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Aspen Institute Releases “Rising to the Challenge”

On October 14, the Aspen Institute released its report “Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries.” The report, a product of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries (DPL), examines how U.S. public libraries are uniquely situated to advance the needs of the communities they serve—and how these communities can best respond to libraries’ needs in turn.

The DPL, partnered on and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is a forum that brings together library professionals, policymakers, technology experts, philanthropists, educators, and civic leaders to examine the evolving role of public libraries in the 21st century. The 35-member working group met twice during the DPL’s first year, and its discussions informed the report’s findings and recommendations.

Among those suggestions are three key assets that libraries can leverage: people—both users and librarians; places—libraries’ physical and virtual presence; and platform—the many ways in which communities use libraries to share knowledge and connect. Four strategic opportu-

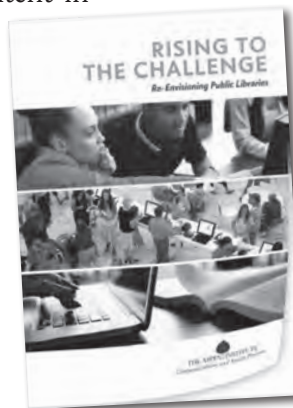
nities that libraries and communities can address together are detailed:

1. Aligning library services in support of community goals
2. Providing access to content in all formats
3. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of public libraries
4. Cultivating leadership.

The report offers case studies and presents a series of actionable steps for library leaders, policymakers, and communities. These include advising libraries to partner with local business, chambers of commerce, and community colleges; bringing together community stakeholders to create a comprehensive strategic plan for the library and other community knowledge institutions; promoting the deployment of wireless hot spots in libraries and other public places, especially in underserved communities; developing public-private trusts for libraries in order to leverage foundation or corporate donations; and making advocacy a priority on all fronts.

The report’s release was held at the New York Public Library’s (NYPL) Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, with

an enthusiastic crowd of library supporters in attendance. A panel discussion followed introductory remarks from NYPL’s Tony Marx, the Gates Foundation’s Deborah Jacobs, and Amy Garmer, director of the DPL. Moderated by Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program executive director Charlie Firestone, the panel offered several members of the DPL working group an opportunity to share their experiences operat-



ing within various communities to strengthen their libraries’ message.

Nashville mayor Karl Dean discussed the Limitless Libraries program, a partnership between the city’s schools and its public library system, and Brooklyn Public Library president and CEO Linda Johnson described how the mission of libraries is moving from lending to sharing. Novelist Dinaw Mengestu offered his vision of active engagement between libraries and writers, whereby authors can choose to participate in a civic dialog rather than simply give a book reading.

Finally, Ralph Smith, managing

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Who Moves You?

The editors of *Library Journal* need your help in identifying the emerging leaders in the library world. Our 14th annual Movers & Shakers coverage will profile 50-plus up-and-coming individuals who are innovative, creative, and making a difference. Learn more and submit your nominations, visit <http://ow.ly/CKAEs>.

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Grady said that the ceiling on these caps is high, and the company does not expect libraries to exceed limits for concurrent use.

Whether patrons are using online training “to get a new job, to learn

new skills, or to augment the [in-person school or library] coursework that they’re doing...we’re supporting their goals and making technology a level playing field,” Kimmons said. With this move, Lynda.com

joins a number of competitors already working with libraries in this capacity, such as Treehouse and Gale Courses. Lynda.com enjoys significant name recognition among consumers and professionals and covers a broad base of topics with more than 3,010 professionally produced, segmented video courses on subjects ranging from public speaking to coding to graphic design.

The company has long offered individual and corporate subscriptions, which businesses often use to meet specific staff training goals. But Lynda.com had limited libraries to “kiosk” licenses, in which each license was restricted to a specific, individual workstation. This type of license made Lynda.com impractical as a component of any major library programming effort and less than ideal as a public resource, since many of its courses are hours long.

The company began exploring enhanced access for library patrons two years ago, testing a non-fixed IP address licensing model with the New York Public Library’s Science, Industry, and Business Library (SIBL) branch in December 2012. As many as 50 patrons at a time could access Lynda.com content from any of SIBL’s 150 public workstations. And from September 2013 through September 2014, Lynda.com worked with 27 libraries to pilot test a licensing model that enabled patrons to check out two-week subscriptions to the service.

Kimmons said that over the years, Lynda.com had received “literally hundreds” of requests from libraries for this type of subscription model. The pilot tests helped convince the company that library licenses would not encroach on its base of individual subscribers.

The new licensing model will give libraries the opportunity to bolster their programming with cours-

Branching Out



The **Lathrop Library** (pictured) renovation at Stanford University, CA, wrapped up on September 15 with the reopening of the 140,000 square foot facility. Along with systems work and tackling deferred maintenance, the bulk of the project involved the relocation of the East Asia Library and the Academic Computing Services from the soon-to-be-demolished Meyer Library to what was the Graduate School of Business. The 48-year-old four-story concrete waffle slab structure features a 24-hour study space and a second-floor balcony; three classrooms, including a 3,000 square foot presentation facility; digital and media production services; and the collaborative create:space. The \$1,108,000 effort was led by Perkins + Will, with general contractor Devcon Construction.

The 154,000 square foot **Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons** at Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI, has attained Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, according to the *Grand Rapids Busi-*

ness Journal; this is the highest certification level possible. The \$65 million project includes an energy-efficient underfloor air system, low-flow fixtures, a heat-recovery system, and use of locally produced materials, among other sustainable features.

The John Stewart Memorial Library at Wilson College,

Chambersburg, PA, broke ground for a \$12 million effort to reinvent its 1924 structure and raze a 1961 addition, according to *Public Opinion Online*. The facility will encompass enhanced “technology services, writing labs, a commuter lounge, two ‘smart’ classrooms, a bookstore, and an outdoor plaza,” along with the Sue Davison Cooley Gallery. Alumna Cooley’s \$2.3 million gift (see *Hotline*, 3/17/14) spurred the fundraising campaign. The project is designed by Ford3 Architects, LLC.

Plans are afoot for a new library in Schenectady, NY, according to the *Times Union*. The 4,000 square foot **Phyllis Bornt Branch Library and Literacy Center** is expected to cost \$1.2 million. Serving the Hamilton Hill, Vale, and Central State Street neighborhoods, the building will incorporate financial and digital literacy services among its offerings, in addition to an intense focus on early literacy, Schenectady County Public Library director Karen Bradley told the *Times Union*. The property cost the county \$120,000, with \$600,000 expected to cover site improvements. Librarian Bornt (d. 2010) left over \$700,000 to the library system; \$500,000 will go to this project.

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es on topics that otherwise would not be covered and to offer supplementary training for beginners, as well as advanced training for users who excel beyond the courses that a library offers.

The company's new president, Andrew Wait, added that the service will be helpful to any patrons who are looking for a new job, facing a life transition, or otherwise seeking ways to gain new skills. "We are thrilled to work with our library partners as they assist patrons in bridging skills gaps, particularly those looking to learn the latest version of software, résumé writing, job hunting, and interviewing skills," he said.

Colorado Students Protest AP History "Censoring"

On October 11, Colorado high school students from Jefferson County school district gathered in Littleton's Clement Park to protest possible changes being proposed to their Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. History curriculum—including suggestions to scrub the classes of materials that "condone civil disorder, social strife, or disregard of the law."

"Censorship has no place in education," said Ashlyn Maher, a senior at Chatfield High School in Jeffco Public Schools, who was at Saturday's protest, according to the *Denver Post*.

The Jefferson County Board of Education passed the proposal of an AP U.S. history review committee by a 3–2 vote in September, said John Ford, president of the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA).

The proposal allowed each of the five board members to put forth three nominees to the new curriculum review committee—15 in total. The final count would be whittled down to nine. Among the tasks of the curriculum review board would be to review curricular choices and texts regularly as to their appropriateness, with AP

The Five Coolest Things at New York Comic Con 2014

The organizers of New York Comic Con (NYCC) put it front and center this year: harassment will not be tolerated. With that bold statement, made on the New York Comic Con website, its app (with a button to report problems immediately), and signs at entrances to the exhibits, this felt like a more welcoming con for all.

"We made it easier to report incidents, yet we had fewer incidents reported," ReedPOP senior vice president Lance Fensterman, who oversees the show, told the comics and pop culture retailing website ICv2 in an interview. "I will take that as saying the program worked, or people just started treating each other as they should. Either way, it makes for a safer environment, and we're happy about that."

That's an important step, not just because it's the right thing to do but also because it recognizes what has become increasingly obvious: women are a substantial and growing part of the comics audience, and many are cosplayers, those who attend Comic Con dressed (in costume) as their favorite characters. Unfortunately, some female cosplayers have been targets of harassment. There were eight reported cases this year, half as many as in 2013.

At the ICv2 conference immediately before the con, Christine Bohle, a representative from the online ticketing service Eventbrite, showed the results of an Eventbrite survey of attendees of all types of conventions. It revealed that 45 percent are women, with a 50/50 gender split for those under 30.

While women and people of color still made up only a tiny minority of the show's official participants, the panel schedule was a different story. Numerous events focused on various aspects of diversity, including LGBTQ comics, strong female characters, and sexual harassment issues.



Now, for five very cool things at New York Comic Con 2014:

1. Retro Wonder Woman Is Back!

DC announced a digital-first comic, *Wonder Woman '77*, based on the 1970s TV show that starred Lynda Carter in the title role.

2. Manga Stays Strong

At the ICv2 gathering, ICv2 CEO Milton Griep presented a white paper on the state of the industry. It showed that manga sales were up eight percent last year and that manga now comprises about 19 percent of all graphic novel sales.

3. Science Takes Center Stage

Bill Nye the Science Guy and xkcd webcomic creator Randall Munroe had a delightfully nerdy conversation spinning off the questions that Munroe answers in his new book, *What If: Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions*. There are few people who are more articulate—and funny—about science than these two individuals.

4. Librarians WEIGH IN ON Stealth Challenges

At the "Saving Indecent Comics" panel, sponsored by the American Library Association and led by teen librarian Tom Maluck, librarians discussed their personal experiences with book challenges.

5. Books!

Publishers were out on the floor debuting new titles and showing off future releases.

U.S. history listed among its initial projects for review.

The document reads:

Materials should promote citizenship, patriotism, essentials, and benefits of the enterprise system, respect for authority, and respect for individual rights. Materials should not encourage or condone civil disorder, social strife, or disregard of the law. Instructional materials should present positive aspects of the United States and its heritage.

Students launched protests almost immediately after hearing about the proposal on September 22, per the *Denver Post*, walking out of classrooms—and protests have continued since.

Changing the framework of a class may be under the purview of the Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE). However, the College Board, which oversees AP guidelines, has stated that the proposed changes from the JCBE would strip Jefferson County's AP U.S. history class of its AP certification.

According to JCEA's Ford, on Oc-

tober 2, Jeffco students sat in on a school board meeting at which its members amended and approved its original proposal, expanding its curriculum review board to a total of 12 members, including two students. At a protest rally on October 11, students passed around a clipboard gathering signatures for a school board recall, said the *Denver Post*.

"I think kids need to see all sides," said Chatfield High School math teacher Alma Moore. "I've talked to several of our AP history teachers and other AP history teachers in the district, and they all say [this review committee] is ridiculous."

CT Maker Space Expands with Robots and More

Connecticut's Westport Library this month has drawn attention from media outlets around the globe, thanks to the acquisition of a pair of fully programmable NAO Evolution robots—named Vincent and Nancy—from Paris-based Aldebaran Ro-

botics. The new robots, which can be programmed to walk, dance, and talk using the Python programming language, will be used in leveled coding classes that will become part of Westport's growing Maker space program.

Funding for the robots—which retail for \$8,000 apiece—was provided by a family foundation that "wanted to fund really exciting projects," Maxine Bleiweis, executive director for Westport Library, told *Hotline*. The buzz indicates that the robots have already accomplished at least part of that goal. But setting aside their cute, tiny humanoid appearance, Vincent and Nancy are much more than a PR stunt. The robots represent the latest serious investment of time and funding that Westport has been devoting to hands-on learning efforts.

Bleiweis later added that Maker spaces are in line with modern views on education. Also, if a library is hoping to get kids and teens interested in coding, it's tough to imagine a better hook than a programmable talking robot that can dance.

Some patrons may be disappointed that the devices "can't be available and live on the floor all the time," said Bill Derry, Westport's director of innovation. The robots are delicate, precision machines, and their joints could potentially lead to hand injuries if children were allowed to play with them unsupervised.

However, there will be regularly scheduled viewing times when people can see Vincent and Nancy in action, and the robots will be displayed in a "house" where they'll be available for viewing at any time, with a nearby touch screen monitor showing videos of the robots.

Among public libraries, Westport was one of the earliest adopters of the Maker space movement, hosting its first Mini Maker Faire in April 2012, which drew 2,200 visitors. In July 2012, the library followed up by in-

People

Carolyn Ashcraft, State Librarian for Arkansas, received the Distinguished Service Award by the Arkansas Library Association. She has worked in the field for more than 30 years.

Katherine Boden was promoted to Emerging Technologies Librarian at Cranston Public Library, RI. She previously held the grant-funded position of Digital Learning Team Leader at the library.

Beth Daly announced her retirement as Office Assistant at Iowa City Public Library, effective November 14. She has been with the library for 33 years.

William T. DeWitt III was appointed Director of Marion County Library, SC. He was previ-

ously Information Technology Administrator at the Florence County Library System, SC.

Jeffrey A. Knapp was named Foster Communications Librarian at Pennsylvania State University Libraries, University Park. He was previously Coordinator of Instruction at Robert E. Eiche Library, Altoona, PA.

Tim Rogers was named Executive Director, Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, following the retirement of **Donna Morris**. Rogers is currently Executive Director of NC Live.

The New Rochelle Public Library, NY, Board of Trustees inducted two new members: **Charles F. Burke Jr.**, Executive Director of Morgan Stanley, and **Damon R. Maher**, a partner in the law firm of Levy and Maher.

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stalling a large, open structure outfitted with workbenches and 3-D printers in a prominent location of its great hall. A “Maker in Residence” program, featuring extended programs led by local experts, was launched shortly afterward.

In September 2013, Westport was awarded a grant of almost \$250,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for its project “Maker-Space 2.0: Retinkering Libraries.” Derry estimates that in less than three years, at least ten actual products have been prototyped using the Maker space’s five 3-D printers.

And in a sign of how Westport is working to appeal to users with a broad range of skill sets, a local biomedical engineer recently encouraged Westport to purchase a \$1,000 educational license for SolidWorks computer-aided design (CAD) software. Classes on the software have attracted a new contingent of trained engineers into the library and the Maker space.

Separately, the software is also being used to facilitate collaboration. Derry said that a former engineer with expertise in SolidWorks was introduced to a local inventor who had created a rough prototype of a tool to fix sockets on roof gutters. The engineer helped refine the prototype through SolidWorks, and then a 3-D printer helped to fabricate the new tool.

“Things like that are beginning to happen,” Derry said. “Someone’s idea gets elevated in a very short time, and they create a relationship.”

Newbery Honoree Zilpha Keatley Snyder Dies at 87

Three-time Newbery Honoree Zilpha Keatley Snyder died on October 8. She was 87.

Beloved in the world of children’s literature, Snyder received her Newbery Honors for *The Egypt Game* (1967), *The Headless Cupid* (1972),

Princeton University Library, NJ, has acquired the papers of Nobel Prize–winning author Toni Morrison. To mark the event, the library mounted an exhibit of selected manuscripts, corrected proofs, and first editions of her work.

The Friends of the Rye Public Library, NH, received the 2014 Sue Palmatier Award for Outstanding Support by A “Friends of the Library” Group by the New Hampshire Library Trustees Association. Friends president Katie Jaffarian accepted the award on behalf of the group.

Oxford University Press has partnered with the **Qatar National Library** to give residents of the country access to more than 9,000 monographs. The titles will be available free of charge.

MIT Libraries, Cambridge, MA, joined **Borrow Direct**, a cooperative association of aca-

demic and research libraries. Students and staff can now borrow materials from participating universities, including several Ivy League institutions.

Grand Valley State University Libraries (GVSUL), Grand Rapids, MI, received the 2014 State Librarian’s Excellence Award for customer service. The honor was presented by the Library of Michigan Foundation and the Library of Michigan. (For more on GVSUL, see *Branching Out*, p. 4.)

Hollings Library at the **University of South Carolina**, Columbia, acquired the archive of author Elmore Leonard (1925–2013). The collection includes drafts of his novels and his desk, along with appointment books, research files, letters, photographs, awards, and more.

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and *The Witches of Worm* (1972), vivid, evocative, and dark works for middle-grade readers. One of her earliest titles, *The Egypt Game*, focuses on the intense fantasy life of a group of children who reenact ancient Egyptian practices and rituals in an empty lot, while in the background a child murderer lurks.

Snyder was born in Lomora, CA, in 1927 and spent her childhood surrounded by animals. An imaginative child, she often anthropomorphized the world around her, giving personalities and lives to plants, animals, and spirits. Books, too, were an integral part of Snyder’s world. She learned to read at age four, and feeling like an outcast growing up, she often took solace in the printed word.

After graduating Whittier College, CA, in 1948, she was still committed to her goal of becoming a writer, but it was an ambition she put on hold, instead working as a teacher for the next nine years in Berkeley, CA.

In the early 1960s, however, with

her children in school, Snyder rekindled her dream of writing. Though she had always assumed she would write for adults, she realized that her years of teaching had given her an appreciation for the emotional life of children, especially at ages ten and 11. She made her debut in 1964 with *Season of Ponies*, a novel about a lonely young girl who encounters a herd of mysterious and magical horses, launching a long and storied career that would last decades.

Though best known for her mysteries, Snyder branched out into historical fiction, sf, and YA, publishing more than 40 books in total. Though her output dropped off in more recent years, she still continued to produce. Her novels made their mark, garnering her both praise and criticism—*The Headless Cupid* appeared on the American Library Association’s list of the 100 most frequently challenged books for 1990–2000 because of its themes of witchcraft.

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Transforming Libraries, Engaging Communities

During this engaging series we'll discuss why User Experience (UX) matters for libraries, share some practical user research approaches, and offer helpful tips on design thinking. We will also focus on three key areas where UX design can help transform your library and engage your community.



Moderated by **Aaron Schmidt**
Principal, Influx Library User Experience
and LJ columnist (*The User Experience*)

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Creating Usable and Useful Websites

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