TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: *Center for the Future of Libraries Update*

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
   Update on activities of the Center for the Future of Libraries.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
   Miguel Figueroa, Center for the Future of Libraries

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DRAFT OF MOTION:
   No motion proposed – information only

DATE: *January 6, 2020*

BACKGROUND:

The attached update includes information on the Center's work across three goal areas:
- *Identify emerging trends relevant to libraries and the communities they serve*
- *Promote futuring and innovation techniques to help librarians and library professionals shape their future*
- *Build connections with experts and innovative thinkers to help libraries address emerging issues*

Identify emerging trends relevant to libraries and the communities they serve

The Center's [trend collection](#) remains a popular resource for library professionals, planners, and supporters.

Pageviews and Unique Pageviews for Six Month Segments (July 2017 – Present)

	Pageviews	**Unique Pageviews**
July 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019	23,892	13,300
January 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019	22,286	12,688
July 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018	21,114	11,597
January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2018	20,705	11,240
July 24, 2017 – December 31, 2017	15,075	7,025

Among the most popular content over the past six months are [Virtual Reality](#) (2,015 unique pageviews), [Artificial Intelligence](#) (2,003 unique pageviews), [Aging](#) (1,801 unique pageviews), and [Blockchain](#) (1,606 unique pageviews).

Over the past year, the Center has added new trend entries for [Artificial Intelligence](#), [Corporate Influence](#), [Facial Recognition](#), [Micro-Mobility](#), [Rethinking Rural](#), and [Self-Driving Cars](#) – bringing the total number of entries to forty.

The Center continues to promote new information and indicators through the e-mail newsletter, [Read for Later](#), which shares the Center's weekly trend scanning to help library professionals think about the future of our collections, spaces, services, partners, and roles in the community. Subscription to the newsletter has finally hit 4,000 current subscribers – in addition to readers accessing the posts via the Center's blog or RSS reader apps. Newsletter activity remains strong and feedback about the newsletter remains positive. The newsletter sees immediate unique open rates around 30% and higher and longer-term unique open rates around 45%.

Promote futuring and innovation techniques to help librarians and library professionals shape their future

The Center helps share information about futuring and emerging trends through frequent presentations to library staff and the public.

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Center has so far provided nine presentations:

- University of Wisconsin – Madison (webinar)
- Sonoma County (Calif.) Library
- Glenview (Ill.) Public Library
- Contra Costa County (Calif.) Library
- Mid-Hudson (N.Y.) Library System
- Stones River / Buffalo River (Tenn.) Regional Library Systems
- Tennessee State Library Level V Directors Meeting
- Detroit Metropolitan Area ASPA
- Algonquin Area (Ill.) Public Library District

Library Futures Series

The Center for the Future of Libraries works with ALA Neal Schuman on the Library Futures Series, a series of short editions that bring together library experts and innovators to explore the profession's many futures by focusing on emerging trends.

The series' first four books have all been published, including *Anonymity* by Alison Macrina and Talya Cooper (Book 1 – May 2019); *Resilience* by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (Book 2 – June 2018); *Blockchain* by Sandra Hirsh and Susan Alman (Book 3 – November 2019); and *Design Thinking* by Rachel Ivy Clarke (Book 4 – January 2020).

The Center has appreciated the opportunity to work with the books' authors and with ALA Publishing to help expand the thinking around these emerging trends.

Tiny Library Toolkit

Developed by the Meridian (Idaho) Library District through the 2018 Future of Libraries Fellowship, the Tiny Library Toolkit (pdf download) shares that library's experience creating a "lighter, quicker, cheaper" means of installing a library service point using a recycled shipping container. The tookit can be used by libraries to provide inspiration and practical assistance for planning informal, programmatic spaces in their communities.

The Tiny Library Toolkit joins the Library Service Design Heuristics Cards (developed by Joe J. Márquez and Annie Downey, both from Reed College Library) as free resources developed through the Future of Libraries Fellowship.

Build connections with experts and innovative thinkers to help libraries address emerging issues

2020 Symposium on the Future of Libraries – ALA Midwinter Meeting

With guidance from the Center for the Future of Libraries Advisory Group, the 2020 Symposium on the Future of Libraries has been developed to provide attendees and presenters with different opportunities to share and learn together.

The Symposium features Libraries Transform morning sessions each day, bringing Philadelphia-based innovators into the Midwinter conversation. Libraries Transform: Civic Innovation (Saturday, 8:45 – 10:00am) will feature Anuj Gupta, General Manager, Reading Terminal Market, and Ariel Ben-Amos, Founder, StreetBoxPHL. Libraries Transform: Social Innovation (Sunday, 8:45 – 10:00am) will feature Mariana Chilton, Professor of Health Management and Policy and Director of the Center for Hunger-Free Communities, Dornsife School of Public Health, Drexel University, and Joanna Visser Adjoian, Co-Director, Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP). And Libraries Transform: Education Innovation (Monday, 8:45 – 10:00am) will feature Malik Brown, Executive Director, Graduate! Philadelphia, and Dara Ruiz-Whalen, Chief Learning Officer, Executive Director, eCLOSE Institute.

The schedule of concurrent sessions for the Symposium features over 35 sessions in three session formats:
- Information Sessions allow presenters to focus on a specific trend, topic, or issue to help attendees better understand what they need to know to make sense of the future.
- Workshops provide time for instruction and allow attendees to engage in active learning through discussion, activities, or other constructive learning.

- Discussion Sessions are designed to spark conversation across participants, with lead discussants or facilitators posing questions or prompts and encouraging attendees to share their perspectives and insights.

Over the course of the call for proposals, the Center received 66 session proposals (30 Information Session proposals; 22 Workshop proposals; and 14 Discussion Session proposals). The Center's Advisory Group reviewed proposals and made final selections, curating a diverse mix of perspectives and topics to explore current and emerging trends in libraries.

2020 News You Can Use – ALA Midwinter Meeting

The Center for the Future of Libraries coordinates the News You Can Use series at both the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. New You Can Use sessions offer the latest updates from experts on policy, research, statistics, technology, and more, based on new surveys, reports, legislation/regulation, and projects.

The [schedule for the News You Can Use series](#) is available in the Midwinter Meeting scheduler and features 20 learning sessions. In addition to sessions led by ALA units and member groups, coordination with the Symposium on the Future of Libraries allowed the schedule to incorporate sessions featuring updates on funded research and demonstration projects.

Smart Communities

Over the past year, the Center has been involved in the IMLS-funded "[Enabling Smart, Inclusive, and Connected Communities: The Role of Public Libraries](#)" project with the Center for Technology and Government at the University at Albany.

As part of the Center's support for the Smart Communities grant, the Center has launched a [Get Smart - Planning Libraries' Roles in Smart Communities](#) e-newsletter. Over the past year the subscriber list has grown to 419.

The project's primary investigators are preparing two national surveys – one for public libraries and one for local governments – to better understand perceptions and priorities for smart community planning and the roles of libraries in those plans. The Center will support the distribution of the public library survey in early 2020.