

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Annual Conference, Chicago
June 23 - 26, 2017**

Topic: *Young Adult Library Services Sustainability*

Background: At the 2016 Fall Executive Meeting, the Executive Committee directed the YALS/YALSAblog Editorial Advisory Board to explore the idea of changing *YALS* to a digital only publication, in part because the journal has an average net loss of \$14,167 per year. The Advisory Board undertook a review of existing literature on making this switch, created a survey for *YALS* readers, collected current information about *YALS*, and talked to those who are part of the *YALS* publication cycle. This document has been prepared by Crystle Martin, with support from the YALS/YALSAblog Editorial Advisory Board.

Action Required: Discussion

Proposal

This document proposes shifting *YALS* from a print and digital publication to a digital only publication.

Rationale

- The cost of printing and shipping is currently outstripping advertising revenue, and printing and shipping costs are only expected to rise.
- Given the results from the survey (see below), the impact on users from going all digital would be slightly in favor of all digital, with 52% saying they would read *YALS* about the same or more.
- According to the survey, 95% of those who have used our current digital version like it.
- YALSA does not have an effective method for measuring the impact of the journal. We don't know how many members or subscribers open it or read it, nor do we know which content they interact with most. By moving to a digital only version, we can easily capture that data, which can help the board and staff with decision making.
- YALSA needs to identify areas for financial savings to ensure the fiscal health of the organization and free up funds for priorities in the Organizational Plan.

Fiscal Impacts:

- If the Board takes no action, the journal will continue to lose about \$14,000 per year.

- If YALSA kept a print version, and if ALA were to approve an opt-in for print, this will cut down on print and mailing costs. Given the survey, it could be a savings of 50% or more. But there is no timeline for when this option could become available.
- If *YALS* goes digital only, the net savings would average \$31,205 per year in print, storage, and shipping costs, but could lead to a loss of ad revenue of up to \$18,323.
- If *YALS* moves to a digital only format, it will need to find a platform for hosting the journal, as what we're using now is very basic and provides users with limited features. A service like Issuu runs at \$3,228 per year (\$269 per month). Mag+ ranges from \$999 to \$2999 per month. YALSA could use the platform ALA licenses, which would cost about \$27,500 per year. These fees include some work that is currently being done for print issues, like copyediting and formatting.

Evaluation

- If *YALS* is left as digital and print, a survey should be run again in six months to a year, after the digital version has been promoted more heavily to see if there is a more definite approval of moving to digital only.
- If ALA were to approve revising the member form to add an opt-in option for print, then the Board could evaluate one year after that is implemented.
- If *YALS* goes digital only, evaluate impact financially and through a user survey at the end of one year.

Timeline/Next Steps

- Between now and Dec. 31, 2017: The Executive Director and the *YALS*/*YALS*ablog EAB will work together to find a suitable new digital platform for *YALS* (*YALSA*'s contract with our current publisher is up 12/31/17).
- The *YALS* Editor and the *YALS*/*YALS*ablog EAB will work together to determine a new publication workflow once the new platform is determined.

Other Recommendations

- 18% of survey respondents indicated they didn't know about the digital version of *YALS*. Each time a new issue is available, send out an email blast to all members and subscribers, like the one under Additional Resources below to promote the digital version. Promoting the digital version more heavily brings it to the attention of more members/subscribers and will make the transition easier for readers.

Proposed Board Action

The Board directs the Executive Director to work with Staff, the *YALS* editor, and the *YALS*/*YALS*ablog EAB to transition *YALS* to a digital only publication.

Alternate Courses of Action

- Leave *YALS* as both a print and digital publication, and monitor through online use and yearly surveys to determine if a change is warranted in the future.
- Initiate a discussion with ALA to see if they are willing to modify the membership and subscription form to allow for members and subscribers to choose whether they prefer digital or print versions of *YALS*.

Background Information

Survey Results: Total Number of Respondents – 164 (out of a potential 4,542 personal members and 171 non-member subscriptions)

1. Have you ever accessed the digital version of *YALS*?
 - a. Yes - 38% (95% respondents who had used the digital version like it)
 - b. No - 43%
 - c. Didn't know it was available digitally - 18%
2. YALSA is considering moving *YALS* to a digital only format (no print) How would this impact your interaction with the journal?
 - a. I'd read it more often - 11%
 - b. I'd read it about the same - 41%
 - c. I'd read it less often - 37%
 - d. Not sure - 11%
3. What would be your most preferred delivery method for *YALS*?
 - a. Print - 39%
 - b. Web based magazine - 27%
 - c. Downloadable PDF - 35%
4. What device/platform do you use most often to view digital newsletters/magazines?
 - a. Desktop/Laptop Computer - 60%
 - b. Tablet - 23%
 - c. Android Phone - 5%
 - d. iOS Phone - 5%
 - e. I don't read any digital publications - 7%

Written survey comments about *YALS*:

- I never get my print journal so I have to access it online. I like it in print but it wouldn't impact my reading.

- I would probably read YALS digitally more often if it was delivered via email. If I had to go seek it out each month, I would probably read it less often.
- A purely digital platform is most definitely welcome as that is the way in which I read the vast majority of my publications, both personally and professionally.
- I enjoy browsing YALSA in print, then often carefully review and share articles through libraries online subscription databases. So value both print and electronic versions. Thanks!!
- I would prefer the print version--but if you go to digital only, please make the links easy to access.
- From a personal standpoint, I am always willing to give the digital version of things a try, but usually come away unhappy. I also get overwhelmed by my digital stuff and push it all into an evernote folder to read "when I have time" I think we could possibly avoid this if we did something like School Library Journal where we have an app you download to your tablet newstand that pushes alerts when a new issue is available. That being said, the SLJ app is not dynamic, but just a PDF version of the print journal and I HATE it. If it is going to be digital, I also want it to be dynamic. I can't think of the last time I used the SLJ app for anything more than to search for a review when I had left my print copy at school. Searching isn't even easy, you just have to scroll through the pages. However, I have a NatGeo digital subscription, and it is fantastic. It links out to cited articles, back to other issues, embeds video and audio and allows you to view pictures from different angles. NatGeo offered a digital subscription in addition to its print version several years ago and after a year of both, I switched to just a digital subscription because it was so rich

Information from YALSA's Ad Rep:

YALS' as rep gave his impressions of what he thought changing to an all-digital version of YALS would do to advertising.

“It would devastate sales in my opinion. I can use RUSA as an example. They went from approximately \$11,500 in ad sales per issue down to less than \$2000 per issue after they switched from print to digital in fall 2011. A loss of \$38,000+ annually. So, yes, they saved on printing and postage, but they lost the income on the ad side. Also, we don't have anyone advertising exclusively in the YALS digital edition now and we have promoted it for a couple of years. I think Hyperion, our regular back cover advertiser, would almost be out for sure. They prefer to run print ads and not digital.” (it should be noted that this is not an unbiased opinion. Additionally, only one example was given that provides only relational evidence and doesn't consider other factors why ad sales could have shrunk during this timeframe).

Financial Information

	FY14	FY15	FY16
Subscription sales	13,912	12,832	12,244
Ad sales	20,985	14,648	19,336
TOTAL REVENUE	34,897	27,480	31,580
Paper, Printing & binding	15,491	16,449	16,363
Mailing & postage	14,401	14,056	16,856
TOTAL PRINT RELATED EXPENSES	29,892	30,505	33,219

If the worst-case scenario happened, and *YALS* lost all of its advertising in a move to an all-digital format, YALSA would come out an average of \$12,882 ahead in terms of revenue/expenses related to print and advertising. However, another factor in decision making should be the cost to produce a robust digital version. Currently YALSA pays about \$1,400 per year for the publisher to convert the paper version into a simple e-version. However, if YALSA moved to an all-digital format, we would want to provide a true digital experience with full search-ability, embedded links, interactive ads, etc. in order to increase member satisfaction. The Advisory Board has not yet explored what that cost would be. A key factor to keep in mind, however, is that YALSA spends an average of \$8,351 per year on design related expenses for *YALS*. If a robust digital platform cost less than or equal to the current cost of design and web formatting, a digital *YALS* would be a break-even publication. Whereas YALSA is currently losing an average of \$14,167 per year on the publication.

Additional Resources

- http://www.slate.com/articles/business/technology/2013/08/magazine_with_most_digital_subscribers_it_s_game_informer.html
 - This article talks about the success of a particular magazine in the digital market when only about 3.3% of overall magazine circulation is digital. (I know we're more of a trade publication, but I still think this might be applicable, and may have some nuggets of wisdom, and the same is true of the below.)
- <http://mediaworks.io/blog/digital-magazine-trends-and-challenges>
 - Again, this is about magazines, but it makes the point that circulation has increased with the increase of tablet sales, so something to consider.
- <http://digiday.com/publishers/digital-publishers-reviving-print-corpse/>

- This is an article about how and why some publishers are going back to print from digital. And I think an important takeaway here is this: “If you define your publication by the platform on which you publish, you pretty quickly risk irrelevance,” said Susan Glasser, editor of Politico Magazine. “I would rather think about it in terms of the audience, content and mission of the publication.”
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC100770/>
- <http://adage.com/article/media/teen-vogue-cutting-back-issues-year/306647/>
- Example of email of what could be sent to digital only subscribers when the issue is available.

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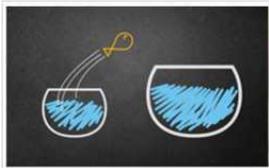
Helping Students Navigate Change

Students in the middle grades are faced with many changes, often including a change to the buildings and adults they consider familiar. How do we help our students navigate through changes during the middle school years?



Experiencing Challenges and Failures

Here are ideas for helping gifted and advanced learners during transitional periods.



Supporting Students During Times of Change

Transitions should be more of a milestone, and less traumatic. Here are ideas for being attentive to students' needs.

Also:

- >[Examining the Evidence](#)
- >[Young Adolescent Voices](#)
- >[Developing a School Vision: What Utensils Do You Use?](#)
- >[Beyond Cool Garb](#)
- >[Transitions with the Brain in Mind](#)
- >[Removing Imaginary Boundaries Around Content](#)
- >[If You Take a Mouse to School...](#)
- >[How can I help students view differences as strengths?](#)
- >[What Can Middle Level Leaders Learn from the Student Experience?](#)
- >[Google Can Do What? Five Activities to Engage Students](#)
- >[Professional Learning Communities: A Kaleidoscope of Opportunities](#)