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: *October 8, 2019*

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 – October 8, 2019*	12,114	6,714
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

*Please note, this period covers 3 months whereas other segments cover 6 months.

Among the most popular content over the past three months are [Virtual Reality](#) (1,011 unique pageviews), [Artificial Intelligence](#) (865 unique pageviews), [Aging](#) (889 unique pageviews), and [Blockchain](#) (832 unique pageviews).

Ove 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 steadily grown to 3,915 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 innovation techniques through frequent presentations to library staff and the public.

In Fiscal Year 2019 (September – August), the Center provided 36 presentations for 30 libraries, organizations, conferences, and public events.

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Center has so far provided 2 presentations (University of Wisconsin – Madison, Sonoma County Library), with six more scheduled through December 31, 2019.

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 includes *Anonymity* by Alison Macrina and Talya Cooper (Book 1 – published May 2019); *Resilience* by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich (Book 2 – published June 2018); *Blockchain* by Sandra Hirsh and Susan Alman (Book 3 – forthcoming 2019); and *Design Thinking* by Rachel Ivy Clarke (Book 4 – forthcoming 2019).

Titles in the series have shown positive reception in the library community. Each of the published titles sold 300 copies in their first four months of publication. The forthcoming titles have solid pre-order numbers.

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 2020 call for proposals introduced three distinct session formats to help improve the experience:
- 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. Information Sessions feature a traditional theater room set with a front podium and/or speakers' table.
- Workshops offer an interactive room set with rounds or tables that encourage collaborative, hands-on learning. These sessions provide time for instruction but allow attendees to engage in active learning through discussion, activities, or other constructive learning. These sessions are meant to help attendees develop skills to be more strategic, effective in leadership, or proactive in using foresight tools or strategies.
- Discussion Sessions are designed to spark conversation across participants. Lead discussants or facilitators pose questions or prompts and encourage attendees to share their perspectives and insights. These sessions might be especially useful for early-stage exploration or community-building around new and emerging ideas.

The call for proposals was opened on May 28, 2019 with a first review of proposals beginning July 15th. The first review provided the Advisory Group with an opportunity to review 35 proposals. In addition to

approving several outstanding proposals, the first review allowed the Center to provide feedback to some proposals that were promising but could be improved. The final deadline for proposals was extended to August 19. 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 schedule for the 2020 Symposium on the Future of Libraries is available at the Midwinter web site. To build on the popularity of the Youth Media Awards, the schedule includes at least one session for children's, youth, or school librarians during each time block. The Symposium will also feature three plenary sessions to open each day, highlighting Philadelphia-based Civic, Education, and Social Innovators. Additional sessions and speakers will be added as they are confirmed.

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 at the Midwinter web site. Additional sessions and speakers will be added as they are confirmed.

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 394 as issues have explored Smart and Equitable Transportation (May); Open Data, Civic Hacking, and Creating Change (August); and Smart Communities and Sustainability (September).

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.