

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION MEDIA RELATIONS HANDBOOK FOR LIBRARIES



Image credits: 1. A user at the new Pierce County Job + Business center is helped by a library employee, photo by [Washington State Library](#); 2. Teen using e-reader at Myrtle Grove Middle School in Wilmington, North Carolina, photo by Jennifer LaGarde; 3. Mother and son at Centro Library. 4. Storytime at Virginia Beach (Va.) Public Library; 5. Rachel Schott works on a computer at the New Orleans Public Library Lakeview Branch, photo by [Gates Foundation](#).

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How Can Media Attention/Publicity Help @Your Library?

Publicity is everything when you are trying to gain visibility and support for your library. It may seem daunting, but with some planning and dedicated effort you can shape and organize effective communications outreach. Media attention has its limits, however. What are its limitations?

Media Attention/Publicity Can:

- Increase public awareness of your programs, personnel, and services;
- Attract and increase involvement of public and private partners;
- Create, change, build, or enhance your public image;
- Encourage contributions of money, materials, services, and time;
- Win support for city, state, federal, foundation, or individual donor funding;
- Help you reach new or never before approached audiences, such as non-English speakers;
- Clarify misunderstandings about what libraries do and how they're financed;
- Mobilize opinion leaders in your community to become active supporters and advocates;
- Help knit together a vital network of libraries throughout the region, state, and nationwide; and
- Help build public and private support for libraries.

Developing and Implementing a Simple Media/Communications Plan

It's always recommended to develop your flight plan before you take off. Similarly, drafting a communications plan will help you chart the course to a successful communications campaign. Below is a standard set of sections you can consider following each time you want to begin an outreach campaign, no matter how small. Even a brief, one- or two-pager can be helpful. Consider developing it with a small or large group of colleagues, depending on the scope and breadth of the project. The kind of staff or volunteers you involve may include those from development, programming and library services as they can help you to consider all of your strengths as you move forward to gain the kind of attention you want.

What do you want to achieve? Your goals and objectives

Why do you want to do media or advocacy outreach? You only need two or three goals for a simple campaign and to keep your focus on what you are looking for.

Your goals may be specific:

1. Making current and potential library users aware of the services offered @ your library®;
2. Letting the public know about a specific upcoming event, report release, or activity; and
3. Informing the public and other stakeholders about a referendum for library support.

Or, they may be quite broad:

1. Increasing your base of potential donors; and
2. Increasing public awareness and support for your library.

Or, they may be a combination of the two.

Who are you trying to reach? Your target audience

When planning media outreach, your first impulse is to focus on the story. Resist the urge. Instead, look at the goals you have just set forth and consider which audiences you will need to help you attain your goals. Remember that “the public” represents many groups of people who read, watch and listen to a variety of sources.

Here are some of the possible “publics” you may include on your list:

- Your library leadership—board members, staff, volunteers;
- Past, current and potential contributors;
- Decision makers and opinion leaders in your city, state and in Washington, D.C.;
- Potential library members and leaders;
- Your colleagues in other local and statewide associations;
- Your counterparts in other states;
- Local and regional business leaders;
- Potential library users;
- Seniors, teens, parents of young children;
- Journalists;
- Community groups;
- Personal contacts;
- Your neighbors; and
- Ethnic communities.

What should you say? Your key messages

Regardless of your goals and audiences, it's important to shape messages that are simple and consistent. Generally, you will have three or four *key messages* for your library. For specific campaigns, you may consider adapting one or more of your key messages to fit the new campaign. Either way, your message should always be applicable to your library's primary mission (for example, libraries are community centers, libraries are centers of lifelong learning.)

Once you've shaped your key message(s), you can develop talking points that support these messages.

Once you have drafted and approved messages, it is essential that you create a message manual or notebook where all of your key messages and campaign messages live on a permanent basis for easy access. You should update this as needed and have several copies available for any media interview situation. It can be divided into general messages and talking points – and sections delineated for campaigns and programs. One copy should be kept with your communications' staff, one with your executive director and one, possibly, with development or program staff.

Here are a few message-crafting pointers:

1. Develop messages that are extremely understandable so they can be used to reach all or most of the audiences identified.
2. Be proud of your messages. This is especially important for libraries because your constituencies – library, Friends, donors, and politicians – need to get your messages so they can easily convey your key messages in one or two sentences or talking points. These constituencies can be your best advocates!
3. Your message(s)—boiled down to a tagline—might represent a core value of your library (“Libraries are centers of democracy.” or “Our library meets the need of our children”) or be a call to action (“Get involved—get a library card!”). We also recommend you incorporate The Campaign for America's Libraries messages that include the phrase “@ your library.”

The Campaign for America's Libraries

Following are the three main Campaign for America's Libraries messages (and talking points):

- **Libraries are changing and dynamic places.** Today's libraries go beyond books. While still offering traditional print resources, libraries have e-books, free computers, Internet access, free wi-fi and more. Plus, libraries offer trained professional service from librarians.
- **Libraries are places of opportunity.** Libraries are places for education and self-help. And because they offer free and open access to all, they bring opportunity to all.
- **Libraries change lives.** Libraries have more than information. They have the power to transform lives.
- **Libraries change communities.** Libraries support community and civic engagement. As non-commercial institutions that welcome everyone equally, libraries offer a unique place to stay in touch, engage with others and find a place to contribute.

TESTING MESSAGES: You, the library staff member reading this guide and/or some of your colleagues, may not be your target audience, nor may you “get” your messages depending on your activity or project. For example, your reference librarian's forte may not be reaching potential library users, but he or she may know exactly how to communicate with your daily visitors. If new users are your target audience, you'll have to test your messages with people who represent that audience. This does not always mean running formal focus groups, as this can be an expensive undertaking. Consider testing messages on your child's group of friends or their parents or people who attend your gym or religious group, or ask one of your relatives to test your messages with people they know.

What Outreach Tools Will Work @ Your Library? Your Tactics

The tactics in this guide can be selected alone or in concert to help you develop a plan of action for your campaign that will help you meet your goals, audience, and timeline within the limits of your financial, staff, and volunteer resources. We have included communications tactics that may also be useful in developing your advocacy work as you design synergistic activities to effectively reach and generate support for your library activities and issues. NOTE: You might also consider developing a crisis communications plan that can go into effect should you ever be faced with a crisis situation.

Some sample activities

Below are five types of events or activities that you might consider planning to gain media attention or other visibility. They may be selected for various audiences you've already defined. For each sample, we've included sample tactics, tips, and ideas for you to pick and choose from as you plan and implement your outreach campaign:

1. Opening a new wing, a new facility or embarking on a capital campaign.
2. Announcing a new president, executive director or board chair.
3. Celebrating the milestone of a longstanding volunteer or staff member.
4. Announcing a new program, an event, town hall or other activity for children, teens, adults, seniors, or others.
5. Releasing a report or study conducted by your library about library usage trends.

Using stories to help communicate your message

For all of the sample activities below, what will be essential to develop for media is a compelling story. This is because not only the story, but the 'story-telling' is an essential art for media. As you develop and think about these stories, remember you need to be able to talk about "Why your donors, or the spokespeople care about the library." As will be mentioned in sample activity #3, stories can be found in many places in your library. Consider developing a bank of these stories so they are at your fingertips when you have the opportunity to sell the stories to the media.

The ALA's Campaign for America's Libraries has a [library story collection database](http://atyourlibrary.org/librariestories) (<http://atyourlibrary.org/librariestories>) to help encourage public awareness about the value of libraries. Ask your patrons to share their library stories! The collection includes over 60 [video library stories from authors and celebrities](http://atyourlibrary.org/video-stories) (<http://atyourlibrary.org/video-stories>) that are available for download to use in your library's public awareness campaign.

Opening of a new wing, a new facility or a capital campaign

- Consider a formal invitation or letter of invitation to outlined audiences.
- If you want the public to attend, in addition to sending out an invitation to your constituents and the general public, send advance media listings to radio, TV, print and Internet outlets;
- If it is a groundbreaking, plan to invite and include local decision-makers and board members in the program. In fact, check with key individuals offices to coordinate a compatible date;
- If you want the media to write and run a feature piece on the day of your event, work well in advance to research and create possible feature story angles that you can pitch to the media. The stories could be about the architect, a committed funder or the people who will benefit from the building or space.
- If you want the media to attend and then do a story about the event, make sure you are prepared with spokespeople, sound equipment if appropriate and a place them to hold interviews if there is not a speaking platform. Follow-up with press that has shown interest to ensure they attend.
- Think of the props you will need for such an announcement: shovels, construction hats, floor plans, renderings of the new space, appropriate signage.

Announcing a new president, executive director or board chair

In planning, first determine if this is news or not.

- If your current leader has left abruptly or is leaving after a short time at the library, there's a chance that this will be considered news. Consider this a crisis situation and handle it very strategically. You might want to consult a communications professional to create a strategy to roll out the announcement. See also: Tips on Handling Bad News.
- If this announcement is due to the retirement or leaving of a long-term staff member or board chair, then it may be an opportunity to plan several events – first to celebrate the contribution of the person leaving and second to introduce the new leadership – which may be better planned over the course of a month or two, depending on the new leadership.
- Here you have the opportunity to generate stories both about the dedicated service of the person leaving as well as to pique interest about new leadership. Either may be a good time to schedule one-on-one interviews or media meetings. Always try to have a media professional or other experienced staff member attend any meetings set up, not only to take follow-up notes, but also to provide details.
- With an incoming person, the first step will be to determine if they are already comfortable talking about library issues in general and key local issues. If it is determined that the person is well prepared, then try to schedule a short refresher media training and start outreach calls. If they aren't, consider a phased in media campaign where after more extensive media training they can start off speaking to smaller outlets before building up to the larger and more important outlets.
- Plan your events: a few possible events might be a press conference [find details in the Appendix,] a media breakfast or briefing at your library café, a tour of the library following or instead of a press conference.

Celebrating the milestone of a long-standing volunteer or staff member

- This may be a perfect opportunity *not* to plan a press event. It is, however, a chance to spend time doing a phone or Internet campaign and build your relationships with media sources.
- Your first step is to uncover potentially compelling stories by spending time visiting the stacks, the help desk, the computer room, the children's room, the afterschool program and others. Talk to as many people as you can to identify interesting and unique stories about library members, staff or volunteers who are making a big difference. Try to always have many stories tucked away in your short-term memory. The more you practice, the better you'll become at it.
- Once you have about 10, try to narrow your pool down to three to five different personal stories and draft a bio or story about each person's involvement.
- Create a general pitch letter that includes snippets about each of the stories you are pitching with general information about what a great time it is for libraries.
- Develop your media list, including both people you know and people you think might be interested. Cover all types of outlets: radio, print, TV and bloggers.
- Practice your verbal pitch, then get on the phone. Pitching a feature story is something that often times gets pushed to the back burner, but if you carve out 30 minutes or more a day to contact media, you can run your feature ideas by them, ask about stories they are working on and see how the library might fit into their plans. If one person commits to doing a specific story, you will still have several special library stories to pitch to another contact.
- Keeping in constant touch with reporters can always help your case.

Announcing a new program, event, town hall or other activity for children, teens, adults, seniors, others

This is a time to reach out to your community at large as well as targeted lists. It would be best if they could hear or read about the announcement more than once from many different types of media over a period of time. Here are some tactics you may try in reaching them:

- Pass out flyers or postcards about the program at all library events starting well in advance. Place these items at the checkout counter, at the information desk, on your website.
- Send out public service announcements for print, radio and news websites [depending on the audience and the announcement.] For example, if you are targeting young toddlers and their mothers/caregiver, don't target popular websites for parenting and youth. Business people rarely catch daytime TV talk shows, so try not to target these TV stations when targeting legislators. For teens, try pitching some hip websites or local stations they watch after school. If you are promoting an event or activity whose potential attendees will be high-school students, then it would not make sense to buy an ad in a local paper where the average reader is considerably older.
- Let your local and state legislators and their staffs know about what's happening. They read both their hometown papers and state or national dailies and weeklies. Local weeklies may have small circulations, but they often end up on legislators' desks.
- Consider broad outreach for events such as a town hall or fundraiser, a pep rally, or a workshop. It can include simple written correspondence, such as a postcard or more detailed pleas for involvement, such as a volunteer or fundraising letter. Once you've determined your end product, you may want to distribute your materials in various forms and to different audiences. Some of these materials can be produced for a very small budget. This is especially true if your board members and advocates agree to approach their contacts for free services or printing. This is a way they can do their part to encourage library support.

Releasing a report or study conducted by your library about library-usage trends

Releasing this type of tool can be a fabulous news maker, but takes extreme forethought and organization and is best coordinated by a team of internal staff and consultants. Here are some tactical tips:

- If you would like to do a report, study or survey, try to start planning at least a year in advance.
- Begin by asking such questions as what type of research could you do that would be of interest and when you would like to release the results. This could be hooked to National Library Week, Women's History Month, the first day of spring or during Banned Books Week. Once you decide, then put together your time line backwards, starting from your release date.
- Put together a team that might include staff from development, event, program, management and appropriate consultants who could work on the research, the analysis, the writing, the production of the publication if you are planning to create a formal piece, the media outreach, and a release event, if desired.
- One way to shape ongoing interest in your report is to follow a trend. Not the Uggs your teenager is wearing, but a statistical or factual trend that is happening to libraries over time. Trends influence what gets covered and what doesn't. Local journalists like trends because they show facts that aren't isolated. National journalists love trends because they show national dimension with demographic variation. The American Library Association Public Information Office frequently uses trends to pitch national articles. Here's a sample trend message:

"Our library is facing a \$200,000 budget cut this year, part of nationwide cutbacks that are impacting libraries in many parts of the U.S."

Conversely, if you see that a national paper has covered a story that you see relating to a newsworthy local example, take the time the next morning to reach out to some reporters to generate interest in your activities. For example, if *USA Today* reports that libraries are building coffee shops to lure people back from retail booksellers, you can say that since opening four years ago, your coffee shop has seen a 10 percent increase in revenues. The newspaper likes the story because they can say, "Yesterday, *USA Today* reported an increase in coffee shops in libraries across the nation and here in our town, the local library has seen a 10 percent increase in revenues over the past four years." Suddenly, your old-news coffee shop is new news!

- Consider distributing an embargoed copy of the results to a few key media well enough in advance so that they have time to write or produce a piece about the study on the day you want it published. Don't send the results to the journalists until they have agreed *not* to break the embargo. Once you've sent the embargoed report, identify those with extreme interest and that might publish and invite the journalists to meet with your

executive director or researcher to discuss the details. If you meet with TV producers in advance, you can offer advance interviews to be released on the agreed-upon date. If a TV interview comes through, make sure that your spokespeople have had specific media-training sessions to plan for the release of this report.

- Consider drafting and trying to place an op-ed piece authored by your board chair and/or executive director that will run the morning your report is no longer embargoed.
- Depending on your media market, having a release in key news organizations on the morning of an event will help your chances of attracting additional media. If you have done your homework and advance media outreach, this will be a major key of your success.

When Is It Best to Plan Your Release, Event or Program?

Your Timing and Time Line

Your news delivery timing is a key to your success. Think about the best/worst time to release information or a report—or do an event or activity. Here are some general thoughts:

Timing

Long-term planning

If you are planning an event or activity that you would like to invite press to attend and cover, consider scheduling when there won't likely be competing events. This is easier said than done. Remember that since your date will be set well in advance, interested media may be pulled away for breaking news at the last minute. Keep this in mind as you plan so that you, your team and your volunteers are not disappointed. Timing can also help *strengthen* a news or feature hook. As you consider a date, think about other happenings locally, statewide, or nationally. For example: Design a theme relating to National Library Week, Banned Books Week, School Library Media Month, Library Card Sign-Up Month or Teen Read Week. Also, holidays such as Labor Day, Mother's Day or Women's History Month can provide opportunities for media-outreach campaigns.

Consider the news cycle

Your town or city may have better days when reporters and producers are likely to attend your event if there is no breaking news. In many big cities, the best days for media events are Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 9 a.m. and noon. This gives you time to get your spokespeople onto early morning shows before your event and will give the evening news shows time to attend and then get back to the station to edit their segments before air time. Figuring out your news cycle can help you plan this.

Devising a time line or internal planning calendar

Regardless of how much time you have to deliver your message or to accomplish your stated goals, consider developing a simple or extensive calendar to help you stay organized and coordinate your efforts. To begin, start with the event or release date and work backwards, figuring out how much time you will need to complete each task. Include time for approvals.

For your planning calendar, you will need to develop both an internal calendar for the event itself as well as a calendar for approaching the media. The calendar below is a sample media calendar, which can be adapted for your use, based on your media outlets and deadlines. Note that several months out, your timeline might specify what needs to be accomplished in a particular week, but as it gets closer to your event or activity, the timing might be down to the hour. Here you may also include broadcast and print outlet deadlines for longer lead magazines such as monthlies. Short-lead publications like daily papers and broadcast outlets are included closer to the event or activity. Try to be specific in listing tasks to be completed and by whom. This will help staff plan enough time to make phone calls and write releases or other items. Also, remember that the actual event or release isn't the last thing on your calendar! During the days and week after the event, time should be allotted to follow-up by gathering news clips and thanking reporters.

Sample planning calendar for a press briefing

Three months to six weeks before an event:

- Check with as many media outlets as possible to find out their deadlines for listings, public service announcements, articles, if you're trying to get word into a special edition, etc. (This might be a great intern project).
- Create media strategy and an event team, if needed.
- Revise and get your strategy approved.
- Contact event site to reserve date. (Should be done earlier, if possible or if not on-site).
- Contact and begin to solidify participants and speakers.
- Create invitations if necessary.
- Draft, approve and send long-lead media advisory and materials to long-lead publications.

Five weeks before event:

- Receive commitment from speakers.
- Update media list.
- Call key journalists who need a long time to commit to and produce pieces.
- Draft and send PSA to radio contacts.

Four weeks before event:

- Draft and send calendar listing to feature and community calendar editors at local papers and television stations.
- Begin to shape speaker remarks.
- Plan and produce press kit components.
- Continue to call journalists.
- Distribute release/advisory to weeklies (announcing the event), assignment and planning desks.

**Remember, weekly papers have earlier deadlines than dailies. You may need to do outreach to them this week or before.

Three weeks before event:

- Finalize speaker's remarks internally.
- Edit press kit components. Contact talk-show producers to schedule interviews.
- Continue to call journalists.
- Distribute release to dailies and bloggers.

Two weeks before event:

- Media follow-up calls.
- Begin to distribute remarks to speakers for editing.
- Consider audio/visual needs and make arrangements for rentals if needed.

One week before event:

- Media follow-up calls.
- Call speakers to confirm appearance and finalize remarks.
- Finalize press kit components.

Week of event:

- Weekly papers published.
- Coordinate coverage.
- Distribute release again to dailies, TV and news radio contacts.
- Copy, collate, and assemble press kit.

Day before event:

- Call to remind assignment editors.
- Set up the space if possible.
- Create a sign-in sheet.

Day and week after event:

- Set up the space, with enough chairs for media and guest, but not too many so it looks crowded even if it isn't.
- Set up a press sign-in table.
- Monitor news coverage.
- Write/mail follow-up release, if desired.
- Draft and send thank-you notes and calls for good stories.
- Send letters-to-editors to correct errors and expand coverage.
- Debrief.

Your Online Campaign

Blogs

There are millions of blogs on the Web—an exact number is the subject of great debate. However, their ability to give instant news updates has driven them to become mainstays of many news organizations; in fact, many bloggers are now credible pundits. Consider posting an announcement to community blogs created for neighborhoods, cities and states. They are a good way to get word out about events/votes/etc. So which blogs should you pay attention to? Good question. Start scanning and then building a list of websites and blogs related to libraries if you haven't already. If you want to try to pitch the discussions or blogs that are part of these sites, sign up or volunteer as an editor for them. Talk to your friends about specific blogs you know of and ask for contact information. You may want to start a library blog.

Direct Email to Supporters

Direct email is used more and more for outreach ... you can acquire lists by buying them (usually voter lists or from other organizations). You can also micro-target populations, too. This would include likely voters, those with a high propensity of library users, etc. For your direct email piece, do the following:

- Pay special attention to crafting subject lines so that even if a recipient doesn't open it, he or she still gets a mini-message just by seeing the subject line (i.e. Vote to Keep Your Library Open or Today is Election Day or Help Fund Your Local Library).
- Keep your messages short – 4 or 5 sentences.
- Consider who should send out the email. Use prominent community members or special advocates such as "Friends of the Library" organizations.
- Include a URL in message.
- Coordinate the email with other aspects of campaign, e.g. direct mail, newspaper ads.
- For larger scale campaigns that have funding, consider placing paid or sponsorship banner ads on newspaper or other websites.

Electronic Discussion Lists

Electronic discussion lists are voluntary networks where individuals sign up to receive email messages submitted by other electronic discussion list members or owners. Electronic discussion lists are slower than chatrooms and rather than happening very quickly on a Web page, messages arrive via email. Some electronic discussion lists are moderated, so only the moderator or approved messages can be posted. Other electronic discussion lists are a free-for-all, with all members able to post messages at will. Electronic discussion lists are very common for clubs or member organizations. They can be an effective way for a large group of people who share similar interests to have a discussion.

Managing social media strategy within your organization

Listen

When your organization is mentioned online, whether it's a responding to criticism, thanking someone for a positive comment, or an opportunity to be a part of a conversation that relates directly to your organization's concerns, there's a relatively short time to respond effectively. In addition to monitoring your library's presence on its own social media sites, you should monitor the Internet for mentions of your organization's name, the names of key leaders of your organization and mentions of your individual campaigns and events. By monitoring keywords (and/or hashtags on Twitter) for topics related to your organization or campaign, you can also identify the online community that shares your concerns and build new relationships.

There are a variety of fee-based monitoring and engagement services available, but organizations without a budget for these tools can use a variety of free and low-cost services to track and stay notified about online communications that relate to their work and brand. In a webinar hosted by Techsoup in 2010, Amy Sample Ward and Allen Gunn give instructions for creating a social media dashboard using a combination of search strategies combined with RSS feeds and other online tools.

“Social Media Listening Dashboard”

Archived webinar from Techsoup (2010), Amy Sample Ward and Allen Gunn

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/internet/webinars/page13083.cfm>

“Listening Literacy For Nonprofits”

August 19, 2009 by Beth Kanter, Guest post on BrianSolis.com

<http://www.briansolis.com/2009/08/listening-literacy-for-nonprofits%E2%80%A8/>

Internal Communications

Since social media places staff on the frontlines of your organization’s communication channels, planning and good internal communication is key to averting public relations problems. Have a plan in place to deal with difficult situations, negative comments or a crisis, should one occur. Clear and thoughtful planning will help social media staff feel more comfortable and confident in their roles.

Additionally, you will want to have a formal **social media policy** in place and review it with staff. In “Doing Social Media So It Matters: A Librarian’s Guide” Laura Solomon recommends reviewing social media policies created by other libraries and organizations and offers these resources:

UT Southwestern Library Social Media Policy (PDF)

http://units.sla.org/chapter/ctx/UTSouthwesternLibrarySocialMediaPolicy_LL_T_Final.pdf

Policy Database at Social Media Governance website

<http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies.php>

Further resources

Presentations and webinars

Slide [presentations from PR Forum events](http://www.ala.org/offices/pio/prforum/prforum) (<http://www.ala.org/offices/pio/prforum/prforum>) at past ALA Annual Conference including:

- "Going mobile @ your library®" (2011) by Joe Murphy, librarian at Yale University and mobile technology innovator,
- "Next practice in communication @ your library®" (2010) by Stephen Abram
- "Diversity @ your library®: Broadening Your Audience and Engaging Communities" (2008) by Eric Friedenwald-Fishman.
- "Breaking through the message clutter @ your library®" featuring a panel of industry experts offering powerful tips and strategies on how to deliver library messages to the public. Speakers: Tom McNamee, editorial page editor, Chicago Sun Times; Dave Baum, Chicago broadcaster and media trainer; Eric Friedenwald-Fishman, creative director /president, Metropolitan Group; Kevin Kirkpatrick, executive vice president, Metropolitan Group and George Eberhart, editor, American Libraries Direct.

[Social Media in 30 Minutes a Day Workshop](http://www.slideshare.net/AmySampleWard/social-media-in-30-minutes-a-day-workshop)

<http://www.slideshare.net/AmySampleWard/social-media-in-30-minutes-a-day-workshop>

This workshop was part of the 2012 Grassroots and Groundwork conference, at Mystic Lake, MN - given June 8, 2012 by Amy Sample Ward.

Nonprofit Marketing/Communications Blogs

Amy Sample Ward

Co-author of "Social by Social: A handbook in using social technologies for social impact" and "Social Change Anytime Everywhere: How to Implement Online Multichannel Strategies to Spark Advocacy, Raise Money, and Engage your Community."

<http://amysampleward.org/>

Beth's Blog: How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media

www.bethkanter.org

Beth Kanter is co-author of *The Networked Nonprofit*

(http://www.worldcat.org/title/networked-nonprofit/oclc/773988683&referer=brief_results)

and *Measuring the Networked NonProfit*

(http://www.worldcat.org/title/networked-nonprofit/oclc/773988683&referer=brief_results).

Dan Zarella : The Social Media Scientist

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Cutting-edge thought on effective use of social media.

Dan Zarella is the author of *The Facebook Marketing Book*

(http://www.worldcat.org/title/facebook-marketing-book/oclc/635468621&referer=brief_results)

and *The Social Media Marketing Book* for O'Reilly

(http://www.worldcat.org/title/social-media-marketing-book/oclc/437083133&referer=brief_results).

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<http://www.communityorganizer20.com/>

John Haydon: Discussing Social Media Marketing for Nonprofits

Author of "Facebook Marketing for Dummies"

<http://www.johnhaydon.com/>

Katya's Nonprofit Marketing Blog

Katya Andresen founder of Network for Good

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com/>

Kivi's Nonprofit Communications Blog

Kivi Leroux Miller

<http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/blog/>

KDPaine's PR Measurement Blog

Katie Delahaye Paine (KDPaine & Partners) conducts research on measuring public relationships, reputation, and brand image.

<http://kdpaine.blogs.com/>

NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network

<http://www.nten.org/>

The M Word: Marketing Ideas for Non-Profits and Libraries

<http://themwordblog.blogspot.com/>

List Servs

[ALA's PRTalk List Serv](#) is a very active community of communications, marketing and public relations professionals working in libraries.

Who Should Do the Talking? Your Spokespeople

People often panic when reporters call. There's no reason for most people to fear a journalist's questions. In fact, it's often a great opportunity to educate the reporter about your library — if you know how to take advantage of it.

Typically, calls from reporters come directly to a communications or development staff member. Many times, however, it is a receptionist who first picks up the phone. Both of these interactions can flavor your library's relationship with the reporter. This section covers both tips for official spokespeople as well as hints for a media professional, an assistant who answers the phone and staff from other departments. There are also specific tips in the Tools, Tips and Tricks of the Trade section.

Before and After the Interview

For the person that has primary contact with reporters or answers the phone:

Be accessible. We all have meetings and other commitments. If you want to become a regular source for journalists, you **MUST** be accessible. Train the person who answers your phone to keep a separate log of reporters who call—with names, news outlets, direct phone, fax numbers, email addresses, and their deadline. If you are going to be in a meeting, let that person know where you are and if you can be interrupted. When he or she talks to a reporter, this should be communicated along with “but I know she'd be eager to talk with you. Can I interrupt her—or can she call back at 3 p.m.? When do you need to hear from her? Can you tell me what you need to know so I can find someone else to help you right now?” Try to rearrange things if you can to avoid saying no the first several times radio or TV producers call so you can get onto their rolodexes.

Accessible, but you need not take a call when it comes. Often, reporters are on tight deadlines. But sometimes, you have plenty of time to prepare background materials and to brief your spokesperson, if an interview is requested. Ask if you can return the reporter's call at a specified time. Using your message manual, jot down a few notes based on your talking points or develop new ones for the specific request. Practice or prepare the spokesperson and then call the journalist back. If you're really convinced you or your spokesperson is the wrong source, suggest an alternate.

Ask questions before accepting to do or Schedule an interview. Be sure you know the angle the journalist is coming from. Is he or she calling simply for background information or to schedule an interview with a spokesperson? Who else is being interviewed? Will other organizations be represented? Does he or she want a national spokesperson's perspective? Is it going to be in a special section? When will it be coming out or on-air? Will it be taped or live?

Take time to prepare. Even the most skilled media professionals and spokespeople take a few minutes to prepare. If the reporter is on deadline, you or your spokesperson can call him or her back in five to ten minutes. That should be enough time to focus on your key messages.

Preview one or two upcoming events or issues. While providing background information, take advantage of any interaction with a journalist and mention a story idea, an upcoming event, or a burning issue. Don't be shy. You may just stimulate the story of your dreams.

Drop a thank-you note. Most reporters hear about their errors. Few get thanked for their accuracy and insight. Journalists have long memories. Especially when you're competing for scarce space, it helps to drop a note to a reporter who you feel “Gets it”—and his or her boss. Even though email is used frequently for communicating with reporters, hand-written notes go a long way these days. You may be pleasantly surprised next time you call with a story idea.

Determining the best spokespeople: Your director, children’s librarian, volunteer?

Who is the best person for the interview? Whether planning a media campaign or simply answering media inquiries that arise, you need to identify the best spokesperson for the particular type of request. Generally, your director and your board chair are the main spokespersons. However, depending on the size of your library and the amount of media attention you receive, you may identify additional individuals to speak on your behalf. These could include program or other appropriate staff, other members of your board, volunteers, or members of the community who can sing your praises or speak to a specific issue.

Spokespeople need to have media training, whether for a yearly brushing up or full-scale training with a professional. If non-staff are going to be spokespeople, it is always a good idea to be in close touch with them about their contribution well before you need them. Look into professional or pro bono media trainers—to practice sound bites on or off camera—who can help you professionalize and personalize your messaging. Again, this can be done by qualified staff or outside consultants.

The actual interview

Staying in control of an interview can help you get your message out—and save you from future headaches. Skilled spokespeople can take any question thrown at them, answer it, and bring it back to their original message—all within a few sentences. Below are some tips for your spokespeople.

Take time to prepare. [Yes, you just read this message above. It’s crucial.] Even the most skilled media professionals and spokespeople take a few minutes to prepare. If the reporter is on deadline, you or your spokesperson can call him or her back in five to ten minutes. That should be enough time to focus on your key messages.

Be succinct. Don’t ramble. Even print reporters have space constraints. And they can easily take your rambling comments out of context. If words don’t roll off your tongue, keep a sheet of one-liners near your phone. Practice short answers to common questions with a friend or colleague with a stopwatch. Know two or three short, compelling stories that make your case. Then cook them down and practice telling them.

Don’t use jargon. Even with the reporter who knows your issues, steer clear of tech talk. It’s stiff, turns off the uninformed, and is less likely to be quoted. Likewise, always spell out acronyms, and don’t assume the friendly reporter you talked to a month ago remembers the buzzwords. Consider starting from square one unless you know and have spoken to the reporter previously. It’s a good habit in any case, and usually generates more lively copy.

Never answer questions you don’t understand. If the reporter asks a question that’s vague or needs clarification, check for understanding. Interviews aren’t one-way streets. Ask a reporter to repeat the question or rephrase it. Restate it yourself, buying time to compose an answer, but be especially sure you understand just what you’re being asked. You may even clear up the reporter’s confusion or misstatement.

Pause or think before you answer. You can always buy yourself time by saying, “That’s a good question.” You can also pause before you begin your answer to get your thoughts in order.

Avoid one-word answers. “Yes” and “No” won’t help you get your point across. Take the opportunity to expand, or bring the conversation back to your main message.

Stay “on message.” If an interview starts on the wrong topic, be sure to bring it back to what you’re really there to discuss. You can do that by using the following Special Tricks ...

Special Tricks

These techniques can help you keep control of the interview, ensure you get your points across, and speak directly to the audience if on television or radio.

Bridging. If the interview is heading down the wrong road or if the reporter has used bad phrasing, build a bridge by saying “well, that’s an interesting question, but what we really need to address is . . .” This is a technique that lets you turn the tide from a reporter’s agenda to your own. A few examples:

“That’s an important question, Susan, but what’s critical for people to know about library literacy is . . .” If a reporter says, “but isn’t it true that libraries are no longer necessary because of the Internet,” don’t respond using that bad opinion by saying, “no, it isn’t true that libraries are no longer necessary.” Instead, turn it around and say “Libraries are flourishing . . .” and so forth.

Beware of leading questions. Some reporters try to influence interviews by saying

“Would you say” or “isn’t it true.” Avoid falling into the trap of agreeing with them. If you don’t agree or if it’s not true, be sure to say, “No. Actually, the truth is . . .”

Flag important statements. This is different from bridging because you are identifying “The most important thing here is . . .” or “The real issue is . . .” you not only get the reporter’s attention, but you also get the audience’s attention too, and the audience is who you are speaking to. This is also a good way to get to your key message.

Hook your interviewer. By saying “There are three important points here . . .” the interviewer (and the audience) is automatically waiting for those three points. It grabs the interviewer’s attention, and they can’t cut you off before you finish the three points without annoying their audience.

How Can You Make the Most with a Limited Budget?

Your Resources

Your biggest resource is your library users. This means that you or another staff member must spend a significant amount of time talking to library users and identifying those who are best positioned to reach out to the community. Children can be effective media spokespeople; parents know the value of the library to them and to their children. Seniors often rely on the library for reading materials or Internet access and use it as a community center. While developing your human resources may take time, cultivating these supporters will be worth the effort, and the network you build can be used for years to come.

The tips below may help you to maximize your resources:

Try to get to know your library users. Noticing all of the different reasons that people come to the library will broaden your base of support and reinforce the necessity of your library for your community members. For example, if there is an unemployed person who comes to use the Internet at the library to find a job, take note of that, as he or she may be able to provide a moving testimonial in the future. Such a person might highlight important, concrete stories you can tell to the media, funders, elected officials, and opinion leaders. Keeping a file of these individuals can prove invaluable.

Take special of local community members and opinion leaders who use your library. Perhaps the president of a local PTA or the husband and son of a city council person are frequent users. These persons will likely have access to a large network of contacts that he or she can influence to support the library, either through giving time, money, or simply writing a letter to an elected official. Making use of these supporters and potential supporters is inexpensive, and it is the most effective way to reach your other target audiences.

Don't forget your library trustees and Friends group. Library trustees and Friends of the library generally have political and community connections that can benefit the library, and are valuable not only as voices, but also as eyes and ears for library staff. Or maybe one of your Trustees is also on the Board of Directors at the local YMCA. Take time in your trustee meetings to discuss these connections in relationship to specific events or advocacy activities—and encourage your trustees to act on them. Discussing their commitments in front of peers can be an effective way to hold them to their promises.

Consider “image.” It is important that any materials you create are specific to your library and consistent with the character of both your library and your community. For example, if your library has a limited budget, don't try to impress your patrons with a glossy, four-color brochure. Or, if a significant portion of your library's users speaks another language, try to provide a translated version of your materials.

Ask volunteers how best to get in touch with them. Everyone has their preferred method of contact, for example, via email or telephone. Remember to keep your volunteers informed about important events, issues they should know about, and/or how they can help. It's important that these people be as “in the know” as possible to enable them to maintain their connection to the library and spread accurate information.

What Lessons Have You Learned? Your Evaluation

Remember to incorporate periodic evaluations or debriefings into your planning calendar. This can be done monthly, quarterly, prior to board meetings, or immediately after the completion of an event or campaign so that it is still fresh in your minds. Evaluation can be focused on the number of placements achieved or can be broader to encompass your overarching advocacy goals. In the ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*, the following chart of indicators is listed:

Key advocacy indicators might be:

- Has funding improved?
- Did the law pass?
- Did demand for a particular service increase?
- Did you receive editorial support?
- Does the library enjoy greater prestige?
- Did you get requests after items appeared in the media?
- What type of comments did you receive or hear?
- Did you build your advocacy network?

Here are a few ways to incorporate evaluation:

- In the day or two following an event, meet with staff that were involved to discuss objectively how you could do it better next time. Talk about the event or activity itself, your time line, media outreach, etc. Remember to make this a constructive session, not one to point fingers. Once you've figured out how to do it better, implement these changes.
- Consider passing out an evaluation form to guests, if appropriate, at your event. Ask questions like:
- How did you hear about the event? What do they read? What websites do they scan frequently? Do they respond to email alerts?
- How would you rate the event overall? (provide a scale for a response)
- Will you consider joining us next year for a similar event?
- What was your favorite part of the event?
- Are there any suggestions you can make to help us improve next year's event? If you ask for evaluations, be sure to really examine and consider making changes next time – and, if appropriate, let the attendees know their feedback really counted.
- Keep a running tab of all of the media you reached out to and the placements you achieved. Create a chart to record them. In the chart consider listing them by type of outlet, such as radio, television, print, Internet, or wire services, then create a column for the date, the outlet, the name of the actual article or show and the reporter if notable. If available, include the circulation or audience numbers. If this is an annual event or activity, compare how you did this year with last and use these items to create a plan for upcoming years.

Tools, Tips and Tricks of the Trade

Pitching and placing

Now that you have a plan, you need to dig in. Since you are planning to spend a fair amount of time with reporters, it's helpful to know what a journalist's life might be like and why they end up sounding curt on the phone, when they are actually on deadline. But just like all library staff don't keep the same schedule, neither do journalists. These aren't hard-and-fast rules, but they are situations you're more likely to encounter.

- 9 a.m.: Daily newspaper journalists read not only newspapers but websites and other sources they get their news from. Most also attend morning editorial meetings with editors and team members to discuss daily assignments.
- 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. or so: Calls, Scheduling and arranging interviews.
- 2 p.m.: Final Interviews and writing time.
- 3 p.m.: Editors start wanting finished copy.

What should you take from this?

- While your schedule may be best suited for calling daily newspaper journalists around 4:30 or 5, the best time to call them is generally from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Weekly journalists work much the same, but their deadline is generally on a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. Find out which day the weekly journalists have to file by and try not to call them on that day, or the day before.

TV and radio producers work a lot like daily newspaper journalists, but their schedules vary, depending on their programming schedules.. You would be surprised how much of a live show does not come together until seconds before it is aired.

- Morning shows generally have producers running as soon as they get to work, generally as early as 4:30 a.m.
- Try to avoid calling a producer two hours before a show is scheduled to start (one hour for a radio program) and for the hour afterwards.
- If a morning show ends at 9 a.m., producers are generally open to talking after 10 A.M. If an evening show doesn't start until 5 p.m., you will probably be able to reach your producer in the late morning.

Now that you have a plan including a time line – and you know a little about the people you are going to pitch, you can start thinking about what types of listings and pieces you would like to come to fruition. This begins with ongoing research as you create and/or update your media list. Lists are the backbone of your media work and should be kept up-to-date since journalists change jobs often and lists become outdated quickly. If you are in regular contact with journalists, make changes as you hear of them so that the list is fresh. Before you go to the lists found on the Internet and from other sources, think about your personal list. This is an ongoing process. Here are a couple of ways to start:

1. **Envision the stories and media placements results you would like to see.** Read through the information below to understand the kind of placements you might want. Keep track of the names of reporters and writers who you see covering these issues – and then contact them to cover your story.
2. **Continually collect names of local and regional media contacts.** This includes newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, etc.,) radio, cable and television stations and programming and Internet sources from websites, to blogs to chat rooms. Consider keeping a notebook, or a database of newswriters and reporters to approach.

3. **Keep a short media “Key Contacts” list right by your phone.** If you have the names, phone numbers, email addresses, and fax numbers of the key reporters and news directors, sympathetic columnists, and others – they’ll be accessible when you need to reach them quickly for breaking news.
4. **Remember to go to Spanish-speaking media.** If you are looking to reach the Hispanic families in your community, go to the Spanish-speaking media outlets, or community centers with your Hispanic spokespeople.

What kind of placements are you looking for?

News

News is a report on something timely that just happened or will happen soon. This would include an expansion of your library or the receipt of a grant or large donation. Announcing an upcoming event is not as likely to be covered as a news story.

- **TV and Cable:** Look closely at the program line-up for the station—there might be a public affairs show such as “Meet the Leaders” or “What’s New?” and you can invite the chair of your Board of Trustees to appear with your Executive Director.
- **Radio.** Know and listen to all your local stations. Radio news is becoming less and less local, but it may still be possible for you to get coverage if you have actual news about budgets or groundbreaking changes at the library. Keep in mind the newscaster will usually have to tell your story in 10 to 15 seconds (around thirty to forty words) unless it’s a feature.
- **Internet.** Most national and local news sites have their own website, and plenty of us turn to the Web when we miss the local news. (In fact, some studies estimate that up to half of people in their 20s and 30s used the Internet as their primary source of news.) Does that mean everything on ABC World News Tonight will also be on ABCNews.com? No. And everything on CNN.com doesn’t make it onto CNN either. Internet sites also carry news that isn’t covered in print. The same is probably true for your local station, as well. Some news sites are only on the Web. This can include national sites like Slate.com or Salon.com, as well as local sites like Gothamgazette.com, a site focusing on local politics, in this case New York City. You must contact these sites individually, and generally their contact information is available on their website. In some cases, these sites are listed in *Bacon’s*. Keep in mind that others get their news on the Internet from blogs and electronic discussion lists and even through forwarded emails.
- **Wires.** Wires are independent news organizations that provide dispatches to multiple papers or broadcast organizations. Common services include the Associated Press (AP) and Thomson Reuters. Many daily newspapers are owned by companies with wires (for example, the Chicago Tribune/Tribune co.), so that an article that appears in the Chicago Tribune also may be picked up in a dozen other papers that subscribe to Tribune content. Similarly, your local paper may subscribe to one or more wire services. If so, you will notice this at the very beginning or end of an article. Always include wires in your outreach.

Features

- **Print features:** These tend to feature a particular person (an outstanding volunteer, for example) or issue (literacy) and are not necessarily driven by something timely. Feature stories are sometimes called “evergreen” because they can sit unpublished in the hopper for many moons. Once interest has been established, you may have to push the reporter to publish it. Notice how features writers publish fewer stories than news reporters and aren’t seen as frequently. They may be found in special sections as opposed to every day.
- **TV features:** Watch your local news to find out about their daily or weekly features. Perhaps once a week, they feature a “neighbor” or a person “making a difference in the community.” Consider contacting the producer of that segment and ask them to feature one of your library’s staff, a dedicated volunteer, or an intriguing patron. Features also can include the darker side of library news. Perhaps the paint is peeling away on

a wall in the children’s reading room. A local anchor and his or her cameraperson may be interested in shooting footage and interviewing you about the problem. In most cases, you would not pitch this story to producers. They may come to you. Before cameras arrive, you need to figure out your message and what your spokesperson can say on camera to assure the community that the problem will be fixed.

- **Talk Radio.** There are local, regional, and national radio shows. These programs usually discuss issues, not events; hence, they are considered features. Perhaps your library was active in opposing the PATRIOT Act or fighting budget cuts. You or one of your library’s representatives might be a guest on a show to discuss one of these issues. Tailor your pitch to the particular venue. If the station’s audience is in your area specifically, know the effects or potential effects in your area.
- **Public Service Announcements (PSAs).** Public service announcements are free ads made available to nonprofits as a community service. The announcements are submitted by you and published or aired by newspapers, magazines, radio stations, internet sites free of charge. Deadlines are often three to four weeks ahead of airdates.

Radio announcements are generally 30 seconds in length (about 75 words) but may be shorter. When they do run, it is generally not during peak listening time. Most PSAs are 15 or 30 seconds, roughly between 35 and 75 words. Each digit in a phone number, which for broadcasts is best repeated twice, counts as a word, and include your Web address. If a radio station commits to sponsor your event or activity, they will definitely include your PSAs more frequently.

Community newspapers and local radio stations are ideal targets for print PSAs although unlike paid ads, they are not guaranteed to run. When they do, they are free ways to reach larger audiences when you don’t have an advertising budget. PSAs are intended to provide information, and are inappropriate for “calls to action.”

- **PSA wordcount key:**

10 second	20-25 words
15 second:	30-35 words
20 second:	40-50 words
30 second:	60-75 words

- **Listings/ Community Calendars.** You might ask a paper, radio station, local TV or cable network if they have a place you can list an upcoming event or announce something the public needs to know, such as a change in library hours. These can be called listings and community calendars and may even have a Web link. Check the outlet carefully to read or hear the directions for submitting information. Be sure to take note of deadlines, formats and criteria.
- **Wire Services.** Wire Services should not be confused with wires (such as the Associated Press). Wire services are services that allow you to pay to post your press releases and then mass distribute the releases to hundreds of journalists. It’s a good way to get out national news to hundreds of outlets at a time—but it’s less effective for local news.

How to research, build and organize your list

Most publicists organize their lists by outlet type (e.g., print, radio, TV, and the Internet) then alphabetically, by outlet, broadcast show, or print section; and then by journalist. In addition to the regular contact information—address, phone, fax number, email address, beat, and deadline—you may want to include comments about your last interaction with the journalist or recent stories he or she wrote (for example, “Wrote about our 2006 summer reading program.”).

Make sure you have the correct names of daytime, evening, and weekend staff at both print and broadcast outlets if they differ—and cell phone numbers, if you can get them.

Consider asking volunteers, Friends, or support staff to update portions of your media list several times a year, even as you input individual changes. It's best to do this well in advance of a planned distribution, when you're much less likely to get the email address, zip code, or name wrong. Be sure your lists include the correct job title and the spelling of a journalist's name. Sending a news release to CITY EDITOR is like sending a piece of personal mail to OCCUPANT. It is likely to end up in the trash, or in a SPAM file. As with other data, it is essential to keep backup copies of your data.

Common databases such as Microsoft Access, Excel, or Filemaker might be good formats to use for your lists. Make sure that the program can print out labels, or call lists with the information you desire.

Adding to your list using media guides

Consider consulting any of the following media guides:

- CISIONPOINT® (Newspaper, Magazine, Television/Cable, Radio, Internet, News Services and Syndicates) is a Webdatabase that is updated daily. Formally known as Bacon's Information, Cision, which lists itself as the leading global provider of media research, distribution, monitoring and evaluation services with over 40 locations throughout the world. This is a great online resource. Contains detailed, updated journalist profiles, and information about individual outlets and shows – and also includes a robust editorial calendar feature. Contact: Cision US, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604, (<http://us.cision.com/>) Phone: 866.639.5087.
- FINDERBINDER News Media Directories—Published annually. A detailed information and rate directory covering media services in selected metropolitan and state areas mostly in the west and in Florida. Also Hispanic and African American media listings. Contact: Finderbinder News Media Directories News Media Directories National Support Center, 5173 Waring Road #8, San Diego, CA 92120, ph: (619)582-8500 fax: (619)582-3396, toll free: (800) 255-2575
- GEBBIE PRESS: The All-in-One-Directory—Published annually. Directory listing all United States newspapers, TV, radio, magazines, Black and Hispanic media, syndicates, and networks in print, disk, or CD-ROM. Contact: Gebbie Press, PO Box 1000, New Paltz, NY 12561, (845) 255-7560, www.gebbieinc.com.
- LEADERSHIP DIRECTORIES: NEWS MEDIA YELLOW BOOK—Updated quarterly. A quick guide to Who's Who among reporters, writers, editors, and producers in the leading national news media. It contains an extensive listing of journalists by title and assignment and provides contact information to reach the leaders of major United States government, business, professional, and nonprofit organizations. The Media Yellow Book is also available online and on CD-ROM. Contact: Leadership Directories Inc., 104 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, (212) 627-4140 www.leadershipdirectories.com.
- MM Performa: Formerly called MediaMap, this online database is now part of Cision. See above.

Building supplementary Lists

Should you buy advertising space or find free space?

Ads vs. free space. When you pay for an ad, it is guaranteed to run; calendar listings and public service announcements are not. Paid advertising actually may be a very inexpensive way to get the word out about a specific program, and you can build it into your budget when appropriate and cost effective. In fact, some media outlets offer nonprofit rates that can be affordable. If you DO decide to place a paid advertisement, you may need to provide camera-ready graphics or they will do the layout for you at a cost. Whichever you decide is right for you, create and keep these lists separate from your regular media lists.

Do you have official sponsors?

Did you ever consider bringing on media sponsors for events and activities? If not, consider reaching out far in advance of a planned program to appropriate stations, Internet sites or print publications that reaches one or more of your designated audiences. Your list will probably not consist of the news or feature teams, but a community affairs director or public relations office. Try to build a relationship with them and then after they have become more familiar with how you benefit the community, invite them to sponsor an event. If they do, other stations may not cover the event, but you may just get the visibility and support you need. Additionally, dedicated sponsors will hopefully deepen their commitment and involvement over time. Once you have a track record, they may offer their news anchors or station celebrities as hosts or emcees for events, and you may get great coverage on at least the sponsoring station, rather than a media bust.

What about community groups?

This list might include local Parent-Teacher Associations, a Rotary Club, religious organizations, or school boards. Speaking engagements, library tours, or exhibits can be an effective way of reaching key audiences who share particular interests or concerns. You can also create a one-time or ongoing partnership with a community group. For example, if your audience is children and/or teachers, try to arrange for one of your library representatives to visit local schools to talk about the library benefits, programs and activities. This will give you access to teachers, students and, by extension, their parents. It will put a face on their library—and a personal connection.

Don't forget decision-makers

Many staff and board develop relationships with opinion leaders, elected officials, and their staffs. These lists can be cultivated over time through personal, one-on-one contact, but many times a first introduction is in the form of a letter or brochure. Once you become familiar with their offices, you may find that phone calls are appropriate and more effective than email. Keep track of their preferences. After you've made that first contact, it is essential to follow up with a phone call or visit. When you DO speak or meet, let your elected official know how many of his or her constituents support and use your library. In any case, when you do write or speak to your legislator, do so from the heart. Avoid clichés and try to be brief.

Media events, news conferences and press briefings

Below are several types of events/campaigns that can be planned for visibility purposes:

Guest speaker or seminar: If your library is hosting a guest speaker or an evening event and your mission is to get the word out, determine what media you will use, their deadlines and best times for them to attend events, and fashion your time line accordingly.

A ballot initiative or referendum: Perhaps a referendum concerning your library is on the ballot. If so, plan as far ahead as possible. While you might not take action immediately, planning ahead will give you the option. Create a flexible time line that includes specific goals along the way. When do you want letters to the editor to appear in your local paper? Should you or one of your representatives talk to the editorial board of your paper? If so, when?

Closer to Election Day, your time line might be choreographed quite tightly. For example, the night before the election, a predetermined number of supporters receive phone calls and emails reminding them to vote the next day. Then, on Election Day, be sure to call or email them to ask them to vote—turning out your voters will be a key to your success. Someone from your library will need to spearhead this effort by organizing a phone tree or scheduling the volunteer callers and lists of callees. You also need to plan and coordinate the email blast.

Be sure to note who is responsible for taking each step along the way and for monitoring progress. Provide your staff or volunteers with tools to meet their goals, such as telephones and a list of supporters with directions on how to keep track of responses. Have a substitute in place in case someone becomes unavailable.

News conferences

First, ask yourself if the topic is worth a news conference or is a press release sufficient?

- Is your topic newsworthy, or is it merely noteworthy? Newsworthy information can carry an entire dinner conversation; noteworthy information can only carry on for a minute or two.
- Do you have video component for TV, graphics/charts, or a celebrity or personality?
- What will you gain from a question-and-answer format?
- Could an event (for example, a TV crew on a tour of the library) convey your story better?

If you decide to go ahead, here are some tips:

Choose a convenient time:

Try to avoid conflicts with other big events by:

- Looking at schedules in your local paper;
- Surfing online for upcoming events;
- Asking friends in media re: conflicts;
- Best times:
 - 10 a.m. – noon for all press
 - Weekends are often good since “news hole” exists with less competition—but fewer crews and journalists are available, so your event must be newsworthy.

Choose an accessible location: Your site should be:

- Familiar to media;
- Connected to your topic—such as in the library online room for a technology event;
- Easy to get cameras into and, when possible, wheelchair accessible;
- If the location isn’t yours, make sure you get any needed permission in writing beforehand.

Contacting the media

- Send an initial notice, save the date or advisory.
- Draft;
- Send/fax and email major news directors, assignment editors, wire services, etc., one week to three days in advance of news conference;
- Also send to individuals who have covered the topic or related news conferences;
- Call assignment editors, metro editors, city desk editors and radio news directors an hour before your event to check on attendance;
- If you are in the state capital or major city, go to the state House or city hall press room and talk to journalists to deliver your materials in person;
- Offer to provide phone interviews or voice feeds for those who can’t attend.

Planning the actual news conference

Materials

- Draft a press release to go in the press packet summarizing news with key quotes and contact names.
- Plan to have appropriate background materials, such as event press release, fact sheets and brochures for attendees to take with them.
- Plan to use a colorful banner or poster behind the podium that has a logo or message pertaining to the subject of the press conference. Have a banner for the podium with your library logo. The best signage is non-reflective, so investigate using canvas banners.

Program

- Plan on no more than four speakers.
- Keep it short (Total time should be **NO LONGER THAN 15 minutes**) and to one point. Speakers who are succinct will have their key sound bite recorded and more likely to make the news.
- Brief all speakers beforehand (initially by phone and, if possible, in a group prior to the press conference). Talk to them about time, focus and likely questions.
- Choose someone to do introductions, direct questions, and end the news conference.

Room setup

Work with site hosting the event to ensure you have the necessary room setup items. These may include:

- Sign-in table outside or immediately inside the room;
- Table to place background materials;
- Easels for posters or charts;
- Place to hang library banner;
- Podium or table with podium for speakers;
- Proper or desired type of microphones, one for speaker and others for Q&A;
- Some may prefer lavalier microphones that clip onto clothing;
- Mult-box: this is an audio unit that radio and television stations can hook their audio plugs into so that the sound comes directly from the podium microphone. In cases of breaking stories—where you want to see a lot of microphones at the podium—it's best not to ask for mults, just have media tape their microphones to the podium mike.

The event

- Distribute the press kit with the release.
- Distribute at same time to state house or city hall media if at legislature.
- Have back-up documentation, photos, and statistics available to help in answering questions.
- Take attendance at a sign-in table. Note who asked sympathetic questions during the news conference. Write down unanswered or poorly answered questions.
- Ask reporters if they would like to do one-on-one interviews for more in-depth coverage.

Follow-up

- When the news conference ends, call people who said they would attend and did not to set up phone or in-person interviews or another way for them to get the story.
- Fax, email, or get releases to key outlets that didn't attend and may be interested.
- Get back to anyone who asked an unanswered question at the news conference.
- Fax and email releases to weeklies or others who normally don't send people to cover events.

- Monitor press coverage—possibly use clipping service and distribute best clips online to an electronic discussion list, etc.
- Thank those who covered well—supportive criticism also is appropriate.
- Incorporate any new names, email addresses, phone, or fax numbers into press list.
- Review entire event to determine what went right and wrong. Learn from experience!

Media Briefings

When you don't have breaking news, but you have new and exciting information to share and discuss with a group of media, you may consider holding a media briefing or a media breakfast. This would include a few researchers, volunteers, and/or spokespeople and five to 15 media people who are very interested in your issue.

The only caveat with such a planned event is that media schedules are very fickle and outlets are suffering from limited resources—so only consider this type of event if you know a critical mass of your media contacts would be interested. For every two journalists who say they'll attend, expect one to cancel due to last-minute priorities.

Media Tours

Media tours are a series of meeting with media professionals from generally geographically diverse areas. They are mostly used by national organizations that want to reach the local public, and will strategically choose cities to meet with individual reporters. The goal is usually to generate many articles with local angles.

One-on-One Media Visits

Nothing beats face-to-face contact. It's easier to convey any message in person than it is over the phone, or by just email. But these meetings are often the hardest to get. As media professionals' jobs become even more demanding, they have less time to spend in face-to-face interviews. However, when working with journalists, especially journalists who you expect will cover multiple stories about you or your library, in-person meetings are invaluable. Try to set them three to four weeks in advance, then confirm the day before.

Phone Pitching

Calling the media on the phone is one of the most important aspects of media outreach, but many times is the first thing that drops off your list when you're busy. Think about carving out a set amount of time each day all year round to contact and develop relationships with media who will be able to deliver when you need to get some visibility for your programs and services.

The importance of following up after you have made an initial contact cannot be overstated. You may have to contact a journalist/editor/producer several times and each time remind him or her why you are calling each time. If you depend on your media contact to call or email you back, you will have limited success. Don't be afraid to be persistent, but respect his or her wishes if the person you contact insists that he or she "doesn't cover that" or is "not the person to contact." In that case, feel free to ask him or her for a recommendation for whom you might contact.

- **CREATE AND PRACTICE THE PITCH.** In order to ensure as much success as possible for your media event, activity or story, it's helpful to write and then keep a phone pitch in front of you while talking to media on the phone. Think about the event you are trying to get coverage for and create a short description of the most important points you want to convey to the journalist. If you are nervous or haven't done much pitching before, take some time out and practice your phone pitch with a co-worker or friend. The more you say it out loud, the more comfortable you will feel when it is time to speak with the media.
- **CONSIDER DIFFERENT ANGLES.** Make sure you have thought about different angles to offer the journalist. To be safe, practice two or three different ideas.

- **PITCH THE RIGHT PERSON.** Most importantly, you want to make sure that you are talking to the appropriate person. If you want a photographer to attend your event, make sure you are calling someone from the photo desk, not the technology desk. If you get in touch with someone who doesn't cover that beat any longer, ask if they know of anyone else in the department that you could speak with.
- **ALWAYS START OFF THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING IF THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK.**

Proceed with your pitch. Have a media advisory and other materials ready to go. Often the person you are speaking with will ask you to email or fax the information to them. It's ok if you don't have all the answers to their questions. **BUT**, make sure to write down the questions they ask and get their phone number [if you didn't call directly] or email address and a good time and way for you to convey the right information. Be sure to follow up if you send them info.

- **KEEP A PHONE LOG OF ALL YOUR CALLS.** Mark down what day you called and whether or not you left a message or sent information over. This will come in handy when you are making your second or third round of calls.

Granting an Exclusive

What's an exclusive? You've probably heard about "exclusives" or "scoops" in the news business, but what is one and how can you use them? An exclusive is when one media organization, such as a newspaper, is able to publish a news story with information that no one else has. News organizations love exclusive because it forces people to buy their paper or tune in to their station for news they can't get anywhere else. An exclusive could be beneficial because news organizations generally give exclusives more space, and other news organizations will be scrambling to cover what they missed. Where can it work? If you're a library in a two-newspaper town, like Seattle or Miami, you've probably heard a lot about competition between the papers. You're in an ideal situation to give an exclusive.

When can it work? If you have newsworthy information that's not yet public and you're the only source that can (or will) make it public, consider giving an exclusive. The times exclusives are particularly helpful are:

- You're afraid the story might get buried; or
- You want to build a stronger relationship with a journalist.

How is it done? What are you looking for?

- Approach a journalist you trust or with whom you want to build a stronger relationship.
- When weighing giving an exclusive, you should find out what you get in return for the exclusive. Front-page coverage? Top of the evening news? Guaranteed coverage of your pet project in a few weeks? If the deal is good enough, go ahead. But be careful not to overuse exclusives.
- When you begin discussing the story, tell the journalist you'd like to offer an exclusive. If it interests him or her, try to get a confirmation that their editor or executive producer has committed to covering the story. If you've worked with the journalist many times, a verbal yes is all you'll need; otherwise, ask for a short email to confirm.

What's your obligation? You absolutely cannot tell another journalist about the news until that journalist's piece is public.

What about the journalist? Conversely, a journalist may discover some news, or for other reasons, ask you for an exclusive. You're not obligated to do so. Besides, if the news is big enough, why only let one media outlet cover the piece when you could have two—or six—outlets covering it.

There are many benefits to exclusives, but please keep in mind that such a practice can create barriers with other press members. Other news organizations may be put off by you offering an exclusive to their competitor.

Preparing for All Kinds of Interviews

How You Can Help Train Spokespeople

The following section appears in the ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*, and is reproduced here thanks to Patricia Glass-Schuman, former ALA president. The goal of media coaching is simple: to help people channel their passion, personality, and commitment to an issue, whether they're appearing on TV, speaking to a group of legislators or talking to a reporter over lunch. The most effective and engaging spokespeople are those who are prepared, focused, genuinely enthusiastic and comfortable with themselves.

Key Points

HONE YOUR MESSAGE AND DEVELOP SOUND BITES

This is critical! For a successful interview, use the messages developed for your campaign. Refine them by defining key points and finding the most effective phrases, facts and examples for illustrating those points. Think about your target audience and how to best reach it. To develop sample sound bites, brainstorm sound bites with friends, family and colleagues. Choose vivid images. Paint pictures with words. Try them out on friends. Below we've included some examples. More are available in the [ALA online messagebook](http://www.ala.org/news/mediapresscenter/presscenter/onlinemessagebook/tableofcontents) (<http://www.ala.org/news/mediapresscenter/presscenter/onlinemessagebook/tableofcontents>). Users must be logged in to ALA website to view.

On funding:

- Invest in futures. Support libraries.
- We're finding it difficult to meet twenty-first-century demands with nineteenth-century budgets.
- Everyone loves libraries. But libraries can't live on love alone.
- The future is @ your library, so make sure your library has a future.

On role of libraries and librarians:

- Libraries open minds.
- Libraries change lives.
- Libraries save lives.
- Libraries are your passport to cyberspace.
- Librarians are the guardians of your right to know.
- Librarians support parents. We don't replace them.
- Libraries bring you the world.
- Libraries are places of opportunity.

DO A DRY RUN

On the way home from work, at staff meetings or at someone else's desk at lunchtime, rehearse your remarks before interviews. Your colleagues are even more likely than reporters to know the tough questions that might be thrown at you. That will give you the chance to prepare a reply, try it out, time it (for live broadcasts especially), and revise. Tape yourself on audio or video. Play it back, so you can hear yourself as others do. Then refine your presentation.

IDENTIFY YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS FOR EACH TYPE OF OUTLET

(TV, radio, print), and use the training to work on one specific type of outlet. Most problems are nonverbal. They may include adopting a wooden body posture; presenting material too technically; averting, darting, or poorly using eyes; ineffective use of hands; lack of facial expression or one that communicates fear, hostility, arrogance, or defensiveness;

low energy; humorlessness; and use of boring language. Have your trainer help to identify weaknesses and then work on ways to eradicate them.

IMPROVE PERSONAL STYLE

Everyone has a personal style. What is yours? How is your physical appearance? Your rate of speech, pitch and tone of voice? Your level of animation, use of gestures, eye contact, comfort level? Bring your full personality and most expressive physical self to every interview in person or by telephone.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT INTERVIEWS

Hostile interviewers or interview questions often throw the most experienced public speakers off guard. It's important to redirect a question if you need to, but be sure to respond in a way that is positive, contributes to the dialogue and doesn't make you look evasive or defensive. If a reporter uses negative, incorrect or inflammatory words in a question, don't legitimize them by repeating the misconception in your answer. The hotter the interviewer gets, the cooler you need to be. Stay friendly, calm and direct in a response to a nasty questioner or loaded question.

Ten Tricks to Help You Succeed on Radio

1. **LISTEN TO THE SHOW TO LEARN HOW IT WORKS.** Before you call to get on a radio talk show, listen to it so you know the format, the length of segments, and host's style.
2. **CALL AT LEAST TWO WEEKS AHEAD TO BOOK A GUEST.** The timing may take even longer if it's a popular show. Once you've sent your materials and received a confirmation, send an email or written note to the producer double-checking all of the details and finalizing who will initiate the interview, sharing phone numbers and listing who else can be called if needed.
3. **AVOID OFF-THE-WALL HOSTS.** With plenty of shows to choose from in most markets, there's no need to get insulted on the air. Pick a show that will give you a chance to deliver your message.
4. **TALK SLOWLY.** Vary your voice quality. Sound like you're dying to share some juicy gossip. Don't use too many numbers. Avoid jargon.
5. **PAINT VERBAL PICTURES.** Since body language can't connect you to your audience, try to paint pictures with words.
6. **PRACTICE IN PRIVATE.** Either with a friend co-worker or on tape, practice answering questions and handling hostile callers.
7. **REMEMBER TO MENTION YOUR LIBRARY'S NAME AT LEAST TWICE.** Since people tune in and out; just because you were introduced with an ID doesn't mean most listeners heard it. Bring a cassette and ask the engineer to pop it in so you can leave with a recording.
8. **LEARN TO ANSWER ODD QUESTIONS WITH THE POINTS YOU WANT TO MAKE.** It's okay once a show to use the bridging technique to tell the audience, "What I really hope your audience will want to understand about libraries is. . . ."
9. **ORGANIZE A CAMPAIGN** if you're having trouble getting on the air of a talk radio show. Write and call. Try to arrange to visit the producer or station manager. Send a demo audiocassette. If all else fails, call in while the show is on the air!
10. **ORGANIZE SOME CALLERS** if you get on the air for a show with call-ins. See that some friends of your library call, ask good questions, and show support.

How to Succeed on TV

The following section was originally developed by Patricia Glass-Schuman (former ALA president) in ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*.

Hints:

DEVELOP THREE KEY POINTS IN ADVANCE: Television is a medium that requires you to be informal, relaxed and conversational—but to get your message across forcefully in a very brief time. For most interviews, it's important to

develop three key points and make those points quickly and effectively. Find the descriptive words, visual images, and concrete examples that best make those points.

PAINT PICTURES WITH YOUR WORDS. Especially for TV, but in all interviews, colorful phrases that call up visual images make interesting quotes. Keep a notebook of such images by your phone, along with key facts and good sound bites.

DRESS THE PART. If you're like most people, you've probably seen someone being interviewed on TV only to find yourself thinking, "What are they wearing?" Chances are, you can't remember what that person was talking about. With a visual news medium like TV, there are a few ways you can make sure you're being seen and heard.

Dos:

- Business clothes/suits (it's harder to take someone seriously who is in jeans).
- Remember: A microphone may need to be clipped onto a blouse or shirt from underneath, so imagine how that may work when selecting your clothing.
- Jackets and ties for men.
- Vibrant colors like blue, teal, rose, red, and burgundy.
- Makeup: for women, make your makeup a little heavier than normal, but in your usual shades. For men, be prepared to wear a translucent powder and possibly foundation, especially in a studio setting. Going without makeup for men can result in looking sweaty or shiny.

Dont's:

- Women should avoid low-cut or sleeveless blouses and short skirts.
- Men should avoid T-shirts and open shirts.
- Plaid and large or busy prints.
- Dangling jewelry.
- Very dark or very light colors.
- Hairstyles that may hang in your face or be distracting.

Dealing with Bad News

The following section originally appeared in ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*. Inevitably, all organizations have to deal with bad news. Budget cuts. Trimmed hours or closed branches. Parents who want to ban books from the library. While bad news is never good, it can be turned into a positive media message. For example, when a teenage hacker crashed Seattle's King County Library System's computer system, closing the library down for three days, the story became the marvels of the technology rather than its failure, thanks to the library's quick and thoughtful response.

Some bad news you can see coming—budget cuts are generally in the works for weeks.

Others, like crimes, cannot be anticipated. Either way, it's important for libraries to have a crisis communications plan.

Here are a few tips for handling bad news:

- **DON'T OVERREACT.** If only one small paper carries the story, only respond to that paper. Don't send out a release to all your media contacts. If they don't know about the bad news, you probably don't want to tell them about it.
- **BE STRATEGIC.** If the news is huge, consider holding a press conference to communicate the facts, new developments, and the library's response or message. It will save you time and resource to hold one press conference rather than take a dozen individual interviews.
- **SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE.** The most common mistake in crisis communications is to have several spokespeople saying different things. Have one spokesperson, or make sure that all your spokespeople are saying the same thing.

- **UNDERSTAND INTERVIEW TOPICS AND FORMATS BEFORE ACCEPTING INTERVIEWS.** During these times, it is very important to be sure you understand the nature of a talk radio show or TV interview before you agree to go on. Don't speculate. Know who else will be on the show, if there will be call-ins, and what the host's position is before making a choice to go on. If you don't think you'll be given a fair hearing, it might not be best to accept the interview.
- **FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION.** Explain how the library is going to address the situation or say that the library is looking for a speedy solution.
- **APOLOGIZE WHEN APPROPRIATE.** "We apologize for any inconvenience to our users. We are doing our best to . . ." Empathize. Convey caring and understanding.
- **HAVE ALL THE FACTS BEFORE RESPONDING.** Often, when news just breaks, not even the media has all the facts. Make sure you know exactly what is going on before responding to something that could just be a rumor or an exaggerated allegation.
- **PREPARE BRIEFING MATERIALS.** As soon as you can, have briefing materials for the media, with accurate facts included.
- **LET LAWYERS REVIEW STATEMENTS BEFORE RELEASING THEM.** If this situation has legal implications, make sure you consult with a lawyer before making a statement. Avoid "legalese," but make sure that what you're saying is ok to say.
- **STICK TO THE HIGH ROAD.** Avoid criticizing or getting personal with your opponents. Don't be defensive. Staying focused on your message and on the high road will ultimately be your best weapon.

Appendix

Appendix I: Sample Media Advisory

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
November 14, 2012

Contact: Macey Morales
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mmorales@ala.org

ALA to unveil the next classics in children's and young adult literature

(CHICAGO) The eyes of the publishing world will turn to Seattle at 8 a.m. PT on Jan.28, 2013, when the American Library Association (ALA) announces winners of such esteemed literary prizes as the Newbery and Caldecott Medals. The announcements are part of the ALA Youth Media Awards taking place during the ALA Midwinter Meeting, Jan. 25 – 29.

Who: The American Library Association (ALA), Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).

What: The ALA Youth Media Award announcements will consist of 19 awards, including the 75th announcement of the Caldecott Medal, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards and Printz award. The ALA Youth Media Awards honor children's and young adult authors and illustrators, as well as producers of children's audio and video materials. Selected titles rarely go out of print and stay on library shelves for decades to come.

When: Jan. 28, 2013, 8 a.m. PT

Where: Washington State Convention Center, Ballroom 6B, 800 Convention Place, Seattle

Background:

Known worldwide for the high quality they represent, the awards are selected under a cloak of secrecy by national judging committees composed of librarians and other children's literature experts. Title selections serve as a guide for parents, educators, librarians and those interested in providing children and teens with the very best reading and viewing materials.

To follow award announcements live please log on to the ALA Youth Media Awards facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/alayma>, or via twitter hashtag #ALAYma.

For more information regarding the ALA Youth Media Awards please visit www.ala.org/yma.

Appendix 2: Sample News Release I

For Immediate Release
Mon, 11/26/2012

Contact: Mark Gould
Director, Public Information Office
American Library Association
312-280-5
mgould@ala.org

Caroline Kennedy named Honorary Chair, National Library Week 2013

CHICAGO — Caroline Kennedy has been named the 2013 Honorary Chair of National Library Week (April 14-20, 2013), according to the American Library Association. During National Library Week and throughout the month of April, libraries of all types—public, school, academic and special— hold special events to highlight the unique role libraries play in American society and encourage the public to use their resources. Those resources include computers, books and e-books, homework help, assistance with resumes and job searches, accurate financial information, adult education courses, support for immigrants and more.

As Honorary Chair, Kennedy will appear in public service announcements (PSAs) promoting National Library Week. The PSAs, developed by the American Library Association’s Campaign for America’s Libraries, will be placed in magazines and online throughout the spring. ALA will also offer free customization of the PSAs for libraries.

An advocate for reading, literacy and libraries, Kennedy has written or edited 10 bestselling books on American history, politics and poetry. Her latest book, “Poems to Learn by Heart”—due to be published in March 2013 from Disney-Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Publishing Worldwide with original illustrations by award-winning artist Jon J Muth—is a companion to her New York Times #1 best-selling collection “A Family of Poems.”

In addition, Kennedy is scheduled to speak at the 2013 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Seattle at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 27. [More information regarding her appearance](#) is available on the ALA Midwinter Meeting website.

In December 2011, Kennedy spoke at the Carnegie Corporation of New York/New York Times I Love My Librarian Award ceremony in New York City. . In that speech, she said that many librarians she has met are “professionals who are excited about their changing role in a changing world - who are dedicated to serving others, who respect scholarship, and who understand that you are our guides on a lifelong journey of intellectual collaboration and collaborative composition... . Your work is truly life changing.”

The American Library Association’s Campaign for America’s Libraries (www.ala.org/@yourlibrary) is a public awareness campaign that promotes the value of libraries and librarians. Thousands of libraries of all types – across the country and around the globe – participate. The Campaign is made possible by ALA’s Library Champions.

Appendix 3: Sample News Release: State of Americas Libraries

NEWS

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2012

2012 State of America's Library Report shows free access to information in jeopardy

ALA releases Top Ten List of Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2011

CHICAGO — Publishers limiting library e-book lending, budget cuts and book challenges are just a few library trends of the past year that are placing free access to information in jeopardy. These trends as well as other are detailed in the [2012 State of America's Libraries Report](#) released today by the American Library Association (ALA) in conjunction with [National Library Week](#) (April 8 – 14).

The rapid growth of e-books has stimulated increasing demand for them in libraries, but libraries only have limited access to e-books because of restrictions placed on their use by publishers. Macmillan Publishing, Simon and Schuster and Hachette Book Group refused to sell e-books to libraries. HarperCollins imposed an arbitrary 26 loans per e-book license, and Penguin refused to let libraries lend its new titles altogether. When Random House raised e-book prices, the ALA urged it to reconsider. "In a time of extreme financial constraint, a major price increase effectively curtails access for many libraries, and especially our communities that are hardest hit economically," Molly Raphael, ALA president, said in a statement.

The single-minded drive to reduce budget deficits continued to take its toll on essential services at all levels of society in 2011, with teachers and librarians sometimes seen as easy targets for layoffs. Even the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services suffered budget cuts, and the Library of Congress lost nearly 10 percent of its workforce.

School librarians faced especially draconian budgetary challenges in 2011. Cuts began at the federal level in May 2011, when the Department of Education eliminated fiscal 2011 funding for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program, the only federal program solely for school libraries in the United States. The effects were soon felt at the state and local levels

Academic librarians and their colleagues in higher education in the United States also continued to navigate a "new normal," characterized by stagnating budgets, unsustainable costs, increased student enrollments and reduced staff.

Even during a period of budget battles, however, the library community, led by the ALA, stood firm against censorship. Internet-age versions of copyright and piracy issues shot to the forefront as 2011 turned into 2012, and the acronyms SOPA (the Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (the PROTECT IP Act of 2011) became part of the vocabulary as the library and First Amendment communities took a strong stand against proponents of the legislation.

Book banning efforts were alive and well in 2011. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) received 326 reports regarding attempts to remove or restrict materials from school curricula and library bookshelves. The Top Ten Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2011 include the following titles; each title is followed by the reasons given for challenging the book:

- 1) *ttyl; ttfn; l8r, g8r* (series), by Lauren Myracle
Offensive language; religious viewpoint; sexually explicit; unsuited to age group
- 2) *The Color of Earth* (series), by Kim Dong Hwa
Nudity; sex education; sexually explicit; unsuited to age group
- 3) *The Hunger Games* trilogy, by Suzanne Collins
Anti-ethnic; anti-family; insensitivity; offensive language; occult/satanic; violence
- 4) *My Mom's Having A Baby! A Kid's Month-by-Month Guide to Pregnancy*, by Dori Hillestad Butler
Nudity; sex education; sexually explicit; unsuited to age group

- 5) *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
Offensive language; racism; religious viewpoint; sexually explicit; unsuited to age group
- 6) *Alice* (series), by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Nudity; offensive language; religious viewpoint
- 7) *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley
Insensitivity; nudity; racism; religious viewpoint; sexually explicit
- 8) *What My Mother Doesn't Know*, by Sonya Sones
Nudity; offensive language; sexually explicit
- 9) *Gossip Girl* (series), by Cecily Von Ziegesar
Drugs; offensive language; sexually explicit
- 10) *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee
Offensive language; racism

**A challenge is defined as a formal, written complaint filed with a library or school requesting that a book or other material be restricted or removed because of its content or appropriateness.*

The State of America's Libraries Report documents trends in library usage and details the impact of library budget cuts, technology use and the various other challenges facing U.S. libraries. The full Report is available at <http://www.ala.org/news/mediapresscenter/americaslibraries/soal2012>.

Appendix 4: Sample Pitch Letter

Dear XXX,

In times of economic hardship, Americans turn to – and depend on – their libraries and librarians.

As National Library Week, April 10 - 16, approaches, we can offer lively national and local experts to discuss current trends in library use.

With the nation facing tough economic times, libraries offer us all a remarkable wealth of resources. Beyond free access to the books, periodicals and the movies we enjoy, patrons are turning to their libraries for free Internet and e-books, personal finance tools, information for job searches and small business opportunities and, of course, the priceless knowledge and experience of librarians.

Libraries are helping level the playing field for job seekers, and are offering support to people to get back on their feet. With more businesses – including a majority of America's leading retailers – requiring applicants to apply online, job-seeking resources are among the most critical and most in demand among the technology resources available in U.S. public libraries.

When the economy is down, library use is up. Unfortunately, at the same time, tight city and state budgets are closing library doors and reducing access when it's needed most.

Twenty-one states reported cuts in state funding for public libraries from fiscal 2010 to fiscal 2011. Of these, almost half indicated that the cuts were greater than 10 percent. The previous year, 24 libraries had reported cuts, with half indicating cuts greater than 11 percent.

Key issues that we can discuss:

- Increase in library use during the economic downturn.
- The release of the American Library Association’s State of America’s Libraries Report, which is a comprehensive report that discusses library trends.
- National Library Workers Day – Tuesday, April 12, 2010 is a day for library staff, users, administrators and Friends groups to recognize the valuable contributions made by all library workers – including librarians, support staff and others.
- April 13 is National Book Mobile Day, which recognizes and celebrates the role of bookmobiles and direct-delivery outreach services in fulfilling the mission of libraries.
- Teen Literature Day – Thursday, April 14, hundreds of libraries will showcase the best in teen literature.
- School Library Media Month – Celebrated during the month of April. Hundreds of school libraries will offer special activities that celebrate the essential role that strong school library programs play in a student's academic career.
-

Please contact me at 312-280-4393, or mmorales@ala.org if you would like to schedule an interview with a local or national library spokesperson.

Best,

Macey

Appendix 5: Sample Op-ed

Why libraries matter more than ever

By Molly Raphael

Anyone who has visited a library in the past few years will not be surprised to learn that demand for library services has increased significantly. With the growing need for access to digital and online information, including e-government services, continuing education resources and employment opportunities, libraries are essential in communities, large and small, throughout the country.

Last year, 1.5 billion library visitors checked out more than 2.4 billion items. Visit the “learning commons” of a college or university library, and you will find it full of students. The same is true for K-12 school libraries as students recognize the importance of learning how to become “information literate” as part of their basic education.

Yet, many question why we need libraries when we have instant access to information on the Internet.

As the president of the [American Library Association \(ALA\)](#), I often receive questions on the relevance of libraries when information can be obtained so easily in digital form. I believe questioning the need for libraries and the professionals who staff them is like questioning the need for the air that we breathe.

We need air to survive, just as we need libraries not just to survive but to *thrive* in an era filled with economic uncertainty, technological illiteracy and information overload. Technology continues to shape commerce, education and social interactions, in our global world. Libraries, which provide equitable access for all, play a key role in leveling the playing field in our communities. Look at the life stories of our most admired leaders in every field of endeavor who came from very humble beginnings, and you will almost always find libraries were key to their access to the Great American Dream.

The traditional notion of libraries continues to thrive in the age of Google and Facebook, but libraries are also transforming lives by providing patrons with the tools needed to compete and thrive in a 21st century marketplace.

The public still has no-fee access to all types of information, with traditional services enhanced by technology.

That's enhanced - not replaced. Libraries have always embraced new forms and formats such as videos, DVD's, audio formats, and now downloadable resources. More than 65% of libraries report that they are the only source of free public access to computers and the Internet in their communities. Thousands rely on free services including basic training in how to use computers and software products as well as access to employment databases and digital media. More than 87% of public libraries provide free formal and informal technology training to library patrons, often partnering with local nonprofits.

To make good decisions, we depend on good information. The Internet can never replace the expertise of library staff. Anyone who has received an overwhelming number of hits searching the Web understands what it means to have a highly trained information navigator. Why wade through hundreds, if not thousands, of possible resources when a librarian can connect you quickly with the most valuable information to meet your needs?

Right now, libraries are part of the solution when a community is struggling economically. Libraries continue to design and offer programs customized for their local communities' needs, providing residents with guidance, including sessions with career advisers, workshops in resume writing and interviewing, job-search resources and connections with outside agencies that offer training and job placement. Each day an estimated 300,000 people receive job-seeking help at public libraries. More than 74% of libraries offer software and other resources to help patrons create resumes and employment materials, and 72% of libraries report that staff helped patrons complete online job applications.

Patrons turn to libraries for access to ebooks and even eReaders. eBooks are available at more than 67% of libraries, up 12% from just two years ago. Libraries don't just offer access to digital content but also offer demonstrations on how to download library eBooks or eFlicks to personal devices. And more than 27% of public libraries offer eReaders for check out.

Most importantly, libraries are located in nearly every community across the country.

I cannot imagine a world without libraries, when so many of us rely on them to make sense of the technology-driven world in which we live.

Editor's Note: Molly Raphael is President of the [American Library Association](#), the oldest and largest library association in the world. Its mission is to promote the highest quality library and information services and public access to information for all. This week, [National Library Week](#), the ALA spotlights the valuable contributions of our nation's libraries and library workers.

Appendix 6: Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The American Library Association opposes shifting policy making and management oversight of library services from the public to the private sector, not because of its impact on job security, but rather because communities may lose access to trained information professionals — librarians.

I disagree with the statements by Frank Pezzanite, the chief executive of Library Systems & Services, the private company that runs 14 library systems operating 63 locations. Implying that library staffs are just waiting around to cash in on retirement, when in fact there are thousands of librarians serving 1.5 billion visitors a year with dedication, assumes that people will fall for the “demonization” of the public sector.

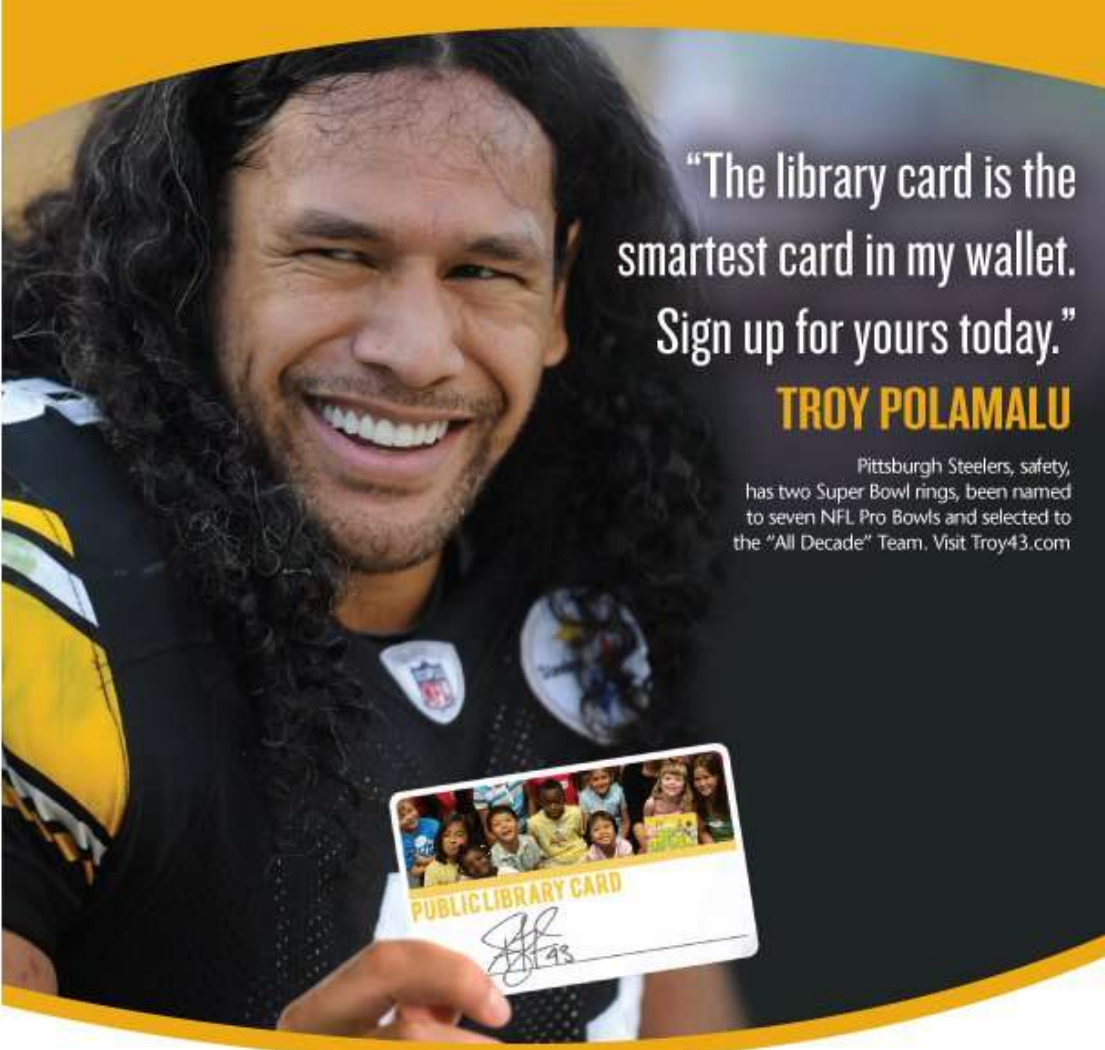
Libraries and their employees, who are often paid salaries far below the demands placed on them and the education required for their positions, serve as a lifeline for millions of Americans.

From free access to books and online resources to library business centers that help support entrepreneurship and retraining, libraries with top-notch staff are needed now more than ever in our increasingly competitive global economy.

Publicly funded libraries should remain directly accountable to the publics they serve.

Roberta Stevens
Pres., American Library Association

Appendix 7: Sample Public Service Announcement



“The library card is the smartest card in my wallet. Sign up for yours today.”

TROY POLAMALU

Pittsburgh Steelers, safety, has two Super Bowl rings, been named to seven NFL Pro Bowls and selected to the “All Decade” Team. Visit Troy43.com

PUBLIC LIBRARY CARD

Troy Polamalu

SEPTEMBER IS LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UP MONTH

Visit your library today. It is a community hub of activity. In tough economic times, your library card gives you free access to books and computers, homework help, assistance with resumes and job searches, accurate financial information, adult education courses, music, movies and much more.

For more information, please visit: www.atyourlibrary.org

ALA American Library Association

 American Library Association
Library Champions
Investing in America's Libraries

@your library
The Campaign for America's Libraries

Appendix 8: Glossary

AD RATES—The rates charged by individual media outlets to advertise in their publication or on their station.

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR—Staff member of a television or radio news team responsible for judging appropriateness of story ideas assigned to reporter for coverage.

BLOG – Literally short for weblog or an online journal. Created by pundits and people who want to express their opinions online.

BOILERPLATE—A brief paragraph stating who you are, what you do, and how you do it, usually used as the last paragraph in a news release.

B-ROLL—Stock footage used by television news stations that includes background information for a story; b-roll is typically filmed using Beta instead of VHS because Beta is used by most TV stations due to its higher broadcast quality.

BEAT—The type of news covered by a particular reporter; such as education, health care, the environment, or city government.

BRIDGING—The process of answering an interviewer’s question by transitioning it into a message that the interviewee wants to discuss.

CLIP OR CLIPPING—A story cut from a publication or a segment cut from a video or audiotape.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR—A calendar that lists specific topics that will be covered by a particular media outlet for each issue. Although developed with advertisers in mind, the calendar helps public relations practitioners plan their messages to fit within the general context of the piece.

EDITOR’S NOTES—Wording found in press releases and other materials that are not a part of the main message of the document, but serve to alert the media when they should release the information, where the story came from, where the document ends, and if it is continued on a second or third page.

FACT SHEET—One- or two-page document that describes an organization’s principles, services, and philosophy. This includes the organization’s address, telephone, fax, and email as well as a map to provide reporters with information.

FEATURE—A long, probing article or story (as opposed to an “objective” news item or account). Magazines and newspapers may have a features department or desk.

GRASSROOTS DISTRIBUTION—Asking for help from volunteers and local community members for the distribution of flyers and brochures about events and organizations.

HOOK—The main news element of a story. Sometimes organizations look for hooks when attempting to increase their visibility by finding a connection between their spokesperson/organization director and the topic being discussed, and then contact the reporter to get them included in the story.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—Your opportunity to congratulate, discuss, or criticize an article you have read. These are submitted to print publications in a timely manner, are typically short, and refer to the original article that caused you to respond.

MASTHEAD—The list of editors, publishers, and senior reporters in each publication’s issue—it includes an address and telephone number and can be found on the editorial page in newspapers and in a standard location in magazines.

MEDIA LIST—List of appropriate outlets to contact created for a specific organization or issue.

NEWS PEGS—Dates around which to pitch stories. These can be internal (Library Card Sign-Up Month) or external (Labor Day).

PITCH LETTER—Letter written to introduce a source and story idea to a member of the media.

PITCHING—Encouraging the media or a blogger to report on a story; a pitch letter is often sent to spark their interest. However, pitching by telephone to follow up is typically needed for a reporter to take notice.

PRESS KIT—A collection of related information to provide the media with background on a particular organization or event.

PUBLICITY VALUE—The unscientific approach to calculating the worthiness of the media’s coverage. To calculate, multiply the price of a column-inch times the length of your story. For example, if the publication says that an ad costs \$100 per column inch and your story is seven inches long, the publicity value is \$700. Public relations generated media coverage carries with it an implied third-party endorsement and added credibility since it is not a paid advertisement.

REACH—Geographic area of the audience and the number of readers/circulation, listeners or viewers who can access the media in any region, city or state where the publication or station is located.

ROUND-UP STORY—Story geared to look back at what has happened over a specific period of time, such as the previous year or quarter; a story in which a reporter typically wants several opinions on a subject.

SPIN—Jargon for the point of view or bias the source works to create a story.

SYNDICATED—Report that appears in more than one media outlet simultaneously, such as the “Dear Abby” column, or one written by a columnist for a specific newspaper or chain of papers.

WIKI—Wikis are collaborative websites whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to them. An example of a Wiki site is Wikipedia.org, which is a free and collaborative encyclopedia consisting of volunteer-created content.

WIRE SERVICE—Wire services should not be confused with wires (such as the Associated Press). Wire Services are a pay services, like PRNewswire, that allow you to post your press releases, and the services then mass distributes the press release to hundreds or thousands of journalists, based on criteria you select. It’s a good way to get out national news to hundreds of outlets at a time—but it’s less effective for local news.

WIRES—Wires are independent news organizations that provide dispatches to multiple papers or broadcast organizations. Common services include the Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and the United Press International (UPI).

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