1st Annual Report of
Entrepreneurship & Maker Spaces
A Member Initiative Group of the American Library Association

September 21, 2016

MIG Purpose
Maker and entrepreneurship spaces share a creative, entrepreneurial approach to solving problems. Knowledge of design, lean experimentation, prototyping, and customer consultation help both makers and entrepreneurs. Design thinking tools can also help libraries innovate internally. This MIG also supports teams and individuals who are testing ways libraries can learn and innovate faster.

We believe this MIG aligns with ALA’s new Strategic Plan in these areas:

- We are part of our profession’s support for the core value of innovation
- Transforming Libraries’ goal “Every library is a hub of community engagement, innovation and continual learning.”
- Strategic Direction: Professional and Leadership Development, especially as we support libraries applying design thinking and lean startup methods in their exploration of new projects and directions.

Goals:
- Collaborate on maker/Innovator resource creation
- Maker/Innovator resource-sharing
- Networking, group support, and learning
- Building capacity by training staff on entrepreneurship skill sets
- Teaching, and presenting learning/findings at conferences

Summary of Accomplishments
Currently there are 1,435 international members of the Facebook group, our official place for communication. Conversations ebb and flow, but it is an active forum with at least one post a day.

So far our outward-looking initiatives have been centered on a presence at the ALA Annual conference. Thanks to ALA, we have been able to co-sponsor our workshops with the Center for the Future of Libraries. We also sponsored meetups in the Uncommons both years; however attendance was low.

- ALA Annual 2016:
  - Top Tools for Changemakers slides, on Haiku Deck
  - Top Tools for Changemakers handouts, on Google Drive
- ALA Annual 2015:
  - An Innovation Workshop for Library Entrepreneurs and Makers (and Librarians Who Support Entrepreneurs and Makers)
  - Because Innovation is a Literacy, on Haiku Deck
Future Actions

Amy Vecchione and Lisa Bunker have begun planning a “23 Things” system of interactive staff tutorials. Patterned after Helen Blowers’ concept, the weekly tutorials will encourage staff to visit their area startup, coworking or maker spaces, identify narrow customer segments and do an empathy map, pitch a crazy idea, do a cost-analysis, explore Tinkercad or Thingiverse, and more. We have identified the “things” we want to start with, and will start writing them soon so they can be tested and used. Like Blowers’ 23 Things, we hope that libraries will adapt the idea for their own use and then share the tutorials they have created too.

We also will be developing what is now a very rudimentary website: [http://www.libraryideatoolkit.org/](http://www.libraryideatoolkit.org/) that will house the initial 23 Things tutorials.

Given that there is now a STEM in Libraries MIG covering maker spaces Lisa is talking with Tina about shifting the focus of this MIG to entrepreneurship and innovation. To that end, Lisa posted a poll on the Facebook Group asking where members see the most value in the group. Over 2 months we’ve heard from over 40 members, and by far the largest choice has been “Learn How libraries can support all kinds of innovation,” chosen by 31 members. “Maker space support” received 9 votes, and other startup/innovation choices received 19 votes as well. Lisa has proposed that we be renamed as the “Library Entrepreneurship & Innovation” MIG, but we will also put that up for a vote. You can see the poll results [here](http://www.libraryideatoolkit.org/).

Our challenge, we believe, has been in building momentum and real collaboration, and we believe that narrowing our focus will help. So far only a very few members have been doing the heavy lifting. We are very interested in hearing what other groups find to be successful.

Lisa has also been interested in learning how design thinking fits into larger efforts to make innovation community-driven, and not innovation for innovation’s sake. Above is a map created after ALA Annual 2016 that collects strategies in use by American libraries. Lisa’s intent is to interview library staff to find out other structures (formal and informal) in use across the country.
Co-Conveners
Lisa Bunker, founder
Sonya Durney, library entrepreneurship services
Amy Vecchione, 23 things initiative