantley
Todd Krueger
Drue Wagner Mees
Joy Millam
Brenna Shanks

Printz Award Committee
Hayden Bass
Robin Brenner
Adrienne Butler
Diane Colson
Naphtali Faris
Angela Frederick
Shelly McNerney
Terri Snethen

Have Fun While Building Your Professional Skills!

Update your skills, get leadership and networking opportunities, be a part of moving YALSA forward, and have a great time by joining one of our process committees or juries! President-Elect
Shannon Peterson will be appointing committee and jury members to 2013–2014 process committees and juries that help the association advance its mission and the profession. Interested in being more involved? Read on to find out how.

A Guide to Process Committees and Juries

YALSA has two types of committees: selection committees, which select specific library materials or choose YALSA’s awards; and process committees, which help carry out the work of the association. Process committees include:

- those that plan YALSA events, including initiatives and conferences, such as Teen Tech Week, WrestleMania Reading Challenge, and the YA Lit Symposium Planning Taskforce;
- those that help YALSA govern itself, such as Organizations and Bylaws, Strategic Planning, and Nominating;
- those that help support specific member resources, including Publications, the Hub Advisory Board, and Division and Membership Promotions; and
- many more!

What to Know Before You Volunteer

Before you volunteer to serve on a committee, advisory board, or jury, you’ll want to learn what the group does and what your responsibilities will be. Contact the chair directly, explain that you’re interested in serving, and then ask questions about what your involvement will entail. Names and contact information for all the chairs are available at www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsacontracts.

On the YALSA website you’ll also find information about the groups’ functions, size, and more. Just click on “Governance.” Finally, be sure to read through YALSA’s handbook, especially the sections that list responsibilities for committee members. View it online at www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsahandbook.

Complete the Volunteer Form

To be considered for a committee or jury, you need to fill out a volunteer form. It is available online (go to www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsahandbook and choose the Committee Volunteer form). When you fill out a form, please be sure to include the names of the committees or juries on which you’d most like to serve. If you don’t indicate a few that you’re particularly interested in, it is very difficult for the president-elect to find the best fit for you. Forms are kept on file for only one year, so you must file a form each year that you would like to serve on a committee or jury.

Timeline

Applications will be accepted through February 1. After you have submitted one, look for an e-mail confirmation from YALSA. Appointments will be made by the president-elect in March and April. If appointed, your term begins July 1, 2013.

The Fine Print

All of YALSA’s process committees are virtual appointments, meaning you do not need to attend the Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting to serve on a committee. Appointments are for either one- or two-year terms, depending on the committee or jury. Some groups are very popular and may receive dozens of volunteer forms for just two or three available spots. Your membership in YALSA must be current in order for you to be eligible to serve on a committee or jury.

Questions? Please contact Shannon Peterson, YALSA’s president-elect, at shannon.peterson@gmail.com, or YALSA’s membership coordinator, Letitia Smith, at lsmith@ala.org.

For other ways to build your professional skills and/or get more involved in YALSA, please visit www.ala.org/yalsa/getinvolved/getinvolved.

Land Named YALSA’s 2013 Board Fellow

YALSA’s board of directors chose Carla Land, YPL/Children’s Services Department Head, at Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, as its 2013 board fellow. Land will begin serving as board fellow in June 2013.

The YALSA Board Fellowship gives YALSA members an expanded opportunity to be involved in the leadership of the association. Each year one fellow is selected from that year’s pool of applicants to serve a one-year term (from June to July of the following year) on the YALSA board as a nonvoting member.

The fellow is expected to participate fully in the work of the board including attending and participating in all face-to-face and virtual meetings and discussions. They will receive a $500 stipend per conference to help defray travel, registration, and hotel costs.

Applications to be YALSA’s 2014 board fellow are available at www.ala.org/yalsa/awards&grants and are due by December 1 each year.

YALSA’s Research Journal Seeks Manuscripts

The Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults (http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya), YALSA’s peer-reviewed, open-access online research journal, seeks manuscripts for future issues.

The purpose of the Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults is to enhance the development of theory, research, and practices to support young adult library services. Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults promotes and publishes high-quality original research concerning the informational and developmental needs of young adults; the management, implementation, and evaluation of library services for young adults; and other critical issues relevant to librarians who work with young adults. The journal also includes literary and cultural analyses of classic and contemporary writing for young adults.

Submissions and questions about the research journal should be sent to editor Sandra Hughes-Hassell at yalsaresearch@gmail.com. Before submitting a paper, please read through the call for papers and author guidelines at the journal’s website, http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya.
Virtual Town Halls on Teens and Libraries

The National Forum on Libraries and Teens is a year-long effort bringing together key stakeholders from the areas of libraries, education, technology, adolescent development and the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to explore the world of young adults and library services. One end product of the Forum is a white paper that will provide direction on how libraries need to adapt and potentially change to better meet the needs of twenty-first century teens. This project is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

As this issue mails as part of the Forum, YALSA will be hosting a Teens and Libraries Summit January 23 and 24, in Seattle during ALA’s 2013 Midwinter Meeting. The Summit will feature two days of speakers, panels, and small group discussions to examine the current state of library services for and with young adults, and to explore how library services may need to evolve to meet the needs of twenty-first century adolescents.

Beginning in March, all YALSA members can join the discussion in a series of Virtual Town Halls on Teens and Libraries, facilitated by Linda W. Braun. The issues raised during the virtual town halls will be based on what is discovered during the Summit. Please save the following dates and visit http://www.ala.org/yaforum/ for more information. To keep up via Twitter about the year-long project, follow #yalsaforum. We hope you participate in this important project!

Virtual Town Halls on Teens and Libraries:
- Tuesday, March 19, 2013
- Tuesday, April 16, 2013
- Tuesday May 21, 2013

YALS

Connect, Create, Collaborate (continued from page 31)

- Pinterest is an online pinboard for photos and images. Pin pictures of your displays, and use Pinterest to find examples of fresh new ideas for your library. You can organize your ideas and photos by creating multiple pinboards.

- YouTube allows users to create a channel to upload videos. Create tutorials, book trailers and short videos about your library, and add them to your channel. You can embed your YouTube videos on blogs, Facebook pages and even tweet a link connecting patrons to your videos.

Newcomers to social media or librarians working alone may find using social media to communicate with their community overwhelming. It’s a good idea to just take it one tool at a time. Decide what one thing you would most like to achieve using social media, and then start with that tool. Take small steps, and don’t try to do everything at once.

You Can Do It

The successful use of social media is not reliant on a strong understanding of how technology works. Knowledge of the technology will help you choose the right tools, but teens and colleagues can help you with that too. Successful use of social media requires a set of goals, organization, interpersonal skills, and a plan of action.

Technology is just a platform for communication and getting something done. Ask yourself, “How do I build an online community for my library using social tools?” Social media allows you to have real-time communication with your stakeholders, community members, and teens using a platform they are familiar with, comfortable with, and use frequently. Use social media to connect, create, and collaborate with your community as a way to make your library an even better place for teens.

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