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A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

young adult library services



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INSIDE:

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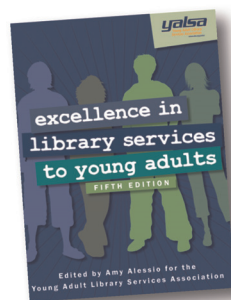
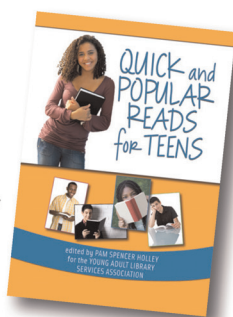
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Edited by Tina Frolund

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Linda Braun, Hillias J. Martin and Connie Urquhart

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Sarah Flowers

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About This Cover

Poster art for Teen Tech Week™, March 3–7, 2010. Teen Tech Week is an annual initiative sponsored by YALSA to ensure teens are competent and ethical users of technology, particularly those available at libraries. To purchase the poster or other Teen Tech Week materials, visit www.alastore.ala.org. Poster by Distillery Design Studio.

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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.

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from the Editor

Sarah Flowers

Learn, Create, Share @ your library®

Teens and technology are a natural. Today's teens were born between 1992 and 1998. That means there has never been a day in their lives that did not include personal computers, the Internet, and cell phones. So clearly, for those of us who work with teens, it is way past time to get over thinking about technology as "all that new stuff." Of course, new types of hardware emerge all the time, and new applications crop up daily. However, we owe it to ourselves and our teens to keep up, to know what's out there, and to think constantly about how these technology applications can be used in libraries. This year's Teen Tech Week theme, "Learn, Create, Share @ your library," applies as much to librarians and library workers as it does to the teens we serve.

I am very excited about this issue of YALS, which offers some very practical suggestions for working with technology and teens in both school and public libraries. Many thanks to YALSA's Teen Tech Week committee, chaired first by Heidi Dolamore and then by Kelly Czarnecki, for coming up with lots of great ideas to share with YALSA members. Camden Tadhg, one of YALSA's past Teen Tech Week mini-grant winners, tells us about how she used the grant to learn how to make music by bending circuits and then shared that knowledge with her teens. Mary Fran Daley shares some free online tools, Laura Peowski offers some tips for engaging teens online, Mari Hardacre talks to teens about technology, and Kim Herrington focuses on how school librarians can tap into TTW. Christy Mulligan and Cynthia Matthias describe Hennepin County Library's Teen Tech Squad, a model for teen leadership, Suellen Adams talks about how to use digital tools to market the homework center, and Aaron Dobbs explores some of the possibilities of ALA Connect.

It is not only about tech. Mina Gallo offers suggestions for a year's worth of teen volunteer projects and Vivian Howard explores the influence that peers have on teen reading. Add all that to reviews of professional resources and the YALSA update and you have a jam-packed issue.

In all of these pages, you are sure to find something to *learn*, something you can *create*, and lots of things you will want to *share*—@ your library. Meanwhile, do not forget to register for Teen Tech Week. Registration is free and gives you access to the 2010 logo, which you can use to promote Teen Tech Week by adding it to your library's web site, blog, Facebook page, or other resources. Check out Teen Tech Week products, including decals, posters, bookmarks, digital downloads, and more by going to www.ala.org/teentechweek. YALS

YALSA Rocks Technology

from the President

Linda W. Braun



Don't stop me if you've already heard this: when I was in library school and computers were just beginning to show up in libraries, a professor predicted that within ten years all libraries would be filled with computers. My response: "Not in a library where I work; I love books."

Once I had my first professional library position and began seeing the enthusiastic way teens interact with technology in the library, I did a 180. I realized the library wasn't about what I thought teens should use; it was about how I could help teens successfully use the increasing variety of tools and resources that would make positive contributions to their lives.

I knew I needed to get some more education. I needed to learn why teens gravitate to technology and how I as a librarian could support their technology needs and interests. I also wanted to find examples of ways that teens and librarians were already using technology and use those as jumping-off points for programs and services in the library where I worked.

In those early days of technology integration in teen library services, the research, models and best practices were limited. There were no Teen Tech Weeks, no e-chats, no webinars, no blogs, no wikis.

As I think back on this, I can't help being envious, but inspired, by the many technology tools, resources, and methods of support that YALSA provides to its members. Think about it:

- The first Wednesday of each month, YALSA sponsors an e-chat on a topic of interest to librarians who work with teens. These real-time conversations give participants an opportunity to talk with peers about a popular topic or new trend and get feedback on ideas, successes, and challenges.
- The YALSA blog covers a wide range of topics from news about YALSA and its activities to trends in programming and services for adolescents. Each month, the blog receives about fourteen thousand hits. It's a resource for finding out what's going on and conversing with others about libraries and teens.
- Audio and video have proven to be a great way for YALSA to share information with members. For example, podcasts on YALSA's financial health were produced when there was a downturn in the U.S. economy. Over the past few years YALSA has also published podcast interviews with award-winning authors and conversations about diversity in the library. Audio and video are also a way that YALSA briefs those who can't attend conferences and meetings. Audio and video were used in conjunction with the YA Literature Symposium in fall 2008, and video interviews with attendees and presenters have been part of every recent Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference.
- Wikis are an important part of how YALSA interacts with members and gives them opportunities to develop content. In 2009, YALSA crowdsourced development of a booklist focusing on titles that every teen library should have. People from around the country added their suggestions for the list via the wiki. Similarly, many people generate details for the YALSA wiki about programs and meetings scheduled for the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, as well as information about what to do, where to eat, and where to stay while in a meeting or conference city.
- YALSA uses social networking both to connect with members and to help members better understand the social networking tools themselves. YALSA maintains both MySpace and Facebook accounts and is actively using Twitter to inform followers of upcoming events and news of interest to teens and librarians. In fact, YALSA was the first ALA division to set up a Twitter account as a way to connect with teen librarians.
- Teen Tech Week is a great way for librarians to celebrate the many ways that technology can support teen learning and literacy, and it highlights the important role that libraries can play in providing technology skills to teens through programming and services. YALSA started Teen Tech Week just three years ago, and already many teen librarians find the materials produced and distributed essential for integrating technology into their teen library services.

A new development: In 2010, YALSA's annual President's Program—which traditionally takes place on-site at the annual conference—will be entirely virtual. This format will give an increased number of members the opportunity to participate, and will again give YALSA the chance to test out a new way to use technology. Stay tuned for details.

There is no doubt that YALSA has embraced technology as a tool to support members, and is willing to take risks in the technology realm in order to understand the potential a specific tool has for the work of the association. Overall, YALSA rocks when it comes to using technology! YALS

feature

The View from ALA

Connect With What's Important to *You* on ALA Connect

By Aaron Dobbs

ALA Connect is a Web platform created to promote communication and collaboration among ALA members. For the last nine months, ALA divisions, round tables, interest groups, and members have been exploring ALA Connect to find ways to leverage this new application to distribute committee work and find or create connections to other ALA communities working on similar efforts.¹

We haven't exhausted all the possibilities yet, by far. You can use ALA Connect to highlight what your committee, interest group, or self-organized community of practice is doing. You can easily find engaged, like-minded (and even contrary-minded) library folk to help move your efforts forward. ALA members use their ALA website login information to log

in to ALA Connect. Not sure what that is? The ALA Membership office can help you recover it. Not an ALA member? You're still welcome to participate on ALA Connect—just create an account.

My first position straight out of library school was at Brooklyn Public Library, working mainly with young adults and children in their transition from childhood into young adulthood. Brooklyn Public Library had an excellent internal support system in place for its librarians. However, if ALA Connect had been around then, it would have been a great way for me to stay involved with national-level issues via ALA (this was during my “I can't afford to eat after paying the student loan monthly payment, let alone pay dues and go to ALA conferences” phase). ALA Connect provides opportunities to network with peers who are

dealing with the same issues you face, as well as with role models and possible mentors. This includes mentors in young adult (YA) librarianship and mentors who can help you meet and become known to the movers and shakers inside YALSA and ALA.

Right now ALA Connect is only a little more than nine months old. This platform is wide open and fertile ground for engaged, energetic people to get out there and have their ideas heard and discussed and build their reputations. If you find a group that encompasses what you're passionate about, go forth and participate. Share and learn. What? You don't find a group like that? Create one! (If you build it, they will come.) Maybe no one has thought of your idea, or maybe someone has, but they decided not to post it. ALA Connect is flexible and allows users the latitude to organize communities as they organically develop.

What sorts of things can I expect to find on ALA Connect?

You will find more ALA communities than you can shake a stick at or tell to get off your lawn. ALA divisions, round tables, committees, interest groups, and other official ALA entities each have their own, prepopulated, group space. Check out the YALSA space, where you will find information about upcoming YALSA online chats, held on the first Wednesday of each month from 8 to 9 P.M. Eastern time.² Recent chats included “Advocacy” in October; “Cool Teen Programs for under \$100” in November; “Teens and Technology” in December; and “Your YALSA New Year's Resolution” in January. Upcoming chats will be on “Building and Defending Your Teen Services Budget” (Feb. 3), “Engaging the After-School Crowd” (Mar. 3), and “Programming for Older Teens” (Apr. 7).

You will also find annual conference programs, plus legislative advocacy efforts

AARON W. DOBBS is Systems and Electronic Resources Librarian at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania and an active ALA member as ALA Councilor at Large, LITA Director at Large, and a member of the ALA Website Advisory Committee.

and recommendations. In addition to YALSA events, the YALSA community tag brings together disparate goings-on that relate to young adult library services, including the various YALSA task forces (Reader's Choice, Competencies, etc.), interest groups (Teen Read Week, Youth Participation, Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, and so on), and of course, the YALSA committees.³ There are also cross-divisional groups and communities, such as the AASL/ALSC/YALSA School–Public Library Cooperation Committee.⁴ I love to see mutually developed sets of best practices come out of interdivisional efforts such as this.

Along with the “official” ALA and YALSA groups, ALA Connect users can create communities. Communities are like groups, but (unlike official groups) you can create communities that cross over multiple ALA entities or define an issue or area of practice. A video example highlighted in AL Focus is “Dog-Loving Librarians Who Knit and Watch *Lost*.”⁵ Videos that explain and demonstrate uses for ALA Connect, from an ALA Emerging Leaders Team, are linked from a post on the ALA Student Member Blog.⁶ Did you know there is a YALSA Student Interest Group Community on ALA Connect?⁷ Whether or not you're a member of the YALSA Student Interest Group on Ning, consider joining the current community members on Connect.⁸ ALA Connect is an easy way to connect across related groups and communities in YALSA and in other divisions.

There are plenty of other ways to get involved with YALSA and ALA on ALA Connect. There is a very active Young Librarians Working Group tasked with making suggestions to improve the ALA experience for newer librarians.⁹ (If you have ideas about this, please share—more brain power equals better results.) Another active community is the Improve ALA Connect community which offers ALA Connect users (ALA members or not) a

public venue for suggesting improvements to the service.¹⁰

The ALA New Members Round Table (NMRT) has a community called Career Connections where some have posted their resumes and invited comments and suggestions for improvement.¹¹ People in hiring positions, as well as job seekers, participate in this community. It gives those involved the opportunity to provide or gain insights into the search process from both sides—search committee and potential hires alike.

What knowledge would make it easier for me to connect with ALA Connect?

The ALA Connect Help Community offers comments and suggestions on how to effectively use ALA Connect.¹² Particularly helpful posts include “Finding New Groups that Might Interest You,” “Keeping Up with Connect: What's Going On,” and “What's New with My Groups: Finding and Featuring Group Information on ALA Connect.”¹³ After viewing these three ALA Connect help posts, you'll know things those of us who have used ALA Connect from its inception learned by banging rocks together to see what happened. If you're interested in future plans for this tool, please check out the ALA Connect Roadmap.¹⁴

Long story short, ALA Connect will become what we all make of it. ALA Connect will be more powerful as more people use it. As Peter Bromberg comments in *Library Garden*, “[I]t is getting exponentially more useful and powerful with each new user.”¹⁵ And as Christopher Harris puts it in *School Library Journal*, “Along with the potential for involvement, though, comes a responsibility for taking action. For the many members who have been asking for virtual committees and ways to be connected without attending

conferences, this is the time to step up and get involved.”¹⁶

Feel free to drop me a line while you're exploring ALA Connect or add me as a friend or colleague (or whatever suits our relationship). I look forward to hearing from you on ALA Connect! YALS

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I have always wanted my work to reflect my personal passion for social change. After graduating from Smith College, a women's college in Northampton, Mass., in 2002, I returned home to San Francisco and dedicated myself to learning as much as possible about the nonprofit sector. I found a niche in outreach and database management, understanding that I am definitely a "people person" and also someone who loves technology. Unfortunately, like many nonprofit workers, I began to burn out and become frustrated from increasingly stressful working conditions with low pay and little or no room for growth into management positions without a professional degree. I started to consider alternate careers in which I could incite social change from a more sustainable place. As a humanities major and lifelong lover of books, I began to consider librarianship. Soon, I realized that librarianship involved a lot more than just books. I found that it was a perfect marriage between my work experience in database management and outreach and my desire to positively impact communities. By becoming a librarian, I began to realize that I could offer access to crucial information—and teach skills to access that information—to communities with less access to resources because of race, class, age, citizenship status, sexual orientation, or native language. As soon as I discovered organizations like YALSA and REFORMA, which spoke to my personal passions of working with teens and Spanish-speakers, I knew this was the right career for me.

My interest in youth services stems from having had the benefit of excellent adult mentors who supported my interests and ambitions throughout my teen years. Adolescence is an incredibly tumultuous time of figuring out so much about oneself and one's place in the world. Without those adult mentors, I would be a much

less confident person than I am today. I have always wanted to work with youth to reciprocate the support and encouragement that I received as a teenager.

One of the organizations I have worked for is YouthNoise, a nonprofit social networking website for youth activists around the world. At YouthNoise, we were trying to test how we could leverage Web 2.0 tools to empower public high school students to take a stand for better education in light of the devastating budget cuts proposed for California public schools in 2008. As part of this campaign, I coordinated statewide outreach that included a two-week van tour throughout inner-city public high schools in Los Angeles to allow young people to share their visions for a better education on a custom-built web-based platform.

As an aspiring librarian, it was an obvious choice to seek out youth services and continue the advocacy I began at YouthNoise. As the library assistant in an inner-city public high school in San Francisco, I have seen my role as "the ultimate cheerleader" in a teen's life. Whether it is helping them tackle an essay on a Sherman Alexie novel, guiding them to reliable sites on the Internet for research, or hearing them out about a strenuous friendship in their life, I cherish the role a librarian offers in a teenager's life.

It is an incredible honor to be a YALSA Spectrum Scholar. It is not an exaggeration to say that receiving the news about receiving a Spectrum Scholarship was like winning the Publisher's Clearinghouse sweepstakes! The incredible

Spectrum Scholar

Advocate, Mentor, Change Agent

By Cristina E. Mitra

CRISTINA MITRA is a Spectrum Scholar and a student at San Jose State University's SLIS. She graduated cum laude from Smith College with a degree in Spanish and Latin American Studies. She lives in San Francisco where she is the Disability Program Navigator Librarian. In addition to being an aspiring YA librarian, she is a trained dancer, amateur cook, and urban biking enthusiast. You can reach her at cemitra@gmail.com.

financial assistance allows me to attend my MLIS program at San Jose State University. In addition, I now feel that I have a family of new and veteran library and information science professionals to depend on and learn from to enter my new career in librarianship with confidence. I am eager and excited to get involved in YALSA in any way that I can and I have signed on to become a YALSA blogger, which I will get to once the semester's demands die down a bit! I think one of my strongest skills is in building relationships with people and I look forward to making

lasting relationships within YALSA, with other Spectrum Scholars, and throughout other branches of ALA to make a lasting positive impact on youth services and establish its place within a changing world and difficult economy.

I would just like to take the opportunity again to thank YALSA for the opportunity to be a YALSA Spectrum Scholar. I would especially like to thank the Friends of YALSA, whose contributions provided the money for the scholarship. I come from a family of recent immigrants, from the Philippines and

Mexico, and my parents and grandparents did not have the expectation that anyone in their family would receive a master's degree to be able to work as a professional. As a bilingual Spanish-speaker, I am eager to find ways to connect with Spanish-speaking teens as someone who can speak their native and cultural language. Finally, as a member of the LGBT community, it is very important to me to connect with the work that youth services professionals have been doing to include the needs of LGBT and questioning youth and offer the library as another safe space for them. YALS

Celebrate TEEN TECH WEEK™ March 7-13, 2010

Teen Tech Week is a national initiative for teens, librarians, educators, parents, and other concerned adults that highlights the many types of technology available to teens at libraries. The 2010 theme — Learn Create Share @ your library — encourages creativity and positions the library as a place to safely explore technology at libraries, including DVDs, music, gaming, video production, online homework help, social networking, tech workshops, and more.

For more information on Teen Tech Week, visit www.ala.org/teentechweek.



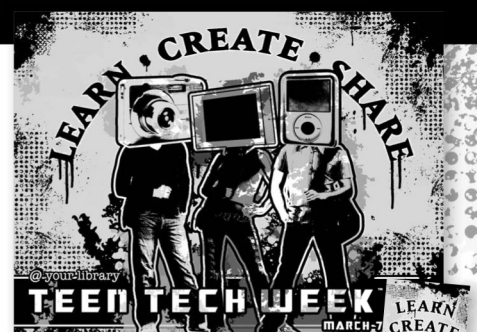
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Learn Create Share Pamphlet [download]
Foldable pamphlet containing books, websites, and audiobooks for this year's theme.
Item #5057-1013 \$29



2010 Teen Tech Week Poster
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Item #5050-1011 \$12



Learn Create Share Bookmark
2" x 6"
Item #5052-1011 \$8.50

www.alastore.ala.org

ALA Store purchases fund advocacy, awareness, and accreditation programs for library professionals worldwide.



YALSA has sponsored Teen Tech Week™ (TTW) as a yearly event since 2007. This initiative was established to encourage and enable teens to be “competent and ethical users of technologies,” especially those available through libraries. It highlights librarians as “qualified, trusted professionals in the field of information technology.” This year’s TTW theme is “Learn, Create, Share @ your library,” a theme that speaks to education. School librarians should challenge themselves to find a way to participate.

When I attended my district’s back-to-school meetings in August, I mentioned that I was on the TTW committee this year and asked some of the other secondary librarians whether they had ever celebrated TTW. No one had. Some had never even heard of TTW. The ones who had heard of it complained about the unfortunate timing of the week. We teach in a Texas district, and since TTW is in the spring, it, like many other spring activities, falls prey to the strict focus on state testing. In addition to the unfortunate timing of TTW, other librarians complained that the Internet filter blocked all the sites they might want to show to students and that they doubted that administrators would approve of the promotion of any technology that was not directly related to the curriculum.

The difficulty that many school librarians face in promoting TTW is not a new problem. In February 2008, Frances Jacobsen Harris, a former TTW committee member, wrote about the problem in an article for *School Library Journal*. In “Teen Tech Week, despite Limited Access,” Harris acknowledged the difficulty that school librarians face because in their libraries, “technology is highly controlled and restricted.”¹ The obstacles she identified remain obstacles for most school librarians today. Schools continue to block access to social networking sites such

as MySpace and Facebook, to prohibit the use of MP3 devices in the classroom, and to restrict the use of blogs and wikis. It is very difficult to overcome these obstacles and especially frustrating when, as one of my school librarian friends put it, schools “seem keen on teachers being up with technology, but ban almost all student technology.”²

I queried some school librarians about their experience, or lack thereof, with TTW. Only one of them, a high school librarian, had ever done anything for TTW. Three or four years ago, she “bought the posters . . . had a book display of nonfiction/fiction with technology-based themes . . . got together with the [teachers of technology-related courses] and . . . had some student projects available for viewing.”³ Although she could see that

the students were interested, she “[felt] like there should have been something more,” but restrictions on student technology use and access to the Internet prevented her from doing more. She pointed out that in the years since, TTW has unfortunately conflicted with spring break or state testing. She ended with this statement: “I love the idea, though, and would like to do more with it.” Most of the school librarians that I spoke with echoed her sentiment.

Not all school librarians have been stifled in their efforts to promote TTW. In the first year of TTW, students from a high school library won YALSA’s TTW video contest.⁴ In the same year, the first-place winner of the TTW display contest was a school librarian.⁵ In 2008, high school students won first place and second place in TTW’s promotional song

Now Is the Time!

Teen Tech Week in a School Library

By Kim Herrington

KIM HERRINGTON is the librarian at Pearland Junior High West in Pearland, Texas. She is currently a member of the Teen Tech Week Committee and is on the Texas Library Association’s New Member Round Table Outreach Committee. She maintains Breathing Space, a blog that is mostly about books (kimsbs.blogspot.com), and she tweets as [kaykayh](#) about books, the Dallas Cowboys, the Houston Astros, politics, and Houston happenings. She spends way too much time on the Web.

contest.⁶ In 2009, two of the twenty TTW mini-grant winners were school librarians.⁷ Of course, two of twenty is not a very high percentage, but perhaps not very many school librarians apply because of the aforementioned obstacles or lack of technology capabilities in their school libraries.

To those school librarians who have hesitated in the past, I say this school year is a great time to do something for TTW and “to do more with it.”⁸ Thanks to the Broadband Data Improvement Act, which was signed into law in December 2008, schools that use e-rate funding are now required to teach students “appropriate online behavior, including online interactions with other individuals in social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.”⁹ According to my school’s Campus Instructional Technology Specialist, schools not only have to “do some type of Internet safety training/lesson” but also have to “document it and be ready to produce the material if audited.”¹⁰ Librarians should take advantage of this opportunity and promote TTW as part of this new mandate. Administrators should be more amenable to promotions and activities that can be used to document that the school is in compliance with this new requirement. Administrators, who in the past have said no to students’ blogging or participating in a Ning group, might be willing to approve these activities since they can be used to teach students about appropriate online behavior. In addition, at a time when many

school librarians fear that their jobs will be cut, being seen as a expert and leader on something like this new mandate might make the difference between being seen as expendable and not.

Even technologically challenged school librarians can do something to celebrate TTW, whether or not it is to be used as proof of compliance with the new law. For example, they could simply create a display of books about old and new technology or fiction books with technology-related themes. They could hand out copies of the YALSA’s “Social Networking: A Guide for Teens” brochure, available at www.ala.org/yalsa/handouts. School librarians with more advanced technology skills or access to more advanced technology could have students create YouTube videos or podcasts. YALSA’s TTW information page (www.ala.org/teentechweek) includes links to resources, including the brochure mentioned above and the TTW Wiki (wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Tech_Week). This wiki includes links to the current and past years’ wikis and links to resources. The current year’s wiki is a place where participants can share their ideas and experiences.

For the first two years of my school librarian career, I was frustrated in my desire to celebrate YALSA’s TTW. Both years the dates coincided with state testing dates, and my school, like most in this state, put everything except state testing on the back burner for a good portion of the spring semester. When I was asked to be on the TTW Committee,

I was very excited and immediately started brainstorming how I could do something, anything, for TTW this school year. I hope that other school librarians will join me in showing that the school library is a great place to “Learn, Create, Share.” YALS

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Libraries across the country are creating a wide variety of web-based and in-library homework help centers. Some are manned by adult volunteers, others by student tutors who help younger students. Librarians are virtually always involved in creating and promoting the centers. These centers may handle everything from remedial tutoring to hands-on assistance in planning, organizing, researching and writing papers, and other types of literacy instruction. Whatever the mission or goal of your particular center, it is not enough to design and build it, whether face-to-face, web-based, or both. Building it does not ensure that “they will come.”

Marketing is a joint process between service providers and clientele. It is no longer a matter of having an “us and them” relationship, but of having “us and us” as partners in the marketing process. Of course much more is involved. But the point is that marketing is more than just believing that we have a wonderful product and trying to convince others of this so that they will use it.

Therefore, we must not only make users aware of the services the homework center offers, but ideally give them a voice in the process, so that we can actually make the service work for them.

We must first determine who the customers are for our service. Then, since they exist in a rich context, we must evaluate that context, for instance, the other stakeholders, including parents, school personnel, and the community at large. Of course students and librarians are the first people we think of when developing a homework help center, but there are others we also need to reach—parents and school personnel, for instance. To a greater or lesser degree, most of these people are increasingly “plugged in” to digital technologies. So how can we go about using technology to reach these groups?

Reaching our customers, particularly teens, can be a challenge, especially if we

wish to attract those who do not already frequent the library. We often think of reaching our customers via local businesses such as banks and grocery stores, where parents might see fliers or other publicity, or in places where teens spend time, such as teen centers, youth clubs, the mall, and after-school activities. These channels remain, but they clearly leave out an important part of the teens’ context, the digital part.

We already know and use traditional publicity tools such as brochures, press releases, bulletin boards, and giveaways. But we need also to consider nontraditional means, such as social networking applications. The following are some ways to reach stakeholders, most importantly teens, through technology:

- E-mail and electronic discussion groups
- Web pages

- Blogs
- Social networking sites

E-newsletters for all sorts of groups and businesses have become popular in recent years. This innovation allows us to convey the same information to roughly the same audience as traditional paper newsletters for a smaller cost, since we no longer must consider printing costs and bulk mail rates. On the other side of the coin, however, is another whole set of technological and design issues. As Sevilla reminds us, e-newsletters, especially those in a text-only format, can have the same design problems as the paper variety.¹ Sometimes writers try to make them more pleasing by using html formats, but not every e-mail application deals well with these formats, and some users do not like them. Some e-newsletters are sent as mail attachments, which can result in technical issues.

Suellen Adams is an assistant professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Rhode Island. She has published articles on the importance of new media and new literacies in libraries. Ms. Adams also has a business background and teaches a course that emphasizes marketing and outreach to library patrons.

Because so many businesses and organizations now use e-newsletters, many customers have their e-mail boxes cluttered with such mail and they go directly into the junkmail, where they are not opened at all. Exacerbating this problem is the temptation to send mass e-mailings and to send more frequent e-newsletters, which may just increase the number of deletions by customers.

If the library wishes to send frequent updates, and if the customers wish to receive them, an electronic discussion list or blog targeted toward a certain customer population may be a better choice. In either case, those who really desire the information can subscribe and there is often a mechanism for response. This capability for customer response is a very useful part of many digital technologies and will help us fine-tune our service and its promotion.

Blogs are sites with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order so readers can see the latest news, but can also scroll down or link to archives of interest. Typically the blog will contain text and images, sometimes including videos, links to other pages, or other content. A vital aspect of maintaining a blog related to your homework help center is the interactive ability for readers to leave comments that is nearly always a feature of blogs. This gives us clues about who has interest and what they think. Be aware though, once a blog has been started, it must be kept up. Once the content becomes stale or outdated, the readers will not come back and the comments that could have helped strengthen the service will dry up. Someone must be assigned to keep the blog updated and follow the comments on a frequent basis.

Most libraries now have web pages that can be put to good use in promoting new services. A “see what’s new” button with the homework help center logo could be linked to a page specifically about the center, for

instance. And a library blog of any type should certainly be linked from the library page. Web pages of various municipalities can also serve as an entry to your web page. If the local school district approves, perhaps a link could be added to the schools’ web pages to the library page or the homework help center page. School websites are a particularly good way to reach teens and their parents. Both may visit these sites for items such as school newsletters, schedules of events, contact information, etc. If your information is prominent and inviting enough, this placement can raise awareness of your center and increase its use.

One way to think about social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook is this: from time immemorial, people have learned things by word of mouth through their connections. Even now, one of the most commonly sought and trusted sources of information is the peer group, and this is true whether one is a parent, a child, a teen, or a scientist or engineer. Information reported by a friend or colleague often carries more weight than a formal source. That is an unhappy thought for many librarians, but it need not be. The energy of informal communication can be harnessed online.

In social networking online we are purposely trying to create networks of people with whom we can share thoughts and who will, in turn, share information about our services with the rest of their networks. When using social networks, there are some important points to remember:

- We must take care to behave within our social networks as we would if we were dealing with people face-to-face. Just as a positive interaction or a negative interaction in person will make a difference in the information you pass on to others, so will a comparable interaction online.
- It is important to remember the proper uses of the social network. As

one expert commented, “Social networking sites are back-and-forth communication forums, not broadcast media. Annoy or abuse people and they’ll tell the world.”²

- Social networks, like any kind of personal relationship or network, require personal attention, and that means taking time. It is not enough to put up a MySpace page or a Facebook group and leave it for people to find. If you cannot be current, it may not pay to do it at all. Someone must update it often to keep others coming back for new content.
- It is important to follow the links and comments left by people responding to your content, making more personal connections by commenting there, checking their networks to see who you might contact, and so on. This is wonderful way to reach teens, but it is a labor-intensive process.

Finally, when considering any of these technological strategies, particularly blogging and social networking solutions, remember that it is unwise to jump in because it is “the thing.” All of these things sound glitzy and cool, but that may not be enough of a reason to make use of them. We must weigh the time and cost against the impact it will have on reaching our customers. YALS

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In the library meeting room, an air of controlled chaos reigns. In one corner, teens are hunched around a computer arguing heatedly about where exactly an audio track should end. In another corner, two teens are discussing the merits of different supernatural powers as they draw the main player character in the game they are designing. Next to them, a boy enhances a photograph he is going to import into a comic he is creating. The door opens and an elementary school-aged boy pokes his head in: “What y’all doin’ in here?” A teen employee hurries forward to invite the boy in and get him started drawing with a drawing tablet. This is what a typical Teen Tech Squad workshop looks like at Hennepin County Library.

Tech Squad a Model for Youth Leadership

In 2006, the former Minneapolis Public Library (now merged with Hennepin County Library) hired its first Teen Tech Squad—a group of four paid teen employees who led technology workshops aimed at teens and school-aged children. Three years later, the program has evolved into a model opportunity for youth leadership and twenty-first century skill building that can be adapted and used by libraries large and small. This opportunity is a perfect fit with Hennepin County Library’s priority of helping youth succeed and preparing them to be vital contributors to our community. Many workshops are informal, allowing kids to drop in and spend as little or as much time as they wish on a wide range of technology projects from game and animation creation to sound recording and editing, stop motion animation, and more.

Although teen interns hosting these programs have received training in many of the software programs used, they never claim to be experts. This creates a perfect

environment for building literacy skills like collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and technological fluency.

Workshops focus on using free, open-source software programs—welcome news to libraries as well as participants, who can build on and share projects outside of the library program. Finally, thanks to funding from the Best Buy Children’s Foundation, Hennepin County Library is able to offer a much-needed employment opportunity to youth in the community. Teen Tech Squad interns will frequently say they would do it for free, but we know this job is

creating an important and impressive first step on that career ladder.

The Teen Tech Squad has now expanded to three libraries—two within the city of Minneapolis and one in suburban Hennepin County. Each squad consists of four teen employees who are supervised by the teen or youth services librarian in their library. Although supervision is critical to helping these youth develop both leadership and job skills, much of the program’s success can be attributed to the fact that interns work as a team to determine and evaluate the

Hennepin County Library’s Teen Tech Squad

Youth Leadership and Technology Free-for-all

By Cynthia Matthias and Christy Mulligan

CYNTHIA MATTHIAS and CHRISTY MULLIGAN are teen services librarians at Hennepin County Library. Cynthia works at Brooklyn Park Library, and Christy works at Teen Central in Minneapolis.

Hennepin County Library's Teen Tech Squad



content and structure of the workshops they host.

Preparing for a Workshop

Team members meet before each workshop to create an outline and tip

sheets for software programs, prepare examples, and pull together materials they will need. Each session is followed up with a briefing session, in which interns talk with their supervisor about successes, challenges, and ways that the program could be adapted in the future. These meeting sessions have been critical to

shaping and adapting the program over the past three years. Team members may learn about a new software program from a workshop participant or receive feedback about activities that should be added to the program. Supervisors discuss these new ideas and help teams determine how new content can be integrated into open labs; they also tailor trainings to help them build the skills they need.

The workshops themselves take on a variety of formats. Most are informal, drop-in "Open Tech Labs," in which Tech Squad members set up laptop computers loaded with a variety of software programs for participants to use. Tech Squad members work with participants to help them try out these programs or work through a project they have already started. Teen Tech Squad members do, on occasion, schedule more formal workshops that focus on teaching a specific program or activity (stop motion animation, for example). These focused sessions are an effective way for Tech Squad members to introduce regular participants to new programs they have learned in training sessions with Science Museum teachers. Some workshops take place in library meeting rooms; others take place at tables in the public area of the library. Workshops are aimed at teens but open to interested participants of all ages. In all cases, Tech Squad members foster an environment where questions are encouraged, collaboration is key, and the goal is to experiment with new tools.

Continuing Education Strengthens the Squad

In addition to leading workshops, Tech Squad members have monthly continuing ed meetings. Continuing ed trainings may be with Learning Technologies Center staff from the Science Museum of Minnesota or simply a chance for the teens to brainstorm ideas. Trainings from the Learning

Technologies Center staff allow Tech Squad members to learn about new technology tools, discuss instructional techniques, and share challenges they have faced in workshops with experienced teachers. In addition to these trainings, supervisors schedule a monthly team meeting, in which interns spend three hours processing what they have learned, building example projects in new software programs and setting practical steps for building learning into workshop sessions. Trainings with paid instructors require a funding source and, as a result, may not be an option for all libraries. That does not mean that a Teen Tech Squad in your library must go without continuing education. Teen Tech Squad interns at Hennepin County have often used monthly meeting time to go through online tutorials for programs and teach themselves and then create teaching outlines they can use with

teen workshop participants. Setting aside time for learning and development is key.

Today's Tools of the Trade

Teen Tech Squad programs continue to adapt and evolve to provide new, challenging activities that meet the interests of youth participants. We are not sure what they will be using next week, but here is a current list of the Teen Tech Squad's tools of the trade:

Scratch

Scratch is a graphically based programming language developed by the MIT Media Lab. Users can create animations, games, music, and interactive art using images and sounds they create in Scratch. Images and sounds can also be imported from external sources or from other programs such as

Audacity and Art Rage. Users can share their projects with the world on the Scratch web site and find answers to their programming questions in the sizable and active online user forum. <http://scratch.mit.edu>

Art Rage

Art Rage is a drawing platform that emulates physical drawing materials and implements. Media available include oil paint, pencil, crayon, and airbrush. Finished images can be exported to a variety of standard image formats. The full version of Art Rage is available for purchase, but the free trial version contains many of the full version's functions. <http://artrage.com>

GIMP

GIMP is an open-source image-editing platform. GIMP offers a wide range of

Full scholarships available for school and public youth services librarians!



Sharing Success: Educating Professional Leaders in School and Public Youth Services Librarianship

This IMLS-funded grant will provide eight full-tuition scholarships to current school and public youth services librarians (or librarians who want to move into youth services) to earn a Certificate of Advanced Study from GSLIS and become involved in continuing LIS education.

Practicing youth services librarians are encouraged to apply for this 40-credit hour post-masters degree program. Study on campus or online through our award-winning LEEP program and take your professional practice to the next level.

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

options for manipulating photographs and other images as well as a simple paint program for drawing. GIMP supports most image file formats. <http://gimp.org>

Comic Life

Comic Life allows users to format images in a comics-style layout. Users can import images and arrange and crop them to fit a variety of cartoon frames as well as add text using standard comics conventions such as speech and thought bubbles. The free, 30-day trial version of Comic Life gives users access to the entire suite of Comic Life functions. <http://plasq.com/comiclifewin>

Audacity

Audacity is an open-source sound-editing platform. Users can record, cut, splice, and mix audio tracks as well as add simple audio effects. Audacity is also easy to use to convert sound files from one format to another. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>

Picasa

Picasa is Google's digital photograph manipulation software. Picasa is primarily used to organize photographs online and on the computer, but it also has some basic photograph editing functions. The software has an online component for sharing images and a computer desktop application for uploading, organizing, and editing images. <http://picasa.google.com>

SAM Animation

SAM animation is a software platform that allows users to create stop-motion animation with a computer and a video or still camera connected with a USB or

firewire cable. The software allows the user to change the frame rate, to order and sort frames, to overlay text over the frames, and to sync a soundtrack with the frames. The completed movie can be exported in a variety of film formats. <http://sanimation.com>

Junk Boxes

One person's junk is another person's treasure—tin foil, toilet paper tubes, broken toys, wire, duct tape, paper cups, spools from rolls of receipt printer paper, paper clips—these are the building blocks for many of our programs. Workshop participants can use these materials to construct game controllers that can be used to interact with games designed in Scratch or creatures that are animated by Cricket motors.

Pico Crickets

Pico Crickets are not free, but they are versatile and appeal to a wide range of ages. Crickets are computers that are controlled by programs written with Pico Blocks, another graphically based computer language developed by MIT Media Labs. The programmer writes the program on the computer and beams it to the "brain" of the Cricket. Crickets come with motors and a variety of Lego pieces, which can be used to construct machines, structures, and creatures. <http://picocricket.com>

Pico Boards

Pico Boards are not free, but they are a worthwhile investment. Pico Boards are connected to the computer with a USB cable and allow users to physically

interact with their Scratch programs. Pico Boards have sound and light sensors, a slider bar, and serial ports to which wires with alligator clips can be connected. <http://www.picocricket.com/picoboard.html>

Building 21st Century Literacy Skills

Teen Tech Squad workshops at Hennepin County Library provide a much-needed opportunity for youth in the community to create and explore new media and technology tools. Participants at Open Tech Labs probably would not describe what they are doing as "building 21st century literacy skills," but that, really, is the beauty of these programs. What appears to teen participants to be a technology free-for-all is a golden opportunity for youth to learn, collaborate, experiment, and share mixed-media projects in an informal environment. That alone might motivate libraries to consider offering the programs. Sneak a peek into one of the Teen Tech Squad workshops, and behind that cloud of chaos, you will see that is not the only outcome this program achieves. Teen participants do not just want to attain proficiency in the software programs available. One of the most common questions they ask is, "How can I get that job?" Teen Tech Squad interns are role models, and each session brings another opportunity for them to grow as leaders, peer mentors, and to be a positive force in their community. What more could you ask for? YALS

“Please come to my program! Please come to my program!” This line seems to be the mantra inside the heads of all librarians who are trying to start a teen volunteer or advisory group. Whether you are a new or experienced teen services librarian, you will at times feel as if you are begging teens to come to your programs.

At some point in your career, you will think about or be asked to start a volunteer or advisory board. Volunteer and advisory groups meet the criteria for the Search Institute’s forty developmental assets (see www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18). These groups meet the criteria for external assets under empowerment and constructive use of time, and for internal assets under social competencies, positive identity, and positive values.

I’ve had many failed attempts in twelve years of trying to start volunteer or advisory groups. I’ve found that teens love to volunteer, but on their own time. Teens would love to help out shelving books, but in a union work environment, that is not an option. When you have to “make up” jobs for teens to do around the library and have to work your schedule around a student’s school and activity schedule, it really creates more work for you! But don’t give up. Finding a way to start a group at your library can be a meaningful, rewarding activity for teenagers, so persevere!

Three years ago, I decided to try again and started a Student Advisory Board where students met once a month to write book reviews, work on library projects, preview anime, and fill out surveys. Even though I had a successful start, I found that those who kept coming didn’t really like watching anime or writing book reviews. They didn’t want to “advise,” but they were eager to help out and work on projects, so I morphed it into a Student Volunteer Group and planned a community service or library project for each meeting. If your

A Year in Volunteering at the Library

By Erminia M. Gallo

local schools require their students to fulfill service hours, this is a program your library should provide to meet their needs. Just set a time, and teens who want to volunteer will show up. The results will be a rewarding experience for you and your teen customers.

I found three key elements for successful volunteer projects. First, partner with the children’s staff. The children’s librarians have lots of programs throughout the year that could use help, and most teens love to work with children. Second, find projects that teens can do to help you with your programs or teen room. Third, learn easy-to-do projects that you can teach to your teen volunteers and that can easily be delivered to outside community centers. These elements were helpful to me in developing a successful student volunteer

program that can be repeated year after year.

Following is the 2008 Year in Volunteering at the Parma-Ridge Branch, Cuyahoga County Public Library for students in grades 5 through 12. (Check the Parma Ridge Branch Student Volunteer Group Webpage for 2009 news: <http://cuyahogalibrary.net/Branch.aspx?id=12361>.) All supply materials were provided by the Friends of the Parma Libraries.

January: Helping Out at the Library

Think of ways that volunteers can help out with your upcoming programs or bulletin board displays. Five students helped out with an upcoming mystery program and a

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February heart candy bulletin board. The mystery program preparation involved creating crime scenes on a poster board showing a bedroom, kitchen, office scenes, etc. The mystery program preparation supplies included old magazines, furniture catalogs, poster boards, glue, and scissors. For the valentine bulletin board, I made an outline of the heart using a marker, and had the students glue candy hearts on the outline. Volunteers could also create their own hearts. The material needed for this project is black poster board, candy conversation hearts, and glue.

March/April: No-Sew Blankets for Orphaned Cats

Five students made colorful no-sew cat blankets that were donated to the local animal shelter for orphaned cats and kittens. First, call your local animal shelter and see if they have any guidelines about



donations. This program will take one and a half to two hours, depending on the number of students you have signed up. (Thanks to fellow Teen Services librarians Brenna Friesner and Nancy Wolfinger for the idea and instructions for this project.)

No-Sew Cat Blanket Directions

Materials Needed

Fabric-cutting scissors
Rulers
Permanent markers

No-pill fleece fabric—cut the fabric in twenty-nine-inch square pieces prior to the program. Eight yards should make ten blankets.

1. Place one cut piece on top of a second cut piece. (Contrasting colors and prints make colorful blankets.)
2. Make sure the fuzzy side of the fleece faces outward for the top and bottom pieces.
3. Smooth out the blanket and match up the pieces, cutting off excess fabric.
4. Cut out a three-inch square at each corner of the fleece and remove the four corners.
5. Use a permanent marker to make the cutting lines, measuring the fringes three inches long by one and a half inches wide, starting from one corner and making your way around the blanket.
6. On the cutting lines, cut the three-inch fringes (bottom and top layer) around the blanket.
7. Take the top layer fringe and tie a knot with the bottom layer fringe, making your way around the blanket.
8. Make sure the knots are fairly tight so they cannot come undone easily or leave holes in the blankets. Knots can be double-knotted.

(Note that loose knots may be a suffocation hazard for the cat.)

9. Trim back any long pieces of the fringes. (Long pieces may be a choking hazard for the cat.)
10. When you are done, you should have a cozy cat blanket.

May: Help Children Plant Flowers

Six volunteers helped children plant flowers outside the library. Volunteers helped the children dig holes and cover up the plants with dirt. When everything was planted, the flowers were watered and everyone enjoyed refreshments. Materials needed for this program were watering cans, digging tools, marigold and petunia plants, and a place around your library to plant them.

June: Summer Reading Ice Cream Social Kickoff

Volunteers worked at the various stations that were set up. Nearly three hundred people registered for the summer reading program. Four students helped with the ice cream social. Various stations that were set up that day were:

1. Ice Cream Station for passing out ice cream (ice cream cups, eating utensils, and a refrigerator were pre-ordered from a local ice cream take-away store)
2. Topping Station (sprinkles, fudge, whipped cream)
3. Summer Reading Registration Station
4. Prize Giveaway Station

July: Book Buddies/ Little Buddies

Little book buddies in grades one through three were paired with a



student who had completed either grade four, five, six, seven, or eight. Little buddies read with their big buddies and then they participated jointly in activities and games. For the first half hour, little buddies chose their books and read their book to their assigned big buddies. In the second half hour, little buddies played games with their big book buddies. At the end of the session, big buddies and little buddies were given certificates for their participation. Supplies needed were appropriate age-level books, educational games, and a timer.

Puppet Show

Eight volunteers presented a puppet show and helped children with a craft. Volunteers held up their sea creature puppet while the children's librarian read the poems in *Commotion in the Ocean* (written by Giles Andreae and illustrated by David Wojtowycz; Little Tiger Press: 1998).

August: Cards for the USO

Four students made cards to send to the United Services Organization for the troops. Supplies needed for this were construction paper, crayons, markers, and, if available, a die-cutting machine with greeting card dies.

September: Halloween Party Orientation

One student attended the orientation for October's halloween party. We discussed the agenda for the party, went over their participation in the *Chocolate Chip Ghost* story, and helped prepare decorations for the party.

October: Halloween Party

Four student volunteers hosted a halloween party for children. Thirty children and parents attended. Volunteers helped with decorating, passing out prizes, refreshments, participated in the *Chocolate Chip Ghost* story (based on the book by Meighan Peifer and Phyllis French, Leathers Publishing: 2004), taking pictures, putting together the paper plate witch craft, and cleaning up.

November/December: Watercolor Bookmarks

Three students made watercolor bookmarks as part of this two-part program. Completed bookmarks were

delivered to a local hospital for patients in December. Bookmarks can also be delivered to a local senior center.

Water Color Bookmarks Supplies

Novelty (eyelash) yarn
Watercolor paper
Hole punch
Watercolor paints (non-toxic)
Jagged edge scissors
Paper cutter (optional)
Beads, stickers, stamps (optional)
Cups of water
Plastic cloths or paper to cover tables

Directions First Session

1. Use watercolors and paint both sides of the watercolor sheets. Use various colors for colorful/rainbow designs.
2. Leave the sheets to dry.

Second Session

3. When the sheets are completely dry, cut the paper into strips, bookmark size.
4. Use the jagged-edge scissors and cut the sides.
5. Punch a hole at the top of the bookmark.
6. Tie on the yarn.
7. Optional: Add fancy beads, stickers, and library name if donating to a special organization. YALS

feature

Hot Spot: Teen Tech Week

Bending Circuits and Making Music

Teen Tech Week in Downtown Minneapolis

By Camden Tadhg

The table in the back of Teen Central resembles a computer graveyard; plastic casings, circuit boards, and wires are strewn across the table's surface while a group of young people use pliers and other tools to pull strange groans and wails from the circuits. Library-sponsored cyborg torture? Nope! These teens are participating in a circuit-bending workshop.

In 2009, Teen Central at the Hennepin County Library—Central in Minneapolis, Minn., was honored to be awarded a Teen Tech Week Mini-Grant, sponsored by YALSA and the Verizon Foundation. The grant provided funds for one-on-one training at the Science Museum of Minnesota, where I learned the basics of this unusual and creative activity. The remaining grant money funded a Teen Tech Week circuit-bending party.

Circuit-bending is the process of using electronic sound-making circuits to create sounds and music that the circuits were not designed to create. Electronic music-making toys for children are the most common instruments; they contain simple circuits and are designed to make various noises, be they polka beats or mooing cows. Initially developed in the 1960s, circuit-bending remains on the cutting edge of electronic music; artists such as Blur and Peter Gabriel include circuit-bent instruments in their work.¹ Circuit-bending offers an opportunity to demystify technology hardware and experiment with music and creativity.

What is great about circuit-bending is that you can run this activity on your own. Experts are a fantastic resource, and if your budget can cover it, I strongly recommend hiring an expert circuit-bender to lead workshops. But if that's not an option, you

can learn the necessary skills and lead a workshop on your own. You do not even need to be highly tech-savvy. Provided that the sight of a circuit board does not cause you to hyperventilate and you are willing to experiment, this is a skill that is within your reach. I strongly recommend *Circuit-Bending: Build Your Own Alien Instruments* by Reed Ghazala as a starting point. It covers electrical components, tools, instrument decoration, and more, all with a wonderfully irreverent tone. It also includes step-by-step instructions for making specific circuit-bent instruments, so if you can find the appropriate raw materials, you can create a fully functional instrument for demonstration without all the trial and error.

Materials Needed

Tools. You will need screwdrivers in many sizes and types, especially one with a Phillips head. Look for screwdrivers with long necks to reach the screws. A set of tiny jeweler's screwdrivers is essential for the interior screws. You will also need wire cutters and wire strippers. Needle-nose pliers, though not essential, are useful for maneuvering into tighter spaces. I suggest skipping the soldering iron; permanent connections are not strictly necessary and it takes some practice to use the iron safely and successfully.

Supplies. Various supplies all serve the same basic purpose—to connect points on the circuit board. Play-dough is the simplest tool, and some connections can be made with your hand, but ideally you also want electrical components. Test leads (lengths of wire with alligator clips at each end) are the easiest to use, but simple pieces of insulated wire will also work. LEDs, or light-emitting diodes, add a visual component to the experimentation. You should also collect various kinds of switches—push button (e.g., computer power button), toggle (e.g., light switches), and potentiometers (e.g., volume controls). Purchasing resistors, capacitors, and transistors is optional; although they can make some

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pretty cool sounds if you find the right connection points, it is more difficult to locate those connection points. These supplies can be purchased at low cost from a surplus store.

Your most essential raw materials, however, are children's toys. For these, I suggest a thrift store, or if you do not have a budget, try asking teens and your coworkers to bring in electronic toys they no longer need. You want toys that make music, especially those that can play a continuous tune, like the background beats on a toy keyboard. Be sure to bring batteries and a screwdriver (for those pesky childproof battery cases) to the store so you can make sure the toys actually work. Some stores do not mind if you switch out batteries in the aisles; others require you to bring toys to the cashier or customer service desk before removing batteries. Check with store staff to ensure you are following the correct procedures.

Space. Your ideal workshop space will be well-lit and contain a large table with space for tools and supplies in the center. It is useful to provide heavy objects (some nice vampire romances or fantasy epics will work!) against which the teens can prop the top half of their toys. The wires that are linked between the top and bottom halves of the plastic casing are usually too short for the two halves to be laid flat.

The Workshop

I organized the workshop around three sections. First, we took apart the toys and I explained, in very general terms, how the toys work and how electricity passes along the circuit. I had the teens explore the circuits and test what noises their toys made under normal circumstances. Second, we moved on to experimenting with simple connections. Play-



dough is the best place to start; it triggers sounds very easily and the teens can change the sounds by mashing the play-dough around. For more accurate pinpointing, we used insulated wires with alligator clips. Last, I had the teens select a few connections that produced interesting sounds and experiment with the more complicated components. The potentiometers were particularly popular because they gave the teens more control in creating various sounds.

Lessons Learned

Every new program has its own learning curve. Here are some tips based on my experience of running a circuit-bending workshop.

Set Realistic Goals. Having each participant create their own circuit-bent instrument is a complicated, time-consuming, and expensive proposition that does not lend itself to a casual setting. Unless you have a small group of very enthusiastic teens in a closed setting, it is probably too much to take on for your first program. Luckily, the experimental nature of bending circuits lends itself to a more

casual atmosphere. Teens can use play dough and wires to test out different connections and see what sounds they can make without creating any permanent connections. This also allows you to re-use the electronic toys for multiple programs and participants.

Test Your Toys. It is best to take apart every one of the toys ahead of time. Because the toys are machine-made, it often takes quite a bit of work to loosen up the screws. The process requires patience that your teens may not have during the program. Also, it allows you to weed out any toys that have internal problems or

simply will not open. Just be sure to put the toys back together again before your program so the teens can still have fun taking things apart! Claiming one toy as your own permanent circuit-bending tool during your initial tests allows you to map out cool sounds for easy demonstration. If you have the time and inclination, you can even solder a few permanent connections to show your teens.

Plan for the Screws. It sounds a little silly, but this was one of the biggest problems I ran into. Ghazala suggests putting the screws on the magnetic portion of the speaker, which is a perfect solution when you are working with one or two toys. When you have six to ten rambunctious teens working on toys at the same table, however, things get a little more complicated. My suggestion: when you take the toys apart ahead of time, use a digital camera to take a picture of one of each kind of screw in the toy and note how many of each you need to put the toy back together. When you collect the dozens of screws that will end up under and around your workspace, you can use the pictures to match each toy with the correct screws.

Get Teen Buy-In. For some teens, the idea of taking something apart and messing with the insides will be an easy sell, but for others it may be hard to visualize what circuit-bending is all about. See if a local circuit-bending artist would be willing to do a demo for your Teen Advisory Group or bookmark some circuit-bending performances on YouTube to give teens a clearer picture. Make connections with the activities your teens are already enthusiastic about, like remixing and creating beats for hip hop and electronica or creating eerie background music for anime music videos. If you have access to a microphone, try to work a recording element into your plan so teens can follow through on those ideas.

Be Safe. Whenever you are working with circuit boards, keep in mind that there is often lead in the solder used to attach components on a circuit board. You and your teens should wash your hands thoroughly after circuit-bending. Any snacks should be served before circuit-

bending begins and put away before you break out the toys. Do not try to scavenge circuit-board parts from discarded electronics if it involves cutting into or chipping away at any soldered connections.²

Our “Party Like It’s Teen Tech Week” event was a huge success with our regular crowd and with many teens who had never before visited Teen Central. Many newcomers attended because the program was highlighted on a local morning news program. Some of the most enthusiastic circuit-benders were actually younger siblings and relatives who accompanied the teen attendees. The circuit-bending aspect of the party was designed to tie in with existing programs in the library, so teens were able to move from one activity to the next and get a sense of the programming available at Teen Central. Our Teen Advisory Group set up a Wii Super Smash Bros. Brawl tournament. Our Teen Tech Squad interns created a temporary local-area network on which to test open-source multiplayer games.

Our program gave teens leadership opportunities, exposed young people to technology, and encouraged interest in the library. The skills and equipment used in the program are being adopted by our Teen Tech Squad interns for use in our monthly Open Tech Lab, where teens work with a variety of open-source software and do-it-yourself electronics to increase their technology skills and express themselves creatively. We are very grateful for this opportunity to extend the technical literacy skills of our teens and engage them in exciting, enjoyable programming. *YALS*

References

1. Reed Ghazala, *Circuit-Bending: Build Your Own Alien Instruments* (Indianapolis: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 4–6.
2. Brittany Forks, *Kilobyte Couture* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2009), 19.



here's
your
chance
to get
involved

Volunteer for a YALSA Committee, Jury or Task Force!

Starting this spring, YALSA begins appointing new jury and committee members—and we need your help!

- ♦ Make sure your YALSA membership is up-to-date! We can only offer committee appointments to current members.
- ♦ Fill out the Process Committee Volunteer Form at www.ala.org/yalsa/membership by March 12.
- ♦ Contact the chair of the juries or committees you're interested in, and let them know! Names and contact information are available at the “Governance” link on the left-hand side at www.ala.org/yalsa.
- ♦ Jury and committee members who are not virtual members are expected to attend Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, so plan your schedule accordingly.
- ♦ Virtual spots on juries and committees are available

Find more ways to make the most of your YALSA membership at www.ala.org/yalsa/membership!

With all the technology tools available for little-to-no money, planning technology programming for teens at the library can be overwhelming. But don't despair! As you begin to plan your Teen Tech Week, remember these four verbs: advocate, communicate, educate, and create.

Advocate

If your teens and their advocates do not know what you are doing at the library, are you really serving them? Step One of great technology programming is getting the word out!

Wow Them with Web Sites and Work Wonders!

If you do not have a library web page, it is time to get one. Try Weebly.com or Yola.com to set up your free ad-free web site. Remember to make one of the pages a news blog with an RSS feed. When your teens subscribe to your RSS, they will get automatic updates in their e-mail or their reader about your news postings.

What Do They Want? Why Not Ask Them?

A great way to keep business booming at the library is to fulfill your patrons' needs. If you are not a psychic librarian, get yourself a gmail.com account. Then check out <http://docs.google.com>. Go to "New" then "Form." This opens a survey template. This is your chance to ask all kinds of questions. Once you publish this survey to the web, Google will automatically import answers into a nice GoogleDocs spreadsheet.

Newsletters with Pizzazz, Not Papers

Make a nice newsletter in Word, Publisher, PowerPoint, or as a pdf file in Adobe. Then publish it on www.yudu.com or www.scribd.com. Either way, you will have a beautiful digital product that can be e-mailed and archived on your new web site.

Free Online Tools for Serving Teens

Four Verbs to Live By and Great Technologies to Try

By Mary Fran Daley

Communicate

Teens have a lot of media competing for their attention. If you are lucky enough to get a moment of their time, make it count. Make your messages manageable, accessible, and meaningful.

Hot Off the (Word)Press!

Blogs are a great place to share library happenings, discuss literature, or

brainstorm library futures. Weebly.com and Yola.com have built-in blog features, but you can also make a standalone blog on Wordpress.com, Blogger.com, Livejournal.com, and many others. Some great blog posts are soapboxes, whereas others are about prompting a great conversation. Experiment to find out what appeals to your teens. Whichever route you go, be sure to enrich your posts with great photographs, video, and audio content.

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Show Them What You Mean

Do you need to share something wonderfully tech-y? Does it make any sense when you write it out? Save yourself time and save your teens frustration by expressing exactly what you mean through a screencast. Voicethread.com and Jing.com both have great tools for creating simple videos that will capture anything on your screen that you need to show your teens, including images, videos, and web pages, all while you narrate your cast. Screencasts are great for tutorials and so much more!

Educate

Our teens are growing and learning all of the time. We should be, too! There are many virtual venues for learning and teaching.

Weave a Web for Understanding

You could create a simple webliography or links section on your web site, but it would not pack nearly as much punch as a Delicious.com or Diigo.com page. These bookmarking tools allow you to collect links, tag them, organize them, and share them more easily. Each has a toolbar you can download directly on to many browsers and each allows users to subscribe to changes in your bookmarks through RSS.

Wow Them with Wikis

Do you have a lot of content you need to manage? Do you need help building a site with a lot of content? A wiki is the way. Wikis are pretty much web pages that a team can build collaboratively. Sometimes anyone can edit or comment on a wiki, but many providers allow for monitoring of contributions. Some leading sites include Wikispaces.com, Wetpaint.com, and PBWorks.com. You can build content with text, audio, and video formats, and the community can provide feedback in the comment fields.

Virtually Visit

If you cannot fly your favorite author out for an hour-long program, Skype them in instead. Skype.com is an online portal through which you can talk, chat, and videoconference with just about anyone. Authors and other special guests can visit your teens without the hassle of reservations or a carbon footprint of an airplane ride (and most likely for far less money in these times of smaller budgets and increased expectations).

Create

It does not need to be summer reading time to get creative at your library. There are several ways you can make these fun tools available to your teens. Consider choosing a few for the public computer terminals. Offer classes in others. If you can do nothing else, at least link them to your web site so your teens can know about them.

Get Your Groove On!

The teenage years generally involve quite a bit of music (listening to music, dancing to music, getting dissed by your friends for your quirky tastes in music...). Albums and bands have given way to iPods and Guitar Hero. Although some things about music are still the same, there are many new things in music to explore. One of the neatest tools you and your teens can play with is Jamstudio. Jamstudio is an online avenue for composing music. Tunes, beats, and various instruments can be arranged in infinite combinations to craft and perfect original compositions. As an added bonus, teachers can apply on behalf of their students for grants that provide complimentary all-access passes that include more features than the regular free version.

Storytime...Online

A picture is worth a thousand words. Put your favorite photographs together into a

show with some music and you have more than a thousand words; you have a *story*. There are more tools than we can count to create and edit images and photographs, so we will limit it to four favorites. Fotoflexer is an awesome easy site that allows for easy editing of your photographs. You can turn your class photograph into a line drawing or your favorite pet picture into a Warhol-esque masterpiece. Once you have a groovy photograph collection together, make an awesome music video on Animoto.com. Make your music video with your own photographs and music or choose selections from Animoto's library. Add a few captions and you have got yourself one fancy slideshow. Basic free accounts are limited to thirty-second clips, but educators can apply for free accounts for longer videos at <http://animoto.com/education>. Additionally, Gimp.org offers a more advanced (but still free!) tool for photograph editing and authoring, and Microsoft Photo Story 3 offers the ingenue videographer more control over their slideshows with image editing features, soundtracks, and special effects.

Get Your Game On!

Do your teens love video games? Scratch is the fantastic and free video game authorship program from the excellent people at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Most people start by creating images, although you can use a number of stock images provided by Scratch. From there you can create little animations with your images. Once you master that, you graduate to making these elements into full-fledged video games. Scratch has numerous recreational and educational possibilities that can be further explored at www.learnscratch.org.

Do Not Wait!

Don't wait these tools are too fun and life is too short not to try them. It can be very intimidating to explore new things,

especially in the technosphere. Just remember that, in most cases, if you press the wrong button, your computer will not explode. Start small, then go ahead and try to make your forty-three-photograph slide show for back-to-school night played to none other than your school marching band's winning performance. Once you try a few of these things, starting a new one is intuitive. It does get easier. Once it gets easier, you will find your flow, and this is where the real fun happens for you *and* for your teens.

Online Tools

www.weebly.com
 www.yola.com
 www.gmail.com
<http://www.docs.Google.com>
 www.yudu.com
 www.scribd.com
 www.wordpress.com
 www.blogger.com
 www.livejournal.com
 Voicethread.com
 www.jing.com

www.delicious.com
 www.diigo.com
 www.wikispaces.com
 www.wetpaint.com
 www.pbworks.com
 www.skype.com
 www.jamstudio.com
 www.fotoflexer
 www.animoto.com
 www.gimp.org
 www.microsoft.com/photostory
<http://scratch.mit.org>
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feature

Hot Spot: Teen Tech Week

Where Are All the Teens?

Engaging and Empowering Them Online

By Laura Peowski

It is no secret that more teens are connecting with one another online than ever before through online gaming, social networking sites, blogs, YouTube, and a variety of other social media tools. These teens have grown up with video games and the Internet not just as tools for entertainment, but also as platforms for learning, creating, collaborating, and effecting social change. Therefore, it only makes sense that if you want to reach out to this community and forge relationships that foster cooperation, collaboration, understanding, and lifelong learning between the generations, the way to do it is through the Internet. These connections have the potential to become communities within communities that

encourage teens to discuss books, gaming, or even their favorite technologies while simultaneously teaching them how to create and maintain blogs, wikis, and so on.

The Internet is brimming with blogs and web sites about YA literature, but something is missing: teen voices.

Successful Online Book Communities

Readergirlz (readergirlz.com) and its blog (<http://readersgirlz.blogspot.com>) are perfect examples of successful online book communities that offer young adults a place to go to read book reviews and so much more. With each book review posted, the site contributors include

sections on facts about the author such as his or her inspiration, songs picked by the author to accompany the book, questions to reflect on and discuss after reading the book, suggestions for hosting an event to discuss the book, and so much more.

Guys Lit Wire (<http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com>) exists to provide teen boys with a place to discover books that they want to read. What is great about this blog is that the books reviewed are from a variety of genres and are both old and new. The reviews are then given labels that enable site visitors to search for books based on categories like “dystopian” or “books that kick ass.”

The one thing that seems to be absent from these sites, however, is the teen voice. Not that there is not the opportunity for teens to express their opinions or join in discussions on these sites, but that the focus is not the teens’ voice. This is where public and school librarians and even teachers have the opportunity to fill a gap.

Some public libraries, like the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, have already begun to fill this gap. The Cincinnati library’s Teenspace is a great example of how a library can work with its young adult community to meet their needs. As part of the library’s web site, Teenspace is home to all things related to teens, including a section dedicated to book reviews written by teens. The reviews are typically brief, a few paragraphs at most, and include the name, age, and the general geographic location of the reviewer (no home addresses here) as well as a rating of one, two, or three stars. The one-star rating has an exceptionally fun tag line that says, “more fun than throwing up, but not much.” Who has not read a book like that before?

Who is actually using this site, you ask? The answer is young adults, and lots of them. The contributors seem to range in age from approximately 11 through 25. It looks like most of the reviews come from teens who genuinely want to contribute,

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but there is also at least one school using the site as an educational tool. One of the titles was reviewed by thirty-eight students from the same school of the same age; looks like a class assignment to me. What a great way to engage students in reading while teaching them how to write for a web site. Overall, this portion of the Teenspace web site seems to be very successful.

Another public library that seems to be successfully bridging this gap is the Hennepin County Library of Minnesota. The Teen Links section, like Cincinnati's Teenspace, is dedicated to all things teen. From the main Teen Links page, teens can choose from things like "At Your Library," "Do Your Homework," or "Read On." From the Read On link, teens can find teen book reviews, book lists to help them decide what to read next, and information on organizing book clubs. Teens between the ages of 12 and 18 are welcome to submit book reviews that are then posted to the teen book review page of the web site. The book reviews are brief and come with a one- to five-star rating given by the reviewer.

The library also has a link to a list of book club kits, which each contain enough books for up to eight to ten members as well as a list of possible discussion questions. I sat down with my 14-year-old sister and a few of her friends last year to interview them about reading habits and preferences. Through our conversation I discovered that all of the girls were avid readers (except when required by a teacher) and had even tried to organize their own book club, but they did not know where to turn for book suggestions. When they were able to find a book they wanted to read, they could not find enough copies at the library or the bookstore for all of them. These book club kits would have been perfect for them; they would have all been able to read the same title and then either get together in person or online to discuss what they had read.

The key to creating successful sites like Hennepin's Teen Links or Cincinnati's Teenspace is starting the process by communicating with teens in the community. If you log on to Facebook and do a search for teens and library, you will find a number of groups that are sponsored by libraries and run by librarians. These are often used to get information to the teen community but usually have a relatively low number of fans or followers. Maybe this is a result of the fact that a number of teens in the given communities are not online, but it is much more likely that these teens do not know their library has a group on Facebook. Simply deciding to create a group and then doing it is not enough; the same goes for blogs, wikis, and the like. If the teens do not know you are out there, chances are they are not going to find you.

So before you even create a site, talk to your community. Form a TAB or TAG for the project. Go to your local schools and talk to the students. Ask them what they want. Is it a blog where they can just discuss books and submit reviews or do they want a place where they can discuss books, gaming, and their favorite technologies? Getting teens to share their ideas can be akin to pulling teeth at times so it may be a good idea to go into your discussions armed with ideas or examples of what can be created. Once you determine the purpose of the site, it is time to figure out what kind of site will work best. Is it a Facebook fan page, a blog, or maybe a wiki? Again, talk to the teens. What are they most familiar with or what do they want to learn? Maybe they are most familiar with Facebook but would love to learn how to create and manage a blog.

Of course, another very important aspect to take into consideration when choosing a format is safety. Blogs, wikis, and Facebook are all very public in nature, but there are ways to ensure privacy if it is a concern for your library or classroom.

With Facebook, a group can be created that is closed, which means that people may only join the group by submitting a request to the group's moderator. Having a closed group also hides the identity of the members from those who are not members. For instance, the Saline County Library has a closed Facebook group with 31 members, but I cannot see who they are because I am not a member of the group. Wikis and blogs can be protected so that no unauthorized individual may add content to the site. Wikis used in educational settings can also be protected so that very little information is public-facing and the majority of the content is located behind a password. Blog hosts like Blogger also offer the option of making your blog private. If a blog is set as private only people allowed by the creator would be able to view the site.

Creating an online community for teens is also a great opportunity for librarians, teachers, and other community leaders to meet with one another and share ideas and stories. Librarians are not the only ones who can engage with teens online and empower them to create publishable content. Here are some ideas for engaging with and empowering your young adult community to communicate, collaborate, and create online.

- Work with teens to create online book groups so they can get together and talk about books with their friends and even peers they might not normally interact with. A major obstacle for young adults is transportation and this would definitely help alleviate that issue.
- This one is a bit more involved, but what about creating a school wiki or blog much like the school newspaper? A teacher or the school librarian can oversee the project but allow the students to manage it. This could be an after-school club that is strictly voluntary or it could

Where Are All the Teens?

be a for-credit course that students sign up for each term and get graded on. It could be a place for students to discuss books, technology, gaming, and anything else they may be into.

- Create a blog with young adults in the community that would give them a safe place to discuss books they have read that they have taken out of the library, suggest titles the library should purchase, and anything else they want.

The blog could have separate pages for different genres and teens with varying reading interests could be involved.

- As an assignment, have students join an online book group that matches their interests on GoodReads (www.goodreads.com), LibraryThing (www.librarything.com), Facebook (www.facebook.com), or another site and submit a required number of posts that can be graded or give students the

option to create their own online book groups as a class project.

- Work with young adults to create a blog or wiki based on technology. They could discuss things they own like iPods or game consoles, video games they love or hate, free web-based tools they use, or they could even help organize a group of teens who would enjoy a gaming night or afternoon at the library. YALS



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It seems that every time we turn around, we are faced with statements in the media about teens and technology: They spend all day texting, Twitter is the hot new thing, and so on. I wanted to hear from local teens who use our library. What do they think about technology? What products do they use? What do they wish the library offered? To find out, I surveyed teens in the library during the month of September 2009. Eighty-three teens completed the survey. Some of their responses were expected and others were rather surprising. Our awesome Teen Advisory Board (TAB) was happy to offer insight during a follow-up conversation. For reference, the Allen County (Indiana) Public Library serves 250,000 residents in the city of Fort Wayne and an additional 100,000 residents surrounding Allen County. Fourteen percent of the population is between the ages of 10 and 19.

Facebook versus MySpace

In 2007, the Pew Internet and American Life Project released a study called "Social Networking Websites and Teens." They found that "fully 85 percent of teens who have created an online profile say the profile they use or update most often is on MySpace, while 7 percent update a profile on Facebook."¹ Of course, at the time Pew was gathering data, Facebook had only been open to all for a couple of months. I asked "What websites do you use for socializing with friends?" and 47 percent of teens replied "Facebook." MySpace came in second with 35 percent. Some respondents use both sites. A full 20 percent said that they do not socialize with friends online. Even more surprisingly, Twitter was mentioned by only three teens. Gaia and World of Warcraft each scored a couple of mentions.

TAB members almost universally preferred Facebook. Why? Teen Becca Kaufeld said, "Facebook is way better. It's

cleaner, more professional and just generally more acceptable than MySpace. Although I guess I shouldn't really be answering because I don't have a MySpace. . . ."

Emily Arnold added:

"Facebook is much easier to navigate. You can become fans of different Web pages and keep informed of your friends' activities through your phone when they update their status. You can get MySpace updates sent to your phone as well, but if you log onto MySpace, your page does not notify you of the updates or comments; you have to remember them all on your own. The majority of people in their teens use Facebook instead of MySpace as well, so it is much easier to keep in touch with your friends through Facebook."

Luke Fallon stated, "Last.fm is the new Facebook." When asked to clarify, he explained: "My friends and I are trying to get people to sign up for Last.fm. You can learn a lot about people from the music they listen to."

Text Messaging Is Ubiquitous. . . Almost

When asked "Do you use text messaging?" 71 percent of survey respondents said "Yes" or

"Heck, yes!" or "Duh! Of course I do." For comparison, these figures are much higher than those found by the Pew Research Center in 2009. They reported that 38 percent of American teens sent text messages daily, whereas 58 percent had sent at least one.² A few of our teen nontexters stated that they would text if they had a phone, but others were opposed to the idea with TAB member Kelley Brenneman stating, "Nope. Phones are evil!" The majority of TAB members, however, disagreed with this assertion, saying that for those that can afford it, a cell phone with a plan that includes texting is one of the most important accessories for the modern teen. Emily explained:

"Texting is the most useful technological thing I have ever come across. If you don't have time to call someone, or you are busy doing multiple things at once, texting is a good way to stay in touch. You can carry on a conversation without dropping everything to talk." Tara Olivero was also enthusiastic: "I love text messaging because it's a quick and easy way to keep in contact with my friends. . . . You can also use texting to update your Twitter status and to get other people's statuses, which I love."

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When asked if they would like the library to offer text messaging reference service, TAB members were not keen since most cell phone plans still charge for each text. They liked the idea of IM reference or even Facebook reference better. Many of them would like to receive library notices by text since they don't check email regularly, but not if they had to pay for the notices.

What Can Libraries Do?

TAB members thought the library catalog could be improved to be more intuitive for searchers to use and more accurate. Said Elijah Kemp: "Sometimes when I type in the exact title, the book still doesn't come up." Sam Osterkil added: "I don't really care which system the library uses as long as it works." Sam attended a demo of one of the discovery layer interfaces the library is considering for purchase and said: "It's got neat features: tagging, search term cloud, rating and reviewing books (I really like this), the ability to pull from a lot of different sources of information, and to add your own."

Databases, What Databases?

I had not included a question about the library's databases on the general survey but decided to ask TAB which ones they found most useful. I was disheartened to learn that only about half of the TAB members knew about the databases, but it made me realize that we need to promote these resources more heavily. Home-schooled siblings Becca and Joe Kaufeld requested that the library offer a Web-based language learning program in addition to reference databases. When asked why, Becca elaborated:

"I'm a languages teen. I want to go into linguistics. So I always want to familiarize myself with a language I've never tried before. Like over the summer, I looked into Gaelic. Fascinating language! If the

library had language software that was free and had a variety of things, you wouldn't be able to pull me off for the world on a silver tray."

Emily added: "Nowadays people can't afford to go out and get a tutor or buy the software themselves so if they had access to it, it would be helpful."

Which Tech Gadget Would You Most Like To Own If You Had Enough Money To Get It?

In the last two years the library has used grant money to give away laptops as raffle prizes—all those who finish the program are eligible to receive a ticket. This year the question came up: "Is there something the teens would like better?" Thirty-three percent of teens surveyed stated that a laptop is the number one tech purchase they'd make if they had the money, so chances are the summer reading committee will stick with laptops. The iPhone came in second with 18 percent of teens wanting to own one. Tara said: "If I had the money, I would want to buy an iPhone with a video camera in it. Right now, I have two different iPods, a cell phone, and a camera. It would be so much easier if I could carry one device around instead of several." Other survey responses included various video gaming systems, a 100-inch plasma screen TV, and as one teen said, "All of them!"

Teen Tech Week Events—What To Do?

TAB members were stumped for a minute or two when asked for technology program ideas. But then ideas began to pop up.

Billy Jones recommended a "video scavenger hunt." Make up a wacky scavenger hunt and equip teams of teens with camcorders or digital cameras that take video. Instead of collecting the items on the scavenger hunt, the teens will film

their team finding the items and completing the goofy challenges. Teens will take turns filming and being filmed.

Elijah Kemp liked the idea of a "video mystery program." Adapt a favorite mystery book or mystery kit by having TAB members act out scenes. Then play the scenes at a mystery party for the general public and make the videos available on the library's website.

Alex Maiden suggested a "robotics workshop". Find a local expert who can teach a robotics workshop, perhaps using Lego Mindstorms robots.

Sadie Sial thought a "video editing class" would be appreciated. Find a staff member or local expert who can teach a basic video editing class on Windows Movie Maker or one of the free online tools.

Even though my survey did not receive as many responses as I would have liked, and I have thought of several questions I wish I had asked, I did learn some valuable information to pass on to our summer reading committee and to our IT department. And I have received some good ideas for Teen Tech Week programming and, hopefully, some willing TAB members to help plan and present the events. Most of all, surveying our teens was a fun way to get know our patrons a little better and to begin a dialogue on technology, an important facet of their lives. **YALS**

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2. Amanda Lenhart, "Teens and Mobile Phones Over the Past Five Years: Pew Internet Looks Back," Pew Internet & American Life Project, Aug. 19, 2009. www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/14-Teens-and-Mobile-Phones-Data-Memo.aspx (accessed Sept 30, 2009).

Gorman, Michele and Tricia Suellentrop. *Connecting Young Adults and Libraries: A How-to-do-it Manual*, 4th ed. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2009; ISBN-13: 978-1555706654; 389p; \$85.

The big pink bible of young adult (YA) services is back and better than ever. In the 4th edition, Michele Gorman and Tricia Suellentrop take what began with Patrick Jones's 1st edition in 1991 and bring both the foundations and new topics back in the format that has a reputation for being easy to use and inspiring. From the history that Patrick shares in his foreword (that he terms a "backward") to the very end that includes a enormously useful and handy CD-ROM tool kit featuring adaptable forms, lists, and surveys, this resource is literally packed with information that no library resource shelf should be without. Broken out into manageable sections allowing users to either read cover to cover or pick and choose as the need arises, Gorman and Suellentrop offer up background details, research, statistics, suggestions, and advice on topics such as booktalking, programming, youth involvement, and technology (just to name a few). With easy-to-follow, natural, and practical language (and also a glossary of YA pertinent terms and acronyms), users of this resource will feel better equipped to serve and advocate for teens with each chapter read and statistic and figure studied. Included are the results of an online survey of teens from libraries all over the country on "reading habits and perceptions." (Full disclosure: This online survey was linked on the teen page of the Fairport N.Y. Public Library Web site, and teens from Fairport responded.) It is hard to imagine any library that wants to do a better job of understanding, serving, and embracing teens not having this book, even if they have every other edition. It is invaluable beyond the few words that this review has space to include. The CD-ROM tool kit alone makes this resource worth its purchase. With dozens of ready-to-use forms to adapt, users will feel inspired to either start or expand their focus on making their libraries even more inviting and relevant for teens. Highly recommended for new and seasoned librarians alike. —*Stephanie A. Squicciarini, Teen Services Librarian, Fairport (N.Y.) Public Library.*

Schwedt, Rachel E. and Janice A. DeLong. *Core Collection for Children and Young Adults*. The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2008; ISBN-13: 9780810861152; 218p; \$50.

In a follow-up to their *Core Collection for Small Libraries: An Annotated Bibliography for Children and Young Adults* (1997), librarian Schwedt and English professor DeLong offer over 350

new recommendations. Drawn from books selected from classroom and library use, professional reviews, and award lists, this annotated bibliography is divided into eight genres, from classics and picture books to contemporary fiction and traditional literature, with an evaluative introduction to each. With the exception of the classics, most of the books were published after 1994. Arranged alphabetically by author, the entries comprise recommended grade levels, an engaging description with possible uses in a classroom or library setting, list of awards, related subject areas, and character themes (e.g., friendship, survival, or humor). This resource is a helpful starting point for librarians who need to start a collection for elementary and middle school age children and teens. Young adult (YA) librarians will find it less beneficial, as the authors selected only contemporary fiction titles that "portray daily life with its challenges while ending with hope." As a result, edgier YA authors, such as Chris Crutcher, Ellen Hopkins, and Terry Trueman, do not appear, nor do any of the Michael L. Printz Award winners. Although an effort was made to include multicultural titles, books that feature diverse cultures in more contemporary settings will need to be supplemented. In addition to librarians, educators and parents will find *Core Collection for Children and Young Adults* a good place for discovering some of the best children's literature available —*Angela Leeper, Director, Curriculum Materials Center, University of Richmond, Virginia.*

Dougherty, Richard M. *Streamlining Library Services: What We Do, How Much Time It Takes, What It Costs, and How We Can Do It Better*. Scarecrow Press Inc., 2008; ISBN-13: 9780810851986; 270p; \$45.

In this day and age of budget cuts, libraries are looking for ways to save time and money—to make their work more efficient while maintaining and improving library services. Richard M. Dougherty offers this highly readable tool to help them do just that. Dougherty has worked as a consultant for organizational change in libraries since the 1990s and has given numerous workshops on change management. He shares his expertise in this revised 3rd edition of *Scientific Management of Library Operations* (2nd ed., 1982), which is recommended for libraries of all types. Dougherty encourages all library staff to consult *Streamlining Library Services*, but it will be most useful to administrators and teams charged with examining library services and workflows and implementing change. Although some of the statistical and data collection tools are a bit dry, Dougherty manages to make them relevant—even

interesting—by using real examples from the library workplace. Not only do they bring the tools to life, but they also illustrate some of the problems identified and changes made in actual libraries. Strategies for conducting your institution's own research, studies, and data collection are included, and also detailed explanations of the various kinds of tools that can be utilized. Dougherty recommends the inclusion of library staff at all levels (from analyzing the work they perform to brainstorming solutions, improving workflows, and enacting changes). Dougherty's suggestions for "doing it better" are rather broad, but can be applied to any number of situations and are well worth implementing—eliminate unnecessary steps, combine processes and operations, assign the most appropriate staff to perform the work, investigate outsourcing, etc. In other words, "Reduce! Reduce! Reduce!" and "Keep It Simple!" After reading this book, you will immediately want to get your staff and coworkers thinking about ways they can improve their efficiency, service, and work environment. —Karin Thogersen, *Young Adult Librarian*, Huntley (Ill.) Area Public Library.

Carlson, Chris, and Ellen Brosnahan. *Guiding Students into Information Literacy: Strategies for Teachers and Teacher-Librarians*. Scarecrow Press, 2009; ISBN-13: 9780810859746; 96p. \$35.

As school districts have focused to an ever-increasing extent on standardized tests and scores that affect the funding and administration of our schools, professional educators everywhere have witnessed the decline of research as a component of the curriculum. As important as these scores have become, it is also apparent that the decline of information gathering is leaving students without crucial skills for lifelong success and information literacy. In view of that problem, this book could not be more timely. Although the above philosophy is clearly elucidated by the authors, this is not a treatise on the condition of modern education but a highly practical manual for teachers and teacher-librarians to use in designing research projects that are effective in promoting the cognitive skills acquired by engaging in the research process rather than the dreary, poorly presented skeleton of facts that result from so many forays into the library. Eminently practical, the manual addresses the design of projects, the typical problems encountered by both teachers and students in completing them, and many very practical forms for facilitating the process from beginning to end. Laid out in order from designing to completing a project, this book is an invaluable resource for teachers and librarians who are dedicated to students' learning and utilizing the process of research and developing information literacy. —Peter

Rivard, Head Librarian, Bullitt Central High School, Shepherdsville, Kentucky.

Gallaway, Beth. *Game On! Gaming at the Library*. Neal-Schuman, 2009; ISBN-13: 9781555705954; 306p. \$55.

Intended as a beginner's guide to video games in the library, *Game On* is designed as a game for the reader to complete, with six "levels" instead of chapters. Unfortunately, the levels are of widely varying quality. Level 2, for instance, is a model of disorganization. Ostensibly about how to advocate for gaming in the library, it presents arguments against gaming (and challenges them, though often not directly enough) alongside overbroad generalizations about the personalities of gamers. Level 3, on nongaming services that libraries can provide to gamers, is better organized, but it seems to be out of place. And the very brief levels 1 and 6, on the history and future of games, never seem to get off the ground in their discussions.

On the other hand, levels 4 and 5, which address the specifics of putting on gaming programs and purchasing games for the collection, are a tour de force of lucidity. Gallaway provides step-by-step instructions on how to create a gaming program and how to put together a game collection, either for library use or for circulation, together with a generous collection of case studies of library programs, and a detailed list of important games to collect. Levels 2 and 3 certainly contain much valuable material, and readers who are willing to work will find some excellent tools both for defending gaming and for providing library services to gamers. Nevertheless, someone should probably have reminded Gallaway that the earlier levels are supposed to be easier to get through than the later levels. —Mark Flowers, *Young Adult Librarian*, Solano County Library, California.

Younger, Beth. *Learning Curves: Body Image and Female Sexuality in Young Adult Literature*. Scarecrow Press, 2009; ISBN-13: 978-0810859869; 166p. 35\$.

No matter what the decade, girls have been concerned with their bodies. Beth Younger examines how teen fiction, including "chick lit," portrays body image, sexuality, teen pregnancy, and lesbian relationships. Younger shows that body image goes beyond the main characters; she examines supporting characters to show how these issues permeate entire novels. She also shows how issues of body image and the characters' sexual behavior are intertwined. Giving examples from seven decades, Younger shows us how far certain views have come while also reminding us how far we have yet to go.

The writing is clear, and the text gives many examples. At times I wondered whether the examples were the nit-picking of an author trying to make a point. Does a reader really remember the father in *Forever* making a comment about the size of his wife's thighs? I came to realize that these asides were the point; comments like this are common in our culture, and although we don't always remember them, they do make an impact. Although the chapters do build on each other, since they are on different themes they can be read separately. Reading the introduction is beneficial, as it states the purpose of the book. This book is academic in nature and would be a great read for both people working in the field with teenagers or researching their lives. —*Sarah Granville, Teen Services Librarian, Barberton (Ohio) Public Library.*

Grassian, Esther S., and Joan R. Kaplowitz. *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. Neal-Schuman, 2009; ISBN-13: 9781555706661; 412p. \$75.

This book is the most comprehensive and detailed look at information literacy, from historical to classroom contexts, available. Many textbooks offer grounding in theory but leave the student adrift as to how to realize this theory as teaching practice. Grassian and Kaplowitz, with extensive teaching and research

experience between them, firmly bridge that gap to equip readers with practical advice along with academic information, instilling confidence in one's ability to provide instruction in information literacy. The authors consider information literacy in the context of history, developmental psychology, teaching stylistics, instructional planning, and classroom management in clear, concise terms that waste not a line of more than three hundred pages. A CD of support materials, including a searchable index and bibliography with active website links, along with sample exercises to illustrate chapter highlights, adds to the practicality of this title. The chapter on assessment is of particular value, as the need for this element of instruction and planning is pressing, but it is not widely discussed in practical terms. Information literacy (IL) standards are addressed, as are tests that measure IL skills; however, the book does not address the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) or key contributors to the educational measurement field Lee Cronbach and Samuel Messick. In this text, test validity is couched in an older definition than the one that Cronbach and Messick support; validity must be concerned with the use of assessment results, rather than the abilities measured. The authors do well to focus on the necessity of continual revision and improvement of information literacy instruction as a natural part of the educational process. —*Kerry Sutherland, Akron-Summit County (Ohio) Public Library. YALS*

Guidelines for Authors

Young Adult Library Services 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

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Peer Influences on Young Teen Readers

An Emerging Taxonomy

By Vivian Howard

Purpose of the Study

Tom Peters recently proclaimed that the future of reading is very much in doubt, stating, "In this century, reading could soar to new heights or crash and burn."¹ However, although adult book sales are in decline, teens are buying books at a record rate. Publishers Weekly/Institute for Publishing Research (PW/IPR) Book Sales Index reports that although adult trade sales are expected to fall by 4 percent in 2009, juvenile and teen book sales are expected to increase by 5.1 percent.² Although teens represent the future of reading, very little is known about their reading habits or what influences their reading choices.

The research study discussed in this paper examines the role of recreational or pleasure reading in the lives of 12 to 15-year old residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia, Canada. The study as a whole was guided by three key research questions concerning the pleasure reading habits of young teens:

1. What role does reading for pleasure fill in the lives of young teens (ages 12 to 15)?
2. What are the main barriers to reading for this age group?
3. What are the main motivators to reading for this age group?

This paper describes one particular aspect of the broader study: the role of peer influences in supporting or motivating teens' recreational reading habits.

Literature Review

Reading Motivation

Several researchers have observed that children and teens whose parents are nonreaders are more likely to be nonreaders themselves.³ Heather also noted that a tendency to share books with friends was a positive encouragement for pleasure reading.⁴ Several researchers have attempted to identify factors that motivate

teens and adults to maintain the pleasure reading habit. In her year-long study of class of American seventh-grade students, Beers classifies participants as dormant readers, uncommitted readers, unmotivated readers, and avid readers.⁵ Similarly, in her study of Australian youth and their reading habits, Nieuwenhuizen identifies four parallel classes of teen readers.⁶ Both Beers and Nieuwenhuizen explore the characteristics shared by members of the avid reader group and conclude that avid readers tend to have the most highly educated parents and the greatest amount of preschool exposure to books and reading. Beers and Nieuwenhuizen also note the importance of freedom of choice as a key motivating factor; subjects in both studies disliked assigned reading and preferred to select their own reading materials, which were often comics or magazines. These conclusions are consistent with those of Krashen, who stresses that three factors are key motivators of pleasure reading: free choice, opportunity for recreational reading, and access to preferred materials.⁷

Everyday Life Information Seeking

Research into teen everyday life information seeking (ELIS) yields some relevant findings. Poston-Anderson and Edwards asked twenty-eight teen girls about the role of information in helping

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them deal with their life concerns.⁸ Few of the participants believed that libraries could help them solve their problems, and they turned to family, friends, or teachers for information instead. In a later study examining how teen girls find information about jobs and education, Edwards and Poston-Anderson found that their subjects performed little or no formal information seeking; instead, they turned to their mothers and, significantly less often, to their fathers, for advice.⁹ Julien's examination of Canadian teens' information-seeking for career decision-making showed a similar pattern: the teens in her study felt overwhelmed by decision-making and did not know where to turn to get information or even what questions to ask to obtain the information they wanted.¹⁰

Latrobe and Havener conducted a study of the information-seeking behavior of eighteen eleventh graders in six categories of information need: course-related activities, current lifestyles, future plans, relations with others, health, and general information (current events, politics, religion, etc.) The researchers did not examine recreational reading per se, but their findings still provide some useful data on information preferences of this small group of teens. In five of the six categories, people were identified as the best sources of information. One teen respondent explained her preference for human information sources in this way: "When asking people, I consider their expertise. If you don't understand what a person is saying, you can ask them [sic] to explain it a little further. You can't ask a book to explain what it means right now. I go to people because of their interactive nature."¹¹ Latrobe and Havener conclude:

The findings of this study illuminate the central role played by people as information links and providers. Students relied upon a broad spectrum

of people when seeking information. In fact, the interpersonal networks of students appear to determine the framework in which all information seeking takes place, therefore emphasizing the role of interpersonal interactions in gathering information as a critical component in the instruction process. Because students rely so heavily on people as information sources, librarians should seize opportunities to deepen students' understanding of people as information resources. Librarians can promote themselves as accessible and valuable information resources. They can also integrate themselves into students' interpersonal networks, working with parents, teachers and others to develop and market programmes that focus on students' needs and the interpersonal aspects of information-seeking behavior.¹²

Agosto and Hughes-Hassell's investigation of the ELIS of inner-city American teens develops a theoretical model in which teens' developmental needs are at the center of their information seeking.¹³ This study also confirms the work of previous researchers (see Edwards and Poston-Anderson, Latrobe and Havener, and Julien) in that the teen participants preferred human sources of information whenever possible: "The participants decided which people to consult based on established human relationships, question topics, and the locations of their information seeking. . . . The participants evidenced general tendencies toward relying on easily accessible, familiar sources and channels."¹⁴

Methodology

Data collection consisted of a series of nine focus group discussions with a total of sixty-eight twelve- to fifteen-year-olds, held

at junior high schools in the Halifax Regional School Board. All students volunteered to participate; they and their parents or guardians were given a written information sheet and signed a consent form prior to the discussions.

Seventy percent of participants were girls and 30 percent were boys. Structured questions were used to permit the cross-comparison of responses between groups. All focus group discussions were tape recorded, but confidentiality of respondents was assured, and the names of individual students, schools, and school districts were not given on the transcripts. Pseudonyms are used in all reports of focus group discussions. Transcripts were imported into QSR NUD*IST software for coding and analysis. Overall, analysis proceeded using a grounded theory approach in the manner of Glaser and Strauss and that of Glaser, in which data central to the focus of the inquiry were gathered through a series of focus group discussions, and themes emerged from the data set itself, through a process of inductive analysis.¹⁵ QSR was used to assist in shaping understanding of the data, to create categories out of the data and to link and explore these categories to form and test theories "grounded" in the data. The qualitative phase did not begin with any a priori hypotheses or speculations about the likely outcomes of the focus group discussions.

Results and Analysis

During focus group discussions, participants were asked to reflect on the reasons why they choose to read for pleasure rather than engaging in another favorite leisure pursuit. In addition to more predictable reasons for pleasure reading (escapism, imaginative outlet, relief from boredom, and so on), many young teen readers systematically described how their pleasure reading takes place in a social

Table 1. Taxonomy of Teen Readers

	Avid	Occasional	Reluctant
Social communal	Avid social communal	Occasional social communal	Reluctant social communal
Detached communal	Avid detached communal	<i>(Occasional detached communal)</i>	<i>(Reluctant detached communal)</i>
Solitary	Avid solitary	Occasional solitary	Reluctant solitary

context, as an effective strategy to cement peer friendships. These teens actively sought to read the same materials as their closest friends and used reading (talking about reading, exchanging reading material, following the same series) as a form of social bonding.

To obtain a more detailed analysis of the role of personal influences on reading choices, a detailed analysis of focus group transcripts was conducted. First, transcripts were coded for participants' self-identified reading frequency. Active readers were classified into two subcategories: Avid (those who read for pleasure daily or several times a week) and Occasional (those who read for pleasure weekly). Participants who indicated that they read for pleasure less often than weekly were classified as Reluctant Readers. Thirty-eight participants self-identified as Avid Readers, twenty as Occasional Readers, and ten as Reluctant Readers.

Second, transcripts were coded for participants' self-identified feelings about the importance of their peers as an influence on their reading choices. Teens who rated friends as a "very important influence" or "some influence" were initially coded as Communal Readers; teens who rated friends as exerting "no influence" were initially rated as Solitary Readers. However, this preliminary bipartite coding scheme was insufficient to capture the full range of focus group responses, and after careful analysis of the transcripts using the constant comparison technique, the Communal code was refined into two subcodes: Social Communal Readers rely on their immediate friends for reading encouragement and support, and Detached

Communal Readers rely on peers other than their immediate friendship group for reading encouragement and support. However, although Detached Communal Readers could, theoretically, be Avid, Occasional, or Reluctant Readers, this pattern was only actually observed for very avid readers. Table 1 describes the emerging taxonomy of teen readers.

By examining the intersection of the codes for self-assessed reading habit and level of peer influence, a richer and more layered view of teen readers emerges that more clearly reveals the importance of reading community for various types of teen readers. Teen readers in each of these categories exhibit unique feelings and attitudes toward the act of reading for pleasure.

Social Communal Readers

Avid and Occasional Social Communal Readers

Avid and Occasional Social Communal Readers experience a clear and mutually reinforcing relationship between friendship and reading and differ only in their frequency of pleasure reading. For these teens, reading exists in a "virtuous circle" in which friends encourage reading for pleasure and shared reading experiences solidify friendships. These readers want to read the same materials as their friends to reinforce their membership in the group and to avoid the feeling of being left out. As Cal notes: "I read mostly because if my friends have read a book I want to read it to find out what it's really about. . . . If your friends had read a book and were

talking about it and you couldn't read you wouldn't know what was going on, you'd be left out." Kate offers similar reasons for reading: "I like reading books my friends have recommended or read so that if they're talking about the book I can get in on the conversation

rather than sitting there and not saying anything."

Like the teens in the studies by Poston-Anderson and Edwards and by Latrobe and Havener, these readers express a strong preference for face-to-face personal reading recommendations and do not report using library catalogues or the Internet to find reading material. Overall, this group has fairly unsophisticated selection strategies, but their lack of a well-developed heuristic is not problematic, as their reading choices are largely determined by their friendship group. For Social Communal Readers, reading exists within a mutually accepted comfort zone of shared reading choices; these teens exhibit little risk-taking or experimentation in their reading selections and read within a fairly limited and homogeneous range of themes and genres. They approach reading as consumers, choosing currently popular materials with appealing covers. Trendy series fiction, particularly of the "chick lit" variety, is especially in style with this group, as series books simplify selection decisions and lend themselves well to communal reading; books can be shared among the group and, in many cases, do not need to be read in strict sequence.

Laura: One person will start reading a series and if they like it they'll tell everyone and then we all read the same series. One person will recommend something and word gets around that it's good.

Social Communal Readers don't just share recommendations; they also

frequently exchange the reading materials themselves among members of their friendship circle:

Ellie: Yeah, I do that [share books] all the time with one of my friends. Like the Madison Finn books, she loves them just as much as I do. I have almost all of the Madison Finn collection so we're always trading books back and forth. I'll read one and give it to her and she'll read it and give it back to me.

Social Communal Readers were almost exclusively female (only one male participant, Cal, rated his friends as important influences and was classified as a Social Communal Reader). They all indicated high levels of positive adult (usually parental) encouragement to read, and all were regular public library users, although they were dissatisfied with the library's often incomplete collection of series books and with the long waiting lists for current popular books. They also felt that the library should provide a more social atmosphere, so that teens would be encouraged to spend time there, reading and socializing with their friends. They were all confident that they will continue to read avidly in the future and that reading will continue to be a social, shared activity.

Reluctant Social Communal Readers

Reluctant Social Communal Readers were a rarity among the focus group participants. Only two teens, Devon and Tanner, fit into this category. Both teens had generally negative views about reading, stating that they found it boring, much less absorbing than other leisure activities such as sports, and that they had considerable difficulty both selecting and finishing books. They both described a functional approach to reading: they usually read to gain some needed information, but they

did not appear to read for aesthetic enjoyment and made little emotional connection with what they read. Neither Tanner nor Devon reported using the library or the Internet for reading advice, nor did they describe any positive adult reading mentors. However, they each spoke at length about the powerful influence of friends in encouraging and maintaining their reading habit, weak though it was. In the case of Tanner, one particular friend encouraged him to keep reading, whereas Devon's reading habit was encouraged by a larger peer group. Both teens acknowledged that they would be nonreaders if it weren't for their friends' influence.

Devon: [I don't really like reading because] you're just looking at a page with a bunch of words on it and it's the same thing over and over again. My friends are the biggest influence. They keep telling me about books and encouraging me to keep reading, keep reading. . . . We have a book report coming soon so I asked my friends for suggestions on what book to read and they gave me some good ideas. . . . Sometimes the beginning of the book is good and you think you'll like it but then it gets boring but my friends encourage me to keep reading it.

Tanner: The reason I don't read that much is that every time I start to read I'll start thinking of doing something else and I'll be too anxious to do the other thing so I'll stop reading. It's hard for me to get into reading. . . . My friend has similar taste to me. I read the same books that he reads. When I'm at his house and we're bored, sometimes we'll read.

Their engagement with reading is weak and they report reading fairly infrequently, but they do read for pleasure, thanks to peer support and encouragement. These teens

feel that they will continue to read, even if infrequently, in the future and even express the hope that their reading engagement may become stronger as their reading skills and selection strategies improve.

Detached Communal Readers

Detached Communal Readers share several features with Social Communal Readers: both groups indicate generally high levels of positive adult (usually parental) encouragement to read and are regular public library users. Detached Communal Readers, however, exhibit some significant differences in their attitude to reading and in the role of personal influences. These readers tend to consider themselves more "serious" readers than Social Communal Readers and see their reading choices as intimately linked to their identity: they dislike the predictability of series fiction and read a wide variety of themes and genres, often deliberately selecting challenging or "edgy" titles. Most of the teens in this group self-identify as very strong readers, often reading well above their grade level, and read a mixture of adult and young adult titles, both fiction and nonfiction.

In contrast to Social Communal Readers, Detached Readers are adamant in their dislike of receiving reading recommendations or advice from their friends. They resent the fact that a friend, particularly someone with less sophisticated reading skills, might want to influence them in their reading choices. Detached Readers tend to view reading recommendations from friends as unwanted pressure and, potentially, even a threat to their friendship, as the following discussion among a group of detached readers illustrates:

Isobel: Yeah, I had a friend recommend a book to me and I just didn't want to read it because she had said it was so

PEER INFLUENCES ON YOUNG TEEN READERS

good. . . . Yeah, if someone says this is the best book ever, I just won't get around to it . . . ever.

Nicola: If someone tells me it's a great book, it's like it's *their* book, and that makes me not want to read it. I want to find books for myself. I have to find my own books. I've got to be a rebel.

Miriam: I agree. If someone recommends a book it's more likely that I *won't* want to read it.

Some Detached Readers see themselves as trendsetters or opinion leaders and enjoy dispensing reading recommendations to others; these teens view themselves as gatekeepers to reading, and they enjoy discovering new titles or new authors and passing on this information to their friends and, sometimes, to their families. Others, such as Roslyn, consider gatekeeping a further potential for rejection and disappointment if the recipients of their advice fail to enjoy the suggested title.

Roslyn: I don't like lending or recommending my books to other people because sometimes I will love the book and my friend will say "it's just okay" and that frustrates me. I want my friends to love it too.

Detached Readers thus avoid developing a reading community with their immediate friends. Instead, they actively seek other, more distant, opportunities for peer support for their reading. Several Detached Readers established a virtual reading community through social networking tools.

Kim: I use the computer a lot. . . . [On Facebook profiles], there's a lot of personal information and one of them is favorite books. I look on my friends' profiles and see what they list as their

favorite books. This is the best way, because they are around my age and they like the same things as me and I know them. I have hundreds of friends on Facebook but a lot of them are people who don't go to my school, people I don't see all the time, and I'll just pick someone at random and read about their favorite books. Then I'll go to the library with their list of good books and look at them myself and see if I want to read them. I never tell them that I'm doing that unless it's a book I really like.

Rebecca: A person who has influenced me a lot is someone I met online through Facebook. She puts book recommendations on her Web site and I've read most of them and they are all really good. We've never met, we just know each other online. One of the other ways I choose books is through this Web site called Buzznet. You can type in your favorite book or movie and it will tell you who else liked that book, so then I can look at that person and see what books she or he has listed as favorites, and I read them.

Several other Detached Readers were members of a teen book club run by a local independent bookstore:

Isobel: Joining book club was the best thing I ever did. We meet once a month and talk about the books we read that month, not just the "assigned book" but all the books we read. It's great. If I hated a book and someone else loved it, we can argue about it. No one gets mad if you don't agree. I use book club for lots of recommendations about what to read. I heard someone talking about how much they loved *Uglies* and so I went right out and read that book. I might not have found it if it hadn't been for book club.

Miriam: Book club is nothing like school. We don't have to be all serious and "right"; we can just talk about what we liked and what we didn't like and no one's right and no one's wrong.

These "detached" reading communities function as safe spaces for these Avid Readers to discuss and share their reading interests with peers without threatening their primary friendship relationships. The relative anonymity of these reading communities gives Detached Readers the peer encouragement and support they desire, as well as the opportunity to give and receive reading recommendations in a risk-free environment. Detached Communal Readers are very satisfied with their reading community and are confident that they will continue to read avidly in the future.

Detached Communal Readers are predominantly female, although two males also fit this profile. Detached readership appears to be unique to the Avid Reader group, probably because of the extra effort that is required to find and join a detached reading community: no Occasional or Reluctant Readers were identified as using this strategy.

Solitary Readers

Avid Solitary Readers

Focus group participants were initially classified as Solitary Readers if they indicated that their friends exert "no influence" on their reading. Avid Solitary Readers simply do not see any reason to share or discuss their reading with their peers. Male and female readers are evenly represented in the Avid Solitary Readers group; however, there are some significant differences between male and female teens in terms of the role of adult mentorship of their reading habit. The male teens in this category report high levels of positive adult encouragement to read, whereas female

teens feel they have received low levels of adult mentorship. For example, Mark describes his father's role in the development of his love of reading:

Mark: My dad recommends books to me. He got me reading Terry Pratchett, his adult books. They're really good. He also likes Elmore Leonard and he got me reading those books, too. My dad has really encouraged me to read more challenging books. . . . Like Sherlock Holmes and Patrick O'Brian. My dad likes books that were written a long time ago and the language is different, the English is different, and it's interesting to read and you learn different words.

In contrast, three female Avid Solitary Readers describe the start of their pleasure reading habit:

Josie: My family really doesn't like to read but I love to read. I remember in elementary school a teacher read a really good book to the class and then I got it and read it and it was fun. And that's how I started reading on my own.

Jessica: My family doesn't read at all. My mom says she doesn't have time for reading and my stepdad said the last book he read was in college. My mom doesn't understand it when I go to my room and I read for like four hours because I'm stuck in a really good book. I think I became a reader because when I was younger my sister would always have the TV, she'd have the remote so I couldn't watch my shows, so I started reading. It was kind of self-defense.

Mandy: For me, reading is solitary because my friends don't read the same kind of books that I do. They read magazines and watch TV and surf on the net for 6 hours a day. . . . Ever since my parents divorced and my stepfather

moved in, since he retired from the military, all he does is sit on his butt and play videogames or play on the computer. He just wastes his time. I watch him and I swore I wouldn't be like that, so I read.

The lack of early positive reinforcement for their reading habit appears to make girls less likely to use their pleasure reading as an opportunity to make social connections later in life. The solitary nature of their early reading experiences appears to persist into their teen years; for these teen girls, reading has always been and continues to be something they do for pleasure, but in isolation, and it is not a habit to be shared with either friends or family.

Both male and female Avid Solitary Readers have effective selection strategies and feel confident and self-sufficient as readers: they enjoy reading, but it is something they keep to themselves. For the boys in particular, this preference for solitary reading could be a reflection of the "socially unacceptable" nature of male pleasure reading: some boys may be reluctant to share their reading with their friends because reading for pleasure is not recognized as a valid male pastime. Although male Avid Solitary Readers do not join in a peer reading community, they are confident that they will continue to read avidly—and solitarily—in the future.

Occasional Solitary Readers

Occasional Solitary Readers are predominantly male, although two female teens also fit this profile. All appear to be solitary readers by choice. Although teens classified as Occasional Solitary Readers are quite sanguine about their lack of a peer reading community, all teens in this group spoke about the difficulty they have finding books and other reading material that they enjoy. Occasional Solitary Readers all exhibited very particular taste in reading;

they could name exemplary book titles that they had particularly enjoyed, but they reported having particular difficulty finding more titles of the same type, and this frustration reduced their incentive to read. In other words, their weak selection strategies and lack of support from a reading community markedly discouraged their reading behavior.

Julian: I don't browse. I usually go to the library to find one book that I want and if it isn't there, I get frustrated and I'll take another book but it won't be something I want and I won't like to read it. It'll be really boring to me and I'll be disappointed and mad. . . . If I go to the library and they don't have the book I want I'll get mad and say I'm not going back to that stupid library again. I get frustrated.

Adam: Most of the books that I've read I've found on the floor. Someone dropped it there and I picked it up and liked the look of it.

Ruth: Usually my problem isn't finding a book that I will like to start to read; it's finding a book that I can finish without getting bored of it. I usually look at what size it is and how long, and if it's a topic I'll be able to read about for a long time. I usually read nonfiction. I have a hard time reading fantasy because it's not real and I can't relate to it very much. I usually read books about war and stuff because I find it more interesting and I learn from it.

Occasional Solitary Readers did not report reading series books and many relied on their mothers to select their reading material, but they note that these selections are not always very appealing. These teens do not report using the library OPAC, the Internet, or other alerting sources for reading advice, but

most describe positive adult encouragement to read.

Joshua: My mom knows what kinds of books I like, adventure stories, not too long. I don't like extremely long books. I only like one long book, *Eragon*.

Darcy: My mom really influences me. She read *A Million Little Pieces* before I did because she heard about it on *Oprah*, so she told me I should read it because it's about drugs and stuff.

In summary, Occasional Solitary Readers appear to be at a crossroads in their reading behavior. They recognize the potential value of reading in their lives, have specific and clearly identifiable reading tastes, and would read significantly more if they did not find it so difficult to find appealing reading material. On the other hand, without peer encouragement and with further negative reading experiences, their reading habit could decline and they could become Reluctant Readers.

Reluctant Solitary Readers

Reluctant Solitary Readers report reading only very infrequently. They appear to be solitary by choice and do not seem uncomfortable or distressed about their lack of reading community. In fact, they see no need for such a community:

Tamsin: I don't share books with my friends. We don't talk about books.

Makenna: My friends and I don't share books.

Angus: I don't share books with my friends.

Reluctant Solitary Readers have negative feelings about reading and readers,

and they have no plans to change their reading habits in the future. They read only when they are bored and have absolutely nothing better to do; otherwise they avoid reading as much as possible. Similar to Reluctant Social Communal Readers, adult mentorship and early exposure to books among teens in this group were irregular and infrequent, and when Reluctant Solitary Readers do read, they do not make an emotional connection with what they read. In the following quotations, Reluctant Solitary Readers compare reading negatively to other leisure activities, such as watching television or playing sports.

Makenna: It takes a long time to get through the book and it's easier just to watch the movie or whatever. I'd rather be outside, being physically active, doing sports. You can't be active when you're reading a book.

Tamsin: You have to think [when you're reading]. I don't like that. . . . If you're hyper, you don't like to sit still and read.

Generally, Reluctant Solitary Readers dislike their perception of the solitary nature of the reading experience; for these teens, the lack of reading community discourages their reading habit. Makenna describes her feelings in the following passage:

Makenna: It is a lot easier just to watch a movie and you really have to be focused when you're reading a book whereas you can be watching a movie or watching a TV, you can be talking to your friends at the same time. If you're reading a book, usually you want to do it in a quiet place with not very many distractions. Reading is more solitary.

These teens feel that they will probably read less in their future than they

do now. They feel that reading for pleasure is an irrelevant activity, one that is enjoyed by other people, but not by them, and that in the future, when they have more independence and control over their own time, reading will be increasingly irrelevant.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that there is considerable diversity in the role of peer groups in supporting teen pleasure reading, and library programming that acknowledges and responds to this diversity will be most effective in serving the widest range of teen readers. This study found that teens' attitudes toward peer influence on their pleasure reading was quite complex. Although some readers found that their immediate peer friendship circle was a key factor in encouraging them to read for pleasure, this was not the case for all teens. Careful analysis of focus group transcripts resulted in a taxonomy of teen readers based on the intersection of two key factors: self-identified reading frequency (Avid, Occasional, and Reluctant Readers) and the role of peer influence (Social Communal, Detached Communal, and Solitary Readers). By examining the intersection of the codes for self-assessed reading habit and level of peer influence, a complex view of teen readers emerges that more clearly reveals the importance of reading community for various types of teen readers. Teen readers in each of the categories identified exhibit unique feelings and attitudes toward the act of reading for pleasure and the role of peer influence on the pleasure reading experience. This taxonomy effectively accounts for the complex role of the peer reading community in encouraging teen pleasure reading in a way that prior classification schemes do not.

Finally, these findings highlight some critical gender differences in the role of personal influences in encouraging the reading habit. Focus group discussions

reveal that all active (Avid and Occasional) male readers describe positive early reading experiences and adult encouragement to read. In contrast, female Avid and Occasional Social Communal and Avid Detached Communal Readers report similar high levels of positive adult encouragement and positive early reading experiences, but female Avid Solitary Readers describe a very different set of experiences, ranging from adult indifference to adult discouragement of their reading habit. These findings suggest that adult mentorship is a critical factor in encouraging young boys to become active readers, but it is less significant for girls. Girls who lack adult mentorship may become active, even avid, readers but they do not view reading as an opportunity to reinforce social relationships, as do many of their female peers. For these girls, reading has always been a solitary and rather isolated activity, a hobby not shared with family members or with friends and peers. YALS

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the YALSA update

ASSOCIATION NEWS

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

Promote YALSA's Awards @ your library

As this issue mails, YALSA will be announcing its award winners at the Youth Media Awards at ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Boston, Mass. The announcement will take place Jan. 18 (watch for reproducible lists to distribute in the spring issue of *YALSA*!).

After the awards announcement, visit www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists to find downloadable tools to promote winners at your library! You'll be able to download customizable bookmarks featuring the winners of the 2010 Alex, Edwards, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey, and Printz Awards. We'll also offer press releases, which you can customize and send to local publications to let teens know that award winners are available at your library.

So check it out at www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists!

Join YALSA at ALA Annual Conference!

Early bird registration ends March 5

YALSA has big plans for Annual 2010—join us in Washington, D.C., June 24-29!

YALSA will offer two preconferences on June 25: Details available at <http://bit.ly/yalsaac2010>.

- **It's Perfectly Normal: Dealing with "Sensitive" Topics in Teen Services**

(Ticketed Event—YALSA Member: \$195; ALA Member: \$235; Non-Member: \$285; Student/Retired Member: \$195.) Friday, 9-5. Have you ever found yourself worrying about how best to address critical but sensitive adolescent topics through your teen services and collection? Topics like sexuality, abuse, privacy and others can be difficult for librarians to address with teens &/or their parents and caregivers. Hear from experts in the field of adolescent development, along with authors and librarians, about how they have managed to successfully maneuver this difficult landscape. Explore strategies for collection development, services and programming relating to these sensitive issues.

- **Promoting Teen Reading with Web 2.0 Tools** (Ticketed Event-\$99) Friday, 12:30-4:30. The participatory web has transformed adolescent literacy, as young people create and consume a new range of online content. Are you ready for it? Learn how libraries can use free web 2.0 tools to connect teens with reading and writing opportunities within and beyond your library collection. Librarians, reporters, and academics will explore teens' daily use of technology and the interaction of digital and print reading channels, including fan fiction and gaming. YA authors will discuss leveraging readership through social networking channels.

In addition, YALSA offers plenty of interesting programs (see the full list at <http://bit.ly/yalsaac2010>) and ticketed events, including the 2010 Printz Reception, the YA Authors Coffee Klatch and more.

Early bird registration ends March 5. Find more details about registration and housing at the ALA Annual Web site, www.ala.org/annual. For the latest details on YALSA's Annual schedule, visit the YALSA Annual Conference Wiki, <http://bit.ly/yalsaac2010>

2010 ALA/YALSA Elections

YALSA's Nominating Committee has submitted the following slate for 2010. YALSA members will vote for president-elect, a one-year board term (choose one), Elections will be held March 16 to April 23, 2010. The 2010 election will take place entirely online. Details on the 2010 election can be found at www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/governance/alaelection/index.cfm.

YALSA 2010 Slate

YALSA President

Sarah Flowers
Sarajo Wentling

YALSA Board of Directors

3-year Term

Shannon Peterson
Chris Shoemaker
Priscille Dando
Alexandra Tyle Annen

1-year Term

Jerene Battisti
Gail Tobin
Angela Carstensen
Jack Martin

Printz Committee

Joy Millam
Todd Krueger
Patricia J. Campbell
Erin Helmrich
Elizabeth Saxton
Drue Wagner-Mees
Ian Rosenior
Gail Zachariah

Edwards Committee

Susan Fichtelberg
Amy Chow
Jonathan Hunt
Walter Mayes
Emily Dagg
Kate Pickett

Nonfiction Committee

Mary Burkey
Jennifer Hubert Swan
Megan Fink
Diane Colson
Michael Cart
Mary Anne Nichols
Elizabeth Burns
Eva Volin

Build Your Professional Skills!

Update your skills, get leadership and networking opportunities and be a part of moving YALSA forward by joining one of our process committees or juries. President-Elect Kim Patton will be appointing committee and jury members to 2010 - 2011 process committees and juries that help the association advance its mission and the profession. Interested in being more involved? Read on to find out how.

A Guide to Process Committees & Juries

YALSA has two types of committees: selection committees, which select specific library materials or choose YALSA's awards and process committees, which help carry out the work of the association. Process committees include:

- those that plan YALSA events, including initiatives and conferences, such as Teen Tech Week, WrestleMania Reading Challenge, and Local Arrangements
- those that help YALSA govern itself, such as Organizations and Bylaws, Strategic Planning, or Nominating;
- those that spread YALSA's messages, including Publications, Web Advisory, and Division and Membership Promotions; and
- many more.

What to Know Before You Volunteer

Before you volunteer to serve on a committee or jury, you'll want to learn what the group does and what your responsibilities will be. You should contact the chair directly, explain that you're interested in serving and then ask questions about what your involvement will entail. Names and contact information for all the chairs are available by clicking on the "Governance" link on YALSA's homepage. Be sure to attend the "All Committee Meeting" on Saturday during Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference to meet with the chair and members. You'll have a chance to learn more about the group, and establish an important contact with the chair, who helps fill seats as they become vacant.

On the YALSA Web site you'll also find information about each of the group's functions, size, and more. Just click on "Governance." Lastly, be sure to read through YALSA's Handbook, especially the sections that list responsibilities for committee members. It's online at www.ala.org/yalsa. Just click on "Handbook" from the left menu.

Complete the Volunteer Form

To be considered for any committee or jury, you need to fill out a volunteer form. It is available online (go to www.ala.org/yalsa then click "Handbook" and "Forms." Choose the Process Committee, Jury, and Taskforce form). When you fill out a form, please be sure to include the name of the committees or juries on which you'd like to serve. If you don't indicate a few that you're interested in, it is very difficult for the

president-elect to find the best fit for you. If you already submitted a volunteer form, but either weren't appointed or missed the deadline for appointments for your particular committee request, your forms will be turned over to the next president-elect. Forms are only kept on file for one year, so it's important that you fill one out each year that you would like to serve on a committee or jury.

Timeline

Turn in your volunteer form between now and March 12. Look for an email confirmation from YALSA after you turn it in.

The President-Elect will make the appointments between March 12 and May 7. If appointed, your term begins July 1, 2010.

The Fine Print

ALA is in the process of revising its policy regarding committee participation. It is likely that committees and juries may have more virtual members than in the past. Please check with Kim Patton if you have questions about specific committees or juries.

Appointments are for either one- or two-year terms, depending on the committee or jury. If you're not appointed specifically as a 'virtual member,' then committee members are expected to attend committee meetings at both the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. YALSA does not pay travel expenses for committee or jury members. Some groups are very popular and may receive dozens of volunteer forms for just two or three available spots. Your membership in YALSA must be current in order for you to be eligible to serve on a committee or jury.

Questions? Please contact Kim Patton, YALSA's President-Elect, at kimpatton@kclibrary.org or YALSA's Membership Coordinator, Letitia Smith, at lsmith@ala.org.

For other ways to build your professional skills and/or get more involved in YALSA, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/YALSAgetinvolved>

Mark Your Calendars

Learn Create Share @ your library this Teen Tech Week

Make sure to register for Teen Tech Week! Registration for the annual event

closes on February 8. This year's theme is Learn Create Share @ your library. The general theme for Teen Tech Week is Get Connected. Teen Tech Week 2009 will be celebrated March 7-13.

YALSA is a nonprofit organization that depends on its members for support. By registering, you are letting us know that technology literacy is important to you and your teen patrons. By registering, you are telling YALSA that this program is valuable and worth continuing.

Support Teen Literature Day

Love young adult literature? Tell everyone that YA lit matters on Support Teen Literature Day on April 15, celebrated in conjunction with ALA's National Library Week (April 11-17, 2010).

YALSA will again participate in Operation TBD on Support Teen Literature Day, along with the Readergirlz (www.readergirlz.com) and Guys Lit Wire (<http://guyslitwire.blogspot.com>). This year, we're working with If I Can Read, I Can Do Anything: A National Book Club for Native American Children. YALSA and its partners will distribute donated teen books to tribal libraries and schools, ensuring those teens have access to quality reading materials that speak to their experiences. To learn more (and see who is participating) visit <http://bit.ly/operationTBD2010>. In 2008 and 2009, Operation TBD donated 20,000 books donated by publishers to pediatric hospitals nationwide and in Canada.

Support Teen Literature Day aims to raise awareness among the general public that young adult literature is a vibrant, growing genre with much to offer today's teens. Support Teen Literature Day also seeks to showcase some award-winning authors and books in the genre as well as highlight librarians' expertise in connecting teens with books and other reading materials. Many of these activities can be featured throughout National Library Week or simply featured on Support Teen Literature Day.

Support Teen Literature Day will also be the official launch of YALSA's 2010 Teen Read Week initiative, which will be celebrated October 17-23, 2010 with the theme "Books with Beat @ your library."

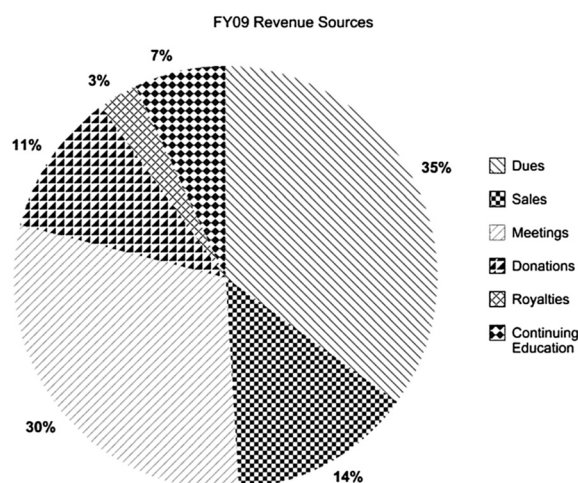
YALSA names Spectrum Scholar, 2010 Emerging Leaders

As part of its commitment to furthering young adult librarianship, YALSA will again sponsor a Spectrum Scholar and two Emerging Leaders for 2010. Cristina Mitra (see article on page 7) is YALSA's Spectrum Scholar, and Anna Koval and Amy Barr are its 2010 Emerging Leaders.

Koval and Barr will receive funding to attend the American Library Association's Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference in 2010. YALSA's participation in the Emerging Leaders program is supported by the Friends of YALSA.

Established in 1997, the Spectrum Scholarship Program is ALA's national diversity and recruitment effort designed to address the specific issue of underrepresentation of critically needed ethnic librarians within the profession, while serving as a model for ways to bring attention to larger diversity issues in the future.

The Emerging Leaders program enables newer librarians from across the country to participate in workgroups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA's structure and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity. Emerging Leaders receive up to \$1,000 each to participate in the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference and each participant is expected to provide to years of service to ALA or one of its units. More than 100 librarians will get on the fast track to leadership in ALA and the profession in the 2010 program.



YALSA Snapshot

YALSA's Revenues

YALSA is a not-for-profit organization that leverages dues, donations, and revenue from various products and programs to fund efforts that support the mission and goals of the association, as outlined in YALSA's strategic plan. In the 2009 fiscal year, money came from the following resources:

- **Dues (\$216,082):** includes student, regular, organizational, corporate, and lifetime memberships for approximately 5,800 members
- **Sales (\$83,795):** includes award seals, advertising for periodicals and self published books
- **Meetings (\$186,425):** ticketed events at Midwinter, Annual and the YA Lit Symposium
- **Donations (\$143,000):** Corporate sponsorships, promotional partnerships, Friends of YALSA and Leadership Endowment
- **Royalties (\$18,372):** includes books published with Neal-Schuman and ALA Editions, TRW products, TTW products and other products sold through ALA Graphics (pamphlets, bookmarks)
- **Continuing Education (\$45,860):** includes regional licensed institutes and e-courses

One hundred percent of revenues go to support the work of the association and its members, including:

- member stipends & grants
- book awards and lists of recommended reading
 - Teen Read Week
 - Teen Tech Week
 - advocacy efforts
 - continuing education opportunities
 - best practices and research dissemination
 - and more.

In 2009, the YALSA Board of Directors also voted to transfer \$25,000 in funds from the operating budget to YALSA's new Leadership Endowment to begin generating interest that will be used for future mentoring, training, scholarships and other leadership offerings for members. **YALS**

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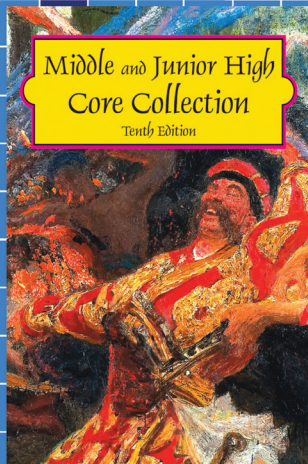
Application deadline is
January 4, 2010.



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