

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Philadelphia  
January 24 – 28, 2014

**Topic:** YALSAblog Reboot

**Background:** The YALSAblog was established in 2006 in order to provide timely information to members, because at the time, both the journal and e-news were quarterly publications. Little has changed with the blog in the past nine years, and usage has been waning. With the current Member Manager’s contract expiring on Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> and the release of the new report on the future of libraries and teens, the timing presents an opportunity to refocus the blog in order to better meet the needs of members and YALSA. A proposal is provided below by Jack Martin, Shannon Peterson and Chris Shoemaker.

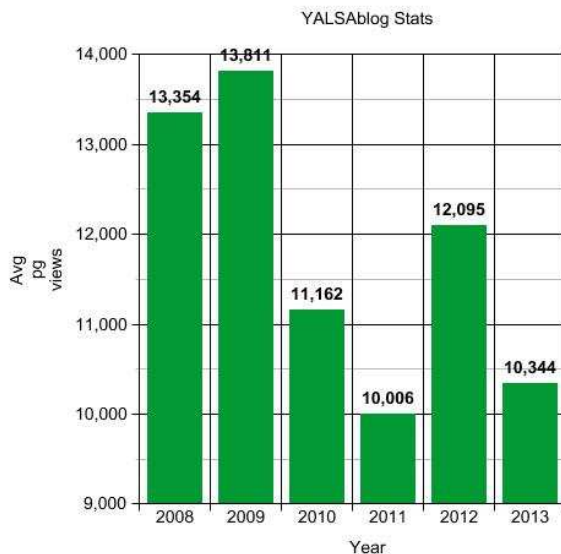
**Action Required:** Action

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**Proposal:** refocus the mission and direction of the YALSAblog in order to increase usage and member relevance and to provide a timely source for news, information, resources and emerging practices around innovation in library services for and with teens, especially those topics which relate to the *Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action*.

**Rationale:**

- Stats for the YALSAblog show a decline in use, as well as fewer mentions from the library community. For example, YALSAblog articles are rarely included in *AL Direct* at this point in time, suggesting that the content is not as novel, engaging and/or newsworthy as in the past.



- The success of the library community responding to the call to action in the new report depends on the degree to which librarians and library workers understand the changes being called for and embrace them. Refocusing the blog's content so that it serves as a timely, go-to resource that aids members of the library community in refocusing their teen services fills a much needed gap, and can help ensure that YALSA's call to action is widely adopted and implemented.
- The YALSAblog has not been meeting YALSA's needs in terms of raising awareness of YALSA resources, or advancing YALSA's strategic goals. Posts are regularly made live that fail to mention appropriate YALSA resources. For example, a recent post about STEM programs failed to mention YALSA's STEM Programming Toolkit, and a recent post about planning author visits failed to mention YALSA's state by state directory of YA authors.
- The YALSAblog has been running largely as-is since its launch 9 years ago in January 2006. The only major change occurred in 2011 when The Hub launched, and all YA lit focused content moved there. It is good practice to periodically evaluate YALSA's various products and refocus, as needed, in order to ensure that they are still meeting members' and YALSA's needs.

### **Current Mission**

The mission of the YALSAblog is to provide a virtual space for publishing information about time sensitive issues and to provide a forum for members and the library community to discuss matters relating to serving teens through libraries.

### **Proposed Mission**

The mission of the YALSAblog is to provide a virtual space for publishing timely information about emerging and new practices for library services for and with teens, to explore practices in related fields relevant to teen services, to raise awareness about appropriate YALSA tools to facilitate innovation in teen services, and to provide resources for members and the library community to support their efforts to continuously improve their overall teen services program.

### **Current Advisory Board Charge**

The YALSAblog Advisory Board's function is to support the Member Manager to ensure that the blog is relevant, innovative and meeting member needs for information about YALSA and the young adult librarianship profession. The Advisory Board participates in the maintenance of the blog and works within the guidelines for the site as set by the YALSA Board of Directors. The Advisory Board also serves in an advisory capacity to the Member Manager of the blog and assists with the collection of content for the site; generates ideas for direction and content; helps obtain, analyze and use member and library community feedback about the site; assists with marketing as needed; and writes for the blog when requested by the manager. Advisory Board size: up to 7 virtual members, including the YALSAblog Member Manager, who serves as chair of the group.

### **Proposed Advisory Board Charge**

The YALSAblog Advisory Board's function is to support the Member Manager to ensure that the blog is relevant, interactive, engaging and meeting member needs for information about innovation in teen services. The Advisory Board participates in the maintenance of the blog and works within the guidelines for the site as set by the YALSA Board of Directors. The Advisory Board also serves in an advisory capacity to the Member Manager of the blog and assists with the recruitment of bloggers and the collection of content for the site; generates ideas for direction and content; helps obtain, analyze and use member and library community feedback about the site; assists with marketing as needed; and assists with reviewing/vetting draft blog content when requested by the manager. Advisory Board size: up to 7 virtual members, including the YALSAblog Member Manager, who serves as chair of the group.

### **Proposed Next Steps**

- Use Feb. as a transition period for the blog while logistics for the new blog direction are being worked out.
- Sunset the current Advisory Board and put out a call for new board members, based on the revised mission and committee charge
- Identify a guest or temporary manager to serve until a new Member Manager is identified through the typical application process.
- Recruit and vet the YALSAblog Member Manager applicants and identify the most qualified based on criteria stated in the position description, including having a track record with implementing innovation in teen services.
- Launch the new blog in March with the temporary blog manager and transition to the new manager as soon as possible

### **Proposed Board Action**

The board accepts the proposal as presented in this document and directs the President to 1) recruit and appoint a new Advisory Board as soon as possible 2) oversee the search committee for a new blog manager and 3) work with staff as needed to facilitate the transition and market the revamped blog.

### **Additional Resources**

- The Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action, [www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report](http://www.ala.org/yaforum/project-report)
- YALSAblog, <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/>