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 22, 2018*

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*

The American Library Association's Center for the Future of Libraries works toward three primary goals:
- *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*

Activity updates have been organized according to these goals.

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.

The collection received 11,084 unique page views (23,026 total page views) during the seven-month period from June 9, 2017 through January 19, 2018. During the six-month period from January 4, 2017 through June 8, 2017 the collection received 13,383 unique page views (24,324 total page views).

The Center has added new trends to the collection ([Blockchain](#), [Creative Placemaking](#), [Smart Cities](#), [Virtual Reality](#), and [Voice Control](#)) and has continued to promote the availability of those new trends in the Center's e-mail newsletter, [Read for Later.](#)

The Center's 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, continues to grow. Subscription to the newsletter has steadily grown to 3,338 current subscribers (10% growth over numbers reported at the 2017 ALA Annual Conference) – in addition to several hundred more readers accessing the posts via the Center's blog or RSS reader apps like Feedly. Newsletter activity remains strong and feedback about the newsletter remains very positive. The newsletter sees immediate unique open rates in the 25% to 35% range 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 the first five months of Fiscal Year 2018 (September 2017 – January 2018), the Center has provided 17 presentations for individual libraries, conferences, and public events.

- COSLINE
- TxLA District 3
- Redwood City (Calif.) Public Library
- San Mateo (Calif.) Public Library
- Palo Alto City (Calif.) Library
- San Francisco Public Library
- Pacific Library Partnership Future of Libraries Conference
- COSLA Membership Meeting
- Louisiana State Library Directors Meeting
- Massachusetts Library System Annual Meeting
- Clinton-Macomb / Rochester Hills (Mich.) Public Libraries
- AASL National Conference

- South Central Regional Library Council (N.Y.) Membership Meeting
- University of Illinois – Chicago
- University of Washington iSchool
- New Mexico State Library
- Delaware Library Association

Through the remainder of Fiscal Year 2017, the Center has 10 additional presentations currently scheduled.

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

2018 Symposium on the Future of Libraries

The [2018 Symposium on the Future of Libraries](#) features over 35 educational sessions, including [plenary sessions](#) on Education Innovation, Diversity and Inclusion, and Civic Innovation and concurrent sessions exploring coding in libraries, refugee services, blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, the opioid epidemic, digital memory projects, virtual reality, library fine policies, the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, linked data, generational leadership changes, workforce development, and sustainability.

Library Futures Series

Working with ALA Editions, the Center announced a new Library Futures Series that will take the trends identified by the Center and engage library experts to think more expansively about these trends. The first two books – [Anonymity](#) (Alison Macrina and Talya Cooper) and [Resilience](#) (Rebekkah Smith Aldrich) – have already been announced and featured in ALA Editions' Fall catalog.

Future of Libraries Fellowship Program

[Joe J. Márquez and Annie Downey, both of the Reed College Library, were selected](#) for the first [Future of Libraries Fellowship](#). The results of their project, [Library Service Design Heuristics Cards](#), are available from the Center's site.

The Center will once again provide a fellowship with a $10,000 stipend in 2018 to advance new ideas and perspectives for the future of libraries through the creation of a public product (report, white paper, resource, tool) that will help library professionals envision the future of library collections, partnerships, services, spaces, or technologies.

Grants and Projects

The Center for the Future of Libraries is currently a partner in three IMLS-funded grant projects.

With the University of Maryland - "[Enhancing Digital Privacy and Security Skills for Low-SES Families: Resources for Information Intermediaries](#)"

> The University of Maryland, partnering with the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Library Development & Services (DLDS), the American Library Association's Center for the Future of Libraries (CFL), and CASA de Maryland, will identify privacy and security challenges librarians and families of low socioeconomic status face using internet and communication technologies. After conducting an evaluation of the challenges facing librarians, families of low socioeconomic status,

and information intermediaries within families such as the children and young adults who serve as information brokers, the partners will develop a suite of educational and professional development resources for librarians and families to enhance privacy-related digital skills and to minimize risks to the security of individuals' personal information. Up to 50 local families and 40 librarians will participate in the study while data, research reports, and resources will be made accessible to the broader field through a project website, webinars, conference presentations, stakeholder talks, and social media.

With San Jose State University – "[Investigation of Possible Uses of Blockchain Technology by Libraries-Information Centers to Support City-Community Goals](#)"

The San Jose State University School of Information iSchool will investigate ways that blockchain technology can be used by libraries to partner with other organizations and to support city or community goals. Blockchain technology is a shared digital/electronic ledger featuring a constantly updated list of transactions. It is supported by a peer-to-peer network that may be either public or private. This technology has the potential to help libraries develop a distributed metadata system; facilitate better digital rights management; and create a protocol for supporting community based collections. The proposed National Forum would bring together 20-30 technical experts in libraries, blockchain technology, and urban planning to discuss ways that blockchain technology can advance library services to support city or community goals. The resulting commentary from a project blog, national forum, and conference and the survey data will be evaluated and included in the project's final report, which will be available online. The recommendations will serve as a guide for both large and small, urban and rural libraries to implement blockchain technology or consider other directions.

With the Center for Technology in Government at the University of Albany – "[Enabling Smart, Inclusive, and Connected Communities: The Role of Public Libraries](#)"

The Center for Technology in Government at the University of Albany, in partnership with the American Library Association's Center for the Future of Libraries, will explore the role of public libraries as community anchors in smart city initiatives to understand how public libraries can advance their role as community anchors by contributing to the community's understanding of and participation in smart city initiatives. This three-year project will use a multi-method research approach and include a literature and current practices review; case studies of Ignacio Community Library in Colorado, Saratoga Springs Public Library in New York, Chattanooga Public Library in Tennessee, and Chicago Public Library in Illinois; and a national survey. The project will result in increased and sustained relationships among public libraries, local governments, researchers, and community organizations; an Opportunity Agenda, Roadmap Report, and Smart Libraries Toolbox to guide libraries willing to advance their role as community anchors and catalysts; and demonstrable improvements in library services.

Translations

The Center for the Future of Libraries has signed an agreement with the [Library Studies Research Group at the Collège Lionel-Groulx (Québec, Canada) to translate the Center's trend content into French](#). The agreement provides free use of the content for two years (renewable) provided that the translated content is made available for free to users.

Questions or Comments

Questions or comments may be sent to Miguel Figueroa at mfigueroa@ala.org.