

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** Center for the Future of Libraries Update

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Update on activities of the Center for the Future of Libraries.

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Miguel Figueroa, Center for the Future of Libraries

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**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

No motion proposed – informational only

**DATE:** 01/12/2017

**BACKGROUND:**

The attached update includes information on the Center's work across three goal areas:

- Identify emerging trends relevant to libraries and the communities they serve
- Promote futuring and innovation techniques to help librarians and library professionals shape their future
- Build connections with experts and innovative thinkers to help libraries address emerging issues

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

- *Identify emerging trends relevant to libraries and the communities they serve*
- *Promote futuring and innovation techniques to help librarians and library professionals shape their future*
- *Build connections with experts and innovative thinkers to help libraries address emerging issues*

Activity updates have been organized according to these goals.

### ***Identify emerging trends relevant to libraries and the communities they serve***

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

The collection received 16,413 unique page views (28,453 total page views) during the seven-month period from June 6, 2016 through January 4, 2017. During the six-month period from December 30, 2015 through June 6, 2016 the collection received 10,720 unique page views (19,687 total page views).

The Center's e-mail newsletter, [Read for Later](#), which shares the Center's weekly trend scanning to help library professionals think about the future of our collections, spaces, services, partners, and roles in the community, continues to grow. Subscription to the newsletter has steadily grown to 2,624 current subscribers – in addition to several hundred more readers accessing the posts via the Center's blog or RSS reader apps like Feedly. Newsletter activity remains strong and feedback about the newsletter remains very positive. The newsletter sees immediate unique open rates in the high-20% to mid-30% and longer-term unique open rates around 45%.

A [fuller report on the Center's readers' survey](#), conducted September 12, 2016 through October 11, 2016, is available below. Readers' feedback was generally positive with indications that readers are interested in the newsletter, that its coverage helps inform their conversations with colleagues, and that it is proving useful in developing new collections, partnerships, programs, services, or spaces. At the same time, readers indicated that the Center needs to better communicate its mission and improve its visibility within the profession and find greater opportunities for reader engagement.

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

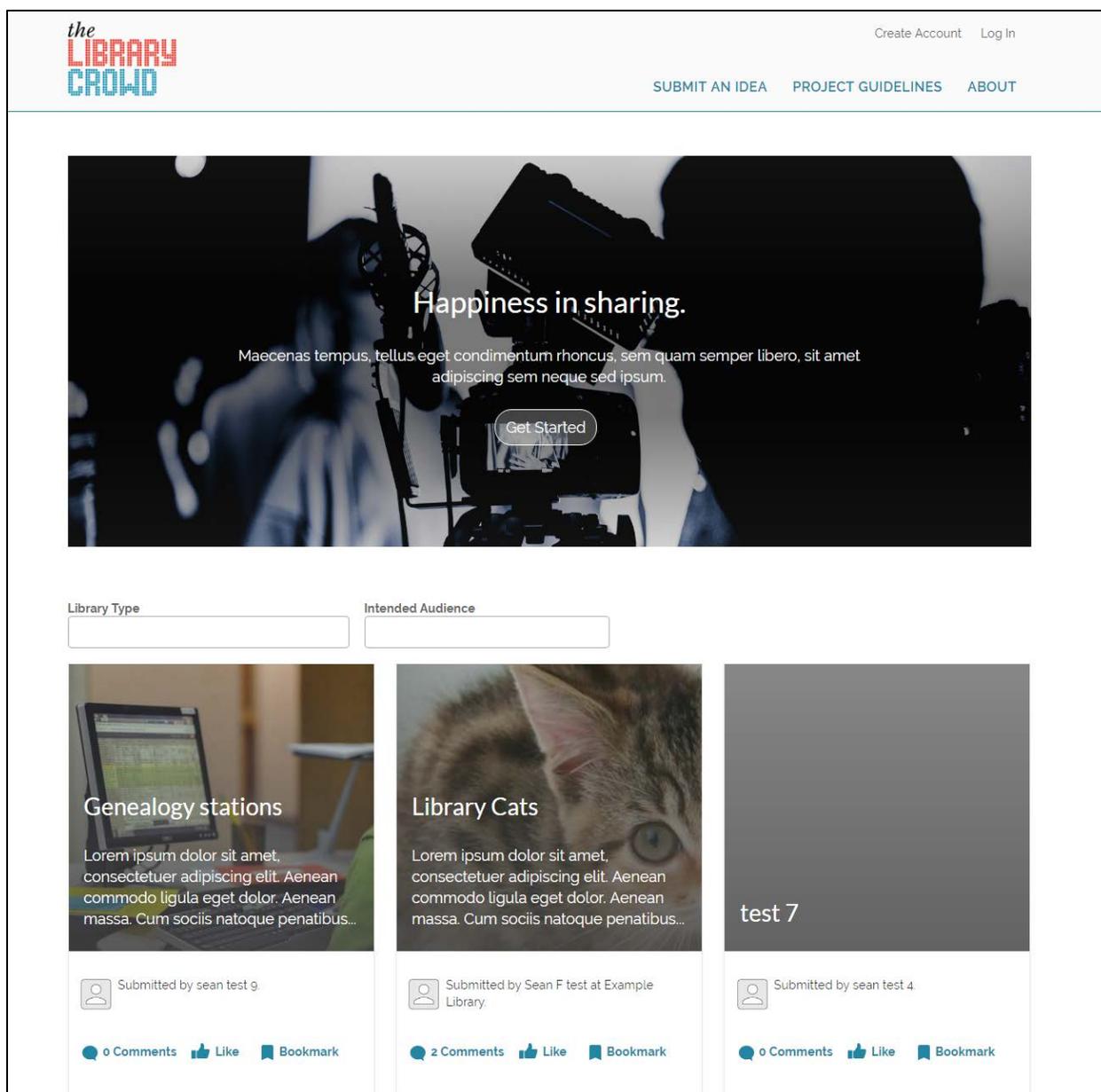


Figure 1: The Library Crowd - Screen capture of the Center's forthcoming crowdsourcing ideation platform.

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

In Fiscal Year 2016, the Center provided over 40 presentations.

In the first five months of Fiscal Year 2017, the Center has provided 16 presentations for individual libraries, conferences, and public events.

- Fairfax County (Va.) Public Library (2)
- University of Pittsburgh University Library System
- [Zocalo Public Square](#)
- [Library 2.016 – Libraries of the Future](#)
- Altadena (Calif.) Library District
- Arizona State Library
- Arizona Library Association (2)
- California Library Association
- Sharjah International Book Fair
- ASCLA Future of Libraries Interest Group
- Plymouth District (Mich.) Library
- The Library Network (Mich.)
- Massachusetts Library System
- Iowa State Library

### *ASAE Innovation Grant*

The Center is preparing to launch its crowdsourcing ideation platform, The Library Crowd. The Library Crowd will provide an online space for members of the profession to submit innovative solutions to problems in their field and leverage the wisdom of the crowd to point to those solutions which might be most viable. Participants can up-vote solutions, provide comments, and follow ideas. When idea submitters have completed their project, they can revise and update the entry with additional information and archive it for others to search and review previous innovative ideas.

Funding for this project was made available through an ASAE Foundation Innovation Grant. The project is anticipated to launch after the 2017 Midwinter Meeting –changes to features have extended the anticipated Midwinter release.

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

#### *Center for the Future of Libraries Fellows Program*

The Center for the Future of Libraries announced a \$10,000 fellowship opportunity for an individual (or group) from the library profession or from other disciplines with a demonstrated interest in libraries and their future.

The fellowship provides the \$10,000 stipend to advance new ideas and perspectives for the future of libraries through the creation of a public product (report, white paper, resource, tool) that will help library professionals envision the future of library collections, partnerships, services, spaces, or technologies. Projects may build on existing work, research, or initiatives of the Association, its Offices, Divisions, and Round Tables, or explore new directions and interests.

Selected individuals will be asked to conduct and complete their project within six months of selection, managing the project with existing employment or any other work responsibilities.

The fellowship does not include a residency requirement. International colleagues are encouraged to apply.

The fellowship is designed for individuals with:

- A passion for and commitment to the value of libraries and library professionals
- A unique point of view or vision for the future of libraries or desire to provoke thought around the future of libraries
- The skills and abilities to explore the future of libraries
- Strong analytical, communication, and writing skills and an ability to independently manage a project and delivery timeline

Applications will be evaluated by members of the Center's Advisory Group.

The call for applications was announced November 28, 2016 with a first deadline of January 15, 2017.

There has been generally positive interest around the fellowship. The page has received over 2,700 unique page views since its announcements.

#### *Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow Program*

The Center for the Future of the Libraries was fortunate to work with the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) on an application for the [Mellon/ACLS Public Fellows Program](#), which places recent PhDs from the humanities and humanistic social sciences in two-year funded staff positions at partnering organizations. As part of the application, ACRL and the Center developed two position descriptions for possible fellows – one advancing ACRL's research on library contributions to student success and one connecting the Center's work with ACRL's strategic priority exploring new roles and changing landscapes for academic libraries.

ACLS responded positively to the application and has invited ACRL to host a 2017 Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow. The selected position description brings together elements of both submitted descriptions, emphasizing ACRL's research on library contributions to student success while encouraging contributions to the Center's work promoting new roles and changing landscapes for academic libraries. A [full press release is available from ACRL](#).

#### *Library 2.016 Libraries of the Future Mini-Conference*

The Center for the Future of Libraries worked with San Jose State University's School of Information and The Learning Revolution on a [Library 2.016: Libraries of the Future Mini-Conference](#). The October 6<sup>th</sup> event brought together over 5,600 international registrants, presenters in fifteen concurrent programs, as well as an opening and closing session. The range of topics covered included open educational resources, virtual reality, trends-based strategic planning, civic engagement, information visualization, youth coding programs, campus sustainability, and 3D virtual spaces. Recordings are available [from the mini-conference's site](#).

## *2017 Symposium on the Future of Libraries*

The Center for the Future of Libraries will host a [Symposium on the Future of Libraries](#) in conjunction with the 2017 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Atlanta.

The Symposium builds on and expands content that had been introduced at the 2016 Midwinter Meeting, including sessions with local civic and social innovators discussing emerging trends and issues for communities.

The 2017 Symposium will provide three [plenary sessions](#), planned around themes of civic, social, and education innovation. Confirmed presenters include representatives from Atlanta's Center for Civic Innovation (Civic Innovation), We Love the Buhi (Civic Innovation), Georgia Tech's Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Universities (Education Innovation), Honor Code (Education Innovation), Digital Undivided's BIG Accelerator Program (Social Innovation), and Welcoming America (Social Innovation). Special thanks to AASL, ACRL, ODLOS, and PLA for committing member leaders to moderate these sessions.

Additionally, the symposium includes [25 concurrent sessions](#) spread across three days. The concurrent sessions include new visions from leading libraries ([New York Public Library](#), [MIT Libraries](#)), considerations of our values in times of change ([The Future of Librarian Labor](#), [Sustainable Thinking for the Future of Libraries](#), [Building Civic Engagement with a Civic Lab](#), [21st Century Library Ethics](#)), and near- and long-term trends for libraries ([Collude! Resist! Collaborate! ebook Strategies for the Modern Revolutionary](#), [Immersive and Interactive: Virtual Reality In a Contextually-rich Learning Environment](#), [Placemaking and the Public Library](#))

Concurrent sessions were developed in collaboration with ALA offices and divisions and through an open call for proposals. The open call for proposals received 54 completed proposals. Special thanks to the Center's Advisory Group for their review of proposals.

In addition to plenary and concurrent sessions, Sunday and Monday will conclude with Day-End Discussions, facilitated forums where participants will be asked to share their most significant insights, questions, or priorities. This discussion might facilitate connection across participants with shared interests or priorities and help shape the association's and Center's priorities for future-focused discussions.

### **Center for the Future of Libraries Advisory Group**

The Center's Advisory Group continues its productive work. The upcoming agenda will focus on developing partnerships to advance the Center's work and exploring greater engagement among the membership and the larger profession.

### **Questions or Comments**

Questions or comments may be sent to Miguel Figueroa at [mfigueroa@ala.org](mailto:mfigueroa@ala.org).

## **Read for Later Readers' Survey**

The Center for the Future of Libraries launched a readers' survey on September 12, 2016 to gather input about the [Read for Later](#) newsletter's usefulness and opportunities for improvement.

The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey and promoted through five issues of the Newsletter (September 12 – October 11, 2016).

The survey received a total of 133 responses (the total subscribers at the time of the survey was just over 2,100).

### *Summary*

#### The impact.

Several questions (1 – 7) sought to address the impact of the newsletter on work in the profession. Generally responses to these questions were positive. Nearly 95% (126) of respondents had a high (read regularly in its entirety) or medium (skim for articles) interest in the newsletter.

Responses to the newsletter's usefulness in developing or considering new collections, partnerships, programs, services, or spaces was more tempered – 22.73% (30) of respondents found it very useful and 40.91% (54) found it useful – though generally over 96% (127) of respondents found some use for the newsletter in developing these services. This was clearer when respondents were asked if they had used content from the newsletter to develop new or improved existing collections, partnerships, programs, services, or spaces – 42.75% (56) of respondents noted that they had used content from the newsletter.

While the newsletter may not yet have a significant impact on developing or improving services, it is helping to influence conversations within libraries or the profession. 59.85% (79) of respondents have shared the newsletter with colleagues or coworkers. 81.06% (107) of respondents have shared an article from the newsletter with colleagues or coworkers. And 75.76% (100) of respondents have used content from the newsletter in discussions with colleagues or coworkers.

#### The mission.

Over 87% of respondents found the newsletter very useful (48.48%) or useful (38.64%) for their own professional development or trend awareness. 82% of respondents feel that the newsletter is very important (40%) or important (42%) toward accomplishing the work the Center should be undertaking. That said, several responses to an open feedback question later in the survey demonstrate a need for the Center to better communicate its mission and improve its visibility within the profession.

#### The details.

Most respondents seem pleased with the technical details of the newsletter. 74.60% (94) of

respondents were happy with the newsletter's title, Read for Later. 71.09% (91) of the respondents were pleased with a weekly distribution. 69.67% (85) of respondents were happy with the newsletter's distribution on Mondays.

### *Survey Responses*

Question 1: What is your level of interest in the Center's newsletter, Read for Later?

- 48.12% (64 responses) High Interest – Read regularly in its entirety
- 46.62% (62 responses) Medium Interest – Skim for articles of interest
- 2.26% (3 responses) Limited Interest – Skim only specific sections related to my work or interests
- 0.75% (1 response) Low Interest – Read only occasionally
- 0.00% (0 responses) No interest
- 2.26% (3 responses) Still deciding

Question 2: How useful is the Center's newsletter for your own professional development or trend awareness?

- 48.48% (64 responses) Very useful
- 38.64% (51 responses) Useful
- 9.09% (12 responses) Somewhat useful
- 3.79% (5 responses) Not useful
- 1 respondent skipped the question

Question 3: How useful is information from the Center's newsletter for developing or considering new collections, partnerships, programs, services, or spaces?

- 22.73% (30 responses) Very useful
- 40.91% (54 responses) Useful
- 32.58% (43 responses) Somewhat useful
- 3.79% (5 responses) Not useful
- 1 respondent skipped the question

Question 4: Have you used content from the newsletter as you have developed new or improved existing collections, partnerships, programs, services, or spaces?

- 42.75% (56 responses) Yes
- 57.25% (75 responses) No
- 2 respondents skipped the question

Question 5: Have you shared the newsletter with colleagues or coworkers?

- 59.85% (79 responses) Yes
- 40.15% (53 responses) No
- 2 respondents skipped the question

Question 6: Have you shared any of the articles from the newsletter with colleagues or coworkers?

- 81.06% (107 responses) Yes
- 18.94% (25 responses) No
- 2 respondents skipped the question

Question 7: Have you used content from the newsletter in discussions with colleagues or coworkers?

- 75.76% (100 responses) Yes
- 24.24% (32 responses) No
- 1 respondent skipped the question

Question 8: How important is the Center's newsletter when considering the work you think the Center should be undertaking?

- 40.00% (52 responses) Very important
- 42.31% (55 responses) Important
- 14.62% (19 responses) Somewhat important
- 3.08% (4 responses) Not important
- 3 respondents skipped the question
- Selected comment (Q14): "I'm sorry, I have to admit I've forgotten your precise mandate. Perhaps adding a few lines about the Center proper (mandate & goals) at the start of each newsletter would serve as a useful reminder."
- Selected comment (Q14): I have to admit this, I don't really know what you guys do at the Center for the Future of Libraries ...for those of us who've been eating up your lists but don't know who you are, you could curate a list about yourself."

Question 9: Does the title, Read for Later, resonate with you?

- 74.60% (94 responses) Keep it – Read for Later
- 25.40% (32 responses) Something else
- 7 respondents skipped the question

Question 10: How frequently would you like this newsletter distributed?

- 71.09% (91 responses) Weekly (as it is currently distributed)
- 24.22% (31 responses) Bi-weekly (every other week)
- 4.69% (6 responses) Monthly
- 5 respondents skipped the question

Question 11: When would you prefer the newsletter distributed?

- 69.67% (85 responses) Monday (as it is currently scheduled)
- 9.84% (12 responses) Tuesday
- 3.28% (4 responses) Wednesday
- 8.20% (10 responses) Thursday
- 9.02% (11 responses) Friday
- 11 respondents skipped the question

Question 12: Do you have additional thoughts for coverage that should be included in this

newsletter?

30 responses received – selected responses coded below

- Happy with current coverage (13)
- More international coverage (4)
- More library context/examples of library practice (3)
- More coverage of rural issues (2)
- Additional topics – events/fairs (1), open source (1), organizational strategy (1), music (1), sports (1)
- Selected comment: “I find the newsletter and work extremely important for keeping the library of the future at the forefront of today's discussions.”
- Selected comment: “More gravitas ... it all feels a bit lightweight for something as important as the future of information use, libraries and the profession.”

Question 13: Do you have any additional thoughts for improving this newsletter?

37 responses received – selected responses coded below

- Happy with newsletter (13)
- Cleaner design/layout (5)
- Reader comments (2)
- Interviews with thought leaders (1)
- More concise (1)
- More context for libraries (1)
- More visual elements (1)
- Thematic issues (1)

Question 14: Do you have any thoughts for additional activities the Center for the Future of Libraries should undertake?

20 responses received – selected responses coded below

- Library case studies (2)
- Programming at conferences (2)
- Webinars (2)
- Engagement – social media (1)
- Fellowships (1)
- Raise visibility (1)