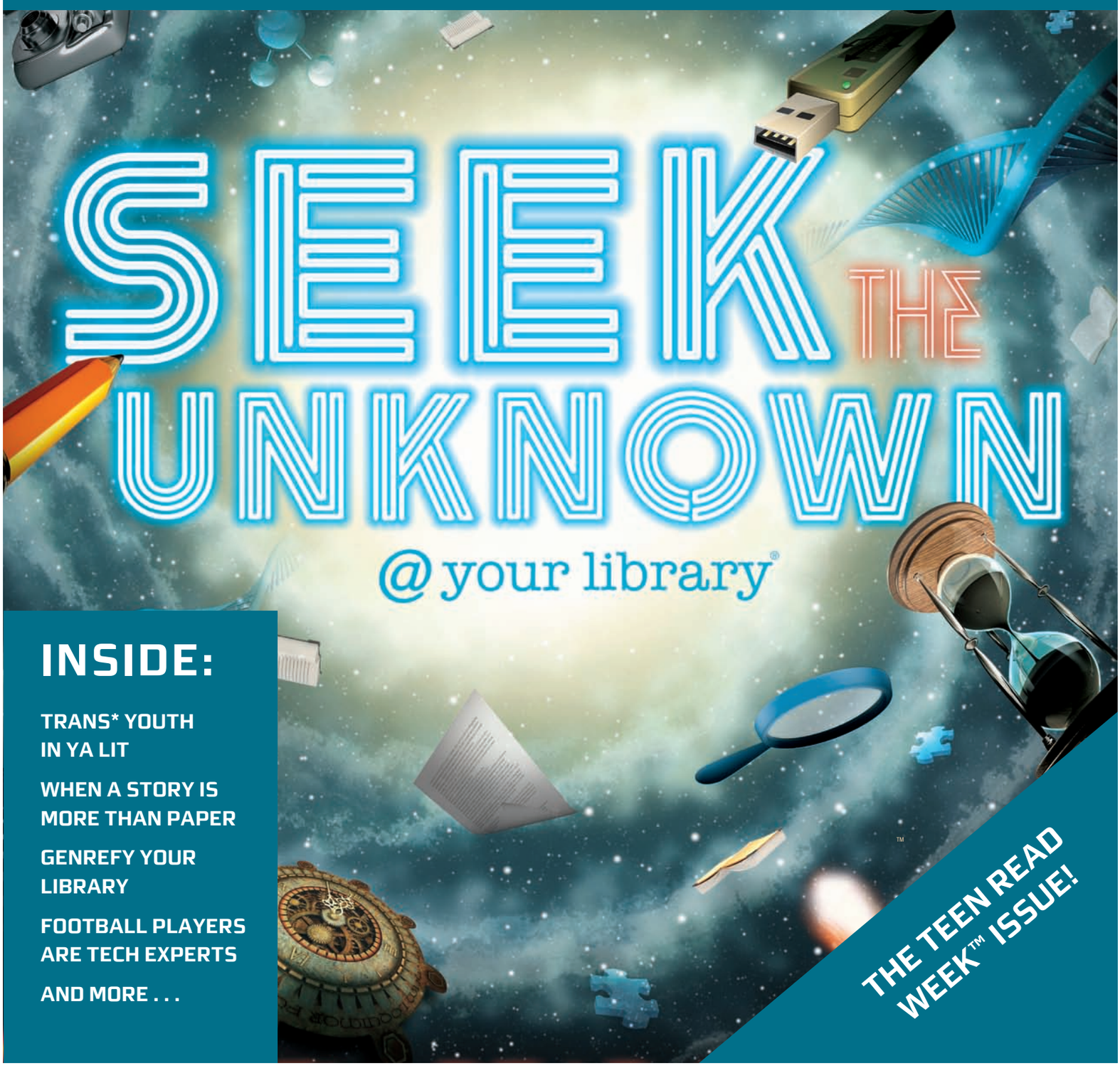
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

young adult library services

2012 APEX® AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

VOLUME 11 | NUMBER 4 | SUMMER 2013 | ISSN 1541-4302 | $17.50



INSIDE:

Life's little to-do list.

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- ☐ Guardianship
- ☐ Beneficiaries
- ☑ Planned Giving to YALSA

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The School Angle

YALSA Perspectives

Best Practices

Hot Spot: Teen Reading

Plus:

About This Cover

Seek the Unknown @ your library®! is the official theme for Teen Read Week™ 2013, Oct. 13–19. Teen Read Week offers libraries a chance to highlight the many ways they connect teens with great reads. © 2013 American Library Association. Poster and other products available at www.alastore.ala.org or by calling 10800-746-7252. All proceeds support the nonprofit work of the ALA and YALSA.

Circulation
Young Adult Library Services (ISSN 1541-4302) is published four times a year by the American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of ALA. Subscription price: members of YALSA, $25 per year, included in membership dues; nonmembers, $70 per year in the U.S.; $80 in Canada, Mexico, and other countries. Back issues within one year of current issue, $17.50 each. Periodicals class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Young Adult Library Services*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Members: Address changes and inquiries should be sent to Membership Department, Changes to *Young Adult Library Services*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Nonmember subscribers: Subscriptions, orders, changes of address, and inquiries should be sent to Changes to *Young Adult Library Services*, Subscriptions, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 1-800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; subscriptions@ala.org.

Statement of Purpose
Young Adult Library Services is the official journal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. *YALS* primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages twelve through eighteen. It will include articles of current interest to the profession, act as a showcase for best practices, provide news from related fields, publish recent research related to YA librarianship, and will spotlight significant events of the organization and offer in-depth reviews of professional literature. *YALS* will also serve as the official record of the organization.

Production
Cadmus Communications

Advertising
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Indexing, Abstracting, and Microfilm
Young Adult Library Services is indexed in Library Literature, Library &Information Science Abstracts, and Current Index to Journals in Education. Microfilm copies of *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* and its predecessor, *Top of the News*, are available from ProQuest/Bell & Howell, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences-Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992. ∞

from the Editor

Linda W. Braun

Teen Read Week™ October 13 to 19, 2013, is a time to support teen pleasure reading. In today's world of choices, reading for pleasure takes on a myriad of forms, including: a fiction or nonfiction book; a series of Twitter messages; a text message conversation; Instagram captions; pages on a website; or a piece of fan fiction. It's the job of those working with teens to recognize the value of each format, and to explore any or all of them with the teens they serve.

The articles in this issue of *YALS* highlight ideas that connect with this year's Teen Read Week theme, Seek the Unknown @ your library®. School librarian Courtney Lewis looks at some teen book reading interests and explains how library staff can uncover those interests through action research. Fan fiction (and other forms of fandom) might be something of a mystery to many librarians. Teen librarian Robin Brenner discusses the world of fandom and why it appeals to teen readers, writers, artists, and video producers. Do you know what transmedia is? If not, read what Rachel McDonald and Jackie Parker have to say about it, and why it's important to know about.

What if you're just jumping into YA librarianship for the first time? School library support staffer Dawn Treude tells you almost everything you need to know in order to teach yourself the basics of getting the job done. Or maybe you're looking for a new way of doing the things you learned long ago. Stephanie Sweeney decided to give the unknown a try by instituting a genre-based shelving system, and she's glad she did. It's all in this issue of *YALS*.

Starting with this issue of *YALS* you'll notice a new section. We're calling it *The School Angle*, and it's where you'll find at least one article in each issue with a focus on working with teens in school libraries. But it's not the only place you'll find school-related content in *YALS*, which is why we highly recommend a cover-to-cover perusal of each issue.

Don't forget, each week there is new content that complements the print journal on the *YALS* website: http://yalsa.ala.org/yals. YALS

from the President

Jack Martin

When it comes to teens and the meaning of reading, lots of people—including library staff—have a variety of different thoughts and opinions. Some might think that reading means curling up in a comfy chair with a traditional physical novel. Others might think it means reading the paper every morning with coffee. Some might think it means scanning Twitter feeds for the latest celebrity gossip. Others might have a different idea altogether.

For this issue of YALS I decided to bust out the big guns—I mean my old *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* from 1988 (published well before the whole e-reader and tablet phenomenon) that's been sitting around my apartment for the past 14 or so years. And when I looked up the word "read," I discovered that it means lots more than I ever thought it could.

The first part of the definition—located on page 980—for all of you researchers—reads "to receive or take in the sense of (as letters or symbols) by scanning."[1] This is probably what most people think of when they think of reading. But, then it goes on to say, "to learn what one has seen or found in writing or printing."[2] To me this means that reading takes on different aspects. It's not just decoding letters and words, but it encompasses the actual taking in of information AND the understanding of that information. When I think of what this looks like in real life, I think about a student checking out material from a school library and reading it. It's during that traditional form of reading that the second part of the definition kicks in—the student learns something from what's been read. (Others can figure out what the student learned through conversation or a quiz or even a blog post.)

Then I read further down into the definition (which is actually quite long), and, as an appreciator of the arts, got really excited. According to the dictionary, reading can also mean "to interpret (a musical) work in performance" and also "to sense the meaning of (information) in recorded and coded form (as in storage): acquire (information) from storage—used of a computer or data processor." This made my brain explode because reading could actually be attending a concert (which means I must get a lot of reading done going to all those summer concerts!), the opera, a musical on film. Anyone who gains knowledge and understanding from a performance is doing a form of reading. Reading also means gaining information from a computer or a data processor (anybody actually remember using a word processor?). How amazing, in 1988 we had the insight to think past what assumptions we may have had about what reading means and think about how it connects to technology. The computer reads the bits and bytes and then the "reader" gets the benefits of that computer reading by being able to take information in in a variety of ways—through eyes and ears primarily of course.

One other thing I love about this is the whole "sensing the meaning" of "coded" information aspect of the definition—to me this means not reading what's on a computer (or online), but understanding how it's written and what language it's in. Then I also like to think this can be translated to the back end of the various functions of the Internet—for example, reading could also mean interpreting the coding that goes into building the Web. There is a big movement in the education world right now where learning to code is considered an essential skill. If you think about it, of course it is, it's a form of reading (and of gaining understanding).

I realize, I'm getting a little out there with this excitement about what reading actually means. So, I'll step back and think about where and what teens are actually reading in libraries. They are reading physical and digital books and magazines and websites. They're reading text messages that come in on their phones. They're reading music videos on YouTube. They're reading video games and related materials to better understand and play them. They're reading everything—more than many of us ever did or would ever imagine doing when we were teenagers.

2013's Teen Read Week—Seek the Unknown @ your library—fits right in with this idea. Where is the unknown for teen readers? Maybe it's the latest sci-fi thriller. Maybe it's any and all of our Michael L. Printz award winners. Maybe it's a title discovered on one of YALSA's themed Popular Paperbacks lists. Or, it could be a trip to the local theater where they gain understanding by watching the latest popular movie. It could be by

(continued on page 7)

feature
The School Angle

Lean On Me?

Finding Training and Support for School Library Support Staff

By Dawn Treude

I'm staring at 25 Tom Clancy novels in disbelief. In a public library that may not be enough Clancy, but here in the stacks at Horizon High School it appears excessive, if not indifferent. It's 2011, not 1995, and I know enough to realize that something's not right when we own four copies of *The Patriot Games* and not a single volume in The Hunger Games series. It's my problem now because in my new position as library media tech I'm in charge of collection development in a collection that appears to have been neglected for years.

What makes me qualified to take on this enormous responsibility? Location, location, location. I'm the only one here with the time and passion for such a project. Budget cuts have eliminated certified teacher-librarian positions across the nation, and for the ones who remain, technology integration often takes precedence over traditional library practices. Such is the case in my own library. While the library media specialist I work with teaches faculty and students how to navigate educational technologies, I handle the book side of operations. Our situation would be ideal except for the fact that neither of us is a certified librarian.

This is the new school library—underfunded, perhaps unstaffed, and in many cases, staff not formally trained in library science. As the Internet and bring-your-own-device (BYOD) integration become a reality, it is a continuing challenge for those of us in the trenches to advocate to administration and district officials what we do all day and how we are an integral part of the advances and changes going on in the school. Make no mistake, I want to do everything possible to support my patrons and help sell my services to the administration, but as a paraprofessional, to whom do I turn for training and support in an environment with no budget for those things?

Start in Your Own Backyard

Help is easier to find than you think—if you know where to look. I survived my first year by utilizing the human capital around me:

- Patrons
- Parents
- Professionals

Public service is not a job you do alone, even if you are alone in your library. I had to practice what we teach the students—there are no stupid questions—and be willing to ask for advice, direction, and assistance.

Patrons

My student and faculty patrons are a gold mine for professional development. Their unique position on campus offered me the following resources:

- Place
- Passion
- Promotion

Place

Students are in your space and in your face all day. Listen, look, and learn from them. School library staff have the ability to develop strong relationships with student patrons. We see the same kids regularly, as well as a steady flow of first-time or infrequent users.

One of my biggest obstacles during the first months on the job was staying in touch with popular YA series. I felt grounded in middle grade titles but less so with YA. I spent time on Teenreads (www.teenreads.com) and Goodreads (www.goodreads.com), which definitely helped, but my students provided far more insightful feedback. I used every interaction at the circulation desk as an opportunity to question and connect with the teens. I asked for title recommendations and encouraged them to name names of favorite authors. When teens know you're listening, they're happy to talk!

DAWN TREUDE is a Library Media Tech at Horizon High School (Scottsdale, Az.). She is also a freshman football volunteer coach.

I strive to capitalize on every interaction I have with faculty in the same way I do with the students. I ask questions about upcoming projects, suggest book titles, and encourage them to bring their classes to the Library Media Center (LMC). It's working. Library reservations are up. Teachers will request a group of titles within a specific subject range, which gets me out in the stacks and learning more about the collection.

Passion

Avid readers are always hungry and never shy about expressing their appetite preferences. In a library filled with users there's bound to be some book discussion. Our campus boasts a strong read-for-pleasure population, especially among the underclassmen who are fresh off the Accelerated Reader (AR) programs from our feeder schools. As the students recognized my interest in their reading habits, they began to feel more comfortable asking for titles and making suggestions. I listened. With their blessing, I built up our meager manga section into a popular space.

I'm as much of an advocate for digital literacy as I am for the traditional kind and know it's important that all staff understand how to assist patrons (both students and faculty) in the digital shift. In addition to learning about my students' book reading preferences, I've acquired new skills in document formatting, printing, and uploading through a rather unpleasant process called "My-English-essay-is-due-today" (aka: due within ten minutes of speaking those words). My ease and comfort with different applications grows the more I interact with the school community. I'm as much of an advocate for digital literacy as I am for traditional print literacy.

Promotion

Word of mouth is still the best form of advertising. If you're doing it right, patrons will tell their friends. My willingness to help, make mistakes, and ask questions has presented the best learning opportunities on the job. As more teens and faculty come in for assistance, the more I discover about my own abilities and limitations. I can't solve every problem or hand over every book desired, but my efforts are noted. Both students and staff are spreading the word about what *can* be done in the LMC.

A big part of successful librarianship is building relationships that will foster increased use and confidence in patrons. To that end I make an effort to combine the necessary services—book checkout, printing, and research assistance—with fun activities designed to give patrons an enjoyable experience. During the first week of school I instituted T-Shirt Tuesday. Every Tuesday I don a geek-themed shirt (*Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, and Dr. *Who* are some favorites) and the students guess where my shirt is from. Correct answers earn a Red Vines licorice. I've found that teens will do anything for Red Vines. It's a silly but effortless way to reach students. Everything I do is student directed because this is their space and I'm lucky enough to work in it.

This year I introduced the book spine poetry slam to the English department. I'd read about it in a library journal and kept asking for volunteers until I got a yes. Two classes came down one morning and composed poems using the exact word or words contained in six book titles. The teachers had the students read the poems aloud and describe the themes. It was so successful that word spread and two more teachers brought their classes down to the library. I'm now trying to come up with something equally fun and educational for the social studies department.

Parents

In a school environment parents are primary stakeholders whose voice and resources provide key components to campus success. Horizon High School parents have contributed to my growth through their:

- Commitment
- Caring
- Cash

Their support has played a significant role in my professional development.

Commitment

Second to the faculty and staff, no one cares more about student success than the parent community. As children grow older, the opportunities for parent involvement at school shift. We don't see many parents on campus during the school day, but their dedication to Horizon is evident through the various projects, programs, and equipment they provide. The majority of parents are willing to assist any campus effort to increase services or positive outcomes for students.

Caring

Parents care about the entire school population. The library services the entire campus. I have yet to meet a parent harboring unpleasant memories of his or her high school library. Parents love libraries because they recognize our role in promoting literacy and student success.

Parent organizations are designed to support programs and services for the campus. Sometimes they aren't aware of which areas are in need of more (or new) assistance. I'm not uncomfortable approaching our Horizon Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) because we're on the same team. When you look at it through that lens, you may wonder why you haven't approached them before.

Cash

Parent organizations provide funding that the school district doesn't. Our Horizon PTO offers a grant program for faculty. The main requirement is that the request be for an item or service benefiting as many students as possible. I have successfully applied for and received funding for three grant proposals.

The first grant allowed me to attend a Bureau of Education Research (BER) conference on YA literature. Because I was in charge of collection development and focusing on fiction, I easily explained the necessity of the conference. Since my district provides no funding for support staff professional development, the PTO recognized that without their financial assistance, I'd be without options.

The outcome of that generosity resulted in more fiction titles our students wanted and some advantageous networking for me. I met a local book vendor, whom I now use regularly, and other Arizona librarians who were eager to share their ideas and insights, some of which I've put into practice.

Do I feel awkward asking for financial aid for my professional development? Absolutely not. (There are no stupid questions, remember?) I pay my dues to ALA, YALSA, American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and Arizona Library Association (AzLA) myself. The more I know, the more I can help my students.

Don't overlook parents as a resource; they are a school's best partners.

Professionals

You don't have to go far to reach dedicated library professionals. Between the Internet, social media, and journals, a novice support staff like myself can acquire a wealth of information through the experience of certified librarians at all levels:

- Local
- State
- National

Not only is much of this assistance free, but delivery is often instantaneous.

Local

The school district I work in is filled with people who know how our library system works. Believe it or not, connecting with other district library staff is a challenging endeavor; we're all too busy at our own sites to reach out to each other on a regular basis. In my district the media specialists have a professional learning community (PLC) group, but nothing similar is in place for the support staff at this time. I'm hopeful that will change.

What we do have and use frequently is a Google group for all media specialists and media techs. We share links to articles, ask questions about cataloging or software, and call for help—"Is the network down at your site, or is it just us?" At first I didn't feel comfortable posting in the group, but I'm reaching out more this year because these are the people who know best what challenges I'm facing at my site. That context and connection is priceless.

State

Your state library association offers a variety of services and programing to further your career. AzLA has a fantastic teacher-librarian division that sponsors a free fall workshop. It was well worth giving up a few hours on a Saturday morning to connect with other professionals in the state on topics relevant to school libraries, such a buying books without a budget, the shift to Common Core, and marketing your library to the school community.

Seeing what's happening around the metro Phoenix area outside of my school library space has done two things: I appreciate what my district is still doing to support libraries, and I actively advertise the services the LMC offers to the faculty. The best library is a used library.

This year we've experimented with new programming ideas, like Teen Tech Week, and were able to prevail upon the faculty to recommend new nonfiction titles for a book order. (They'd never been asked.) Reservations are up for computer carts, as are old-fashioned visits to the library. My goal for next year is to promote booktalks—a first on this campus. Meeting other librarians inspires me to want to do more at Horizon. The best part is that I don't have to come up with all the innovations myself.

National

Connecting to the greater library community is time and money well spent. One of the first things I did when I started here was join ALA, YALSA, AASL, and AzLA. My initial excitement shifted to an extreme sense of being overwhelmed as I tried to take in all the new information flooding my inbox. I didn't know how or where to start plugging into the community. My day consists of thousands of stop/starts rather than any chunks of uninterrupted time, so I connect in small bursts, usually through our LMC Twitter account, which I manage.

Twitter digests easily for those short on time. I find that I gain a lot from hearing about trends outside of Arizona. Through Twitter I've discovered library blogs and many valuable resources for the shift to Common Core. I often share articles I find to our Google group.

I've begun to feel grounded enough in the national associations to participate in roundtables and leave comments on blog posts. Right now I still feel that I'm a small fish in a big sea, but don't worry, I'm swimming, not dog paddling.

The Best Things in Your Professional Life Are Often Free

One of the other benefits of being connected to the greater library community is the access it affords to learning resources for library staff at all levels. I take advantage of free webinars through Booklist, E-collab, and YALSA (see the YALSA Perspectives section of this issue for an article on YALSA webinars) and thus steer the course of my own professional growth. Collection development for fiction and Common Core adoption are the most pressing concerns I face. It's important to demonstrate to the faculty that the LMC is prepared to collaborate with them through the shift to Common Core.

Vendor webinars have provided the unexpected benefit of not only furthering my education in YA literature but also learning more about the titles already in the collection. Listening to someone passionately discuss a title makes a far greater imprint on my memory than reading a review. That, combined with knowledge of my patrons' reading preferences, has increased circulation. The more books I can recommend, the more they move out the door.

By far the best free resource I have is the support I receive from my direct supervisor, Library Media Specialist Stacey Orest, and the administration on campus. This support enables me to leave work for the occasional workshop or to disappear into the telepresence room for a webinar or Tweet-up. I'm encouraged to pursue all avenues that can further my professional development.

As much as I want to do—like book clubs and author visits—the urgency of the school day often takes precedence over expanding library services. This is potentially the biggest difference between teen services in a school library versus a public one. As support staff, I don't have the flexibility within my schedule to leave the LMC at lunch or after school to conduct library programs. There are a multitude of campus activities that compete for students' time, and we have yet to discover the time or day to run a special program. I'm not ready to give up however.

Facing the Future

The week before I wrote this article another metro-Phoenix school district announced the layoff of its media specialists for the 2013–2014 school year. Despite the challenging climate libraries are weathering, I believe that library careers are rewarding and more necessary than ever. With that in mind, I'm continuing my education and training in a variety of ways.

I applied for the 2013/2014 YALSA Mentoring Program. I plan on taking a library science class at Mesa Community College (CC), the one CC in the valley that has a degree program. I've grown more confident buying books, but cataloging is another matter. Should we stick with Dewey or move to a bookstore model? How can I make the 800s, our most used nonfiction section, more user friendly for the students? Is there a contest for the worst-looking Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) record? I know I'd be a contender. With Common Core approaching, it's imperative I know what we have and where it can be found.

I've set my sights on attending the YALSA Young Adult Literature Symposium, November 2014, as my first foray into a national event. Between scholarships, saving, and a possible grant, I might be able to get there.

My want list is long, but the urgency of my need-to-do list takes up the majority of my workday. The nonfiction section needs serious weeding and attention—a student handed me a moldy copy of *Leaves of Grass* recently, and a book search brought me face-to-face with a title about the United Nations, in the cookbook section, next to a UN cookbook. It was that way in the catalog and on the shelf. The campus shifted to cloud printing in Google Drive, and the students still don't quite get it, especially on "my-essay-is-due-today" days.

My schedule is as demanding as my teen (and sometimes faculty) patrons are, but I love what I do, even when I'm unsure if I'm doing it right. The challenges are not going to disappear, and school libraries will continue to face staffing and budget cuts. But being around the energy of teens makes staying positive less arduous. The best days are the ones when I hand a student a book he or she wants. Sometimes they squeal with excitement. I understand exactly how they feel. YALS

from the President *(continued from page 3)*

watching a how-to video on YouTube. It could be building their own website on a topic of interest, or creating and editing an online video, or simply talking about what they're interested in as a part of an online community.

It's all reading, and we should push teens to expand their horizons and seek the unknown in all of these different realms. Speaking of pushing horizons, this is my last YALS column as President of YALSA. I've certainly had my horizons pushed as I've worked with members, stakeholders, peers, and colleagues. I've learned a lot about serving teens in libraries and how to help others do so successfully. It's truly been an inspirational year; thanks to all of you for your support and enthusiasm. YALS

References

1. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Merriam Webster, 1988), 980.
2. Ibid.

feature
YALSA Perspectives

Your Key to Professional Development:

YALSA Webinars a Great Perk for Members

By Megan P. Fink

Energetic, creative and under a time crunch—these could describe any library staff around the United States working with teens in school or public libraries. According to the ALA Library Fact Sheet there are over 16,000 public and 99,180 school libraries in the country. There are 46,849 librarians working in public libraries (this figure includes YA librarians) and 75,250 librarians working in public and private schools in the United States.[1] These libraries employ professionals and support staff who need opportunities to share successful programming and who are looking for high-quality professional development. YALSA provides what they want and need.

I fully admit that I didn't know about the webinar archive available from the association on its website. With 12 webinars archived each year and freely available to members ($19 each for everyone else), that's a total benefit of $228, which more than pays for your ALA/YALSA dues. YALSA webinars cover a variety of topics, from YA lit, to setting up technology programs, to dealing with difficult teen behaviors. As the YALSA website says, "Members can see archived webinars for free, two months after they take place, in YALSA's Members Only section."[2] Despite being a member for over nine years, I never explored the YALSA website beyond the volunteer forms, book award lists, and committee contact information. (Consider this my public apology for not taking time to absorb all that's available on the site.) That said, I'm willing to bet that some of you don't know about the webinar archive either. I found out about the webinars when I volunteered to serve on the YALSA Continuing Education Advisory Board.

All live webinars take place monthly on the third Thursday, are sixty minutes long and include time for questions either at the end or along the way. You can access the archived webinars through the YALSA website. Access gives you the chance to view the webinar and the PowerPoint slides from the presentation. I think these webinars are a great option to share with your supervisor or coworkers who are YALSA members. Here is a list of webinars from the year 2012–2013:

- Take Your Summer Reading Program from Yawn to Yay with STEM
- Apps Apps Everywhere
- Reaching Reluctant Readers
- Teen Spaces on a Dime
- Book Blitz II—45 YA Titles in Sixty Minutes
- A TAG Can Work for You, Too!
- Get Crafty for Less
- Beyond the Birds and the Bees: Talking Sex and Sexuality with Teens
- Ten Social Tools to Connect with Teens at Your Library
- Managing the Swarm: Teen Behavior in the Library and Strategies for Success
- Finding a Place on the Shelf: The Middle School Library and the YALSA Book Awards
- Serving LGBTQ Teens
- Journey Into the Darkness: Summer Reading Programs

(continued on page 15)

MEGAN P. FINK is a Middle School Librarian at Charlotte Country Day School (Charlotte, North Carolina). She began her career in children's book publishing, but fell in love with the library while working for the N.Y. Public Library. She is an active member of YALSA, and has served on several committees, including the 2012 Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults. She is also the editor of *Teen Read Week* and *Teen Tech Week: Tips and Resources for YALSA's Initiatives.*

feature
YALSA Perspectives

Seek the Unknown for Teen Read Week 2013:

Using Action Research to Determine Recreational Reading Habits of High School Students

By Courtney Lewis

You know what Teen Read Week is like in your library. You set up the displays, signed up for the Ning (http://teenreadweek.ning.com), bought the posters, and arranged for the programming. But is there a way of modeling the theme for this year "Seek the Unknown" in your professional life?

Yes, there is.

If Teen Read Week (October 13–19, 2013) is dedicated to the promotion of recreational reading among young adults, then figuring out what you know—really know—and maybe what you *need* to know from your patrons is your jumping off point. Because of the bustle surrounding the week, teen reading preferences are on the brain, so consider offering a serious survey to your population in order to gather valuable data that will inform your collection development, dazzle your administrators, and put the science back in your information science degree.

Embodying the action research ideal is a goal of many librarians, but it's one that is easy to set aside with the 4000 items on our daily to-do list. What sparked me into action was when I read Carol Fitzgerald's *Publishers Weekly* article back in 2009, "What Do Teens Want?" She reported on the results of a Teenreads.com survey of roughly 4,000 teens who completed a 77 question survey about their reading and book purchasing habits.[1] This undertaking was clearly meant to garner information from a publishing industry perspective about young adults and their buying and reading habits, but after looking at it, it occurred to me that this information applied to libraries in a significant way and could impact collection development strategies, better than circulation data, to form a comprehensive picture of patron reading habits. I recreated her survey, tweaking it for a library situation, only to be inundated by amazing data that not only changed the way I looked at my collection but also created a situation where I can periodically measure my population's recreational reading habits, comparing them to past years. In this article I'm going to show you how you can do it too.

Approaching Action Research with a Sense of Adventure

First, a word about action research. I know many librarians who, despite their excellent approach in reading the latest journal articles and reflecting on their

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programs, practically break out in hives at the suggestion that they do their own research. This is probably a holdover from graduate school where doctoral students roamed the halls discussing the complex statistical programs they used to analyze variables. It's important to keep in mind that doctoral research is traditional research, not action research, conducted by professional researchers who want to collect mostly quantitative data for the purpose of generating conclusions that can be generally applied to a specific field.[2]

As Lesley Farmer writes in her seminal (and delightfully succinct forty-four page) work on the topic, action research "by its very nature makes it less scholarly and theoretical than other forms of research."[3] This means that rather than designing a complex survey, accounting for a million variables and using statistical software, a librarian instead relies on her expertise and that of her colleagues to design an instrument which collects quantitative and qualitative data that will help give a comprehensive snapshot of a specific environment and help determine a course of action, preferably with data that can be shared with coworkers.[4]

Choosing and designing an instrument is key, and obviously I chose a survey in order to emulate the survey Fitzgerald reported, basically recreating the questions based on the reported results. Balanced questionnaires usually have a combination of open-ended (free response or comment boxes) and closed-response questions where respondents choose from a list of choices or determine a level of agreement with a statement using a Likert scale (usually "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree").[5] The references listed at the end of this article provide excellent tips for designing instruments as well as collating and presenting your results.

Customizing the Survey for My Library

While collection development strategies are a good enough reason to try this foray into action research, it occurred to me that the opportunity allowed for other questions to be asked. I decided to show my creative Library Advisory Board (LAB) the questionnaire and ask how we should tweak it for our population. I was eager to have a series of questions about why students choose to come to the library as well as some questions about e-reader and e-book attitudes and use, but was surprised when my LAB added questions about summer reading. My students also felt it was important to add questions about patron use of the library catalog and some other issues they felt were crucial to understanding who uses the library (see the references and the YALS site—http://yalsa.ala.org/yals—for a link to the questions and results of the original survey). Against all the official advice, the survey was long, and I worried about whether anyone would have the patience to sit through it and actually answer the questions.

Do not underestimate the teenage understanding of how best to influence their peers! My LAB came up with the shameless bribe of rewarding participants with a cookie day where anyone who had filled out the survey received a fresh-baked cookie (they even could order one of three flavors). I sent out a mass e-mail to students with the survey link and posted signs around campus to get the percentage of the population that didn't come to the library regularly, as well as reminded our regular patrons to take the survey. I then watched the results roll in.

The cookie bribe was a fantastic motivator. The survey had a 57 percent response rate, which made me extremely confident about the results, although roughly 33 students skipped the majority of questions, bringing the actual response rate closer to 49 percent, still within the realm of respectability. Purely by chance, the demographics seemed evenly divided by grade/age and ended up close to our actual proportion of day/boarding students, a fact that further bolstered my confidence in the results.

I was most astonished by the percentage of students who indicated they wanted to read books but didn't have the time for it. Even though I had anticipated this being a high number, 64 percent of survey participants wanted to read more books but couldn't. I was happy that 83 percent of respondents thought the library had a great or good selection of books, and over 72 percent of the population indicated they came to the library at least once a day, if not more, which was consistent with our foot traffic data.[6]

The results regarding where students found books in person and online, what genres they preferred, and details (like what adult authors they read) informed my collection development strategy and helped me weed the fiction collection and bolster it in different areas than we had developed prior to the survey. Many of our LAB members volunteered to check on the popular adult authors and genres (general fiction, series fiction, romance, and fantasy all scored high) on the shelves and give us a sense of what areas needed improvement.[7]

The snapshot of student consumption of online culture was particularly interesting, with almost 30 percent of participants seeing more than 20 movies in the theater each year and around 11 percent falling in the 10 to 20 movies range. My LAB members felt this was extremely important when marketing books, and in fact our best used displays are the movie tie-in novels, related DVDs, and genre arrangements inspired by a popular film in the theater.[8]

In the end, the data were so rich in information that I presented the results at a faculty meeting, showing the similarities and differences to the national sample with our population. This generated a beneficial conversation about book reading trends

among young adults, which many of my teachers indicated changed the way they viewed our adolescent population. But, I've been using this data for a few years now, and the time has come to consider undertaking this survey once again, so what better time to do it than during Teen Read Week?

Updating the Survey for 2013–2014

Three years have passed, which in a high school practically counts as a generation, and I not only want to know how the data have changed, but I also realize my original survey was only months after the first generation iPad debuted. Goodreads was in its infancy in 2009, not having even added its spiffy, post-API recommendation algorithm, and my survey listed Borders as a bookstore option.[9] While my private school population had a reasonable number of smartphones four years ago, I'd be hard pressed to find a student without one today. Considering the recent Pew Internet & American Life study about adolescent access to computers, smartphones, and the Internet, it's worth it for me to include a question regarding access to these devices with a follow-up question about whether they are used for recreational reading.[10]

Having seen some students accessing notes on their Kindle Fires or iPads when writing their papers, I also want to know how many students are using e-readers or associated apps for school-assigned reading, and if they take notes on them using the app interface. My school, which requires students to purchase the majority of their textbooks, has only recently begun a larger discussion around e-book versions of textbooks, so this could be valuable data in decision making (and I like to help the people who determine my budget). Back in the 2010 survey, 44.71 percent of students wanted textbooks and required reading to be available electronically, even though only 21.63 percent responded that they had ever read an e-book on a computer or e-reader.[11] In addition to the questions from that survey, I've added a specific question regarding device access to determine how many people could use e-books if we ended up going with a subscription service like Overdrive, as well as to determine attitudes toward e-reader technology in general.

Another area I revamped (and one that some librarians might question) is the section on movies and television watching. We have found our collection (both DVD and print) to be extremely affected by trends in these areas. When BBC's *Sherlock* burst on the scene followed by *Elementary* on CBS, I couldn't keep Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on the shelf, or any related Sherlock Holmes fan fiction. This reader demographic was also interested in forensic science nonfiction, so we created displays promoting this material with this group in mind. By knowing what services students use for their movies and television shows, I can monitor these services for what they indicate are their top shows of the week, checking for appropriate trends that might impact collection development. My slightly updated survey is hardly perfect but has the potential to provide me with valuable data, particularly as I can compare the majority of results against the data from 2010 (feel free to take a look at all the survey questions at http://bit.ly/ZIYPlM).

A Call to "Seek the Unknown"

With all the energy surrounding the celebration of Teen Read Week at my library, I am thrilled to be able to harness some of it and deploy another valuable survey to update my data regarding recreational reading habits in my patron population. Engaging in action research is an activity that does not require perfection (I'm sure there is plenty I can improve about my survey—feel free to tell me), reminds my administration and colleagues about one aspect of the library program that they often don't consider, and gives me the opportunity to write reflective blog posts and this professional article. It actually doesn't take a lot of time since SurveyMonkey does the bulk of the work for me, so my time is largely spent interpreting the data and creating valuable methods of disseminating the results.

Take Teen Read Week beyond the craft projects and movie nights this year and determine a burning issue that you would like to investigate in order to improve the quality of your library program. We are a profession based on asking questions, so determine the queries to which you would most like an answer and "seek the unknown" this October.

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feature
Best Practices

"What We Think Actually Matters?"

Teen Participatory Design and Action Research at the Free Library of Philadelphia

By K-Fai Steele

In 2012, the Free Library of Philadelphia received an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)/MacArthur Teen Learning Labs grant to plan and design a teen center in our Parkway Central Library. Our project's comprehensive design focuses on three sources of input: library staff, community partners, and teens.

For the past 15 years, the Free Library of Philadelphia has offered teen programming (such as Teen Tuesday events with movies and gaming), an annual Teen Poetry Slam, and scattered workshops. Despite these programs, the Free Library never had a formal teen space until the April 2012 renovation of the Philbrick Hall popular lending library at Parkway Central, and the March 2013 opening of the Teen Center at the McPherson Square Library. Teens are always welcome at the library, but many of them expressed feeling alienated even though they felt comfortable at the library throughout their childhood years. We wanted to provide an opportunity for teens involved in the project to engage in a dialogical design and action-research process, to begin to break down the walls of how we—and how they—define, use, and make their library experience meaningful.

Getting Started

We knew a few things going into this grant: it was going to be challenging to round up teens in Philly willing to sacrifice their time to give us honest, thoughtful feedback; we needed to create a lot of structure and interesting activities to guide these teens in the research and feedback processes; and we needed to conduct this research and conversation with teens over an extended period of time. We decided to begin our research with a team of 35 Teen Programming Assistants (TPAs) hired for six weeks from July to August 2012 through the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), a city initiative that employs youth from low-income families. For many teens in Philadelphia, this was their first job.

Our 35 TPAs were assigned to work at their neighborhood library during the week and we gave them projects related to grant research to work on when scheduled at their branch. Isamar Ramirez, Programming Specialist, and Channell Warren, Assistant College Prep Specialist, developed action research assignments for the TPAs to complete weekly. Each library location was given access to technology, for the teens to use, in the form of cameras, laptops, and voice recorders, along with basic art supplies. The teens created site-specific tumblr blogs that they used as virtual journals to document their research. Several mentors (work-study students) were hired to travel between sites during the week to facilitate research and make sure the teens were on track. Examples of the tumblr blogs are available at: bushrodteen.tumblr.com (Bushrod Library), heavenlyhallteenresearch.tumblr.com (Heavenly Hall Hot Spot), and widener2800.tumblr.com (Widener Library).

Making Teens Feel Welcome in the Neighborhood, and the Library

An example of a project the teens worked on was an assignment to investigate the resources for teens available in their

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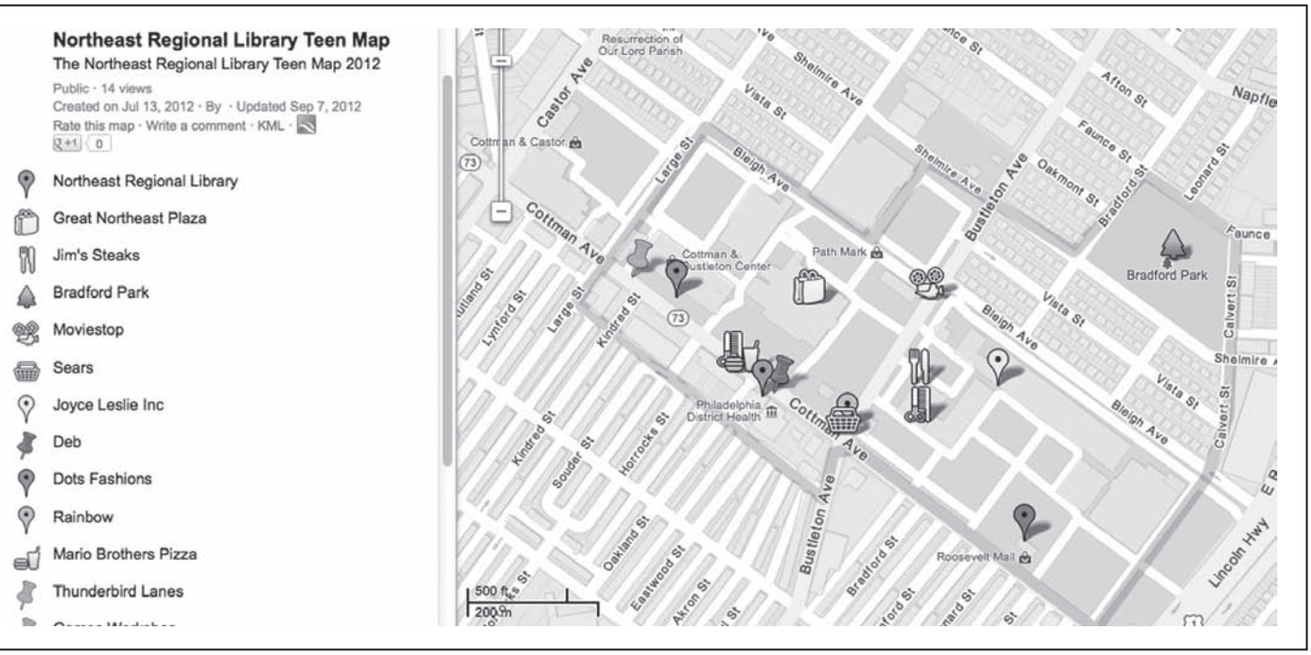
library's neighborhood (teen-friendly stores, restaurants, anywhere teens hang out and are welcome) and map these locations digitally using Google Maps.

As teens reported on their neighborhood teen resources, many noted a lack of teen-friendly places and activities, even within their local library. To address this, we had the TPAs develop how their ideal teen space would look, feel, and run. They researched furniture online; polled other teens, friends, adults, and library staff on colors and textures; compiled lists of programs and workshops that they thought would be popular and suitable for a library (and for the space they thought was best suited to the library). They discussed ideal traits for their potential mentors ("They should be . . . 20–30, have previous jobs that include working with teens" and "be laidback, smart, non-strict, responsible . . . "). They also developed interview questions for mentors: "Do you like working with teens?" "Do you have the abilities to mentor someone?" and "What made you want to work here?" The teens designed both virtual and 3D models of their ideal spaces. We ended the six-week period with a celebration, where the TPAs gave presentations of their findings to their peers and Free Library staff over ice cream.

We found that teens desired a safe, colorful, and comfortable space with free access to computers and snacks, freedom to hang out with their friends, interest-driven programming—such as graphic design and dance—and support from technologically savvy near-peer mentors who encourage them to excel in school and life. Our Youth Design Council defined a "near-peer" as a mentor one to two years older than them, either in college

Learn More: Action Research, Connected Learning, YOUmedia

1. **Action Research** is a type of data collection where participants are actively involved through a collaborative, deepening loop of activities, dialogue, and reflection. The aim is to investigate "with" rather than "on" participants, establishing a relationship where the participant has a greater stake in the outcome of the research project.
2. **Connected Learning** is an approach towards learning that advocates for youth to receive a more comprehensive support system that is responsive to their peer life, academic life, digital life, and out-of-school learning experiences. Learn more at http://connectedlearning.tv.
3. **YOUmedia** is a group of libraries, museums, and community-based organizations dedicated to supporting youth as they create, learn, and build skills with traditional and twenty-first-century digital tools. Learn more about YOUmedia at http://youmedia.org.



or a recent college graduate. Typically the near-peer mentor possesses a similar background, or is sensitive and responsive to youth needs and interests.

Youth Design Council

Out of the summer PYN group, we selected 15 teens to form our Youth Design Council, a group that meets monthly throughout the academic year. This was essential to the planning process, because we had the ability to engage them on a deeper level through dialogue and action research activities in order to identify the whys and hows of their summer recommendations. It also allowed us, as mentors, to develop more meaningful relationships and build trust with them—something we weren't able to do over six weeks with fewer staff. Several of the Youth Design Council members also work as Teen Leadership Assistants at the Free Library during the week (mentoring their peers as well as younger students with homework and providing literacy activities), giving them firsthand exposure to the current library environment on a regular basis.

One action research activity for this group involved identifying what they dislike about the new teen space at the Parkway Central Library, which opened in April 2012. Outfitted with iPads, cameras, and iPods, they captured photos and video of things that they noticed in the space—our thought was that if given technology to record their ideas and findings teens would be more involved. We were proved at least partly wrong when one teen demurred and opted for a pen and paper. This indicated that teens need a variety of options when it comes to engaging with research and recording findings.

So much of what we did involved creatively trying to readdress the way that we interacted with teens to gather information from them. For example, we realized that our teens were compliant when asked to take a survey, but it wasn't particularly enjoyable for us or them. So we compiled talking points in a visually pleasing document that we reviewed over pizza, and asked teens to cross out or circle the items they didn't agree with or did agree with. (Another thing we've learned is that food is one of the best lures for participation.)

Instead of creating a final report or presentation, the Youth Design Council is writing and producing their research, recommendations, and thoughts on mentors, physical space, technology, programs, and rules in a short video.

Lady Gaga's Born Brave Bus Tour: Polling Teens from Across the City

On March 16, 2013, Lady Gaga's Born Brave Bus Tour came to Philadelphia, without Lady Gaga. (The tour was originally scheduled for February 19 and 20, but was cancelled after Lady Gaga suffered an injury.) With only two days notice, we decided that this would be an excellent opportunity to conduct some action research with teens from across the city, many of whom we assumed were non-library users, on what type of programs and workshops they'd like to see in the new teen space. We created a poster activity that read, "The Free Library is building a teen center. What are the top three things you'd like to do in the space?"

Teens were encouraged to vote using their own smartphones and Instagram, Twitter, tumblr, or Vine (an app used to create six-second video montages) accounts with the hashtag #phillylibrary. It was a quick and engaging method—just a few teens had never used an iPad before.

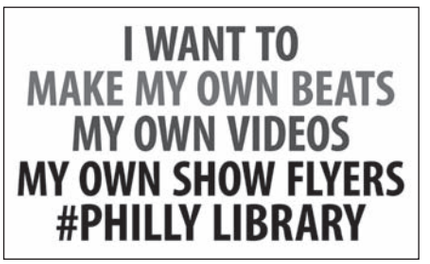
We also provided our own iPads, iPods, and cameras for teens to use if they didn't want to use their own accounts—nearly everyone opted to use our devices, and nearly all participants only voted for one activity. The top results surprised us: 14 percent of the participants wanted to use the library space to "learn how to be a better writer"; 12 percent wanted to "learn

something new"; 11 percent wanted to use the space to "hang out with their friends"; and another 11 percent wanted help "getting ready for college."

McPherson Square Project

In October 2012, we were asked by The Friends of the Free Library to help facilitate a new action-research project with youth at the McPherson Square Library, located in one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in Philadelphia. The Friends group had received a $15,000 grant from the McClean Contributionship to build a teen center, and they wanted us to replicate the process we developed over the summer, using action research and dialogue, to develop a plan for the McPherson Square teen space. We were given the entire right wing of this Carnegie-style building, which involved not only the design and construction of a new teen center, but the removal and shuffling of materials and technology of the existing space.

McPherson Square gave us the opportunity to review the work we had done during the summer (identify what had worked and what we could improve on) to effectively mentor and guide the McPherson youth as they developed their space. Most importantly, this gave us the opportunity to put together a physical space with the results of the youth research, rather than a list of recommendations.



The McPherson Square Youth Design Council met over six weeks and discussed space, mentors, programs, rules, and furniture. They also kept a tumblr blog as a journal. The teens worked within the constraints of a budget, and they had just six weeks to plan before their research was put into action.

We wanted to see if it was possible to replicate a teen-centered site dedicated to the principles of connected learning, in the spirit of YOUmedia, on the library floor for $15,000. The short answer is "yes." The long answer is also "yes, but only if you have the support of your institution." We realized that this project could not have happened without strong institutional support and interdepartmental cooperation. Siobhan Reardon, the President and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia, agreed to designate the entire wing of the Carnegie-style building (as opposed to the back half of one wing) for a teen center. Our IT department donated six laptops loaded with software, and provided us with funds to purchase apps for the iPads. Our buildings department helped to construct a worktable as well as a café-style bar that runs along one side, with outlets. The McPherson Square Library has been gracious and excited about working together with us to build and accept this new space. The library hired not only an adult-teen librarian, but also an after-school leader (mentor) to develop and run programming.

McPherson Square represents a beginning to the Free Library's commitment to serving teens by meeting them on their level and engaging them in the steps of a planning process.

Our past year has been consumed with working directly with teens and young adults, and it's been an incredibly rewarding experience. Teens brought a unique insight as participants in the design process, and they surprised us at every turn. One thing that we've learned is that if we as an institution want to support teen learning and engagement in our libraries, it is necessary to include them in the process. Many teens identify the library as a valuable place, but their fondness seems to be more of a nostalgic notion that doesn't carry weight in their everyday life. The Free Library of Philadelphia's mission is to advance literacy, guide learning, and inspire curiosity. Its vision is to build an enlightened community devoted to lifelong learning. If we seek to fulfill that vision, our goal with teen engagement needs to begin with getting teens on board. YALS

Your Key to Professional Development *(continued from page 8)*

Taking part in webinars when they happen is a great opportunity for anyone to learn about serving teens successfully in real time. The fee for participating in a live webinar is incredibly reasonable. Look at this—$39 for individual YALSA members, $29 for students, $49 for all other individuals, $195 for groups. YALSA's group rate gives an institution 10 log-ins for a webinar.

Library staff have a constant need to creatively enhance library programming and services, and the YALSA webinars are an excellent way to get ideas on how to do just that. Librarians and library workers can find more information on webinars and other continuing education opportunities on YALSA's website. These webinars are a free (or low-cost) way to re-energize, discover new trends, or even mentor new professionals or new hires at your library. We spend the majority of our time as librarians and library workers supporting patron information needs. YALSA webinars are an opportunity to share a wealth of information among our peers and develop a renewed enthusiasm for our job. YALS

feature
Best Practices

High School Football Team Boosts Technology Achievement at a Public Library

By Meaghan Thompson

As public libraries begin to evolve, from book and material borrowing centers to town technology hubs and community centers, staff at the Turner Free Library in Randolph, Massachusetts, knew it was time to consider new ways to demonstrate value to the community. In the last three years, the new director Sara Slymon, made extensive changes to the library to improve its relevancy. Approximately two dozen computers were added to the library, along with a new teen room and teen librarian. Most of the computers are used all day, every day, with many patrons using the reservation station to sign up and then wait for the next available computer. DVD, CD, and video game collections have been ramped up along with an expanded section for English as a second language materials. The library also now buzzes with teens after school waiting to attend library programs or use the computers in the teen room. The library has evolved into a community center for all ages and caters to the needs of the community as it grows and the services they require expand.

In the *Boston Globe*, Paul Watanabe, Director of the Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, states Randolph "is probably the most diverse city in Massachusetts."[1] Randolph is a large town, with 32,112 residents, located outside of Boston. Many residents in the town rely on public transportation and commute into Boston for work. Statistics from the United States Census in 2010 noted the community speaks 49 different languages, and 31.9 percent of the population was not born in the United States.[2]

Community members lean on the technology, computers, and the know-how of the library staff to connect with relatives on Facebook and e-mail, along with writing resumes and research papers. While the town is surrounded by universities and colleges, many of our patrons use computers for research and to attend online courses. Also, English language learners continue to use the library's technology for course assistance and translation tools. Like many public libraries, while wanting the time to assist each patron individually with technology needs, staff time and budgets are limited.

This was frustrating to many staff members. However, with the innovative idea of the high school football coach and me, the new teen librarian, we have been able to connect teen athletes with adults needing technology assistance in order to improve the lives of everyone involved.

In January 2013, the Randolph High School hired Keith Ford as their new football coach. Previously, he was the assistant coach for the Curry College football team and in college was an offensive lineman at the University of Maine and Northeastern. Coach Ford has a clear passion for the game. However, he also has passion for the welfare of the boys on his team and the community he joined. Soon after he was hired, Coach Ford made great efforts to promote his team throughout the town. He made contacts with the recreation department, the senior center, and the local public library. He entered the public library with an overwhelming positive attitude and wanted to know what his team could contribute to the library and the town.

MEAGHAN THOMPSON was inspired to be a librarian at her work-study job while she studied mathematics at Castleton State College. She received her master's degree in Library and Information Science at Simmons College in 2012. She resides in Plymouth with her patient roommate and friend Morgan and tailless cat Fanny.

After much collaboration, Coach Ford and I agreed that the boys held a talent that was untapped, something many adults in town sought—technology skills. Coach Ford and I had a meeting with the entire football team to elicit interest and enthusiasm for a new library program. The football team's interest in participating was overwhelming; with that the Teen Technology Team was born.

Here's how the program works: two evenings a week for two hours two different members of the football team come to the library. Patrons, through library staff at any time, are able to make an appointment with the football players to get technology help Or, a patron can drop-in and make an appointment when team members are on site. Although the Teen Technology Team was optional for the football players to join, most of the team members signed up. The overwhelming interest from the football team made the vision of the program even clearer, not only did the community members need help from the boys, but the boys wanted to contribute to the community.

When first starting the program, the volunteer athlete-scholars sign in and are given a quick training guide (which they sign) of expectations and the goals of the program. Some of the things outlined for the boys to do includes make eye contact, shake hands with patrons, and be a positive representative of the football team and other teens in the town.

I was a bit nervous about attendance, with schoolwork, sports and other clubs, teens are strapped for time to participate in all of the programs they want to. This is never an issue with the Teen Technology Team. The boys all come on time, are respectful and eager to begin. Above all, the boys are expected to do their best answering technology questions (and staff is always around to assist if needed).

Teens on the team have worked with community members young and old, creating e-mail accounts, Facebook accounts, and answering questions about Twitter (especially the ins and outs of the mysterious #hashtag). Facebook and other Web 2.0 applications have been a hot topic; patron concerns about Facebook privacy are put to rest by the teens displaying privacy settings and how they can be changed; allowing patrons to feel at ease about whom they are communicating with through the social tool.

A patron was extremely touched when teen football volunteers aided her in transferring pictures of her granddaughter's wedding, from her camera to the computer. She could then e-mail the photos to her friends and other family members. The teen volunteers have also helped younger generations create PowerPoint presentations for school and create their very first e-mail addresses.

The main goal of the program is the obvious—to assist patrons with technology needs and give the library help with assisting in meeting the needs of patrons. However, this program also enhances the communication of the town residents and builds bridges between younger and older community members. Like many towns, the divide between generations can be vast. Sometimes, the different demographics have different values, priorities, and interests. This creates a rift that can be difficult to mend. This program allows teens and adults to meet in the middle, bonded by a common interest and tool—technology. Through this bond, other topics of conversation come up; patrons are finding that some of the teen volunteers are interested in attending the college that the patron attended, or interested in going into a profession that the patron works in. Whether the teens know it yet or not, these new relationships they are building may be helpful in future endeavors.

In the Search Institute's *40 Developmental Assets of Adolescents*, empowerment is an external asset that is required for teens to be successful in life.[3] Empowerment has many components, including that the public values youth in the community and a teen perceives that adults in the community value youth. It also includes that youth and teens should be used as resources; teens are given useful roles in the community; teens need to provide service to others; and a young person should serve in the community one hour or more per week. The Teen Technology Team program achieves all of these and guarantees cognitive growth and confidence. Volunteering in the community and helping others builds a great sense of self-worth. Not only are the teens recognized for their achievements as athletes and scholars, but they will also be recognized in the town as caring citizens.

This program at the Turner Free Library pushes football team members to see and understand one of many talents they have that help to improve their community. Not everyone in the town realizes that every age group has something to offer and the program has started to change the stereotype that all teens are inherently "trouble makers" or "a menace to society." The boys have made connections with town members who are enthusiastic about the teens' success and, with that, town communication has begun to cross previously uncrossed boundaries of language, age, and race.

I had the honor to speak to the football team about their progress as volunteers at the library during their scheduled weight room training. I wanted to emphasize to them the achievements that have been made by their efforts in assisting library patrons. I also received feedback from them about the program. Football team member and Teen Technology Team volunteer William Train stated what the program meant to him and explained what he had accomplished, "I enjoyed working with the public, I felt that I had made a difference."

Nathan Fernandez, a sophomore at Randolph High School and a member of the football team, explained what he expected from the program when he came

for his scheduled time, "I expect to assist someone with technology, but also to feel good when I leave."

The program has been a great success throughout the town. Advertising the program inside and outside the library has been significant to the jump-start of the Teen Technology Team. Like most library programs, the local newspapers contributed an announcement; flyers were placed inside the library and at other community buildings, like the senior center; and the library's social media pages plugged the new event. To boost promotion of the Teen Technology Team, the local television station promoted it during usual programming and local businesses were contacted and asked to make flyers available. Word-of-mouth advertising has also been essential to the popularity of the program; many patrons that have been assisted by the teens have referred a friend or relative to participate in the program.

However, key to the success of this program is the football coach and the library staff; the teens need to know (from these people as well as those they help) that their efforts are worthwhile and appreciated. The program has been a wonderful way for the library staff at the Turner Free Library to support the needs of patrons. In our profession, it is never a good feeling to have a patron leave the library without their information needs met. Unfortunately, this sometimes happened at the library. Library staff did not always have the time to assist patrons with extensive technology questions. Now, the librarians have a way to guarantee patrons do not leave unassisted. They are able to refer technology questions to the Teen Technology Team and, when a Technology Team member is not available, patrons are given a flyer with days and times the teen volunteers will be at the library to answer technology questions. The time freed up allows library staff to work on collection development, plan more programs, and continue to implement new programs and services that incorporate new ideas and trends.

Since the beginning of this program, I have had the chance to reflect on all of the opportunities presented to me, Coach Ford, and the teen athlete-scholars throughout town. Coach Ford invites me to football team parent conferences, where I get the chance to gloat over how wonderful the boys are, and meet perspective parent library patrons. The boys on the football team have met new community members and have looked into summer jobs with them, along with other professional avenues. Coach Ford has helped start to change the stereotypes of teens in Randolph and promote the team's achievements on and off the field. I would have never guessed this library program would have turned into a town-wide success, and I am so excited to be a part of it.

Using teens to help library patrons with technology is incredibly important for public libraries. With the support of my library administration (Sara Slymon and Meghan Malone), Coach Ford, and the Randolph High School Football Team the startup of this program was seamless. I am proud to be a part of an innovative team like the Turner Free Library and the Town of Randolph. It is my greatest hope that this program continues for many years to come and the teens benefit from their experience at the Turner Free Library. YALS

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feature
Best Practices

All Wired Up:

Understanding the Reading and Information-Searching Behavior of Teenagers

By Rachel Randall

In July 2012, I embarked on my MIS (Masters in Information Science) research project titled (quite uncreatively) *How Young Adult Readers Select Fiction in Public Libraries: A Study of the Factors Which Influence Information-Seeking in Context*. Phew.

The premise of my research? To find out (a) how young adults are searching for information and how they share and spread this information, (b) what channels (I had a few inklings) they use to share information; and (c) how and why searching and sharing is accomplished. I refined my study to the realm of public libraries, for example, observing how teens selected items at the public library and the whole backstory behind this selection. Using three discussion groups, each consisting of 10 or 11 participants (all from ages 15 to 18), I spent an hour with teens, throwing questions around and letting the conversation flow.

I was interested in the relationship between social media networks and personal networks, the reaction and response to hyped books and fan fiction, and how successful libraries are at engaging teens in social discussions via social tools. I wondered, since many libraries engage in some form of social media now, what's next?

YALSA defines the young adult group as ages 12 to 18 years. Since I am 24, I am on the edge of young adulthood, and as a result I truly felt the need to delve into the topic of teens, social media, and reading.

Findings

There were four main chapters in the thesis I submitted as part of the final research project for my MIS degree. My findings, included in the thesis, are indicative of my main observations and certain rich data and comments shared with me by the focus group participants. In this article I summarize three of the chapters, which together provide fodder for a post-Web 2.0 discussion:

1. Why and how teenagers read.
2. The influence of personal networks on book selection and information-searching processes.
3. The reality of social media and mass media in teen lives.

I would definitely recommend to any librarian in young adult services to invest time in observing the way the teen clientele operates. Don't just believe it when Marshall Breeding (www.librarytechnology.org/breeding-bio.pl) tells you that the social web

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is the way to go—find out why. Invest time in talking to teens, and any other customer group, in person. Invest time in putting together focus groups.

My research proved to me that while reading, seeing films, and listening to music may certainly be social activities for young adults, their information-searching process (i.e., looking for new materials to consume) is still done solitarily. During the focus groups as teens talked about their behaviors, there were several moments of "You do that? Me, too! I thought I was the only one!"

The *why* and *how* of teens made up the main focal points for research—and I opted to do a qualitative study, which gave me the perfect platform to gather rich data, and not feel like I needed to quantify or measure anything. In short, I was looking for plain, simple, pure inspiration.

Why and How Teenagers Read Books

There were a myriad of different answers from the teenagers in my focus groups, but what stood out was the traditional reason of all reasons: escapism. Other comments included reading books to broaden one's horizons and pursue new dreams. And, almost as though these reasons went full-circle in the bid to escape, the need to make sense of one's own purpose, one's own life story. It was exciting to hear these teenagers acknowledging the ways in which reading is still a main way they learn about how to "function." When asked about the why teen responses included:

"It's something to get lost in for a while."—Participant, 16 years old.

"I like to read to find out about things I like, like travel, or fashion, or relationships."—Participant, 17 years old.

"I look for books that relate to my life . . . maybe the 'ending' might be like my story, too."—Participant, 16 years old.

I was interested to see if the ubiquitous presence of e-books and e-readers in today's world would impact the *how*. This was also interesting. My research is not quantitative, and referring to measurements of any sort would go against the grain of my research objectives. However it must be said that in all three of my focus groups, I observed that those who owned mobile devices were a minority and for the majority, the thought of using their mobile devices to read books was simply not a priority. The way teens described their preferences is interesting:

"I like *normal* books, as opposed to reading online or e-books."—Participant, 17 years old.

"I prefer *normal* books . . . they're easier to curl up with on the couch."—Participant, 16 years old.

"I like *paper* books. I can write in them and highlight them and fold the 'pages'.—Participant, 16 years old.

"I like to collect books and put them on my shelf. So . . . *normal* books. For sure."—Participant, 16 years old.

"I don't like reading on my iPad. It's sort of cold . . . to hold at night, and not comfortable. So I like *regular* books. But I could see how it would be better to read e-books when you go traveling."—Participant, 17 years old.

Upon reflection, maybe this question has been posed to the wrong generation of teenagers who, like myself and other 20-somethings, were brought up on books in their original paper format. We may not remember a life before texting or chat rooms, but we're no strangers to dog-eared pages or paper cuts. Perhaps questions on e-books would be better posed to today's tweens and elementary school kids.

As a librarian, I was interested in *how* public libraries are playing their part in influencing book selection, or promoting their collection to youth—and *how effective* these efforts have been. It occurred to me halfway through the first focus group that perhaps this was the first assumption I'd made—that just because there are young adult services in public libraries, that young adults will surely be capitalizing on forming wonderful relationships with library staff, joining the Facebook page, the forums, etc.

In nearly every single group, there were confused faces all around the table when I asked questions about library customer service and outreach. I was asked to give examples since the teens were unaware of the various relationship-building opportunities libraries provide. The comments that followed were a mixed response:

"I don't really have any close relationships with any library staff members. I don't really like it when someone comes up to me the moment I step through the door . . . it's kinda weird."—Participant, 16 years old.

"I hate it when they, like, don't listen to you. This old library staff member . . . I told her, like, what I was looking for. And it was epic fail. She just didn't get me. I haven't tried to talk to anyone at the desk since."—Participant, 17 years old.

"I just request books at home. The website's easy to use. I come to the library once a week to do a quick browse, pick up my requests. If I don't have to go the desk, I won't."—Participant, 17 years old.

"There was this one display where the staff each recommended books, and wrote these reasons, like, why they liked each book. They had photos on the review slip of the staff member, and it made it really personal and sorta cool. Like there was this staff member and I like the way she dressed and looked and she seemed cool, so I looked for the books she recommended."—Participant, 16 years old.

"Book recommendations depend on the staff member. You need to have a close relationship with them. They'll know what you like. But if you don't like what they recommend, you know you can be straight up and tell them, too. And it's not awkward."—Participant, 18 years old.

I cannot stress the effectiveness of *close, personal* relationships enough. Teenagers aren't even that demanding. As the teens in my focus groups have affirmed in our focus

group discussions (and these comments have been preserved in the full thesis) it is the little details that count like remembering names, where they go to school, what courses they take, what books they took out the last time. It isn't about plain, hard, cold customer service—bombarding people at the doors so that one has the satisfaction that they've been greeted and seen to, job dusted and done. Librarians in youth services have the opportunity to identify themselves to teen readers as being completely objective, nonjudgmental towards book selection, and good listeners. Try not to become too focused on prescribing—teens get enough of that from their parents, teachers, and peers.

The Influence of Personal Networks

Within the last 14 years, there have been two schools of research and opinion about the effects teachers, parents, and librarians have on teenagers and book selection. The difference lies in *when* in the 14 years the research was published. The premise tends to be that the older the research, the more likely it is to hold the opinion that the gap between teens and the older people in their lives is far too large, and thus events such as conversations about books and so forth are rare. Contemporary pieces comment on the way in which modern fiction is marketed and what the media has done to close these gaps. I was pleased to see that the data from my focus groups certainly contributes to the latter school:

"My dad and I read different things, but he was the one who took me to the library and taught me how to find books, how to request them. He often gets me to try out new genres, like medieval mysteries."—Participant, 17 years old.

"My mom and I like to debate about books. Like she'll say, 'Aw, this was such a cr** book,' and that makes me want to read it, and argue that it's actually quite deep or something."—Participant, 18 years old.

"In my family, it's just us girls, so there's always a nice magazine, some chick-lit book, or a really good book lying around to read. My mum, me, and my sisters love trading really funny chick-lit and then talking about boys, relationships, and stuff."—Participant, 17 years old.

Comments like these point to examples of parent-teen bonding over the love of reading books. Likewise with the comments from participants about their relationships with their teachers and school or public library staff, it was pleasing to see that there are teachers and librarians who are striving to promote the pleasure and love of reading books peripherally, who can view literature beyond the two categories of "classics" and "junk." For example:

"Jade picks out all my books for me. She often requests them for me and puts them aside.[1] I won't like all of them, but I like most of them. We catch up at least once a week on her desk shift to chat about the books. She likes to hear why I don't like a particular book."—Participant, 15 years old.

"My teacher often makes up three lists of books for me when I ask her for ideas: books I should read which will help me with my coursework, books I should read just for pleasure, and finally, the third list will be books that cover both categories."—Participant, 16 years old.

The Reality of Social and Mass Media in Teen Lives

The myriad of Web 2.0 research in the context of libraries currently available certainly touts social media and mass media as being some of the most effective tools available to engage with young adults. We should accept that social media and mass media are huge influences in the average teenager's life—and the comments shared by the participants in my focus groups would certainly confirm this—but is it right to assume that teens will turn to the same sources as part of their book selection process, or assume that library Facebook pages or blogs have a lot of credibility for this age group?

Auckland Libraries is currently the sole public library system in Auckland, and all the participants in my focus groups have Auckland Libraries library cards. No one was surprised to hear that Auckland Libraries had its own Facebook page, a blog, and an option for RSS feeds on reading lists.

"Who Doesn't?"—Participant, 18 Years Old

When asked if anyone had "liked" the page, or used it as a reference point, or forum for discussion about books, there were only perplexed responses. Nearly every single kind of library system will most probably have a social media page and blog of some kind, but little research has been conducted to calculate the actual effectiveness of these endeavors. What is interesting is that the lack of actual interaction on these social media pages is justified with the consolation that people are simply not aware of the library's Facebook page or blog, and the instruction for frontline staff to promote it at all costs. The comments below would suggest that a sample of teenagers are very much aware about these efforts, but have such views of their own:

"Of course Auckland Libraries has a Facebook page. I would expect them to. But it's not like I'll go out of my way to look for them."—Participant, 17 years old.

"The thing is this . . . who is the person on the other side of the page? Maybe it's some old man, who's kind of weird. Library staff are always weird, no offense. I'd like to know who I'm getting advice from."—Participant, 17 years old.

"I unsubscribed to those RSS feeds and the mailing list ages ago because it was kind of impersonal. If I didn't like any of the books on that month's list, it's not like I can e-mail back and say 'what else have you got?'"—Participant, 16 years old.

"It's not just about who's running the page. Who is commenting on it? I've gone on the page. No one interesting was commenting on anything. Just moms asking about what time the children's programs were. So I didn't bother liking the page."—Participant, 18 years old.

"I ended up liking a page by some random public library in Colorado—they had this full-on hilarious conversation with more than three hundred comments about *50 Shades of Gray*. One of my mates re-shared it on her wall. I will 'like' a page if I feel like something interesting like that will come up again. I want to start a wall-rant on *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*."[2] —Participant, 18 years old.

"My friends and I will have wall-rants on each others' pages about books—especially when we share reviews from *The Guardian*, or spoof videos about certain books. But I won't go out of my way to see what other people are doing."—Participant, 17 years old.

What we can deduce, then, is that Facebook is most certainly used as a medium where young adults will discuss reading material, which may then possibly influence their book selection. But personal networks still have precedence over simply searching for random pages. Those who are hesitant to "like" the library's page seem to be somewhat concerned about the anonymous librarian behind it, or that they may be then be bothered by posts that have little to do with their interests. Maybe library systems just need to refine their social media plans and policies. My thesis also comments on the lack of response about other mediums such as Twitter and blogs, and the effects of tumblr, TV, and radio.

There was a segment in my thesis titled "Books to Movies . . . and Wikipedia." This may seem like a strange title to give a segment within this research, however the data gleaned from the focus groups that was related to these three sources of information turned out to be incredibly rich, from all three focus groups. The phenomenon of turning young adult books (especially fan fiction) into film has had various effects and influences on my participants:

"NO NO NO NO. I hate hyped books. And anyway, if I know there'll be a movie, why bother reading the book?"—Participant, 17 years old.

"I always tend to think the books are better than the film, but everyone would say that. If I can, I'll try to read the book first. I'll read in a magazine about the film, and how it was first a book, then I'll race out and get a copy, so I can then critique the film."—Participant, 18 years old.

Teen Confessions

"I was sitting through *The Vow* and loved it, and kept raving on about it for weeks until someone said, 'Did you know it's a Nicholas Sparks book?' and I had no idea! So, now, when I'm watching a really good movie, whether at home or at the movies, I'm usually on my iPhone, on Wikipedia, trying to find out all I can about the movie, whether it's a real-life story, if there's a book or like a bio or something, then I'm opening up the public library catalogue to see if they have it, or I go on Amazon and see if I can get it for my Kindle account."—Participant, 17 years old.

I probed further and asked, "So you're on your iPhone, iPad, or mobile device inside the movie theaters, doing all this?"

Other participants jumped in and agreed that they were behaving in the same manner. There is the perception that it is now necessary to not just read the book, so that they will have an honest idea of a film, but that Wikipedia is necessary to explain the intricacies such as character traits, plot summaries, and recurring themes, so that when the film is actually being watched, one will be well-informed enough to just enjoy it.

"I Wikipedia every movie before I go and see it.[3] IF I go and see it. If Rotten Tomatoes gives it a cr** review and score below like 60 percent, I won't bother watching it. Might read the book though . . . ."

"I had to keep Wikipedia open through all the Lord of the Rings movies, not gonna lie. It was the only way I could remember who all the characters were . . . there were too many Sara-this and Sara-that."

Final Words

There is certainly more work to be done to learn how to be successful reaching out to young adults and being a part of their information-searching and book-reading selection processes. Talking about social media with actual teenagers affirmed my initial desire to include a post social media discussion in my research paper. I framed the discussion within the context of teenagers as users, curators, and audience. One can see that there is a distinct way in which teenagers choose to use social tools to influence their book selection. Perhaps public libraries, or any other type of library, pursuing the social media route, should consider the findings in this paper for ideas on how to efficiently reach out to their next, and current, generation of customers. YALS

Rerefences

1. A staff member at the local public library. Name has been changed for privacy.
2. Refers to a social media situation where a status inspires a series of various comments.
3. Note the term being used as a verb!

feature
Hot Spot: Teen Reading

Representations of Trans* Youth in Young Adult Literature:

A Report and a Suggestion

By Talya Sokoll

Four years ago, I wrote my final paper, "The Forgotten T," for a New York University (NYU) graduate course in young adult literature. While the paper itself was largely forgettable, the message I was trying to impress upon my audience was that in the study of LGBT young adult literature, most books published at that time only focused on the first three letters. In their 2004 article, "Recent Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Fiction for Teens: Are Canadian Public Libraries Providing Adequate Collections?" Michelle Hilton Boon and Vivian Howard state, of the 35 titles published between 1998 and 2002 with LGBT content "in the course of this study we did not become aware of any YA novels published [...] that depicted a Transgender character."[2] Similarly, in their seminal review of LGBT YA literature, *The Heart Has Its Reasons: Young Adult Literature with Gay/Lesbian/Queer Content, 1969–2004*, Michael Cart and Christine Jenkins name only seven titles with trans* inclusive content, four of which are short stories and part of a larger collection. This of course, indicates that at the time (2004) there was simply very little available. While these texts were published in 2004, unfortunately this invisibility of trans* characters in YA literature is still largely true. In a more recent article, Michael Cart laments the continued lack of titles, "less than half a dozen" that contain trans*-oriented content, but happily notes that, "even that number is gradually growing."[3] Young adult literature featuring representations of trans* teenagers is definitely a subgenre, still in its infancy. While in the past four years publication of these titles has slightly improved, and there have been valuable additions to the field, the number of books being published is still very low, and some of these titles are published by small presses, with little or no marketing, which makes them difficult for library staff, or teens, to locate.

The lack of titles does not mean there is a lack of need for these books, both for trans* adolescents and their peers. As librarians we should be doing everything in our collective power to include as many of these books as we can in our collections. Hopefully that trend of increasing titles will persist as awareness continues to grow about the importance of an open discourse when it comes to the needs of trans* youth.

Why is it Important to Include Material That Represents the Experience of Trans* Youth in Our Libraries?

The 2011 National School Climate Survey implemented by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network

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Note: I use the term *trans** to represent the multiple nonbinary identities possible within the spectrum of gender. By using trans* I am including transgender, trans man, trans woman, trans person, transsexual, genderqueer, gendervariant, two-spirit, 3rd gender, and other identities that I might not be aware of.

(GLSEN) found that "Transgender students experienced more hostile school climates than their non-transgender peers—80 percent of transgender students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their gender expression."[4] The survey also noted that "Compared to other LGBT students, transgender students faced the most hostile school climates. [...] In addition, gender nonconforming students experienced more negative experiences at school compared to students whose gender expression adhered to traditional gender norms. [...] 58.7 percent of gender nonconforming students experienced verbal harassment in the past year because of their gender expression, compared to 29.0 percent of their peers."[5]

These statistics are very disturbing. When a majority of trans* youth are afraid to go to school because of how they will be treated, it is our responsibility as librarians to seek out effective solutions.

In her keynote address at the 2012 Massachusetts Library Association Teen Summit, Ellen Wittlinger, author of *Parrotfish*, discussed how, in writing her novel—which tells the story of Grady, a transgender teenage boy—her wish was to write books that not only showed excellent role models for gay youth but also introduced straight youth to their LGBTQ peers. She wanted to normalize homosexuality and transexuality and make gender and sexual orientation just two of the many ways in which we are different from each other. She hoped that her book would not only appeal to adolescents who saw themselves in the characters, but to straight adolescents who did not think they knew any gay teens. As she stated in her speech, "once you know someone personally, your prejudices fall away." Wittlinger also made clear that if "one teen reads it and realizes they aren't alone," then she has done her job successfully as a writer.

But writing is only half the battle. Once the books exist, thanks to authors like Wittlinger who make telling these stories a priority, we must seek them out for our libraries. If trans* students see their stories being told, and their own lives reflected in the literature that we house in our collections, they may realize they are not alone. This literature can create a safe space, no matter how small, within our library walls (both physical and digital) that shows the youth we serve, "we see you, and we care about your lives." The inclusion of titles with trans* characters and storylines not only benefits our trans* youth but also helps cisgender youth understand the lives of their peers. (A cisgender person is "someone who identifies as the gender/sex they were assigned at birth. For example, my birth certificate says female, and I identify as a female woman."[6]) By the very presence of titles with trans* characters in our collections, we are making a strong statement.

Imagine being a trans* adolescent. It can be extremely disheartening to know that there are so few books that exist that have representations of people like you. This could heighten a feeling of being underrepresented and invisible. In *The Heart Has Its Reasons*, Cart and Jenkins impress upon the reader (most likely a librarian) that, "in this quintessential literature of the outsider who is too often rendered invisible by society, there is also the need to see one's face reflected in the pages of a book and thus to find the corollary comfort that derives from the knowledge that one is not alone in a vast universe, that there are others 'like me.'"[7] This belief, that our teen patrons will benefit from reading books that reflect their own lives, includes trans* youth.

Finding the Titles

Because traditional collection development tools such as *The Heart Has Its Reasons* and *Lesbian and Gay Voices* do not have many titles with trans* characters, using the Internet as a collection development tool is an effective and necessary method for locating titles. When browsing various curated lists on the Web, I noticed many include books published by smaller presses. While it is heartening that major publishing houses like Random House (*Almost Perfect*, *Jumpstart the World*), Little, Brown (*I am J*, *Luna*), and Simon & Schuster (*Parrotfish*) are publishing literature for teenagers with trans* characters, there are many wonderful books that remain largely unknown to the mainstream library world due to the relatively small reach of the publishing houses making them available. These

Note: While researching titles for this article, I reviewed books published in the United States. There are titles available from UK and Australian publishers, too, but since they are not readily accessible in U.S. libraries and bookstores, they are not included in this discussion. On the next page of this article you will find a partial list of recommended titles. There is an exhaustive list that includes every (at the time of this article's development) young adult title (and a few younger) that considers gender issues on the YALS website at: www.yalsa.ala.org/yals.

are not publishers that teen collection development specialists typically consult when thinking about these subject areas. However, these books are being reviewed, often in nontraditional resources, and should be included in our library collections.

A brief, informal survey of blogs and websites recommending books with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) characters, content, and storylines reveals some interesting numbers.

Lee Wind, of *I'm Here, I'm Queer, What the Hell Do I Read?* lists 18 titles that fall under the "Books with Transgender Teen Characters/Themes" category, with two of those titles part of a larger manga series (*Wandering Son* by Shimura Takako, translated by Matt Thorn). Wind's website also includes a separate category, "Books with Queer (Gender Non-Conforming) Teen Characters/Themes," that includes a total of 24 titles, 21 of which are not included in his books with Transgender Teen Characters/Themes category. The characters in these novels do not necessarily identify as transgender but instead exhibit what he labels "Queer (Gender Non-Conforming) characteristics. I call this *genderqueer*, which, as mentioned below, is defined as "a person who redefines or plays with gender, or who refuses gender altogether. A label for people who bend/break the rules of gender and blur the boundaries."

Additionally, the titles in this list include characters who dress up as the opposite sex for a variety of different reasons (*Boy Princess*; *Angel Diary*; *Princess, Princess*-all manga- and The *Princess Knight*) and books where the gender of the characters is never revealed (*Brooklyn, Burning*). Wind's list is by far the most comprehensive collection of titles I came across. The other sites I reviewed

Top Ten Trans* Titles for Teens

Luna by Julie Anne Peters

Regan is an average sixteen-year-old who is keeping secret the fact that her brother Liam is really a transgender girl named Luna.

Almost Perfect by Brian Katcher

When Logan meets Sage he is instantly attracted to her, but how will he react when he learns that Sage was born male?

I am J by Cris Beam

J has always known that he was a boy who happened to be born into a girl's body by mistake. Now he just has to convince everyone else.

Parrotfish by Ellen Wittlinger

Just like the parrotfish that is born female but becomes male later in life, teenager Grady knows that even though he was born Angela, on the inside he is a boy. He is happy, but not everyone else is, especially his family, and he must rely on the people in his life who support him to move forward.

Being Emily by Rachel Gold

When Emily, who was born as Christopher, tells her parents about her desire to live as a woman, they send her into therapy, convinced she is ill. She is able to rely on her girlfriend and a few others in her life to help her through her family issues.

Happy Families by Tanita S. Davis

Ysabel and Justin are twins who live a generally happy life. When their father reveals he is transgender and will live the rest of his life as a woman, they are upset at first, but slowly come to terms with their dad's new identity.

Circle of Change by Laney Cairo (e-book)

This is the story of a romance between Kim, a teenager trans man, and Dash, a gay college student, who initially rejects Kim but ultimately falls in love with him.

Beautiful Music for Ugly Children by Kirstin Cronn-Mills

Gabe, who was born Elizabeth, hosts a popular weekly radio show called "Beautiful Music for Ugly Children." He is not out at school and is still living as Elizabeth, but when someone discovers his secret he must figure out how to live an honest life and still stay safe.

Every Day by David Levithan

Every day A wakes up in a new body of a different 16-year-old. Some days A is a boy, and some days A is a girl, but to deal with this uncertain reality, A has certain rules, the main one being to never make a connection with someone because it won't last. But all of this changes when A meets Rhiannon and falls in love. Now, A must track down Rhiannon every day so A can be near her again, even if it means ruining the lives of the people A inhabits.

The End: Five Queer Kids Save the World by Nora Olsen

This book is the story of five queer kids who must prevent the end of the world, including one character who goes on a gender journey of their own.

Note: I define genderqueer as: "a person who redefines or plays with gender, or who refuses gender altogether. A label for people who bend/break the rules of gender and blur the boundaries." I use this word to describe the protagonists of young adult novels who do not necessarily identify as transgender, but do not fall within the normative binary of gender that exists in our society.

contained between three and 10 titles; few contained titles that Wind did not include in his list.

Another site, which is increasingly popular with librarians and readers, in which I found significant resources, is Goodreads.com. Some librarians have already begun using this as a collection development tool, as the user-created lists offer very specific suggestions for readers based on different genres and likes. Goodreads.com has one list, "books for trans youth" that includes 46 titles, some of which might not specifically include trans* teens, but might be of interest to that population. Goodreads is a great tool both for collection development and to recommend to users as a way to garner book recommendations.

In total, after extensive research and cross referencing, I compiled a list of 51 unique titles that I examined. Of those titles, 20 are readily available (published by major publishers, reviewed in mainstream collection development publications, etc.). Of those, 28 deal with genderqueer teens (or in one case a child) who are not explicitly transgender, one deals with a transgender parent, eight deal with teenagers who describe themselves as transgender, and three do not deal explicitly with trans* or genderqueer issues but were reviewed because of their inclusion on various recommended lists (Goodreads, Lee Wind, etc.), The 31 other titles are not readily available. This means a variety of things: these books are not reviewed in the mainstream publications librarians use for collection development (but can be found on blogs and Goodreads.com); they are not available at public libraries (even through ILL); they are not available on Amazon; they are only available as e-books, or in one case, they are only available through the author's website. Not all of the remaining 31 titles fit into all of these categories, but some fit into many of them. What it shows is clear: these books are difficult to locate, harder to track down, and for a teenager with limited resources and searching skills, almost impossible to learn about. Additionally, of those 31 titles, 12 deal explicitly with transgender youth, which more than doubles the total of books written for teens on the topic. However, since these books are not readily available, they are not getting into the hands of the teens for whom they were written.

What does this mean? It is imperative that as librarians, teachers, and caring adults we ensure that trans* teens have access to books that accurately reflect themselves, and that they know they are not alone. We have an obligation to serve all our patrons as best as we can. When confronted with a user group likes trans* teens, who are often marginalized and targeted by society, we need to go above and beyond our normal level of service and actively engage them as best we can to ensure that the patron will have everything they need. YALS

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feature
Hot Spot: Teen Reading

When a Story is More than Paper

By Rachel Mcdonald and Jackie Parker

Have you read an e-book with enhancements such as animations and sound? Do your teens read apps based on classic tales? Do they visit websites based on popular books or series? If so, you've already engaged with a form of storytelling known as transmedia.

What is Transmedia?

Henry Jenkins, professor of communication arts at the University of Southern California, defines transmedia as "a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes it own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story."[1]

Confused? To clarify, here are a couple of recent examples of what transmedia is and what it isn't. The movie adaptation of *The Hunger Games* (or any other book) is not automatically transmedia. However, series like Skeleton Creek, where part of the universe of the story is online and part is within the pages of a book are transmedia. Transmedia is all about *mixing different formats* to tell pieces of the same story. In recent years, apps, enhanced e-books, and websites have made it possible to tell stories that are truly interactive and told across media types.

Using different formats to tell a story is not a new phenomenon. Before printing presses, stories existed in oral tradition, in which storytellers used different voices, gestures, and movements to convey meaning. Stories also existed on stage before they appeared in print. For much of human history, the populace was illiterate. They depended on stained glass, sculpture, oral tradition, and acting out such things like the Stations of the Cross to learn the stories of the Bible.[2] Stories exist in wordless picture books, graphic novels, radio plays, films, video games and anywhere else a narrative is required. The StoryCorps project is currently collecting oral histories that are being archived at the Library of Congress (LC) in audio format. All of these are stories, but not all of them are in print. Movies, albums, and video games have all incorporated aspects of transmedia to engage audiences in a variety of ways on a variety of platforms.

One of the earliest and most successful examples of transmedia is *The Blair Witch Project*. Instead of relying on traditional marketing techniques, such as posters and advertisements to promote the film, the producers created a website containing things like police reports, excerpts from a character's diary, and interviews with the students' (characters in the film) parents. Each week, new elements were added. It is likely that the impact of the transmedia elements on the campaign contributed to the movie's wide success.

Ed Sanchez, one of the film's directors, said, "What we learned from *The Blair Witch Project* is that if you give people enough stuff to explore, they will explore . . . If people have to work for something they devote more time to it. And they give it more emotional value."[3]

One of the earliest examples of transmedia created specifically for teens is *Cathy's Book*. Originally published in 2006, the book (a mystery) contains an evidence packet filled with letters, phone numbers, pictures, and birth certificates, as well as doodles and notes written by Cathy in the page margins. Readers could call a phone number printed on the front of the book to hear Cathy's voicemails. This is also one of the first examples of a young adult novel incorporating alternative reality game elements. Over 1,000 readers have discussed their theories about where Cathy ends up, after the

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story in the book ends, online at www.cathysbook.com. In 2010, *Cathy's Book* was revamped and released as an app for the iPod Touch and iPhone.

Most teen librarians are fairly familiar with Web-based transmedia, thanks to Patrick Carman's many YA series. Prior to the release of his first book in the Skeleton Creek series, a conspiracy website was created with questions that focused on whether the videos and journal entries associated with the book were actual events. The premise of the site is that its creator found hidden videos on the Skeleton Creek author's website. The website creator uses these videos to determine that the events depicted in Skeleton Creek happened in the real town of Sumpter, Oregon. Even though Patrick Carman has admitted to creating the website, and no new blog entries have been posted since 2010, people are still sharing their theories on the blog.

The website for Michael Grant's new book *Bzrk* incorporates transmedia elements through blogs, comics, games, a forum, and interactive activities readers can compete in for points. This is a great example of a platform for additional content for readers who are seeking more information about the characters and events and those who want to become fully immersed in a fictional world.

Depending on the formats used, and the audience, transmedia can look wildly different. It may move across platforms, as the examples of books with websites noted herein illustrate, or features may be embedded within an enhanced e-book. *Chopsticks*, a collaboration between author Jessica Anthony and designer Rodrigo Corral, was released in 2012 as both a book and an enhanced e-book. The e-book allows readers to enlarge images, flip through photo albums, watch video clips, listen to characters' favorite songs, and read their instant messages. Readers can even change the order of the story by shuffling the pages, recreating it as a custom (and personalized) version. The e-book version of *Gift*, a YA novel by Andrea J. Buchanan, includes transmedia elements such as a short companion graphic novel, a secondary character's journal, and lyrics and video links for another character's music.

Chafie Press creative director and author Amanda Havard designed *The Survivors*, a paranormal YA novel, to be an enhanced media experience. The e-book includes historical facts, information about mythology, and images of documents dating back to the seventeenth century. There is a music soundtrack, including three original songs, as well as music videos. Readers get to explore more than 50 real-world locations in the book through location photos and fully functioning Google satellite maps.

The Digital Divide as a Barrier to Connecting Teens and Enhanced E-Books

Transmedia gives library staff another way to connect teens with stories, and for teens to experience and participate in stories. But, there are challenges and barriers to making those connections. Librarians are keenly aware of the issue of the digital divide in terms of who has access to technology. With the advent of smartphones, e-readers, and tablets, some patrons have more access, while others do not. For those who don't have a device at home, the gap can be bridged through libraries and schools that provide access to the devices in the library and/or through circulation. However, simply having access isn't enough. It is also important to expose teens to effective application of these technologies in order to maximize the potential for learning. For example, most teens know how to watch YouTube videos on a device, but how many of them know how to search YouTube effectively to find videos that can help them with homework?

Device Ownership as a Barrier to Connecting Teens and Enhanced E-Books

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, as of January 2013, 26 percent of American adults own an e-reader and 31 percent own a tablet computer.[4] E-reader and tablet ownership is strongly correlated with income and education. For those teens who don't have access to an e-reader or tablet, websites that incorporate transmedia may be more popular than their app or enhanced e-book counterparts because teens can access them from a friend's house, at school, or at the public library. In fact, an October 2012 Pew survey found that 41 percent of Americans under age 30 read e-books on their cell phones and 55 percent used a computer, whereas 23 percent used an e-reader and only 16 percent accessed e-books through a tablet.[5]

Despite being early adopters of technology, teens lag behind all other age groups in e-book adoption. 66 percent of 13- to 17-year-olds say they prefer print books to e-books, 26 percent say they have no preference, and only 8 percent prefer e-books. Of works that publishers designate for youth aged 12 to 17, fully 55 percent of buyers are 18 or older, with the largest segment aged 30 to 44.[6] With teen access and use of transmedia and enhanced e-books there isn't a great deal of opportunity for the age group to give feedback on what works and doesn't work in this format. Adults, who are more likely to purchase apps and e-books, may also have a different idea of an ideal transmedia experience than teens, and therefore may potentially influence the creation of transmedia that is ostensibly for teen readers. As a result, publishers may not create content that is of interest to teens.

Teens surveyed by R. R. Bowker in November 2011 said there were "too many restrictions" on e-books.[7] Digital Rights Management (DRM), which controls

what users can and can't do with media, also puts up barriers to where, when, and how users can access the books that they've borrowed or purchased. There are still barriers to buying a used e-book or "handing down" an e-book. E-book library lending, while growing, is in early stages and puts up many barriers to teen access and use of these materials.

What's Happening in Libraries

Can libraries offer our patrons access to apps or enhanced e-books? Few public libraries lend tablets or e-readers, and up until now, libraries haven't had an easy way to lend e-books with features such as embedded audio and video for patrons to use on their own devices. According to Jason Sockel, Collection Development Specialist with OverDrive, the company has recently launched OverDrive Read, "a browser based reading experience that will allow patrons to 'See Book, Read Book' right from [library] website[s]. Using this functionality and the developing HTML5, OverDrive will be able to support publisher provided enhanced e-books. These features can currently be experimented with . . . any e-book where you see the word 'Sample' in your OverDrive catalog. After the full titles are launched, it will simply be a matter of getting enhanced eBooks from publishers to provide to our partners."[8] This still leaves the question of how libraries will provide access to enhanced e-books on mobile devices, where teens might most often want to have them.

A study of school libraries in the United States conducted in 2012 by *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal* revealed that 40 percent of the over 1,400 school libraries surveyed reported offering e-books to readers, with the percentages climbing from elementary to secondary school libraries.[9] Of those who don't currently offer e-books, 26 percent reported they planned to start doing so in the next two years. Most e-books in schools are accessed through a Web-based service on a computer with e-readers seen as a growth area. Of the high school libraries surveyed, reference e-books and YA fiction were most in demand.[10] As more schools begin to use e-readers, they may consider purchasing enhanced books, especially nonfiction titles.

Using Transmedia with Teens

Kelly Stroud, a high school English teacher from Sweeny Independent School District in Texas, uses *Shakespeare in Bits*, which takes a multimedia approach to learning five of Shakespeare's most famous plays, with animated reenactments, audio tracks and unabridged text all together, with her students. She said, "Students can see, hear and read the text all at the same time. Many explanations and notes are provided to explain the unfamiliar text so I will click on those to show the students. The students love learning this way and prefer it over traditional methods."[11]

There are several examples of enhanced e-books and apps that expand upon classic texts. One reason for this is likely that the content is not only in the public domain, but also because these texts are part of the literary canon and thus are familiar to many readers, particularly adults who may be selecting, suggesting, or teaching the titles. As classic texts become even more separated from their eras, the language becomes more difficult for modern students; students may lack the context to easily decode these texts. Transmedia is another tool with the potential to help mitigate the disconnect more effectively than footnotes. Teachers may consider using transmedia in addition to or instead of print copies of classic texts, ideally allowing students to choose their preferred format.

Reluctant readers may initially connect with apps and books like *iDrakula* and *Chopsticks* because there are fewer words and more pictures on each page compared to a conventional novel. Texting is part of many teens' daily lives, so it seems natural for some dialogue in books to occur via that format. In both the print and digital versions of *iDrakula* and *Chopsticks*, text conversations use the visual formatting you would see on many cell phones. In the e-book version of *Chopsticks*, this also includes the timing and sound effects of texting.

Currently, many librarians use book trailers in lieu of, or in addition to, teen literature booktalks. For transmedia titles, not only could librarians show book trailers, they could demonstrate the interactive content. While professionals might be familiar with transmedia, it may be a novelty to many teens. At the same time, the concept is not unfamiliar to them. In observing teens using this technology, it is obvious how easily they navigate through digital environments.

Programming opportunities for teens within libraries can center on creation of self-made transmedia stories. There are a variety of services ranging from free to paid software that are relatively simple to use, including Book Creator for iPad, audioboo.fm, playingwithmedia.com, Pages (Apple's word processing program), Libre, and more. For Android, MIT has launched free app inventor software based on the same programming language as Scratch (a popular software used to teach youth and adults beginning programming). Adapting books in the public domain would be an interesting activity or assignment to pursue with teens.

What Teens Say

We invited six high school students to sit down with us and review some apps and enhanced e-books. We asked them

Evaluating Transmedia

Developers and authors sometimes take the kitchen sink approach to creating transmedia stories, adding bells and whistles that do little to further comprehension or advance the story. Each element must be relevant and add to the user experience, but at the same time be entertaining in its own right. Think of a puzzle where each piece fits together.

Here are some criteria to keep in mind when evaluating transmedia:

Accessibility

- Do you need special technology (tablet, e-reader, etc.) to access it? Where can the title be purchased? Is the purchase place one that teens, or the library, can easily access?
- What devices is the enhanced e-book available for (Android, iDevices, etc.) and does that fit with your teen population? Can the app or e-book be borrowed as a part of a library collection?
- Does the content work on a small screen (phone or tablet), or would it be better viewed on a laptop or desktop?
- Do you need an Internet connection to access content?

Cost

- How does the price of the app or e-book compare to that of the print version?
- Is there a free or light version, which gives you and teens a chance to evaluate the app or e-book before purchasing?
- Does the digital version have added features that justify the cost?

Functionality

- Does the tech work the way it should?
- Is it easy to use or does it take a long time for teens (as the primary audience) to figure out how to access the features and read the story?
- If it's an app, does it freeze or quit?
- If it's a video, does it take forever to load, breaking the narrative flow?
- Is there tech support or a place to report issues?

Relevancy

- Do individual elements both tell a complete story and add to the story as a whole?
- Are there superfluous elements that seem to be added for no reason and interfere with the story?
- Is it contrived or gimmicky?
- Has it become outdated?
- For apps, are there updates being pushed out on a regular basis to help keep the story going?
- For Web-based communities, is there support and/or interaction from author or publisher?
- Is there new content on a Web-based site added on a regular basis?

Entertainment

- What purpose does the additional content serve? Does it help readers visualize the world or offer opportunities to learn, explore, and connect with other readers outside the pages of a book?
- Does the additional content work as a form of entertainment? Does the entertainment value go beyond novelty?

to compare each to its book counterpart and to tell us if they would be interested in purchasing them at their list prices. The teens we interviewed were not initially familiar with the transmedia titles we presented to them, but were immediately interested. Madelyn, an avid teen reader, owns an iPad that she uses to download library books. She was very excited about the *Shakespeare in Bits* app. "You can picture the story in your mind when you see [the animation]," said Madelyn. However, when she discovered the price, Madelyn said she would rather read the book (which she later checked out) since the app was so expensive. She did feel the app was a good tool for getting students interested in the play and that the navigation made it easier to follow.

Teresa, one of our teen reviewers, loved the interactive elements in *Alice for iPad*, an interactive app with abridged and unabridged versions of Lewis Carroll's classic tale. Teresa loved playing with the app's virtual gravity and physics, moving characters and objects around the screen by shaking and tilting the iPad. She also said the visual clues provided by the animations helped her decode certain words. "In the original book, there are some definitions on the side, but I don't really want to look at them much because I want to pay more attention to the story," she said. "When Alice gives the dodo some comfits, I didn't know it was a type of candy until I saw the candy [on the screen]. So it helped me understand more."

Akilas, another teen reviewer and avid video gamer, said of the *Frankenstein* app, "It makes you interact with the story and makes you feel like you're actually talking to [Frankenstein]. It gives you multiple options and he really does react as if you're asking him a question. It requires you to be involved and imagine." This retelling of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein places the reader at the center of the story. Readers can choose from several different questions and responses

while conversing with Victor Frankenstein. One section allows the reader to direct the monster's behavior, putting her/himself in the role of his creator. The bifurcating narrative structure may be familiar to readers of the Choose Your Own Adventure series. The app also includes archival illustrations of anatomical drawings from the seventeenth century, adding to the gothic feel.

Forecasting the Future

According to the Pew Research Center, teens are reading more than adults.[12] Combine that with the fact that parents are more likely to own tablets, that even if youth aren't currently reading a lot of e-books, they are reading on screens, and it's a sure bet that demand for apps and enhanced e-books is only going to increase. Publishing houses are betting on this.

In 2012, Simon & Schuster released 175 enhanced e-books, the great majority of which were children's titles enhanced through the addition of audio narration.[13] Penguin planned to release 50 enhanced e-books and book apps in 2012, up from 35 in 2011.[14] That's for all ages, but it's a significant increase in offerings, although only a drop in the bucket when taken with the millions of books published each year.

Since teens are online quite a bit, there's no better place for publishers to reach them: Teens are more likely to discover a book they purchase via a social network than any other age group.[15] Eventually, this social element may be incorporated into enhanced books themselves. In an interview with *Wired* magazine, Panio Gianopoulos, Creative Director of Backlit fiction, a publisher that releases books as episodic apps and e-books, said he sees future e-books as "far more social experiences, incorporating what he calls 'literary Farmville' aspects. For instance, secret chapters could be unlocked as a person's friends read a book. He foresees readers using a reddit-like model to up-vote characters or storylines they enjoy, or publishers forming partnerships with Foursquare that could reveal clues to readers who check in at certain locations."[16]

Although incorporating transmedia into traditional publishing shows great promise, the *Wired* article calls attention to the fact that the adaptation book publishers must make "is far more complicated than that faced by the music and movie industries, which essentially needed to digitize their current products. Bookmakers must become multimedia companies—creating audio, video and interactive components for their immersive, built-for-tablets offerings."[17] They also face challenges in which platforms to adapt their content, be it iPad, Kindle, or Nook. At this point, independent publishers may be better equipped to take the risks associated with producing enhanced e-books.

Original Content versus Adaptation

One challenge that original content creators face is what aspects to break out into different media when, where, how, and how much. As the industry searches for best practices, and many original content developers struggle to focus their creative vision, adaptations like *Shakespeare in Bits*, *Alice for iPad*, and *iPoe* seem to have a leg up simply because they often have more clearly defined goals. However, many publishers are now creating stories with transmedia elements in mind from the beginning.

In an interview with *Digital Book World*, David Levithan, an editor with Scholastic, said: "Most of the multiplatform properties we are working on are built in-house. From the inception point, we are thinking of it as multiplatform or transmedia. We want to continue to innovate and do different things but we also want the level of control over it that growing it in-house gives us. We don't look at projects coming in and try to graft transmedia onto it. All of the parts have to be synchronized perfectly with each other and each part has to cater to each platform."[18]

"We are building traditional readers with *39 Clues* and *Infinity Ring*," Levithan said. "At the same time, we are opening their eyes to what a narrative can be. The book's narrative can stretch out into the digital space that they view as recreational. How that translates in the content they will consume [in the future] remains to be seen. Because of the company I'm at, we focus on eight-to-12-year-olds. Will there be something like *39 Clues* and *Infinity Ring* that satisfies both things—reading and gaming—at the same time when they're adults?"[19]

For teens growing up today, touchscreens and transmedia are to them what home computers and Internet access were to many of us. So even though we may not see today's teens adopting this technology wholesale, the generation behind them will likely be totally immersed. If transmedia seems like a fad now, it won't seem that way for long, because of its enormous potential to engage readers and connect them to each other.

Just as libraries aren't going anywhere, neither are print books. However, as the market share of e-books increases, so has the patron demand for e-books in libraries. In spite of facing many digital barriers, most libraries are providing access to e-books. As more publishers and authors include transmedia elements in their books, and as teens become more aware of and interested in these stories, libraries will need to consider how they make them part of their collections and integrate them into programs and other services. YALS

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Teen Literature and Fan Culture

By Robin Brenner

"Fan fiction is what literature might look like if it were reinvented from scratch after a nuclear apocalypse by a band of brilliant pop-culture junkies trapped in a sealed bunker. They don't do it for money. That's not what it's about. The writers write it and put it up online just for the satisfaction. They're fans, but they're not silent, couchbound consumers of media. The culture talks to them, and they talk back to the culture in its own language."[1]

Everyone has read a book and speculated about what might have been. When a work inspires, an engaged reader wonders what happens next, what happened before, and what happened in scenes not shown. Many fans are content with contemplating the "what if" questions in their own imaginations, but with fan fiction, fan videos, and fan art, devotees take the leap from speculation to creation. They use their talents to fill in the gaps, to create alternative timelines, and mix universes. And that's just the beginning.

Once fans are satisfied with their effort, they share that work and vibrant communities build up rapidly. One power of the Internet is that if you really love a particular work, you can very easily find more people who love that work just as much as you do. Fans join forums and electronic discussion groups, and follow fan creators via social networking sites. Many create, but just as many participate by reading, commenting, editing, critiquing, and debating everything from character development and plot points to media tropes and minority representation. Everyone is involved in the creation, and everyone is involved in the conversation. All you need to join in is enthusiasm.

In my work as a teen librarian, I have noticed in the past 10 years intersections between teen reading, literacy, creativity and the collaborative, creative world of fannish activity surrounding popular literature, television, and films. The engagement with creative works, from Harry Potter to *Twilight* to Star Trek to Sherlock, has led to adding voices, characters, points of view, and critique to any created universe. As author Lev Grossman notes in the quote above, being a fan today is about participation, community, and creative expression in a way that has never been quite so visible. In the past 10 years, I've realized that not only are the teens I serve well aware of fan cultures, but many are active creators and participants.

The runaway success of works like E. L. James's *Fifty Shades of Gray*, which was originally written as fan fiction, to Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series, has brought fan creation front and center for people working in publishing and who may view fan culture as a rich creative training ground for new talent. In teen literature, published authors including Cassandra Clare, Marissa Meyer, Naomi Novik, Saundra Mitchell, and Claudia Gray all started out writing in fan communities.

Going Back to the Basics: Where Does the Idea of Fan Come From?

Being a fan is not new, of course, but today being a fan has become an increasingly public, shared act. The term originally applied to sports fans in the nineteenth century, and since science fiction enthusiasts adopted the label in the 1920s, the term has stuck for any enthusiast.[2] A community of fans allied by their love for a particular source can be about anything from cats to a celebrity to a TV ad. When discussing fan culture in this article, the term identifies a community of fans that discuss, critique, and create around

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Food for Thought

Consider these traditionally published titles that are certainly written because of the author's fan fiction impulses.

Adult Titles

The Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood (*Iliad*)
March by Geraldine Brooks (*Little Women*)
The Final Solution by Michael Chabon (*Sherlock Holmes*)
Bridget Jones's Diary by Helen Fielding (*Pride and Prejudice*)
Death Comes to Pemberly by P. D. James (*Pride and Prejudice*)
Wicked by Gregory Maguire (*The Wonderful Wizard of OZ*)
The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller (*Iliad*)
Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys (*Jane Eyre*)
A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley (*King Lear*)

Young Adult Titles

Ironskin by Tina Connolly (*Jane Eyre/Beauty and the Beast*)
Enter Three Witches by Caroline Cooney (*Macbeth*)
Confessions of a Triple Shot Betty by Jody Gehrman (*Much Ado About Nothing*)
Tighter by Adele Griffin (*The Turn of the Screw*)
Ophelia by Lisa Klein (*Hamlet*)
Death Cloud by Andrew Lane (*Sherlock Holmes*)
Jane by April Lindner (*Jane Eyre*)
This Dark Endeavor by Ken Oppel (*Frankenstein*)
For Darkness Shows the Stars by Diana Peterfreund (*Persuasion*)

a particular source work, be it a film, a series of books, a television show, or a comic book. Fan works, which include creative writing (fan fiction), art (fan art), music (filk), video (fan vids), comics, costumes, and crafts, are as diverse as the people who create them. (Visit the YALS site to access resources with more information on fandom: http://yalsa.ala.org/yals.)

Aren't There Legal Implications?

A sticky question in this outpouring of creativity: just how legal is creating works so clearly inspired by and connected to copyrighted content? As panelists at the YALSA Young Adult Literature Symposium in St. Louis in November 2012 noted, the legal debate centers around whether fan works are considered derivative or transformative. If a work is considered derivative, adding nothing of value to the original work, then it is not allowed. If the work, however, is considered transformative, or building on what the original work created, then it is allowed.[3] However, keep in mind, a lawsuit has yet to make its way through the courts and, without precedent, it is difficult to predict an outcome. Outside of the legal question, individual creators including writers and artists are increasingly moving toward a policy of permission and acceptance, especially as they recognize the harm in potentially alienating their fans if they pursue legal action. Recently, source material producers have shifted toward embracing fan culture by endorsing and hosting contests in creating fan works.

Where Do Library Staff, Publishers, and Readers Come In?

In order to help introduce fan creation and communities to library staff and others, I took part in a panel at the 2012 YALSA Young Adult Literature Symposium. (Other panelists included librarian and *School Library Journal* blogger Liz Burns, Aja Romano, fandom reporter for the *Daily Dot*, and Leslee Friedman, a representative from the Organization of Transformative Works and an ACLU Legal Fellow.)

Our symposium audience was full of librarians, authors, editors, and professionals interested in teen literature, and while some audience members were well versed in online fandom, many were hearing about these creations and communities for the first time. Given the continuing discussion about authorship, publishing, and fan communities around the world, it was definitely the right time to discuss what being a fan means, the influence fan culture has on what and how we read, and to consider where the creativity of the fan community will lead us.

In order to be sure attendees saw the many formats fan works take, we included in our presentation a gallery of fan art, showing the extraordinary talent, sense of humor, and communication that happens through visual media. Everything from Harry Potter single-panel cartoons to elaborate portraits of the Avengers's Steve Rogers (a.k.a. Captain America) in the style of renowned illustrator J. C. Leyendecker showed a brief glimpse of what fans create and share.

In the months before the panel, I conducted a survey to gather a snapshot of the fan community. I sent out word of the survey online through librarian electronic discussion groups, social networks, and with the help of the

Organization of Transformative Works, I gathered over 500 responses from self-identified fans.

Looking over our survey data, the majority of our respondents were over 18, although we did have over 40 teens respond. The ages of respondents ranged from 13 to over 65, with most in their 20s or 30s. Over 93 percent of the respondents identified as female, with 5 percent identifying as male and 3 percent as other including transgender, genderqueer, and androgynous. This percentage supports the impression from fan communities that the majority of participants are female. In terms of sexuality, 62 percent declared their sexuality is straight or mostly straight, while 35 percent identified as bisexual, gay, or lesbian, or questioning, and 3 percent identified as asexual. This shows a significant participation by GBLTQ people, and goes toward debunking the perception that fan creators are almost entirely straight women.[4]

From the teens who responded, 97 percent read, watched, or viewed fan fiction, fan vids, or fan art, 85 percent have written fan fiction, and 55 percent have created fan art. Of the adults who responded, 97 percent read, watched, or viewed fan fiction, fan vids, or fan art, 71 percent have written fan fiction, and 33 percent have created fan art. Of both teens and adults, 79 percent actively participate in fan communities, and 70 percent of adults and teens have written or blogged about fan culture. 49 percent of teens and 65 percent of adults have been what's known as a beta—worked with another creator as an editor, copy editor, and cheerleader in the creation of work. While smaller percentages (5 to 25 percent) participate in creating or listening to podfic (audio recordings of fan fiction), filk (fan music), or fan mixes (music playlists tailored to a source or fan work), the fact that these options exist show the many ways fans can and do participate.[5]

So why are all these people drawn to fan culture? There are many reasons, but the stated reasons from our survey include a love of compelling stories, finding community, gaining courage to create as well as becoming a better creator, finding a safe space for expression, and becoming more critical consumers.

Given the urges that prompt creating fan works, it's unsurprising that output can be both incredibly creative and critical. Remixing, retelling, and reinventing characters, worlds, plot points, and stories are the norm. Alternate universes (AU), or works that explore what makes characters true to their nature if they're placed in an entirely different place, situation, or time, are a popular way to riff on the original. Crossover works, which connect one or more fan sources and intermingle characters and ideas, are a key example of remixing. A recent example has been dubbed Superwholock and features the main characters of the television shows *Supernatural*, *Doctor Who*, and the BBC's *Sherlock* solving crimes together. In today's world of strict media copyright, this kind of cross-pollination is virtually impossible through traditional channels.

The act of ripping apart source material and putting it together in new ways also allows fan creators to add in content they want to see but are not getting from professional published media. To put it simply, fan works are more inclusive than mainstream media. Fan works explore sexuality, gender identity, race, and class in an avenue of production that exists outside mainstream production gatekeepers. There is no budget bottom line or question of market appeal. By adding or giving more substantial voices to already existing characters of color, for example, fans can explore and comment on the diversity or lack thereof in a favorite world. Alternate sexuality is frequently a part of fan works, showing a strong interest in highlighting and creating LGBTQ characters. Expanding and subverting established worlds show what fans feel are missing; survey respondents cited this inclusion over and over again as a major reason for seeking out fan work.

For many fans, finding a fan community online increases their confidence in social interactions, connects them with people through common interests, and helps them feel less isolated. As fan culture is also a forum for exploring sexuality and gender, many respondents reported that discovering these issues in fan circles helped them articulate and feel comfortable in their own identities. Despite the fact that much of fan culture's interaction takes place online through social media, many respondents also reported that online connections and community have led to invaluable in-person friendships.

As fan culture is based around creativity, respondents also noted the encouragement, consultation, collaboration, and feedback that thrive in creating and sharing fan works that has led many to try their hand at creation, to improve dramatically, and to feel more confident in their work, and successfully seek professional publication. As one teen notes, "Before fandoms, I thought you needed a fancy degree or a medal from the queen to write actual stories. But when I figured out there was more to life than Internet Explorer and Neopets, I realized that kids were writing. Everyone was writing. And everyone could do it. Then I started to do it . . . I honestly think I started out writing stories because I started writing fanfiction. And now I want to minor in creative writing."

Fans also learn to view what they love critically as they examine the source material, criticizing plot, characters, and

storytelling decisions—and all of this is far outside the traditional rigor of a classroom. Critiquing an original work is part of participating in a fandom, from writing an essay examining character motivation to unpacking what a film's costumes say about the characters' class. Similarly, participating in fan culture has provoked many fans to consider questions of authorship, storytelling, and copyright. Many cite fan culture as forming their thoughts about how created worlds are shared, understanding (and potentially dismissing) authorial intent, and looking at the collaborative agreement between author and consumer that creates each reading. Fans in our survey noted over and over again that they became more critical consumers of media through participating in fan debates and reading or writing critical essays.

Fans encourage and hope that fan creators may move on to create original work, as many have. The success of titles like *Fifty Shades of Gray* has opened the door publicly to how fan works can become traditionally published works. Making significant money off of fan work, which is ostensibly available for free to celebrate the original source, is considered gauche and potentially dangerous if it draws the legal attention of media producers. Respondents reported varying levels of comfort with crossing the line from fan work to professional work, especially given how uncertain and new this practice is for creators and publishers alike. Creating prints of fan art for sale or running conventions and fan events are considered allowable, but taking a fan fiction story, changing all the names, and publishing it as original is much more problematic. However, many creators are not simply changing the names and places of their fan work in order to publish, as James reputedly did. Instead, many are using what they have learned in the trenches of fan creation to create original work. Those who come from fandom, such as Naomi Novik and Marissa Meyer, are accepted in both worlds, but writing professionally and writing fan fiction are considered separate endeavors for different goals both creatively and economically. As more creators move from one world to the other, and the lines between them begin to blur, attitudes will continue to change.

Fan culture has become a vibrant and creative part of being a fan, and participating is part of many teens' daily lives. As fan culture, publishing, and teen literature continue to evolve, all of these creative outlets will become more intertwined, and no one can guarantee smooth sailing. As attitudes seem to be shifting toward embracing the creativity, talent, and sheer joy in stories that define fan works, fan creators are visible, vocal, talented, creative, collaborative, and, undoubtedly, here to stay. YALS

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Those Kinds of Books:

Religion and Spirituality in Young Adult Literature

By Margaret Auguste

"Are you sure it is okay to have those kinds of books in the library?" my colleague asked me in a hushed tone, while perusing several books featuring religion that I'd chosen for our annual eighth grade realistic fiction project. He then furtively glanced around to make sure no one outside of our group could hear our conversation. My other colleagues also voiced their concerns, nervously reminding me of another teacher who had recently been the subject of an administrative reprimand over a book she had given to a student that the student's parent had found extremely objectionable.

Every year the eighth grade students in our school complete a realistic fiction project in which they form small book clubs of two to three students, with each group reading the same book of their choice. This format allows the students to explore the book and its issues in depth. My part in the collaborative effort is to search for a wide variety of books featuring interesting and timely topics that I present in a series of booktalks to the students.

I had fallen in love with the book *Does my Head Look Big in This* by Randa Abdel-Fattah and decided, after realizing our group neglected to include titles that featured religious experiences, to include it in the books to be used for this project. The story centers on a Muslim teenager, Amal Abdel-Hakim, and the ramifications of her decision to wear her hijab all the time or to "become a 'full-timer,'" as she describes it.

"I can't sleep from stressing about whether I've got the guts to do it. To wear the hijab full-time. 'Full-timers' are what my Muslim friends and I call girls who wear the hijab all the time, which basically means wearing it whenever you're in the presence of males who aren't immediate family. 'Part-timers' like me wear the hijab when we go to the mosque or maybe even when we are having a bad hair day."

Amal's decision also inspires a wide variety of reactions from those closest to her. Her classmates and friends are surprised to see their friend, whom they thought wasn't really, "into the whole Muslim thing," wearing the head scarf, causing some to support her unconditionally and others to resort to making racist comments. Her school principal views Amal's embrace of her religion as a symbol of radicalism and defiance that could give the wrong impression to potential students. She adds to Amal's distress by mistakenly assuming that she is a victim, forced by her family to adhere to Muslim doctrine. Her moderately religious family is compelled to revisit the uncomfortable personal decisions they made to either embrace or deny their religious traditions in order to assimilate into their new, more secular country. Amal is taken aback by the intensity of the emotions the public expression of her religion stirs in others and within herself, but her courageous struggle brings results; it strengthens her determination to express herself, becoming an essential part of her self-identity.

I chose Amal's story not to purposely court controversy but because in my experience the best young adult books, the ones that captivate young adult readers the most, are often the very ones that fearlessly explore challenging and engaging topics. The provocative nature of those topics ignites conversations that are essential to the development of the critical thinking skills that adolescents require to become insightful and intelligent adults.

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Still a Taboo

Religious beliefs stem from the most important and revered aspects of our lives, our family traditions, values, culture, and experiences. Young adult books that courageously take on this sensitive subject often invoke a uniquely personal and sharp response. Therefore, it is no surprise that books that dare to feature young adults and their exploration of their religious and spiritual identity are at the center of a deeply personal and passionate debate that has become so contentious that many simply find it easier to not speak of it at all. As a result, religion has become a topic that is notable for its absence from bookshelves, booklists, literary magazines, and conversations. If it is spoken about at all, it's done only in hushed voices, making it truly a topic that is very much taboo.

A study published in the *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* confirmed this deficit of young adult books that featured religion.[1] The author examined professional booklists to determine how many books on the list contained characters of religious background. She looked for books in particular that included the three major religions: Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. She also looked for books that contained different socioeconomic statuses, disabilities, and sexual orientations. The conclusions were that religious protagonists were nearly nonexistent, or at best underrepresented on most professional booklists lists, such as the *Publisher's Weekly* list and the YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults list.

Mainstream publishers have been found to be more likely to publish nonfiction self-help or spiritual books then they are to publish religious fiction. They are hesitant to alienate potential readers with books that either preach too much or don't adhere closely enough to religious doctrine.

Librarians self-censor religious books by simply not purchasing them because they associate the inclusion of religious fiction with ongoing criticism from Christian groups, library administrators, community members, and disapproving parents about collections and the materials in them. In fact, ALA reports that religion is one of the topics that receives a majority of complaints in their annual book banning statistics. Religious challenges feature some of the most popular and well-renowned books in young adult literature: Harry Potter was at one time the most banned book series in America as many Christian groups challenged it and even brought cases to court because they believed that the books were antireligious and promoted witchcraft. Classics like the *Witch of Blackbird* pond and the *Bridge to Terabithia* have been challenged because Christian groups objected to what they believed to be a positive portrayal of witchcraft and a lack of respect for religious doctrine.[2]

Religion is an Integral Part of Teenagers' Lives

The sensitive and divisive nature of this issue clearly presents a conundrum for librarians who recognize the risks involved and yet are committed to providing the teens with the educational and personal tools they know they need and deserve. The question becomes why should we offer religious fiction to teens?

The hallmark of young adult literature is its commitment toward offering stories that fearlessly present a picture of young adult life that is honest and accurate, allowing teenagers to visualize stories and characters that are true to life. This commitment produced stories about teen pregnancy, abortion, violence, and mental health—all issues that are relevant to the lives of young adults. Religion, despite its complicated nature, as an essential part of the daily lives of teenagers, should therefore be reflected in the books they read.

The National Study of Youth and Religion completed a study to gain an overall understanding of the role of religion in the lives of teenagers. They interviewed 3,370 English and Spanish-speaking Americans from the ages of 13 to 17. 80 percent of the respondents self-identified as Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Mormon, or Jewish. The following statistics were collected from their interviews:

- 82 percent belonged to a local congregation
- 80 percent had few or no doubts about their beliefs in the past year
- 71 percent had a very close relationship with God
- 65 percent prayed alone a few times a week or more
- 52 percent attended church at least two or three times a week.[3]

They defined religion as a formal organized system of beliefs, public rituals, and doctrine that stems from tradition and practice, that is often inherited and passed down generation to generation, and includes both traditional religions as well as atheism and newer religions that some might refer to as cults. Their findings led them to conclude that religion was definitely an important part of teenagers' lives.

In my experience their findings also confirm what I see in my middle school library every day. I can recount countless casual conversations with my students about the role religion plays in their lives. Students fast for Ramadan and seek refuge in the library instead of going to lunch. Jewish students celebrate Sukkoth, to mark the traditional harvest season. Catholic students volunteer in the library to meet their requirements for their confirmation classes.

Spirituality is an Essential Part of the Developmental Process

Perhaps the most compelling reason to include books that feature religion is because researchers and scientists from across various disciplines, such as psychology, education, youth development, and literature, are finding that spirituality is an essential part of the universal developmental process—similar to cognitive, physical, moral, and emotional development.

The connection between spirituality and child development was first introduced by James Fowler, who wrote the 1981 groundbreaking book *The Stages of Faith*. It became the basis for all other research in religion and spirituality. Over a three-year period, Fowler competed and analyzed nearly 600 interviews with men, women, and children from ages four to 88, including Jews, Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, and atheists, to gain an understanding of how they incorporated spirituality, personal values, and religious experiences into their lives and how it shaped their identity. Fowler developed a developmental theory that integrated his findings on spirituality with the traditional developmental theories of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Milton H. Erickson.[4]

Developmental Theories Integrated with Spirituality

Piaget was the first psychologist to study how children thought. He discovered that children mature from concrete thinking, where they only believe what they can see, hear, or touch, to abstract thinking, where they can think and manipulate variables. Having a forum to explore such abstract concepts as justice, equality, politics, and religion among other complicated subjects can help hone that thought process. Fowler expanded Piaget's theory to suggest that young adults may begin to examine other religions and beliefs besides their own in order to determine what their path may be. They begin to critically reflect on the symbols, stories, and rituals that define their past to integrate them into the future. They may question authority and God in order to formulate new beliefs or may reject faith altogether. They commit to faith only through choice instead of through unexamined acceptance.[5]

Kohlberg's moral development theory was concerned with moral dilemmas and how children, adolescents, and adults used their differing levels of abilities to reason and resolve those dilemmas. Morals, values, and how they impact decision-making skills become exceedingly important during adolescence as teenagers use their sense of values to evaluate what is the right path to take. Religion with its sense of values and morality may assist in these decision-making skills. The University of North Carolina found that 80 percent of teens believed that their faith was a vital influence in making important decisions and choices.[6]

Erikson's psychosocial theory of development focuses on the importance of social constructs such as culture, family, ideologies, and institutions in shaping the development of identity. Fowler proposed that religious beliefs are also a crucial element of culture and identity and can serve to give teenagers a foundation upon which they can find a purpose to their lives.[7]

Teenagers often search for a confidant or someone that they can trust to confide in. They envision someone who knows them personally and does not judge them and who can offer them security and support. Many adolescents will initiate a personal relationship with God or another higher being through prayer to meet this need. Adolescents begin to understand the importance of their relationship to the world at large and to search for where they fit into the world and how they can contribute to the world and society.

Books Can Help Young Adults Explore Their Ideas about Religion and Spirituality

The Search Institute, a global organization that provides schools, social service organizations, and others with information about what children need to succeed in life, partnered with scientists around the world to study the universal developmental process of spirituality. They interviewed over 7,000 teenagers worldwide to discuss their spiritual and religious beliefs and practices.[8] As a first step in this process, the Search Institute developed a working definition of *spiritual* that was separate from religion.

Spirituality has many meanings for many people. The best framework for it is that it is a broader concept than religion in that it is anything that gives meaning to life, what gives us purpose and direction, and what encourages us to strive toward something greater than ourselves. It consists of practices, beliefs, and experiences that create a commitment to a way of living that may or may not be influenced by traditional religion or doctrine. A person most often inherits religion but makes a conscious decision to be spiritual.

One of the Search Institute's most important findings was that the majority of the teenagers they spoke with stated that they would welcome an opportunity to discuss their ideas about religion and spirituality, and the role they play in their lives, with a caring and nonjudgmental person. However, adolescents are sometimes uncomfortable or inarticulate in their expression about religion and spirituality as it relates to them even though they are curious. This occurs because they aren't asked their opinions about it often enough. This creates an atmosphere where teenagers may feel embarrassed, that their questions are silly, or that it is not appropriate to care about religion.

Ann Trousdale, an expert on children's literature and religion, explains that "stories invite children to enter a world not their own, vicariously to identify with the story's characters and their situations, thus stimulating the emotions, the imagination, cognitive powers and moral reasoning. Such books may resonate with the child's spiritual experiences or encourage them to think beyond their experiences."[9]

Books can serve as a guide toward integrating the cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and religious elements of teenagers' lives by providing them a forum to ask and answer the questions "Who am I?" "Why was I born?" "How can I find meaning in life and how can I find my purpose?" These questions mirror the essential questions of adolescence.

Librarians have historically been fearless advocates for the right of young adults to read. Books that explore the spiritual and emotional experience of teenagers can serve as a guide toward integrating the cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and religious elements of teenagers' lives by providing them a forum to ask and answer the questions "Who am I?" "Why was I born?" "How can I find meaning in life and how can I find my purpose?" These questions mirror the essential questions of adolescence.

Teens in our school need to have these religious reading opportunities, and I'm glad we are giving them to them. (You can access a list of titles with religious and spiritual themes on the YALS site at http://yalsa.ala.org/yals.) YALS

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Genrefy Your Library:

Improve Readers' Advisory and Data-Driven Decision Making

By Stephanie Sweeney

During the summer of 2012 I did something I never thought I would do—I genrefied the fiction section in my library. I had considered it before, but it seemed like an unnecessary, daunting task. My attitude began to change after reading blogs and articles about other librarians trying it and reporting substantial success. Another reason I began considering the change was admittedly personal. I hated being unable to make recommendations when students inquired about books in areas about which I had limited knowledge. I knew the popular and award-winning titles for most genres, but I was afraid some great ones were getting lost in the shelves. If the majority of the library was divided by subject using Dewey, why not the fiction section? Why can't all the romance, mystery, sports, and "books like *The Hunger Games*" be shelved in their own categories?

Yes, the genres are designated in the library catalog by subject headings, but if your patrons are anything like mine, they wander aimlessly through the stacks or ask me before they use the catalog to find a book. As a librarian, advising readers is part of the job, and a love of reading is what got most of us into this position, at least initially. I began a new high school position in the 2011–2012 school year and was faced with a large collection about which I knew nothing. I did not have any help with readers' advisory and students, teachers, and administrators were looking for recommendations from the first day. Genrefication appeared to be a great readers' advisory tool that I had been overlooking.

When I initially toyed with the idea of genrefying I sent out queries on various listservs, and the responses I received were overwhelmingly positive, convincing me to give it a shot. The benefits seemed to outweigh any concerns I had; I learned how to do it in a way that was (relatively) simple, as well as reversible if the need ever arose. Initially, the perks of such a system appeared to be:

- Easier to make recommendations: "Where are the war books?"—"In the dark purple historical fiction section with the war stickers."
- It would be easier for students to find their favorite genres.
- I would know precisely how many books were in each genre, which, subsequently, would improve collection development.

Weeding and Moving the Collection

Genrefying the fiction collection was part of a larger reorganization project that I had undertaken during the 2011–2012 school year. I confess I had committed a cardinal sin of new librarianship: weeding and moving the collection in the first year of a new position. While it was my first year in the district, it was also my ninth working as a librarian, so I figured I could do it successfully. I waited as long as I could into the school year, but, by the spring, I had to get started. Based on my observations of students as they worked, I felt the current organization had students crisscrossing the library in too many subcollections to find books for projects and I needed to begin weeding dated materials from both nonfiction and fiction.

In the spring semester, after I integrated the biographies and short story titles into the main collection, I decided something needed to be done

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about the fiction section. I didn't like the way the fiction books were shelved in one small area, causing quite a traffic jam when there was a class trying to select independent reading books. Seemingly the only way to solve this problem was to shift the entire main collection to the center free-standing shelves and have the fiction wrap around them on the outside wall. This would allow the classes to spread out more and create a distinction between the sections. By this time, I also began seriously toying with the idea of genrefying the collection. The more I read about it, the more I liked the idea. If I was already moving books, now seemed like the perfect time to do it. Summer was approaching and there would be time to reorganize everything before the next school year.

Planning

I decided to genrefy, but how was I going to do it? I knew how I wanted the library arranged but had to figure out a relatively painless process to get it that way. I had seen some discussion in journals, blogs, and listservs on how other libraries did it, and there were number of excellent suggestions. I ultimately decided to follow the advice of Kathryn Makatche, who sent me her blog post "User Friendly—Part 2" describing how she genrefied her library.[1]

How to designate the books was a concern since I did not want to redo all of the labels. I thought Makatche's idea of using transparent colored labels and only changing the catalog record was genius.[2] It would solve the problem of printing thousands of labels and could be undone relatively easily if the need ever arose. I would add the genre to the catalog record, but the call number on the book would remain the same with the transparent colored label designating the appropriate section. "FIC PIC" with a light purple label on the book would become "Chick Lit FIC PIC" in the catalog.

I had a plan of what to do, but I was starting this project before school was out, so what parts of the project could be completed prior to the last day that would not interfere with regular library operations? The first step in the process was to run a shelf list that included circulation statistics and heavily weed. There were many dusty, worn titles that the students were not reading. I made a great deal of notes on my shelf list—crossed out titles to delete from the catalog as I pulled the books (easier to work from paper than a cart of books when removing titles from the catalog), noted titles to replace, started marking genres, and so forth. My paraprofessional deaccessioned the weeded books in the fall, and we made them available for anyone to take; some books went, but not many, so they were then boxed up and discarded.

As I was weeding I learned more about my collection in a week than I had all year because I was handling every single book. I quickly realized we had many holes in our series books that needed to be filled. This was a problem that might not have been identified (and solved) in such a timely manner without undertaking this project. I further discovered that there were a number of graphic novels in the collection and had to decide to keep them together as a genre or integrate them into the other areas. Handling the books in this way while weeding afforded me some time and insight to think about which genres I wanted to use and the state of a collection that was new to me.

Labeling and Reshelving

Selecting the genres was difficult at times, and I went through several lists. I started by researching how many different colored labels were available to see how many options I had and purchased two boxes of each color from Demco. It took some time before I settled on my final list (following), which also reflects the order of the books on the shelves. I tried to keep similar genres together:

- Realistic Fiction (light blue)—appeals to both guys and girls
- Chick Lit (light purple)—Jodi Piccoult, Louise Rennison, Nicholas Sparks, Gossip Girl series, includes friendships and relationships
- Romance (red)—mostly about romantic relationships
- Historical Fiction (dark purple)—also includes multicultural stories that do not fit elsewhere
- Science Fiction (dark blue)
- Fantasy (yellow)
- Horror (green)—Vampires, werewolves, zombies, ghosts, *Jaws*, *Exorcist*, Stephen King—anything that is not clearly science fiction or fantasy
- Manga (pink)
- Mystery/Suspense (brown)
- Adventure (orange)—Espionage, quests, Tom Clancy, Alex Rider series, Esther Friesner
- Sports (gray)
- Guy Reads (light green)—Gordon Korman, S. E. Hinton, Walter Dean Myers

One situation I had not anticipated was the number of authors who write in multiple genres. For example, the John Green books are scattered in several sections—Romance, Realistic, Mystery, etc.—and this can be a bit confusing for students. When working with classes, I have found that it helps to have a mobile card catalog available to locate books more successfully, since I have not memorized where every book is, especially less popular titles and authors. I tell my students about the Follett Destiny app and have it on my

iPhone, enabling me to quickly look up books while in the stacks.

Some titles were hard to place since they could fit in many genres. If I had multiple copies of a book that fit in more than one genre, then I put one copy in each. For example, I put a copy of *Water for Elephants* in the Romance and Historical Fiction sections.

I was certain I didn't want a "classics" section; I had to figure out what to do with those types of books. English classes compose literary analysis papers in sophomore and senior years, so we have a number of such titles. I ended up placing most texts into genres, hoping students would pick them up on their own. The "classics" I couldn't figure out what to do with, I placed in the 800s. Sometimes it felt like a cop-out, but they probably were not going to be at the top of the independent reading popularity list anyway. In the future, if I need room in the fiction section, and if the classic titles still are not circulating, I may move more to the 800s.

The hardest areas to split up were the Realistic, Chick Lit, and Guy Reads sections. I endeavored to keep the books that would appeal to both sexes in the Realistic section and the usual go-to books for reluctant male readers in the Guy Reads section. I spent a long time with the Chick Lit and Guy Reads sections because I did not want to turn off readers based on the location of the book. It felt stereotypical to sort books in such a manner, but I have noticed many students gathered around these sections when classes come in.

Other topics I was initially conflicted about were:

- Spy books—Mystery or Adventure? I settled on Adventure.
- War stories—Adventure or Historical? I chose Historical for most since the story usually focuses on a specific time period. Many war stories are more about experiences or the aftermath than the actual "adventure" part of it, so this seemed to be a better fit in many cases.
- Romance or Chick Lit? Yes, one is romantic relationships and the other includes friendships. I may rethink this down the road since they are rather similar and the Romance section is pretty small.
- Horror or Supernatural? Horror, since Supernatural seems more limiting in scope.
- Graphic Novels section or integrate? I integrated because I did not have enough colored labels and can designate the graphic novel book type with other stickers. Since I catalog the nonfiction ones under the topic, I decided to do the same with fiction.

Moving the Books

Some people do this project during the school year, but I chose to do it over the summer. By doing it at this time, I did not have any help, but I knew I had the library space to myself until new teacher orientation in late August. It was not the kind of sweaty work I wanted to do during the school year anyway, and audiobooks (thank you Game of Thrones series) helped pass the time.

Moving the books was a multi-step process. First, I had to shift the entire nonfiction collection and half the fiction collection to free up the shelves I wanted for the new fiction arrangement. Then I had to decide roughly how many sections I was going to need in the fiction area for each genre so I did not run out of room at the end. By changing the labels in the card catalog and printing new genre shelf lists before moving anything, I was able to see the size of each section and make some educated guesses. Since it was the summertime, I could also take advantage of spreading out the genres on the tables and book carts as I worked. If the summer is not available for work, you can spread this project out over the year by doing one section at a time. However you do it, planning is key so you do not run out of room once you get everything sorted.

Additional Labels

Besides labeling the genres, I wanted the other types of books that I had integrated into the fiction and those with special themes read by classes to stand out, so I purchased stickers for short stories, graphic novels, Asian, Holocaust, and war themes. Even though I have resource lists in my catalog, it is easier to tell students to look for the appropriate sticker in the section they prefer when you have a whole class roaming the shelves.

Identifying series titles was important because we had so many, and I, like most librarians, certainly couldn't remember the correct order of all of them. I did not like the series stickers available from vendors because they do not have room to write in the number of the book, and that was the only reason I was using the label in the first place. I also needed to be able to identify more than one series by an author, so I purchased colored dot stickers (multicolored packs of red, yellow, green, and blue, and single packs of orange) to put on the top of the spines. Now the series books stand out, readers clearly know which number it is, a shopping list of missing titles was created, and the catalog records were updated to reflect the correct series information. The Mid-Continent Public Library has a tremendous database titled "Juveniles Series and Sequels" that was very helpful during this process.[3]

After receiving new book orders in the fall, I realized I would need to keep track of which series had which color dot or I would be constantly going to the shelves when cataloging. I decided to keep

it simple, and mobile, by going a little old school with index cards. I converted an old index card box that I had used as a consideration file and labeled the dividers with the genres. On each index card I wrote the author on the top left corner and the series, genre, and label color on the top right, with the series titles in the correct order on the card, highlighting the titles owned. The cards could easily be taken to the shelf to check for books, pulled to use for ordering, and referred to when cataloging. Sometimes paper just works the best.

Signs

While I knew what each color label corresponded to which genre, my patrons were going to need some assistance through signage. I made signs with the list of genres in the appropriate colors to hang around the area. I took another idea from Makatche, who used Wordle to make signs for each section out of word clouds highlighting terms related to each genre.[4] Instead, I used Tagxedo, which is similar, but allows you to make the word clouds in shapes. The signs were in a shape and color that represented each genre, such as a high heel for Chick Lit, question mark for Mystery, alien giving a peace sign for Science Fiction, bat for Horror, airplane for Adventure, and car for Guy Reads. Some shapes were difficult to pick, and others were determined by what worked best in the *Tagxedo* program. The shapes with the fewest small lines work the best—the high heel was easy, but the soccer ball was tricky to adjust to look right. The shapes were cut out, glued onto construction paper for more color emphasis, and laminated.

Mistakes and Tips

With large projects like this you are going to make a few mistakes—I certainly did. Luckily, they were easily fixable. My first piece of advice is do not throw out any shelf lists. Keep the original you marked up and any genre-specific ones you run later. I made the mistake of working on this project and toying occasionally with the Marc Wizard record updating program, forgetting that the files I had imported into Marc Wizard were from *before* I changed all those call numbers. Several hundred of my call numbers had the genre removed when I imported the records for updating. Now, I had books split into genres on the shelves and no genres on hundreds of records in the system. This occurred at the beginning of the school year, and I happened to have a few light days that allowed me to make the necessary corrections, but I did not have all the paperwork that I used during the project, which would have made the whole situation much easier to fix. I had to run a shelf list of the titles that were changed back to "FIC" and, in many cases, go to the shelves and double-check where I put the book. Several titles I still can not find; I marked them as lost so that I am alerted when they are checked out. Several wayward texts have turned up, and I will probably find the others during summer inventory.

While I am pleased with all of the labels that were placed on the books, and they have proven to be highly effective, they do not always stick very well. You may need extra tape to keep them on, and as you catalog new items try to get as many under the Mylar cover as possible. The stickers I use for special designations also require a little piece of tape to ensure they stay on, particularly for skinny books, where they hang over the edges.

Conclusions

One tremendous benefit of the genrefying project is that I have a wealth of new collection development data to manipulate. When running circulation statistics, I see a breakdown of each genre, and the initial results were truly surprising. My science fiction circulations were twice as high as any other genre. The only other genre that would come close is if I were to combine the Realistic, Chick Lit, and Guy Reads into one section. The popularity of the genres are as follows: Science Fiction, Historical (may be skewed for history class requirements, but war stories are popular), Horror, Fantasy, Realistic, Chick Lit, Adventure, Romance, Guy Reads, Sports, Mystery, and Manga (far behind the rest). I can also see how many books I have in each genre and immediately noted that more current young adult mystery books are needed, as well as sports titles. By running shelf lists with circulation data, I can better understand which series are popular and which titles students are finding that they did not before. It will be interesting to compare this data over the next few years and analyze emerging trends. I can also perform very specific data-driven collection development now, which is something I had not been able to do before with the fiction section.

Dividing the collection into genres also helped meet curricular goals. It is difficult to talk to students about literature and genres in a secondary setting because we don't have regular classes as elementary schools often do. This setup allows me to give an introduction to classes that come in for independent reading books, which covers the genre portion of my curriculum. All of the students were unfamiliar with the new layout this year; next year only my freshman will be new to the system. While it may be a very brief lesson, it is more than I previously had. I try to get the students to understand that while they may think they only like certain genres, they may find their favorite authors write other types of books or that the books that they like fall into different categories than they

realized. I share how I always said I did not like Science Fiction because I thought it was just *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, but it includes dystopian settings like *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *Maze Runner* (our 2012–13 One Book, One School selection), which I, and most of my students, do enjoy. I also stress the number of strong female protagonists showing up in current Adventure and Sports books and encourage female students not to overlook these genres. Initially, I had reservations about turning off readers to books because of the genre designation, but the genrefication process has not appeared to deter students who really want to read a certain book. I have had male students check out Ellen Hopkins books and female students explore the Adventure section.

Patron reaction to the new system has been positive. I have heard many comments about being able to find books more easily and have observed the same behavior from classes visiting for independent reading selections. Before, many students did not know where to start looking for books they might like in the fiction section—the new subsections give them that starting point. The new physical arrangement also allows the classes to spread out, as students do not grow frustrated trying to browse the same row with half the class. The Guy Reads section is much more popular than I had anticipated, particularly with reluctant readers who are not into sports, quest, or war stories. Overall, I am seeing titles circulate that students were not reading before.

Another unexpected outcome I have observed is what appears to be an increase in discussions among students when looking for independent reading books. Because they are standing in front of all the books in the genre they prefer, the students seem to be making more specific recommendations to each other than in the past. As soon as one student declares aloud that he or she does not know what to pick, the ones around him also looking at that particular genre begin making suggestions. It is not just friends helping friends either; students appear willing to make suggestions to anyone. It is helpful for me to overhear and join in these discussions to get an idea of what my students are currently reading.

In the end, I am pleased I sorted my fiction books into genres. The task required a great deal of planning and hard work, but I believe it has improved patron access by helping them be more independent searchers and discover new authors in genres they already favor. Genres have once again become a teachable part of the secondary curriculum, and it is easier to make data-driven decisions in collection development for the fiction portion of my library collection. For anyone considering making the change, do it and the only question you will have is "why did I not do it sooner?" YALS

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4. Makatche, 2011.

Guidelines for Authors

*Young Adult Library Service*s 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.

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Index to Advertisers

feature
Hot Spot: Teen Reading

Do You Read Books?

By Karin Perry

A teen walks into a library. Yes, it sounds like the start of a joke, but it isn't. For school librarians everywhere, this is a daily, hourly occurrence. So, let's start again. A teen walks into a library. He/she walks up to the librarian and says, "I just finished reading *The Hunger Games*, what should I read next?" Or, "My teacher sent me here to get a book, but I hate to read." Or, "I just finished Beth Revis's Across the Universe series and I've already read all the other sci-fi you have. What should I do?"

These three scenarios present three different problems. The first one is probably the easiest as the library staff member most likely just needs to show the teen some other post-apocalyptic and dystopian titles. The second one might be tougher since the staff member is dealing with a reluctant reader, but as long as she finds a book that isn't intimidating in length, and jumps right into the action, there's a good chance of making the reader happy. The final scenario can go either way. One thing the staff member can already tell is this teen does like to read books. One option is to find something the teen will read in another genre. It might take a little time and sometimes the teen won't want to take the chance on something different and choose to reread something familiar, but it's an opportunity to expand the teen's reading repertoire, and that can be a great opportunity.

I'm currently an Assistant Professor of Library Science at a Texas University, BUT in my heart I'm still a public school librarian. I enjoyed my time working at both an elementary school and a middle school. As an elementary librarian I was able to witness the light in the eyes of the little ones during story time. At the middle school I enjoyed hosting book clubs and putting books in teens' hands. The reason I was able to light up children's eyes and find the right books for teens, like the one who is looking for something beyond the Across the Universe series, was because I read.

I READ BOOKS. You might think this is a stupid statement. A "Well, duh!" statement, but unfortunately, it isn't. You would be surprised to find out how many school librarians don't read books and if they do, they don't read children's or young adult literature. Many of the conference presentations I give, naturally, involve books and every time I am shocked by the number of people in the audience that don't raise their hands when I ask if they've read Lois Lowry's *The Giver* or many of the other books I mention. I'm even more distressed to hear, "I don't have time to read books," when chatting with teachers and librarians.

After hearing this one too many times, I created a survey to find out just how much librarians do or don't read books and from that, determine if there is a connection between the amount the librarian reads books and how much book reading is promoted in the library. My hypothesis being, the more a librarian reads books, the more a librarian will do to encourage students to read books.

In total, I received 429 responses. 97 percent of the respondents were female. 46 percent work in elementary libraries, 22 percent work in middle school libraries, and 25 percent work in high school libraries. The remaining 7 percent fit into the Other category, K–8, K–12, etc.

The first question about reading was simply, how many books a month do you read for pleasure? As you can see in figure 1, the majority responded two to four books a month, but for the purpose of this article, I wanted to focus on the two extremes—the librarians who read zero to one book a month (11 percent) and the librarians who read seven or more books a month (24 percent). That fact that 11 percent don't read books may not seem like a large number, but these are the people

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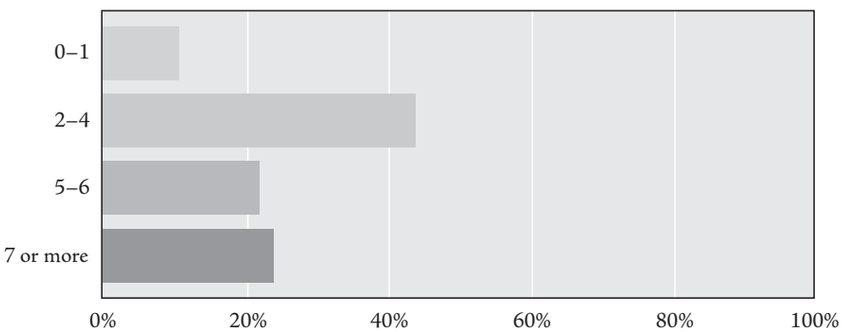
who work specifically with children and teens; the people that are in a position to influence and encourage reading books for pleasure. How can this fact not influence their amount of book promotion?

Any kind of reading is valuable; however, in order to provide quality book recommendations to students, librarians need to be knowledgeable about the literature at their grade levels. It is rare that I read a novel published for adults. (Although there are several books that I read that can be considered crossover books, meaning even though they are adult books, they can appeal to the young adult audience as well. Another thing to be aware of is the New Adult category, which features characters ranging in age from 18 to their early 20s and involved in more "adult" situations like college, living away from home for the first time, military service, and first serious relationship.) With the number of children's and young adult books published each year I have plenty to keep me busy. I choose to focus on this literature because it is my field. I consider it important to be able to provide book suggestions to children, teens, parents, teachers, and librarians and I couldn't do that if I didn't read those books. Figure 2 shows both groups (zero to one book and seven or more books) and their responses to whether or not they read adult books or children's or young adult books MOST of the time. As you'll be able to see, there isn't a lot of difference between the responses. Both groups read more children's and YA than adult books, although the seven or more group did read more children's and YA and less adult than the other group.

While these results don't provide support for my hypothesis, it is interesting to see that more of the zero to one group reads adult books than the seven or more group. This tells us that, for those people, even though they read one book a month it isn't necessarily a book that can be recommended to the teens they serve.

Figure 1. How many books do you read for pleasure every month?

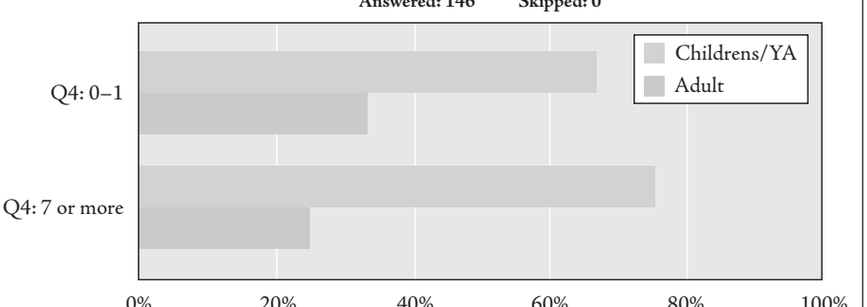
Answered: 425 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
0–1	10.59%	45
2–4	43.76%	186
5–6	21.88%	93
7 or more	23.76%	101
Total		425

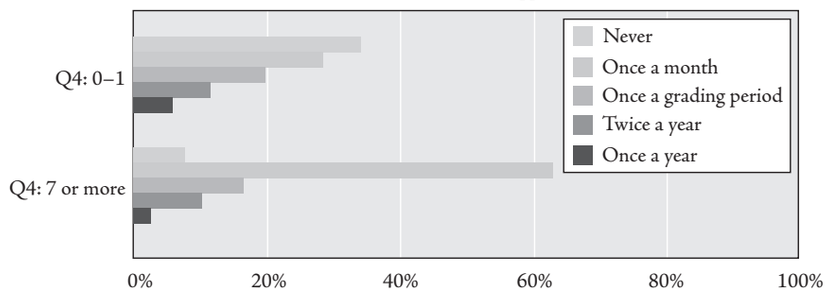
Figure 2. Most of the time, do you read Childrens/YA Literature or do you read Adult books?

Answered: 146 Skipped: 0



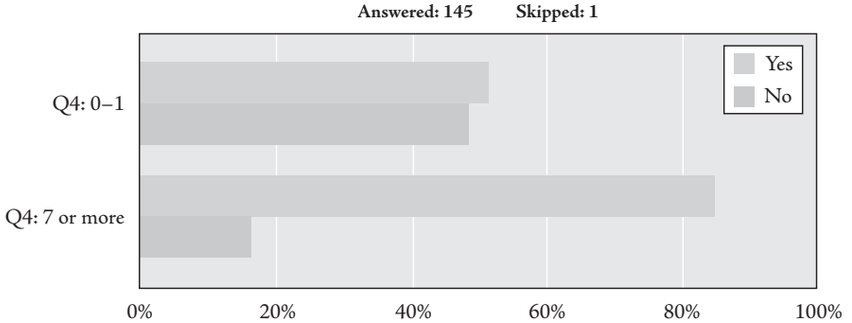
	Childrens/YA	Adult	Total
Q4: 0–1	**66.67%** 30	**33.33%** 15	45
Q4: 7 or more	**75.25%** 76	**24.75%** 25	101
Total Respondents	106	40	146

Figure 3. How often do you provide booktalks to classes? (Check the response that most closely matches your answer)
Answered: 113 Skipped: 33



	Never	Once a Month	Once a grading period	Twice a year	Once a year	Total
Q4: 0–1	**34.29%** 12	**28.57%** 10	**20%** 7	**11.43%** 4	**5.71%** 2	35
Q4: 7 or more	**7.69%** 6	**62.82%** 49	**16.67%** 13	**10.26%** 8	**2.56%** 2	78
Total Respondents	18	59	20	12	4	113

Figure 4. Do you consistently share what you are reading with your students? (Post signs on your door, talk to kids about the books, etc.)
Answered: 145 Skipped: 1



	Yes	No	Total
Q4: 0–1	**51.11%** 23	**48.89%** 22	45
Q4: 7 or more	**84%** 84	**16%** 16	100
Total Respondents	107	38	145

So, a third of the 11 percent who read zero to one book a month, most likely, don't read books that can be shared with teens, unless they happen to be crossover books.

The next question in the survey is where the results really get interesting (see figure 3). When asked how often the librarian provides booktalks to classes, the majority (34 percent) of the zero to one book group answered "Never." This compares to 8 percent of the seven or more group. The most popular answer for the seven or more group was "once a month" at 63 percent. This is the first survey question that appeared to support my hypothesis.

Next I focused on the amount of time the librarian shared what he was reading with the students. I asked if they CONSISTENTLY shared their books with students and provided examples like posting signs or just talking to students. Talking about the books you are reading is one of the easiest ways to "create an environment where reading for pleasure is valued, promoted, and encouraged."[1] For instance, for years I have had two clear pockets taped to my office door (even when I was a school librarian). One is titled "Currently Reading" and the other "Currently Listening To." Every time I start a new book I print off the picture of the cover and slip it in the pocket. This does two things: (1) encourages discussion about the current book I'm reading and (2) reminds people that listening to audiobooks is reading, too.

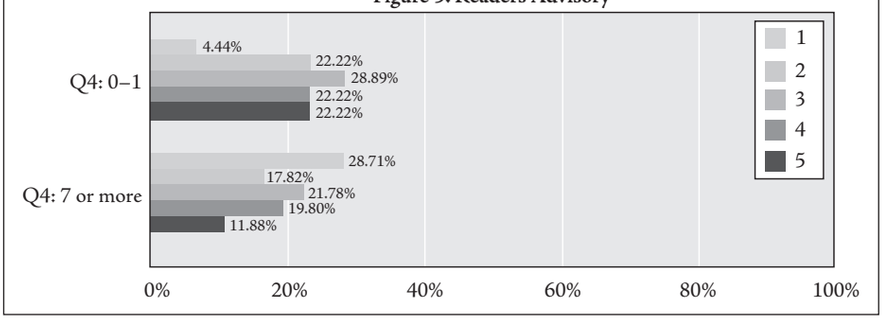
The results for this question are similar for the two groups in the fact that they both had more people answer "Yes" than "No" (see figure 4). However, the zero to one book group was very close at 51 percent "Yes" and 49 percent "No." Since 84 percent of the seven or more group responded "Yes," it would be interesting to know whether or not these readers naturally model or if they model because they know the importance of "talking" to teens about books. Basically, is it natural or deliberate?

The final survey question asked the respondents to rank the importance of the different tasks of the school librarian from one to five (one being the most important). The choices were Teaching Information Literacy Lessons, Being a Part of the School Leadership Team, Reader's Advisory, Collaborating with Teachers, and Administrative Duties. What I was looking for was the attitudes of the librarians in terms of what they did during the workday. Overall, when taking all the survey responses into account, "Collaborating with Teachers" was ranked most important with 44 percent of the respondents giving it a one out of five. As a library science professor, I am extremely happy to see that collaboration is so important to librarians.

The most interesting results are the responses to the readers' advisory role. When comparing the two groups, there are glaring differences in opinions about the importance of this role (see figure 5). In the seven books or more group, 29 percent ranked readers' advisory as the most important task of the librarian with the majority giving it a one out of five. What is amazing to me is the difference between this group's response and the zero to one book group's response. Only 4 percent of the zero to one group ranked readers' advisory as the most important. This isn't to say they are wrong. Remember, I'm simply looking at attitudes and as stated above, overall, "Collaborating with Teachers" was ranked as most important. It is just that this small part of the survey really shows a lot about the attitudes between librarians that read books for teens and librarians that don't read books for teens (as much).

The majorities of the two groups not discussed specifically in this article, two to four books and five to six books, ranked readers' advisory two out of five. And, as you can see in figure 5, the majority of the zero to one book group ranked readers' advisory three out of five. After examining the results, I would say my hypothesis is

Figure 5. Readers Advisory



proven. The more a librarian reads books, the more readers' advisory and other reading promotions are done in the school.

School librarians have many roles: instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator—all of which are important. However, according to *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*, "reading for pleasure is at the core of the school librarian program."[2] It is important to remember that not all reading for pleasure needs to be fiction books. Nonfiction books can provide just as much enjoyment for a reader. In many cases, reading for pleasure can be connected to the curriculum. For instance, suppose a social studies class is studying the American Revolution. There are a number of authors that have published fascinating novels set in that time period. By providing teens access to these novels, the classroom discussions and projects can be deeper and richer, by giving the teens a look inside life during these turbulent times through the characters' eyes. *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs* provides clear actions school librarians should take in order to promote reading as a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment.[3] While some of them involve collaborating with teachers and other members of the community, the tasks listed below are ones a school librarian can plan and carry out on her own, if need be:

- Acquires and promotes current, high-quality, high-interest collections of books and other reading resources in multiple formats.
- Develops initiatives to encourage and engage learners in reading, writing, and listening for understanding and enjoyment.
- Fosters reading for various pursuits, including personal pleasure, knowledge, and ideas.
- Creates an environment where independent reading is valued, promoted, and encouraged.
- Motivates learners to read fiction and nonfiction through reading aloud, booktalking, displays, exposure to authors, and other means.

In order to prove my money is where my mouth is, here are my reading stats as of the writing of this article (April 15, 2013). I have read 99 books or 16,834 pages in the 105 days so far in this year. That averages to about 1 book or 160 pages per day, 6.5 books or 1,112 pages a week, 28 books or 4,810 pages a month. I've read novels, picture books, poetry books, graphic novels, and listened to audiobooks. EVERYTHING I've read has been children's or YA.

People sometimes ask me how I read so much (and believe me—I read a lot less than some of my colleagues—for example you can find out all the reading Teri Lesesne does on her blog www.ls5385blog.blogspot.com.)

Below is a list of the things I do that allow me to read the amount I do. These are things ANYONE can do (and you can, too):

1. I don't watch much TV.
2. I listen to audiobooks in the car instead of the radio.
3. I read books every day.
4. I read young adult novels, graphic novels, picture books, tween books, etc.
5. I set goals. (Last year I read two hundred books and this year I've challenged myself to read two hundred and fifty.)

There are many social networking sites that can help you locate books to read and keep track of your reading. I use Goodreads (you can find my profile at www.goodreads.com/kperry), but there are many other sites that do the same thing. It is all a matter of taste. You can choose LibraryThing or Shelfari, which have been around for a while. Or, you can try some new sites. Booklikes is unique (and I really like it, but I've been with Goodreads so long I hesitate to leave). Booklikes not only keeps track of your books on a "shelf," but it also automatically creates blog posts out of your reviews and comments. This is nice for busy people who find it hard to maintain several social media presences. Riffle is the newest one I've explored. If you like Pinterest and its layout, you'll like Riffle. It is very similar in format.

If you need help with book promotion ideas, there are websites that can help with that, too. If you are in a middle school or high school you'll definitely want to visit the Teen Read Week Ning, http://teenreadweek.ning.com/. It is filled with booklists and program ideas that fit the theme. The theme for 2013 is *Seek the Unknown—@ your library*. Also, don't forget the 2003 American Association of School Librarians (AASL) publication, *Toolkit for School Library Media Programs*. It is filled with useful information and ready-to-use activities. Finally, I would suggest joining Twitter. You will find a multitude of book suggestions, promotion ideas, and program ideas just by following people like you—librarians (also, bloggers and authors are good to follow, too).

With all the resources available, my question to librarians that don't read books (or fit in this zero to one book a month group) is, why? How can you confidently suggest books to students if you don't read them? If you don't suggest books to students, how can you make connections with teens? How do you create lifelong learners if you don't encourage reading books? How do you encourage reading books if you don't set an example?

Go now. Read books and set an example for the students in your life. YALS

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2. American Association of School Librarians, *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 2008).
3. American Association of School Librarians, 2009, p21.

the YALSA update

Find the latest YALSA news every Friday at the YALSA Blog, http://yalsa.ala.org/blog.

Teens' Top Ten Voting Starts Aug. 15

Teens' Top Ten (TTT) voting begins August 15 and ends September 15. The votes will determine the 2013 Teens' Top Ten booklist, which will be announced online during Teen Read Week, October 13–19.

Librarians seeking new titles for readers' advisory, collection development, or simply to give to their teens as part of summer reading programming can see the 2013 nominations (a list of 28 titles) on the TTT website at www.ala.org/teenstopten. There is also a TTT toolkit with bookmarks and flyers, program ideas, and much more. All geared to helping you encourage teens to read the nominated titles. You also won't want to miss the new teen friendly Reads for Teens website at www.ala.org/yalsa/reads4teens.

YALSA 2013 Election Results

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Board of Directors
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Krista McKenzie

Margaret A. Edwards Award
Alicia Blowers
Sophie Brookover
Gail Zachariah

Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Award
Todd Krueger
Drue Wagner Mees
Joy Millam
Brenna Shanks

Michael L. Printz Award
Robin Brenner
Diane Colson
Angela Frederick
Shelly McNerney

Interested in running for office or want to nominate a colleague? Contact Sarah Flowers, chair of the 2014 Governance Nominating Committee at sarahflowers@charter.net. Or, Pam Spencer Holley, pamsholley@ala.com, Chair of the 2014 Awards Nominating Committee.

Help for you and your Co-Workers to Make Serving Teens Easier!

Did you know that YALSA just published two instructional kits by trainers and geared to library directors, library staff, and trainers? These kits provide professional development tools via customizable PowerPoints, a complete script, and optional group activities. The kit curricula are based on YALSA's national guidelines *Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth: Young Adults Deserve the Best*.

Kits are organized into modules, and trainers can mix and match them into one hour or foull-day trainings. Each kit includes:

- a literature review
- PowerPoint presentation
- script
- introductory essay
- list of additional resources.

The **Understanding Teen Behavior for a Positive Library Experience** curriculum is designed to provide tips and resources to make addressing teen behavior easy for staff. The **Strengthening Teen Services through Technology** kit provides libraries with 1) resources to help library workers gain confidence in using tech resources with teens and 2) specific tech tools that can easily be incorporated into library services for teens

Each kit costs $175 for a digital download or $199 for a paper edition with a CD containing PowerPoint presentations (binder-ready, three-hole punched and tabbed). Bulk pricing is available at 20 percent off orders of 25 or more. Visit the ALA Store at www.alastore.ala.org to order yours today or www.ala.org/yalsa/young-adults-deserve-best for more information, including two free webinars that each demo a different kit module.

New Issue of JRLYA Available

Multiracial identities, gender stereotypes and questionable young adult literature cover art are topics explored in the newest online, open access issue (Volume 3: April 2013) of YALSA's *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults (JRLYA)*, available at http://yalsa.ala.org/jrlya.

The issue features the following peer reviewed articles:

- "This, That, Both, Neither: The Badging Of Biracial Identity In Young Adult Realism" by Sarah Hannah Gómez, graduate student, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College
- "Taking a Dip in the Crazy Pool: The Evolution of X-Women From Heroic Subject to Sexual Object" by Suzanne M. Stauffer, associate professor, School of Library and Information Science, Louisiana State University
- "YA Literature: The Inside and Cover Story" by Regina Sierra Carter, PhD student, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

JRLYA is currently accepting manuscripts on topics that advance YALSA's Research Agenda. Manuscripts based on original qualitative or quantitative research, an innovative conceptual framework or a substantial literature review that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation are welcome. Please see the Author Guidelines section of the website, http://www.yalsa.ala.org/jrlya/, for more information on submitting manuscripts.

Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults 2012 Program Award Winners

During the YALSA President's Program at ALA's 2013 Annual Conference in Chicago, awards were presented to 20 innovative teen programs that will also be featured in a sixth edition of *Excellence in Library Service to Young Adults*, edited by Laura Pearle for YALSA. These successful programs focus on addressing new or ongoing teen needs or interests in innovative or unique ways.

The top five programs received cash awards of $1000 each to be used with future teen programs and include:

1. Gina Macaluso – iTNation at Pima County (Ariz.) Public Library
2. Andrea Sowers – Prom Fashion Show at Joliet (Ill.) Public Library
3. Rachel Mcdonald – Book Club at Foster & Skyway Libraries, King County (Wash.) Library System
4. Maureen Hartman – Be @ School at Your Library at Hennepin County (Minn.) Library
5. Kelly Czarnecki – Teen Fashion Apprentice at ImaginOn: Charlotte Mecklenburg (N.C.) Library

15 "best of the rest" programs received cash awards of $250 and are:

6. Angie Manfredi – Teen Tech Week Lock-In at Los Alamos County (N.M.) Library System
7. Jessica Fenster Sparber and Regan Schwartz – iPads With Incarcerated Youth at Passages Academy and Literacy for Incarcerated Teens (New York, N.Y.)
8. Emily Calkins – Slender Night at Milton (Mass.) Public Library
9. Cayce Hoffman – Teen Tech Triathalon at Baltimore County (Md.) Public Library
10. Sarah Bean Thompson – Teen/Child Collaboration at Springfield-Greene County (Mo.) Library
11. Marika Staloch – Createch at St. Paul (Minn.) Public Library

12. & 13. Amy Boese – Teen Tech Summer Camp at Ramsey County Library – Maplewood (Minn.) and Ellie Davis – Zombie Walk/Prom at the Sweetwater County Library (green River, Wyo.)

14. Theresa Ramos and staff – Don't Fall Down in the Hood at Free Library of Philadelphia (Pa.)
15. Courtney Lewis – The Night of Writing Dangerously at Wyoming Seminary College Preparatory School (Pa.)
16. Tom Spicer – DIY Service to Teens at Arlington Heights (Ill.) Memorial Library
17. Dawn Rutherford – Tech/Gadget/Gift Coaching Program at Sno-Isle Libraries (Marysville, Wash.)
18. Jeanne McDermott – Film screening for Teen Dating Violence Month at Amagansett Free Library (N.Y.)
19. Mirele Davis – Skype Encounters at Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School (Rockville, Md.)
20. Faythe Arredondo – TCL Teen at Tulare County (Calif.) Library

The sixth edition of *Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults* will be available in summer 2014. YALS

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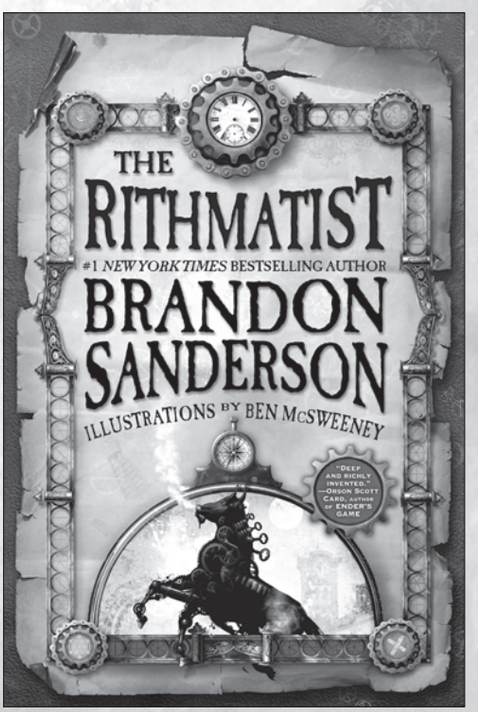

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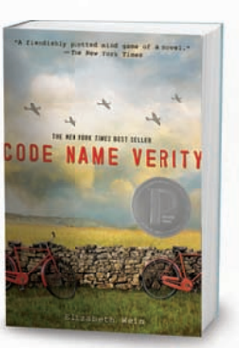

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