# Asia-Pacific Library and Information Conference (APLIC) 2018 Kay Poustie Scholarship Report



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#### Introduction

APLIC was held from 30 July to 2 August 2018 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, in Queensland, Australia and was hosted by the Australian library and Information Association (ALIA), the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA), and the Library Association of Singapore (LAS). This was significant, as even though ALIA and LIANZA had previously partnered to run conferences, it was the first time they partnered with LAS. This provided a unique opportunity for library and information professionals to network from across the globe, to share knowledge, and learn from each other. The theme of 'Roar, Leap, Dare' inspired the large number of events available which explored the following questions:

Roar – how do we advocate for our communities and industries? How do we promote and demonstrate the value of what we do?

Leap – how do we spring forward and build momentum? What are the innovations and connections in technology, service delivery and content that are shaping our services, environments and work?

Dare – what risks are we taking in our organisations and work lives? What are the stories of revolution or evolution, success or failure, in your library, industry, country or career?

(APLIC Conference Handbook, 2018)

Further information about APLIC and access to papers and presentation slides can be found via the APLIC website: https://aplic.alia.org.au





**Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre** 

## Monday 30 July 2018 – "Toolkit series" Pre-conference workshops

#### Readers' Advisory

Diane Velasquez and Diana Hidge, University of South Australia

The readers' advisory workshop stressed the important role that libraries have traditionally and continued to play in connecting people, particularly young adults and adults, to new materials. This has expanded beyond books to include eresources, DVDs, music, video games and more. It can be challenging for adults to continue to read as life becomes more complex. Library staff have encouraged many readers to continue to find the joy of reading by suggesting materials that suit their interests. However, floor staff in libraries can often be para-professionals, and do not necessarily have training in how to make appropriate suggestions. Yet, they are the ones who likely spend the most time interacting with the collection and borrowers. In addition, it can be beneficial for professionals to refresh their skills to continue to provide a high-quality service.

Readers will often ask for a 'good' book to read. However 'good' is a subjective term and what is considered 'good' will differ between readers. In order to make suggestions for readers, library staff need to have a number of skills and tools available to them. This includes a comprehensive interview to gain enough information to make an appropriate suggestion. These interviews should be non-judgemental; the reader determines their own needs and this should not be influenced by the staff member's opinions. Open-ended questions can encourage the reader to express information without assumptions being made by the staff member. In addition to finding out which authors and stories the reader has liked, it can be useful to identify which elements of the story appeal to them; this information can then be used to find stories that demonstrate similar qualities. Electronic resources such as Novelist can assist staff in finding suggestions; this can be particularly useful when unfamiliar with a genre. Once some suggestions have been made, the reader should have some time to consider them. However, follow up to see if they are happy with the selection by gaining additional feedback. This is more likely to result in the borrower being satisfied with the suggestions and service. This can be applied by all library staff that interact with borrowers.

Running programs and events in libraries are another way readers can be introduced to new material. This may be book clubs, author talks, or adult storytime. International observations can inspire events and displays which can introduce borrowers to relevant items in the collection. Social media is another place libraries can promote items to borrowers, creating virtual displays that people can engage with and discuss online. There are numerous possibilities to connect borrowers with new material. The role of Literacy Development Officer actively plans programs and events. Therefore, these suggestions can continue to be a part of and can aid the expansion of an existing program.

#### Marketing

Diane Velasquez, University of South Australia and Jennifer Campbell-Meier, Victoria University of Wellington

The marketing workshop explored ways to promote and market library programs and events. It provided a number of practical suggestions that can be applied by library staff as well as data to support advocating for particular marketing strategies, such as outreach and social media. The marketing and evaluation of programs and events is important at the initial stages as well as ongoing for the duration of the activity. Diane explained that it can take up to 18 months for a community to become engaged in a program. Marketing at the beginning is not enough; programs need ongoing marketing to provide the best possible opportunity for the community to learn what is available. The longer period of time can also allow for staff to evaluate and refine the program to create something that will be considered valuable to the community. This advice will be particularly useful when piloting new programs. Once people are attending programs, libraries can collect and share attendees' stories about the value of attending. Storytelling is a powerful tool that can help potential attendees to build trust in programs and break down stereotypes about libraries. Furthermore, staff can engage with customers through social media. Actively using hashtags can greatly increase the number of people exposed to social media posts. It is also worthwhile to share stories during and after programs and events to build the image of the library in addition to promotion of upcoming programs and events.

The workshop encouraged library staff to move out of library buildings and engage with the local community. The group discussed places that people regularly frequent such as shopping centres, train stations, and hospitals. Setting up pop up spaces in these places can enable library staff to reach customers they might not have otherwise drawn into the library. Another suggestion was to personally

invite local groups, such as a choir to perform at events. By engaging local community groups, they are likely to take ownership of the event, including promotion, particularly in encouraging their family and friends to attend. This can have a snowball effect which continues to grow as community members invite others.



Pacific Fair Shopping Centre, Broadbeach, Queensland

### Tuesday 31 July 2018

#### **Keynote address - Lucy Bloom**

Speaker, consultant and author

Lucy Bloom is author of two books, *Get the girls out* and *Cheers to childbirth*, and has enthralled audiences across the globe as an inspirational speaker. Lucy was an ideal choice to launch the conference and she set the scene for the rest of the week. She encouraged pride in the library and information sector, and for the industry to take ownership of shaping its own perception and future. She motivated delegates to seize every opportunity throughout the conference and in life. This was achieved through her interpretation of the conference theme 'Roar, Leap, Dare'.



Lucy Bloom, Keynote address, APLIC 2018

Lucy believed that dare is about taking risks. She implored delegates to consider what would be the worst thing that can happen if they take a risk such as trying out a new program. She asked them consider if anybody would die, and if the answer was no then there was nothing to lose. Even failures can be considered learning opportunities, so taking a risk is always an opportunity to achieve excellence. Trying new things, particularly something challenging, can give people valuable opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills. Lucy felt that leap was about overcoming fears; having the bravery and courage to try. She motivated delegates with emotional personal stories; tales of bravery that made it seem as if anything is possible. Finally, she encouraged delegates to roar about their journey, learning and success. Libraries should be sharing their own stories to inspire and support each other.

#### **Cultivating Maori student engagement with libraries**

Jacinta Beckwith, Hocken Collections – Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago

Libraries can play an important role in respecting and engaging with their local indigenous culture. The University of Otago Library looked at how they could support Maori students to connect with their Maori culture, by engaging the students in the library and its collection. This included running events before the start of semester such as 'The Amazing Race – Library Edition'. The event encouraged students to find a variety of locations on campus and incorporated culture, art and language, setting up the precedent that the library would connect with the students in a fun and meaningful way. During semester this is continued through a range of initiatives, including language classes, exhibitions, and regular opportunities for students to give feedback to staff. Creating a respectful and inclusive space should be on the agenda of all libraries and library staff.

# Non-library user immigrants: How can public libraries enhance their information experience?

Debra Cooper, Logan City Council Libraries and Kathleen Smeaton, The University of Queensland

This presentation discussed actions libraries can take to engage with immigrants based on the results of a research project. A number of people in local communities, particularly immigrants, can feel socially isolated. Libraries are in a unique position where they welcome and include everyone, this provides an ideal environment to engage with immigrants and assist them to actively participate in the community. Libraries can assess if their current programs are culturally inclusive, and are accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CaLD). Furthermore, libraries can ensure collections include materials in languages used in the communities, as well as materials to assist English language learners. English conversation groups can not only assist in learning English, but also give immigrants valuable insight into life in Australia and the local community. Access to interpreters, particularly for library tours or question and answer type events, can help break down language barriers. Employing CaLD people as volunteers can provide them with opportunities to participate in the community, increase social networks, gain valuable work experience, and demonstrate to new comers that the library is an inclusive space. The library also needs to consider making outreach a priority to find ways to engage with CaLD communities outside of the library, ensuring they know the library is a welcoming place with a lot to offer. These suggestions can be applicable to any library in Australia and will vary depending on the unique attributes of each community. The Mandurah Libraries regularly considers local CaLD communities when planning and delivery programs and events, as well as networking and connecting with local groups, an important outreach program.

# We're all in this together: investigations of a single presentation for books in all formats Dana McKay and George Buchanan, University of Melbourne

There are numerous benefits to having electronic collections. This includes freeing up space in libraries for community engagement and cooperative study. However, students can still be prone to browsing the shelves and electronic resources can become lost or difficult to

find. An app was suggested that would allow students to use their phones to scan barcodes of books on the shelves and be directly linked to similar titles in the electronic collection. Thus, merging the physical and digital resources, creating a more cohesive and accessible collection. This kind of forward thinking and initiative may be the future of all libraries, finding innovative ways to connect people to the information they need in library collections.



Cooperative study space, QUT Gardens point campus library

#### Keynote address - Opeta Alefaio

Director, National Archives of Fiji

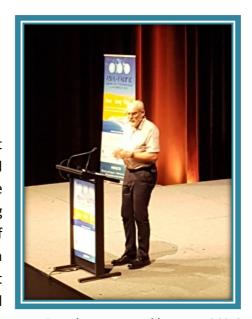
Opeta Alefaio took delegates on a journey from a time where the locals of Fiji did not know that the National Archives existed or the services they offered, to being able to regularly connect people to their history in fun, engaging and exciting ways. Similarly to libraries, while the archives staff knew they existed for the public, most people did not know they existed or the services they offered. The staff decided it was time to make a change; if they community were not coming to the archive, they would take the archives out to the community. They began by partnering with existing events that community members were already attending. What started as an unfunded project in 2012 has steadily increased to a project supported by \$100,000 due to the interest and value shown by the communities. This outreach enabled staff to increase the profile of the archives, community awareness, and enable communities to learn about their own histories. This project has also led to a highly active social media profile where communities are able to share their own knowledge in relation to archives, as well as a tv show airing hours of historical footage. Opeta challenged delegates to consider the purpose of their roles and to take a risk to be able to engage with communities. Libraries can connect with their own communities by starting outreach programs.

### Wednesday 1 August 2018

#### **Keynote address – Dave Snowden**

Chief Scientific Officer, Cognitive Edge

Language is the key to life. It is through language that stories are shared, that knowledge is passed down, and that identity is made. Therefore, by building language in people, they will be better equipped to lead fulfilling lives. In particular young people can be the voice of their communities and can lead change. Libraries can give young people opportunities to learn and grow but also to have a voice in society. Critical thinkers will better understand the world. This can be developed



Dave Snowden, Keynote address, APLIC 2018

through opportunities to argue opposing opinions, encouraging people to consider another perspective. These differences are what make people unique, contributing to a sense of identity. But it is often easy to band together and conform to the opinions of others. This is why focus groups can be a poor choice for gaining true opinions and often do not consider a wider voice. By collecting people's stories, libraries can persuade change, and then support initiatives with research data to encourage best practise. This is where there is potential to learn what is possible, where change can begin to be made.

#### How big is the leap between our ideals and reality?

Troy Tuhou, Auckland University of Technology

Libraries have proudly upheld the value that they provide free and accessible information to all. However in reality access to information can be restricted in a number of ways, including memberships, special collections, and embargoes. Therefore, the restrictions requested by indigenous cultures on materials are similar to the way libraries already run business. Yet, these can often be ignored under the pretence that information should be available to all.

Troy made a compelling argument for indigenous communities to have input into how collections relating to their culture are managed. Information is often misrepresented when not completely understood. Indigenous material is shelved in a western manner which likely does not adhere to organisational methods for their culture. Libraries need to recognise and be aware that they are not neutral or objective; they are culturally bound, even in cataloguing. Being aware of this can encourage consultation with local communities when trying to best manage collections in a respectful manner.

#### Welcome to the library: supporting literacy development in adult learners

Troy Watson, Melton City Council

Libraries can seem like daunting places for people who struggle with reading. Troy shared the learning resources the library developed to assist adults with low literacy and English Language Learners in accessing the library. The resources included a reader that used simple language and images to clearly explain library services and programs. The images provided clues to help the reader predict the text. Furthermore, the content was purposely non-specific so that it could be used to refer to libraries in general and not a specific location. The reader and a corresponding teacher resource were shared with external education institutions to provide them with an additional resource to teach students about libraries and encourage the students to access library services. In addition, Library staff visited classrooms and teachers were encouraged to take their students to the library for tours.

One of the programs offered is English Conversation Classes. The library engaged the people attending their English conversation classes in creating another resource, a video of a song to promote the library. Involving these students in the process encouraged them to feel socially included as well as proud of their library and community. Libraries across the country can involve their own community members in promotional material, whether it is images on a poster, a video, or a community book to foster that same community pride. All of the resources can be accessed from the Melton City Council website. This is not only for their local community, but also so other libraries can access and apply the resources. These programs, resources and initiatives encourage lifelong learning and provide access to people who might have otherwise struggled.

#### We need to talk about information experience in a post truth world

Kate Davis, University of Southern Queensland

Kate explored a new world where people are constantly immersed in the information experience with internet and social media at their fingertips. Libraries need to consider how users engage with information. For many people, it is impossible to separate from the constant access to information in which they have become accustomed. This constant flow of information may be social, entertainment, educational, news and more. This information experience is a part of daily life and cannot be ignored. Libraries can play a role in assisting users to navigate this information heavy world, particularly with concerns about fake news. There are also opportunities to educate people on how to connect with others. For example, social media has been known to help new mothers feel less socially isolated. There are numerous opportunities for programs to be run in libraries to better educate users.

#### Get connected: network theory for library professionals

Rob Thomson, TAFE NSW – Wollongong

Rob discussed four aspects of network theory. 'Small-world Theory' considers that any two people are usually very few acquaintance links apart. When you connect with people you are also opening possible links to all of their networks as well. For libraries to be forward thinking and innovative, staff need to network beyond the confines of the library industry. While networking within the industry is beneficial, connecting with a variety of people is likely to result in further opportunities for learning as well as creative solutions. 'Lifecycles of emergence' explains how people need to share a common vision to create change. Working across sectors is more likely to create stronger communities to lead the future. 'Thick networks' occur when wide social groups all share the same story, when they all believe a powerful message. As libraries share stories of innovation and change they are building a new image of libraries to be adopted by the wider community. Until one day you have 'Modality and sodality', where that is just the way things are done and everyone belongs to the same group. The possibilities are endless when connecting with others.





Networking opportunities, Wanderlust Conference Dinner and Exhibition Hall, Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

### Thursday 2 August 2018

# Breakfast workshop - Virtual bacon and augmented eggs. Bring virtual and augmented reality to your library

Sarah Howard and Ellen Thompson, Queensland University of Technology

There are numerous options for bringing virtual and augmented reality to libraries. This workshop gave delegates the opportunity to play with and explore a range of technology and discuss possible applications. Virtual reality completely immerses the user in the experience, usually with sight and sound and sometimes being able to interact with and manipulate the space. Alternatively, augmented reality layers an image on a device over the real world using the camera. Libraries can provide a safe environment for people to experiment with unfamiliar technology.

Virtual reality programs encourage users to have the opportunity to experience technology that they might not otherwise be able to access. It is likely that in time, virtual reality will become much more prevalent in society; by having the opportunity to test out the technology first it will be less intimidating when it becomes more common. Virtual reality can allow people to play games, visit anywhere in the world via Google Earth, experience learning programs and more. New and exciting virtual reality programs are regularly being created. It is not necessary to have expensive equipment to access VR. There are cheaper options available including Google Cardboard or Voxkin headsets, which enable users



Chantay Mallett with the Oculus Rift

to have experiences via smart phones. Libraries can use 3D camera technology to create their own VR experiences including a virtual tour of their library. This provides an option for people to explore the library and become familiar with the layout from their homes. There are a variety of camera options available, for example the Samsung 360 camera.

Augmented reality is creating numerous possibilities for libraries, not only for programs but also to add value and further learning opportunities to collections. There are programs that allow library staff to layer information onto a physical item including discussion questions, activities, links to videos or other sources of further information, links to social media and



Sample of workshop resources, APLIC 2018

more. Customers can use their personal devices to scan items in the library collection and access this additional information. Other apps exist to bring augmented reality into libraries including bringing colouring in to life on a mobile device and creating scavenger hunts. AR can be a fun way to bring some simple technology into the library.

You can't do that in a library! Why breaking library stereotypes and taking risks is good for libraries and good for the communities they serve. The Tea Tree Gully Library experiments in cementing relevance through the event-driven library.

David Brooks and Symon Williamson, City of Tea Tree Gully Library

The City of Tea Tree Gully Library in South Australia are taking risks and seeing amazing results of community engagement. They challenged delegates to consider that doing nothing is the biggest risk, because doing nothing could actually lead to becoming irrelevant. Staff had started a program of history talks which had approximately six people regularly attending. While these people greatly enjoyed and found value in the program, staff realised they needed to rethink their strategy in order to engage with a wider audience. The first risk was to expand the history program by hosting an 80s roller disco. The risk paid off, they had almost 100 people attend who were learning about history in a fun and engaging way. This was the start of a new way of thinking, of a library that was a place for learning and a place for community. It led to the implementation of a range of new events including adult storytime, radio workshops, archaeological digs, exhibits and a space program focused around sending the library mascot into space. This gave people the chance to learn about new and diverse topics which they may not otherwise had the opportunity to experience. Many of the programs were developed on the basis of partnerships to support the library's capacity to offer events. Offering these new initiatives raised the profile of the library and increased attendance at all the original library programs which were also able to continue. Libraries can continue to develop, implement and adapt programs to continually offer an increasingly relevant service to their users.

# Augmented Reality in your library – dARing to create new user experiences Adrienne Hannan, Wellington City Libraries and Kapiti Coast District Libraries

Libraries are 'technology petting zoos' working towards a digitally literate society. They should be a place where people can try new things, explore and learn in a safe environment. Wellington City Libraries and Kapiti Coast District Libraries partnered with a start-up app developer to create an augmented reality (AR) app. The app would access a devices camera to scan the library. Certain areas within the library would enable interactive content to appear over the image on the device. It was designed to be used to create interactive displays, and scavenger hunts throughout the library. The intention was for the app to encourage patrons to have a go with the technology while also getting to know their local library. People mostly used their own devices however the library also had a few devices available for community members to ensure everyone was able to access the activity. The app was well received and used by all ages and attracted new customers to the library. Work has been started on a second app that will encourage users to explore the collection, linking them to activities as well as other related collection items. This technology is likely to continue to grow and become a part of library services.

# Beyond the page: the development, implementation and continuation of a region wide children and youth literary festival

Stephnie Burton, Upper Hutt City Library

Three local councils partnered to run Beyond the page during a two-week school holiday period. The focus was to engage children and young people in fun and exciting literacy and learning opportunities, including providing a platform for young people to create, celebrate and share their own content. Activities included drag queen storytime, meet the robots, ballet storytime, a murder mystery activity, and scavenger hunts. The large-scale nature of the event encouraged library staff who did not usually run events to get involved. These activities challenged the perceptions of a traditional library and encouraged community members to participate in a wide range of learning experiences. The project has had additional ongoing benefits such as the partnerships that were made have expanded to include joint professional development and continued opportunities to share knowledge between library staff.



Gold Coast Sculpture Trail, Comic Book by Kate Clarke

# Closing keynote address – The heart of librarianship: Finding balance in challenging times Dr Michael Stephens, San Jose State University

Dr Michael Stephens is a leading expert in the library information sector. He reiterated many of the messages that were shared throughout the conference. As explored through several of the presentations, libraries are in a state of change. There are challenges such as money, time, and stereotyped perceptions, but libraries have an important role to fulfil. Libraries need to work smarter towards a collective future. Workloads can be supported by working together and sharing knowledge. This can be achieved through strong networks and partnerships. Together, libraries can be leaders in shaping a better future.

Another prevalent theme throughout the conference was the introduction of programs and events that focus on more than books. Libraries passionately support literacy development, but literacy is not only reading and writing. Libraries should consider life literacies which encompass a wide range of skills that enable people to function in all aspects of life. Libraries are achieving meaningful outcomes and supporting learning for communities through innovative programs such as learning about sustainable farming through 'books and butchers' programs, or expanding collections to include items such as power tools to encourage learning through independent projects. The possibilities are endless and libraries have the power to make a difference.

### Friday 3 August 2018

#### Conference tour - Brisbane Central Libraries

#### **QUT Gardens Point campus Library**

The ground floor of this university library dubbed HiQ is a buzz of activity. This space is bright and welcoming, with staff members readily available to assist with any questions. There is a variety of interactive technology that can allow students to access the information they need. The remaining floors of the library house the collection as well as a mix of quiet and collaborative study spaces as well as an after-hours computer study space and outdoor courtyard. The library has significantly reduced the physical collection to allow for more of these spaces. This has been supported by a growing online collection. As the spaces are consistently used, there are terminals where students can book particular spaces and time limits for bookings.



Interactive campus map

Quiet study space

#### **Brisbane City Brisbane Square Library**

The Brisbane city Square Library consists of lots of bright and open spaces. One of the key aspects of this library is their automated return and sorting technology. This has greatly assisted staff in such a

large and busy library.
Returned books are sent to a sorting room on a conveyor belt and then a machine sorts the items onto trolleys to be checked and returned by staff.



Above: Conveyor belt transporting books to the sorting room

Left: The sorting room

The library features a variety of spaces for events, meetings, study, socialising and playing. This includes board games and game consoles for young adults to access, and a variety of interactive resources in the children's area. Displays of community art can also regularly be found throughout the library spaces. The staff have tried to increase borrowing by displaying books based on retail stores, with lots of forward facing titles and displays.



**Meeting spaces** 





Forward facing displays

**Study spaces** 



**Artwork displays** 



Forward facing holds

#### State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland is a vast and multifaceted space. Discoveries can be made throughout the library from local history to hidden art. The tea cup collection is a spectacle not to be missed. There is a space for everyone and their needs, including an Indigenous reading nook, children's play area, study spaces, computer access, artefact displays, special collections, function rooms and more.



Children's area



Indigenous reading nook



Tools



Sewing resources and a promotional banner

#### State Library of Queensland - The Edge

Makerspaces such as The Edge are becoming more common in libraries. These spaces give people places to create and learn. The State Library of Queensland's makerspace is more like a workshop than a library, making it functional and a welcome space for people to create. They offer a large range of resources including tools, sewing machines, laser cutters, 3d printers and more. Regular programs are run from the maker space giving people the opportunity to constantly learn and improve themselves. Activities have ranged from constructing intricate lamps to brewing kombucha. Timetables are shares on electronic screens throughout the library, often placed near samples of items that have been made at The Edge. State Library of Queensland has created a space that feels completely separate from a traditional library and yet upholds collective values of providing an inclusive space of learning.



Pictures made with a laser cutter

#### Discussion and recommendations

The sessions explored a wide range of learning programs. This is particularly important in public libraries where customers might not otherwise have access to learning experiences. Offering resources, programs and events creates a learning culture that encourages active participation. This not only has benefits for lifelong learning but also social inclusion. When communities learn together they are also connecting and developing support networks. Even if programs do not attract a high number of attendees, it is still a valuable experience because without trying it is impossible to know if it could have worked. Furthermore, from this experience, library staff can improve their own methods to offer future programs that are likely to be more tailored to community's needs.

New technology can be expensive and daunting. However, libraries are a safe space where people can learn through experimenting. This gives people the opportunity to develop an understanding of technologies they may have heard about, but not had the chance to experience. Again, this encourages social inclusion as well as lifelong learning. There is a large range of technology and numerous ideas that libraries can put into practice. Staff need to assess the interests of their individual communities and balance this with the budgets and capacity of the library to offer learning experiences. There are ways to start small and begin to engage with customers. Libraries need to connect and share their knowledge. This will enable libraries to learn together and develop and offer programs of a higher quality based on collective expertise. This can be achieved via local networking groups as well as actively attending and engaging in conference and other professional development.

A challenge for libraries is the continued barrier of library stereotypes. If community members are not aware that programs and events are a service that libraries offer, they will not attend. By visiting community spaces, library staff are able to reach some of these people. It is also vital that library staff unite to raise the profile of libraries and advocate for a shared vision. Programs and events at libraries are the future of creating learning communities. For this to be successful, library staff need to use best-practise methods to market and evaluate programs, including outreach. By networking with local community groups and being aware of other local events, libraries can partner to share information, and continue to advocate for the library as a learning space that is more than books.

#### Conclusion

Conferences offer a unique opportunity for professionals to put networking, knowledge sharing, and professional development into practise. Libraries are places of change, they are relevant, and they are making a difference. However, it is up to library staff to continue to take risks and try new things, to keep learning and evolving, and to speak up and share stories with the world so libraries can continue to improve and move forward collectively.