

The Forum Theme is: **Meeting Users' Needs (EDIA)**

Libraries serve changing and dynamic user groups that often have intersecting needs. By acknowledging these different user groups, we can better provide for our patrons and our library communities. Whether you are working with a neurodivergent student to find research for an assignment or are interacting with a patron who is struggling to navigate technology, or you are aware that spaces in the library could be more welcoming to different groups of users- librarians work constantly to change or adapt to meet our patrons where they are. But we often do not always know how to serve these groups.

Agenda * all times Central

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

10:00am- 11:00am Opening Session: Where Access Meets Advocacy: Intellectual Freedom and Reference Services

Eric Stroshane is the Office for Intellectual Freedom's (OIF) Assistant Director of Member Services. He has twenty years of experience working in public, special, and academic libraries. At OIF he directly supports school and library professionals defending the freedom to read; maintains the database of banned and challenged materials; assists with publications; and curates a weekly news compilation for ALA's Intellectual Freedom Blog. He was the news editor for the Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy and is a former president of the Mountain Plains Library Association. He has delivered training and presentations on intellectual freedom issues to a variety of audiences nationwide.

Joyce McIntosh is the Assistant Program Director for the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF), an organization dedicated to First Amendment education, litigation, and advocacy. She has worked at the intersection of intellectual freedom, communication, and the First Amendment for three decades. Her background and education in journalism and library and information science have led her to work for newspapers, non-profits, and for the last two decades in libraries. She worked in a public library outside of Chicago, IL providing reference, programming, outreach, and assistive technology before joining FTRF. With FTRF and the American Library Association her work has focused on education about the First Amendment and censorship, and helping librarians navigate challenges in their school and public libraries.

SPONSOR: ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom/Freedom to Read Foundation

11:05am – 11:50am Helping Diverse Users with Financial Literacy Resources

This session will assist library professionals in preparing to answer basic personal finance reference questions and to provide resource guidance for patrons who need additional assistance from financial professionals. We will discuss why patrons, especially those with language barriers or those who are new to the US financial system, may seek out financial information from a library.

A librarian will discuss how to use resources in context and how to support the needs of your community as they relate to financial education by building partnerships with community organizations.

SPONSOR: FLIG (Financial Literacy Interest Group)

Speakers:

Emily Mross, Business Librarian, Penn State University Libraries

Lisa Liu, Adult and Teen Services Librarian, Saratoga Library, Santa Clara County Library District

11:55am- 12:40pm Informal Learning and Community Building through Library Outreach

Outreach and informal learning create opportunities where library workers can meet students where they are, reduce cognitive load by sharing information at point-of-need, and “fill in gaps” from classroom instruction. In addition to supporting learning needs, these events consider students holistically and can create space for students to form community and help them feel a sense of belonging in library spaces.

This session shares experiences and best practices from an engineering librarian for developing and growing scaffolded library outreach programs targeting both undergraduate and graduate students. Building on cumulative experiences from a small liberal arts college to an R1 institution, I emphasize flexible, scalable events that can be online or in-person, synchronous or asynchronous. Intentional planning lets you start the semester with events like mixers or breakfasts that welcome new and returning students to the library. Later events, like workshops or crafts provide point-of-need information and opportunities to de-stress. Including events dedicated to writing or finishing projects are impactful for all students. Because of the busy schedules of many students, this session particularly highlights ways we can use technology, both synchronously and asynchronously, to foster connections.

The heart of this work is a drive to build community and develop trust with students so that they feel like the library is a space for them. Assessment is essential to creating the programming and events that students need. I will share how feedback has led to new programming. Additionally, this presentation centers student belonging in relation to libraries, and especially how those experiences may differ for users from a variety of different backgrounds. Feedback like this is essential to go beyond acknowledging differences and creating impactful programs.

SPONSOR: ETS (Emerging Technologies Section)

Speakers:

Sara Kern, Engineering Librarian, Pennsylvania State University

Georgette Nicolosi, Business Librarian, Missouri S&T

12:40pm- 1:30pm Lunchbreak

1:30pm-2:30pm Genealogical Research for African Americans and Asian Americans: Tools and Strategies to Support Family History Researchers

This presentation features presenters specializing in African American and Asian American genealogy. They will share genealogical research tools and techniques for conducting family history research, preparing attendees to better support patrons from diverse backgrounds at their own institutions interested in doing genealogical research.

Family history research is of potential interest to patrons at all types of libraries. Librarians can provide genealogical research assistance, supporting patrons' personal research needs and by learning to research their own family history, library users gain universal skills that can be applied to other research needs as well.

This presentation explicitly addresses the needs of users from different racial backgrounds by focusing on genealogical research for African Americans and Asian Americans. Promoting family history research support for people of color makes genealogy practice more inclusive and open to those who might have thought tracing their ancestors was impossible.

SPONSOR: HS (History Section)

Speakers:

Tamika Strong, Reference and Research Division Manager, Auburn Avenue Research Library, Fulton County Library System

Chella Vaidyanathan, European/World History, Philosophy, and Classics Librarian, Emory University
Chris Pollette, Outreach and Engagement Library, Emory University

Thursday, March 6, 2025

10:00am – 10:45am The Art, Science and Practicality of the Cookbook

When the CODES Essential Cookbooks committee begins its yearlong collection, review and evaluation of titles, the needs and expectations of users is tantamount. Photographs may be beautiful, but do these contribute to the recipe or understanding of the culture? Recipes may be authentic, but will cooks be able to prepare these in their own home kitchens? Are options available for ingredients that may be allergens, or a technique that may be difficult for someone with disabilities to undertake. And what about metric measurements? Striving to create a final list that recognizes diverse populations in public libraries of all sizes, with varying budgets, is part of the art and science of cookbook evaluation.

Cookbook evaluation may sound like a delicious and fun task- which it is- but there is a great deal more evaluation going on beside test testing the chocolate amaretto brownies! CODES Essential Cookbooks committee chair Dodie Ownes will give attendees an insiders look at all that must be considered for a cookbook to make the final list of twelve.

SPONSOR: CODES (Collection Development and Evaluation Section)

Speakers:

Dodie Ownes, Adult Services Librarian, Denver Public Library, Chair of CODES Essential Cookbooks Committee

Barbara Bibel, Reference/Collection Development Librarian, Oakland Public Library (Retired)

10:50am - 11:35am Evolving Library Services: A Holistic Approach to Patron Support and Well-being

Academic libraries are evolving into dynamic, multifaceted hubs that support a diverse array of intellectual, professional and personal needs within the academia and beyond. The adoption of the PARS approach—People, Accessible, Responsive, and Strategic—guides the comprehensive service delivery model at the Zach S. Henderson Library, ensuring that resources and services cater to a wide range of users, including students, faculty, staff, and populace in the local jurisdiction. Through collaborative efforts, born out of cross-campus partnerships, the library becomes an integral part of the broader campus ecosystem that prioritizes engagement and inclusion as facilitated by Georgia Southern University.

This presentation examines how academic libraries could adapt to meet the complex and evolving needs of their patrons through the PARS approach- People, Accessible, Responsive, and Strategic Services. By integrating personalized research support, accessibility enhancements, mental well-being initiatives, and specialized resources, the library can create a comprehensive framework that empowers students, faculty, staff, and community patrons.

SPONSOR: RSS (Reference Services Section)

Speakers:

Kay Coates, Associate Professor/Research, Instruction, and Outreach Services Librarian, Georgia Southern University

Jessica Garner, Associate Professor & the Access Services Department Head, Georgia Southern University

11:35am-12:30pm Lunchbreak

12:30pm - 1:15pm Partnering with Professors: Expanding one-off class instruction with custom course videos

Complex research databases can be hard for students to digest in a one-off, especially when there's five different databases to cover in about an hour. When over 150 students from a variety of backgrounds are working on a research project, and librarian capacity for custom follow-up consultations is limited, providing ways for students to effectively review the content covered in the one-off instruction session is vital. This session will share how collaborating with the professor to enhance student self-sufficiency using specialized databases, with a focus on multiple learning styles, has created a more positive research project experience for all involved.

Over the past two years I have developed and iterated five YouTube tutorials for a syndicated marketing data class taken by undergraduate and graduate business students. The videos have evolved in length, use of closed captions, and recording style to fit student preferences as demonstrated by evaluating viewership data and questions directed to librarians. As I have iterated these videos, I've learned to

focus on features that have received positive feedback from multiple users, such as international students who choose to read the captions, and working professionals who are returning to school after several years and wish to review the material in slices.

The data on student use demonstrate that these course specific resources were far more successful than drop-in office hours, print resources, full class recordings, and other approaches tried over the years.

Sponsor: BRASS (Business Reference and Services Section)

Speaker:

Malisa Anderson-Strait, Business and Career Librarian, Goizueta Business Library, Emory University

1:20pm-2:20pm AI-mazing IDEA: Leveling Up Library Services

This presentation explores the role of AI in libraries, focusing on its potential to advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). It examines how AI can enhance accessibility, bridge gaps, and improve inclusivity for diverse users while addressing the importance of careful prompt engineering to avoid perpetuating biases. The presentation also investigates the use of AI to support patrons with neurodivergent learning disabilities, such as dyslexia or autism, and how to integrate these tools into programming and teaching. It delves into the application of AI as a tool for promoting IDEA in reference interactions and instruction, including its potential to help users understand societal genres and norms and to assist English as a second language learners.

Sponsor: AIRUS (Artificial Intelligence in Reference & User Services Interest Group)

Speakers:

Abe Nemon, Instructional and Online Learning Librarian, Virginia Wesleyan University

Ashley Tschakert Foertmeyer, Teaching & Engagement Librarian, Ohio Wesleyan University

Jennifer Goodland, Reference & Instruction Librarian, San Juan College

Lisa Boyd, Information Services Librarian, Canton Public Library

Melissa Del Castillo, AIRUS Chair

2:25pm-3:30pm Engaging Diverse Library Communities

Providing personalized reference service for your library patrons involves making conscious efforts in understanding who makes up your community, uncovering how cultural intersections impact service and resources at institutional levels, and recognizing the changemaking you can do through your work. In this session, join ALA's Office for Diversity and Outreach Services (ODLOS) on a reflective look at the framework of cultural competency and what action areas have the biggest impact on your role at the library. Following the presentation, resources will be shared to help guide your continued personal, organizational, institutional, and systems-level development to effect change.

Sponsor: ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS)

Speaker:

Kevin Strowder, Director, ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services