

## National Library Services Trends

### NLST – UA1: Crossing the Digital Divide

Patrons face barriers to information and services they seek in several ways including the digital divide. "While the digital divide is not new, what is new is that public libraries increasingly are becoming the place of both first...and last resort to address the digital divide."<sup>1</sup> With an increasing reliance on the library to provide technology-based services and an increasing spectrum of digital literacy needs, the library becomes integral to the community while facing unique challenges.

- Digital Content: Though libraries provide several means of access (free Internet/WiFi, lending mobile devices, eBook readers, etc.), access to content may not always be in the library's control. Though eBook usage has increased, libraries face limited access because of publisher restrictions.<sup>2</sup>
- Inclusion: Addressing the digital divide through mobile services creates new opportunities, but members of our public who do not currently use the library may not be aware of these services, especially persons who already have access to technology. How do we create library users? How do we build a digital community? We have to identify stakeholders to create opportunity.<sup>3</sup>
- Connectivity: Providing high speed Internet and adequate computers remains essential as services are becoming more and more solely available online. The Public Library Funding & Technology Access Study, 2010-2011, found that 70% of libraries had an increase in computer usage, but 76% did not have enough computers with 45% reporting insufficient Internet speed.<sup>4</sup>

### Implications for JCPL

- Increasing bandwidth may be needed to keep up with the increasing demands.
- Employ further marketing strategies of our digital efforts to educate users and non-users.
- Computer classes could be offered off-site.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles McClure, *A New Digital Divide*, Libraries Connect Communities, <http://www.ors.ala.org/libconnect/2011/12/13/a-new-digital-divide/>

<sup>2</sup> "Executive Summary", American Library Association, April 7, 2012.

<http://www.ala.org/news/mediapresscenter/americaslibraries/soal2012/executive-summary>

<sup>3</sup> "Building Digital Communities: New Resource to Help Communities Bridge the Digital Divide." *Targeted News Service* [TNS] 25 Mar. 2012. *Infotrac Newsstand*. Web. 28 Nov. 2012.

<sup>4</sup> "Public Libraries", American Library Association, April 7, 2012.

<http://www.ala.org/news/mediapresscenter/americaslibraries/soal2012/public-libraries>

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – UA2: Offering Early Literacy Education for Non-users**

In a 2000 study, kindergarten teachers reported that 40% of kindergarteners in Indiana are unprepared for the demands of kindergarten.<sup>5</sup> Recent research suggests this holds true over a decade later. In fact, Franklin schools reported that 63% of kindergarteners were unprepared to start the 2012-2013 school year.<sup>6</sup>

Considering 47% of Indiana children between the ages of 3-5 are not enrolled in preschool, full-day kindergarten is a challenging new experience for many students.<sup>7</sup> Once established, gaps in school-readiness skills are difficult to overcome, leading to future gaps in achievement. Overcoming this gap depends on educating all parents that school-readiness begins at birth.

Some libraries are combating these statistics by connecting with families who are most in need of early literacy education.<sup>8</sup> In many instances, these are families who are not visiting the library already and do not understand the services available. This can mean taking the library “to the street” and conducting early literacy training sessions for parents in many places:

- Social services office (including WIC)
- Foster care programs
- Hospitals
- Outreach to teen parents
- Daycares

### **Implications for JCPL**

- Creating partnerships with community organizations who have a shared interest in early childhood education.
- Offering early literacy classes off-site.

## **National Library Services Trends**

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<sup>5</sup> “Preparing Children for Kindergarten: Whole Class Instruction” Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ecc/wholeclass.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> “What Do You Know: Many Incoming Kindergarteners Aren’t Ready for Class” Daily Journal, January 16, 2013

<sup>7</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Data Center Kids Count, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx?ind=5109>

<sup>8</sup> “Ready to Read Corps: Taking Every Child Ready to Read to the Streets” ALSC Institute session, Indianapolis, IN 2012

## **NLST – UA3: Reorganizing Collections for Improved Accessibility**

Children are generally drawn to certain subjects such as construction, dinosaurs, princesses, and animals. Traditionally; however, library picture book collections are organized alphabetically by the author's last name. While this is beneficial to those searching for particular, well-known authors, many other books can become lost in the shuffle associated with a subject term or keyword search. According to one survey, 42% of library users "said they could NOT find materials easily in the Picture Book area."<sup>9</sup> To combat this problem, many libraries are reorganizing their picture book collections according to broad subject categories or "neighborhoods."<sup>10</sup>

Libraries that switch to this neighborhood system of organization report many benefits, including increased circulation and ease of use for children and caregivers.<sup>11</sup> It may also help promote development of children's own categorization skills, which "is a key step in intellectual development."<sup>12</sup>

### **Implications for JCPL**

- JCPL would need to research the pros/cons of creating any subject-based organizational schemes.
- Physical layout and shelving logistics would need to be explored.
- A move in this direction would require a decision on subject categories to be used as well as re-labeling and updating records in Sirsi.

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<sup>9</sup> Caserotti, Gretchen. "Kid Lit ReOrg." SlideShare. June 28, 2012. Accessed December 3, 2012. <http://www.slideshare.net/gcaserotti/>

<sup>10</sup> Koester, Amy. "Welcome to the Neighborhood(s)." *The Show Me Librarian*. October 22, 2012. Accessed December 3, 2012. <http://showmelibrarian.blogspot.com/2012/10/welcome-to-neighborhoods.html>

<sup>11</sup> *MCLS Kids wiki*. "Shelving Picture Books," wiki article. Accessed December 3, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Koester, Amy. "#ala2012: Rethinking Your Picture Book Shelves." *The Show Me Librarian*. June 24, 2012.

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – UA4: Working with Patrons with Blocked or Barred Accounts**

One of the core values of public libraries is the right to equal access to library materials. However, patrons commonly lose this right through fines and fees accrued from lost, damaged, or overdue materials. Patrons who do not have the money to pay the fines may feel guilty or embarrassed, and often do not come back to the library. Children are at the mercy of their parents in returning materials and paying fines and often times will find themselves with large fines leftover from their childhood when they return to the library years later.

The benefits of working with patrons with large fines and fees include:

- Re-engaging users that have been lost through accumulated fines and fees.
- The return of missing library materials. In a time of budget-constraint, amnesty programs can be a way to get high-demand items returned.

Many public libraries have recently offered amnesty programs to their patrons due to the current economic conditions. Forgiveness programs can take many different shapes:

- “Read Down Your Fine” programs for youth.<sup>13</sup>
- One day Amnesty Day in order to promote the return of overdue materials.<sup>14</sup>
- Food drives: Bring in canned goods for forgiveness of overdue fines.

### **Implications for JCPL**

- JCPL would need to explore the impact on revenue.
- Drives may reinforce community partnerships (e.g. a local food bank).
- JCPL would need to consider logistics including frequency (once a year?) and age groups for forgiveness.
- Drive may foster a sense of goodwill in the community as well as garner positive publicity.

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<sup>13</sup> “New York Public Library Grants Amnesty to 143K Kids with Outstanding Fines to Get Them Reading Again”, New York Daily News, July 25, 2011

<sup>14</sup> “Chicago Public Library to Waive Overdue Fines in First Amnesty Program in Decades”, Chicago Sun-Times, August 6, 2012

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – UA5: Reaching Out to New Residents**

As a library's service population grows, the number of potential patrons needing information about library services also grows. Increasingly, libraries are realizing the importance of targeted marketing campaigns directed at new residents coming to their area. In response to data showing high population growth in their 2022 Project, the Mid-Hudson Library System piloted a series of initiatives aimed at new residents. These included a direct marketing campaign, a library card survey, and programs aimed at new residents and other target groups with the goal of attracting residents to the library. One of the most successful components of the project was the creation of "New Resident Resource Kits", which contained information about the library and other local businesses and services.<sup>15</sup>

### **Implications for JCPL**

- JCPL should explore options on getting library information to new residents (does anyone provide a Welcome Wagon in our communities?)
- JCPL could partner with local realtors to provide "New Resident Resource Kits" about the library.
- Use library resources to identify new residents and proactively reach out to them.

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<sup>15</sup> "Across the Board: Maximizing Your Library's Efforts." December 2004. Accessed December 4, 2012. <http://midhudson.org/trustee/ATB/DEC04.pdf>

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – UA6: Reaching Out to Immigrants**

Because many new residents may be immigrants from other countries, libraries must deliver information to a base that may include many different cultures and languages. Reaching immigrant populations can be difficult because of the language-barrier. Additionally, some cultures do not have an understanding of the American public library system. Meeting these users in places they feel comfortable is a crucial part of connecting with resident families.

The Queens Library in New York is attempting to broaden their services to immigrant populations by offering programming in “as many languages as possible” and focusing programs on three key areas that are crucial to a wide range of new immigrants: health information, financial literacy, and immigrant integration.<sup>16</sup>

### **Implications for JCPL**

- Research demographic information on different ethnicities in Johnson County.
- Continue to host programs in conjunction with International Literacy Month.
- JCPL should continue marketing strategies by the Adult Learning Center to educate immigrant users on the library and possible services.
- Outreach to assimilated immigrants to promote library services.

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<sup>16</sup> “Reaching Immigrant Populations: More Ideas from the PLA Conference.” Texas State Library. March 21, 2012. Accessed December 4, 2012. <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/teal/?p=1323>

## National Library Services Trends

### NLST – UA7: Increasing Participation in Community Events

In many communities, a large portion of the library's service population may never venture inside the library building. Because of this, libraries are increasingly searching for ways to promote and demonstrate library services, as well as providing necessary topical information, in places where the community is already gathering. In addition, libraries are creating new events in conjunction with other community agencies in order to attract potential patrons. These partnerships and events can take many forms, including:

- Book or storytelling festivals<sup>17</sup>
- Health fairs<sup>18</sup>
- Community gardens<sup>19</sup>
- Community yard sales<sup>20</sup>

These events, along with traditional library outreach services, can help expand the library's role as a community service, as well as introduce new users to library resources and broaden the visibility of the library in the community. The ALA's Public Programs Office has also stated that "more libraries than ever are reporting that successful collaborations are central to their planning and no longer an afterthought."<sup>21</sup>

### Implications for JCPL

- JCPL must continue to be aware of community events. Staff may attend events with relevant materials. (For example: for an event with the Humane Society, take materials related to pet ownership.)
- JCPL may want to sponsor our own parking lot event and invite other organizations.

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<sup>17</sup> Louch-Waters, Marge. "I Want to Tell You a Story." *Tiny Tips for Library Fun*. September 9, 2012. Accessed December 6, 2012. <http://tinytipsforlibraryfun.blogspot.com/2012/09/i-want-to-tell-you-story.html>

<sup>18</sup> "Lunch Hour Health Fair Nov 7." Albany Public Library. Accessed December 6, 2012. <http://www.albanypubliclibrary.org/news/?p=856>

<sup>19</sup> "The Library's Community Garden." Round Top Family Library. Accessed December 6, 2012. [http://ilovetoread.org/community\\_garden.html](http://ilovetoread.org/community_garden.html)

<sup>20</sup> "Community Garage Sale of the Year!" Hamburg Township Library. Spring 2012. Accessed December 6, 2012. <http://www.hamburglibrary.org/About/newsletters/Spring2012.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Watkins, Chris. "No Library is an Island: Community Collaborations." *Programming Librarian*. Accessed December 6, 2012.

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – UA8: Contrasting Library Use by Economic Status**

Public libraries have a long-standing tradition of support to lower-income families, whether it is helping them cross the digital divide or finding resources needed for recreation or research. While this continues to be true, recent research shows that households in a higher-income bracket and households with higher education levels are using the library at high rates.

According to a nation-wide December 2011 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, 50% of people in a household making less than \$30,000 report owning a library card.<sup>22</sup> 65% of people in households making \$75,000+ say the same. The discrepancy continues for income level, with 50% of high school graduates owning a library card compared to 72% who have graduated from college.

Library use also shows a small discrepancy depending on income and education level. The number of people who reported using the library in the past year is as follows:

- 51% of people in households making less than \$30,000
- 57% of people in households making more than \$75,000
- 43% of people with no high school diploma
- 63% of college graduates

Regardless of the discrepancies, the majority of people of all socio-economic statuses continue to value the public library. 90% of those making less than \$30,000 see the library as somewhat or very important to their communities. 91% of households making \$75,000 feel the same.<sup>23</sup>

### **Implications for JCPL**

- If higher income housing moves into the district, high quality library services will be expected, including technology and e-reading abilities.
- Services, materials, and technology will continue to be offered to people of all socio-economic levels.
- Growth opportunities exist among lower-income users; expanded outreach and marketing in lower-income areas, such as apartment complexes, may be called for.

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<sup>22</sup> "Libraries, Patrons, and E-books" June 22, 2012, Pew Internet and American Life Project [http://libraries.pewinternet.org/files/legacy-pdf/PIP\\_Libraries\\_and\\_Ebook\\_Patrons%206.22.12.pdf](http://libraries.pewinternet.org/files/legacy-pdf/PIP_Libraries_and_Ebook_Patrons%206.22.12.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> "Library services in the digital age" January 22, 2013, Pew Internet and American Life Project [http://libraries.pewinternet.org/files/legacy-pdf/PIP\\_Library%20services\\_Report\\_012213.pdf](http://libraries.pewinternet.org/files/legacy-pdf/PIP_Library%20services_Report_012213.pdf)