

Collaborative, Creative, Participative: Trends in Public Library Innovation

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Abstract

Innovation in public libraries has been concentrated in the areas of participation, making & creating, learning, new outreach and partnerships. These trends represent the emerging areas of strategic focus for public libraries and are strongly influencing the development of library services towards a model that is collaborative, creative and participative, and that places the library at the centre of its user's daily lives. This article provides an overview of these trends, with examples of how they are manifesting in library services, programming and strategy.

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Public Library Innovation

Innovation is the process of generating and implementing new ideas and changes, as well as the application of existing methods, resources and technology in new and different ways. Innovation is viewed as both a positive and critical force in the success of organisations, "innovation matters – now more than ever" (Crainer and Dearlove 2014). Organisations that have the ability to innovate and foster a culture of innovation have an advantage over their competitors, "the rewards of successful innovation can be exponential ..." and at the same time, "... businesses that fail to innovate risk being rendered obsolete ..." (Simms 2015). Many of the benefits that businesses can

realise through innovative practices can be applied to the library environment, and the ability to innovate can be seen as a crucial skill for today's public library services.

Public libraries have a strong tradition of innovation, transforming their services in response to changing environments, external pressures and user expectations. Innovation occurs across a broad spectrum of library services. These include the physical library environment, lifelong learning, community engagement, events and collections. Whilst individual instances of innovative programming and services can be found for almost every aspect of modern library services, the majority reflect one or more of five trends: participation, making & creating, learning, new outreach and partnerships. The identification of these trends is the result of a literature review of innovative public library activities and services conducted by the author. As part of the review process, the author recognised that the activities examined shared common features in the type of activity described, the expected outcome of the activity, and the need the activity was attempting to address. The author then identified five trends the activities aligned with based on these commonalities. The identification of the trends and the classification of library activities into these trends are the author's own work, however, the trends describe concepts and utilise terminology already present and established in the literature.

These trends represent the emerging areas of strategic focus for public libraries. It is in these areas that library industry leaders are active in, dedicating time and resources to exploring services that align with these trends. They present public libraries with the opportunity to build on existing services to develop new and innovative service ideas. These trends are influencing libraries in a number of ways, in the development of makerspaces and the shift to supporting creative skills, in the increase in projects leveraging the input of users such as participatory planning of library services, in the active support of learning initiatives including peer-to-peer learning opportunities, in the expanding role of delivering services through partnerships and collaboration, and in the increase in delivering services outside of library buildings. These trends may have arisen as part of a broader

cultural shift which has created user demand that libraries are moving to meet. Others are opportunities created through technological change, enabling the repositioning of services or the ability for libraries to take on new roles.

Innovation is necessary to reimagine libraries' relationships with communities and achieve library goals of being valued and integral parts of users' daily lives. The desire for improved community engagement is a crucial driver for library innovation, and this can be seen in all of the trends. In participation, libraries utilise participatory cultures to engage with users, and offer participatory planning opportunities as a meaningful way of involving community members in library decision-making. In making & creating and learning, libraries foster engagement within the community by offering facilities and programmes for the sharing of knowledge between community members. In new outreach, libraries seek ways of engaging with communities in spaces outside of library buildings. In partnerships, libraries make connections with community organisations, businesses and individuals in order to collaboratively provide services. In all the trends libraries can be seen utilising innovative thinking and approaches in order to meet their community engagement goals.

The examples presented with each trend were identified as part of the literature review. It focussed primarily on trade publications, such as library association journals, as well as public library news magazines and library science academic journals. Websites of specific library services that were identified as industry leaders were also included. Effort was made to review publications from a range of different countries; however, the author encountered factors that contributed to a bias in the examples presented. These were:

- Limited to sources in English or easily translatable into English, establishing a bias towards English-speaking countries.
- Countries like the United States, United Kingdom and Australia made up the majority of the available professional literature, lending a bias.

- High levels of professional activity in certain countries resulted in a higher quantity of articles and an increased amount of discussion of library activities.
- Countries in which libraries can sustain high levels of innovation are represented more than others. These usually have established library networks that are well-supported and funded.

These factors have contributed to the inclusion of more examples of innovation presented from the United States, and Western and Northern European library services.

The five trends of participation, making & creating, learning, new outreach and partnerships are strongly influencing the development of library services and as a whole form a future direction for public libraries. An outline of each trend, and examples of how it is manifesting in library programming, follows.

Participation

The trend of participation is reflected in concepts such as library 2.0 (Nguyen, Partridge, and Edwards 2012), the participatory library, and the library as conversation (Lankes, Silverstein, and Nicholson 2007). These concepts seek to describe current and future models for libraries, and all identify participation as an integral characteristic of library service models of the future. These concepts are underpinned by the broader social trend of participatory culture. Jenkins *et al* defines a participatory culture as one where (2009, 7),

- there are low barriers to artistic engagement and civic engagement,
- strong support exists for creating and sharing creations,
- some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced participants pass along knowledge to novices,
- members believe their contributions matter,

- members feel some degree of social connection with one another.

Participatory cultures are facilitated by increased access to the internet and often focus on various digital media, such as games, blogs, videos and fan fiction, as well as social media sites and collaborative websites such as Wikipedia. These participatory cultures provide opportunities for libraries in connecting with a wider demographic, engaging with their communities in new and different ways, and increasing promotion of the library and its services.

One way in which libraries have explored connecting with existing participatory cultures is programming based around digital media and digital media creation, such as gaming and video production. An example are programmes run by Darien Library, U.S., and North Melbourne Library, Australia, that leveraged the participatory culture of the game Minecraft. Minecraft, a game based on building and creating, has a wide fan base, with players creating various media about the game, such as YouTube videos, game mods, and fan fiction. Darien Library hosts a county-wide Minecraft server for eight to 17 year olds, and run regular Minecraft events (Darien Library 2016). North Melbourne Library's Minecraft Gaming Day challenged participants to build a virtual library, with North Melbourne noting the active participation of children, and the collaborative way they interacted with other participants (Cilauro 2015). North Melbourne's use of an advisory group of six Minecraft players to help develop the event provides an additional example of the participation trend, with the use of collaborative and participatory exercises to develop library events, services and buildings on the rise.

These exercises, which include participatory budgeting, planning and design, are part of the shift towards the participatory library model, where libraries re-position themselves as collaborators and facilitators. Participatory planning opportunities enable libraries to better reflect the needs of their community by involving the public in decision-making processes. For example, Helsinki Public Library has offered multiple participatory planning opportunities to the residents of Helsinki as it

constructs its new central library, Oodi, due to open in December 2018. These opportunities included participatory budgeting, which allowed users to select four pilot programmes that would receive a portion of available funding, a community development pilot project 'Friends of the Central Library' in which a group of 28 'user developers' input into library design, events and service functionality, an open naming competition to name the new library, and the Dream! campaign which gathered over 2,300 design ideas (Helsinki Library 2018). Helsinki states that,

"Oodi has been designed together with the city's residents so that it can best correspond with the wishes and needs that library users have" (Helsinki Library 2018).

Helsinki has also involved the community in the building process by providing a live camera feed of the construction site on their website, as well as posting regular updates on the new library's design and planning.

The trend of participation is also demonstrated by libraries' growing involvement in open data initiatives. The Open Data Handbook defines open data as,

"data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone – subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and sharealike." (Open Knowledge International 2016)

The open data movement encourages organisations to make data available to the public for viewing, sharing and re-use. Libraries recognise and share many guiding principles with the open data movement, such as freedom of information, transparency, equality and accessibility. Additionally, open data supports participatory cultures, with programmers and developers able to freely use open data to create new software and applications. Libraries can contribute to the open data movement in a number of ways, assisting users to locate appropriate open data, partnering with organisations to publish open data, making available their own open data, and supporting development of the digital skills needed to re-use and create applications for open data.

Newcastle Libraries, U.K., have supported open data by making library data available under an open licence, facilitating a series of workshops as part of their Commons are Forever project where users create new artworks using open data, and running hackathons, events where users learn about open data and are able to work on their own data projects (Charillon and Burton 2017). Edmonton Public Library, Canada, hosted a hackathon in 2014 as part of International Open Data Day (Carruthers 2014). During the event, participants worked on open data projects and learned more about data provided by the City of Edmonton (Carruthers 2014). Edmonton noted that behaviours and skills that align with values and goals of public libraries were fostered by the hackathon, such as collective problem-solving, information sharing and collaboration (Carruthers 2014). These are also features of participatory cultures. Palo Alto Library, U.S., and Chicago Public Library, U.S., are amongst the libraries providing open library data such as circulation figures, visits, and computer use on their City's open data platforms. Palo Alto provides data through a dashboard on the City of Palo Alto's open data portal, with programming, such as hackathons, used to enhance the data (Enis 2013). Chicago provides current year to date library statistics on its library website, as well as additional datasets on the City of Chicago's open data portal.

Making & Creating

Libraries are investing in the spaces and equipment for making, and proactively encouraging their communities to develop creative and making skills. These efforts reflect an underlying shift in the role of the public library, from being a content provider that encourages consumption, to a content producer that fosters creation. This shift has been significantly influenced by maker culture, and the associated maker movement. Maker culture is a DIY culture that emphasises creativity, experimentation and innovation, with a focus on technology. It empowers the individual to create and make, utilising an informal collaborative network for ideas and skills sharing. Maker culture is

strongly aligned with new technologies and software, with programming, electronics, robotics and design all core interest areas of the maker movement.

Makerspaces, also known as hackerspaces, provide a place for makers to create, experiment and test ideas whilst in an environment that connects them to other makers, facilitating the sharing and learning of skills and knowledge. Makerspaces began appearing over a decade ago, with members gaining access to equipment and facilities to work on their personal maker projects. In 2003, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Centre for Bits and Atoms began to implement Fab Labs, fabrication laboratories which provide access to tools such as laser cutters and 3D printers (Enis 2015). With over 500 Fab Labs worldwide, the network is a platform for learning and innovation, with the Centre for Bits and Atoms considering it a "distributed laboratory for research and invention" (Fab Foundation 2016). It wasn't long before libraries began to see opportunities in the maker movement, and specifically in makerspaces, to further their own strategic plans. In particular, libraries saw makerspaces as ideal vehicles to support their goals in lifelong learning, digital literacy and community engagement. With the makerspace emphasis on technology, some libraries saw makerspaces as a means to engage with younger adults, a demographic which has traditionally challenged public libraries. By providing free and open public space for people to work on creative projects, libraries saw opportunities to foster socialisation and strengthen community ties. Over the past decade, makerspaces have proliferated in libraries, and are frequently included in new library building projects.

Makerspaces in libraries can take many different forms. Most, however, provide equipment for fabrication such as laser cutters, 3D printers and milling machines, as well as software for graphic design, video production, animation and other digital media. Also commonly provided are simple programming tools such as Scratch and Python, as well as equipment to build and experiment with basic electronics and computers, such as Arduino, Squishy Circuits and Raspberry Pi. Fayetteville

Free Library, the first public library in the U.S. to provide a publicly accessible makerspace, opened their Fab Lab in 2011 (Social spaces 2015). It provides tools such as 3D printers, laser and vinyl cutters, sewing machines and hand tools as well as software such as SketchUp, Blender and Inkscape (Fayetteville Free Library 2016a). The Fab Lab supports a wide range of programmes and clubs, including knitting, robotics and electronics clubs (Fayetteville Free Library 2016b). Fayetteville have also expanded their makerspace offering with the Creation Lab, a space for digital media creation with podcast and video production equipment, and Little Makers, a making area and programme for children (Fayetteville Free Library 2016c, 2016d).

Libraries are also fostering making and creating by examining their existing business through the lens of maker culture. One example of this is public library support for the publishing and printing of books. Technology has made this achievable, with e-books and print-on-demand services presenting a low-cost and relatively quick and simple method of publishing. Espresso Book Machines, which can be used to print-on-demand patrons' own works, have been incorporated into makerspaces at Edmonton Public Library and the District of Columbia Public Library, U.S. Seattle Public Library, U.S., partnered with e-book self-publishing platform Smashwords, allowing library patrons to upload their work to the Smashwords platform, allowing patrons to gain exposure for their writing as well as enabling Seattle to purchase the book for their e-book collection (Scardilli 2015). Participation by libraries in events like National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) reinforces libraries' role as a partner in creating and making. Books have also been incorporated into maker programmes for children, supporting basic literacy and teaching children storytelling skills in interactive and craft-based sessions. Public libraries in Western Australia, including City of Armadale Public Library, run hot-dog book making programmes where children are able to make their own book using a folded sheet of paper and a photocopier. Book making sessions using craft materials have also been featured in Fayetteville Free Library's Little Makers programme, where children make their own book whilst learning about storytelling (Fayetteville Free Library 2016d).

Learning

Libraries are developing their role as an accessible and informal learning place for the community, providing lifelong learning and educational programming. Libraries are taking a more active role in informing and educating the community, and this trend sees libraries building upon their provision of text resources for learning, and moving to directly facilitating learning. As free and open public space that is unthreatening and neutral, public libraries are a good fit for offering learning opportunities. The trend of learning can be seen in the creation of informal learning spaces like makerspaces, the development of programmes for STEM subjects, and a focus on skills such as digital literacy and media literacy. These efforts can often align with civic goals of improving employment prospects and community building.

The concept of participatory learning is a core component of new library-based learning initiatives.

Participatory learning is defined by Project New Media Literacies as characterised by,

- heightened motivation and new forms of engagement through meaningful play and experimentation,
- an integrated learning system where connections between home, school, community and world are enabled and encouraged,
- co-learning where educators and students pool their skills and knowledge, and share in the tasks of teaching and learning,
- learning that feels relevant to students' identities and interests,
- opportunities for creating and solving problems using a variety of media, tools and practices (2016).

Participatory learning incorporates learning by doing and learning by engaging people's interests and passions. It is particularly suitable for informal and collaborative learning environments, such as can

be facilitated by libraries. The maker movement, and peer-to-peer learning conducted through makerspaces and maker programming, is a good example of participatory learning, linking the three trends of making & creating, learning and participation. Libraries that have makerspaces and related programmes are therefore already fostering participatory learning, and the ability of makerspaces to teach new skills, particularly digital literacy skills, is one of the motivations for providing these spaces. Through its relationship with participatory cultures, participatory learning is also strongly aligned with science and technology subjects, and has a focus on experimentation, creativity and innovation.

Libraries are emphasising learning programming for digital skills and STEM. STEM is an abbreviation for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and was initially a term used to reference jobs in these sectors. The term found its way into the education industry as a response to the need to grow skills for these sectors, and STEM education is incorporated into school curriculums in the U.S., and has begun to be adopted by other institutions concerned with learning (Hopwood 2012). STEM's incorporation into library programming has been influenced by the technology-driven maker movement, and the need in the community for increased competency with digital skills. Examples of STEM learning are coding clubs for children, programming that teaches basic computer and electronics skills utilising tools such as Raspberry Pi and Arduino kits, and science based makerspaces such as the BioTech Lab at San Diego Public Library, U.S. Additionally, simple STEM-based craft activities, and kits supporting numeracy, mathematics and science skills, are increasingly being added to young children's programming.

The focus on digital literacy initiatives for children has led libraries to investigate the role of new media and its potential to supplement early learning programmes. As new media becomes increasingly prevalent in young children's lives, libraries are investigating appropriate applications for new media as well as their role in providing information about new media use. Campbell,

Haines, Koester and Stoltz (2015) argue library staff have an important role as media mentors, with opportunities to share knowledge about recommended media use, model positive engagement with digital media to children and caregivers, and support use of digital media through programming. As media mentors library staff can support digital media use for children in ways that are positive, intentional and educational (Campbell, Haines, Koester and Stoltz 2015). In this context, tablet and app technology can be seen as another tool that libraries can use to support early learning.

Christner, Hicks and Koester (2015) provide a variety of ways tablets can be used in traditional storytime programmes, emphasising the importance of providing opportunities for joint media engagement between children and caregivers. Tablets can be used as a way to extend a story with a relevant app-based activity, as a way for the storyteller to facilitate audience participation, as a digital felt board to enhance storytelling, for creating puppet shows, or as an alternative to a book (Christner, Hicks and Koester 2015). One application described is the use of an app called Sock Puppets to pre-record storytime rules which can be played at the start of a storytime session (Christner, Hicks and Koester 2015). Darien Library offer early literacy ipad kits which provide apps that support pre-literacy skills for two to five year olds (Hansen 2015). Darien reviewed and selected appropriate apps according to set criteria, likening the process to creating a booklist (Hansen 2015). The kits include an ipad, app evaluation criteria for caregivers, and information and resources on technology use and digital literacy for children (Hansen 2015).

Another area in which libraries are providing early learning opportunities for children is imaginative play. Imaginative play fosters cognitive thinking, creativity, language and social skills. Libraries are incorporating spaces and resources to encourage play into their children's areas, such as dress-up boxes and construction blocks. Deschutes Public Library, U.S., installed early learning spaces at their branches to encourage play, with resources such as costumes, puppets and play houses (McNeil 2015). Indian Prairie Public Library, U.S., provides a play house that can be turned into a bakery, florist or other places with the use of props (Johnson 2015). Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, and Singer outline

the importance of play to learning, noting concerns that time for play is being given low priority as childhood becomes more structured, and that school increasingly focusses on achievement in assessments (2006). Library support for imaginative play builds on existing programming for children in developing early learning and literacy skills.

Libraries are also expanding structured and formal learning opportunities, particularly for adults. Many of these have a digital skills focus, and are also often targeted at job skills training. For example, Manchester Library's digital skills workshops for unemployed women included courses on programming and web development (Digital skills for women 2013). Offering education in skills like financial literacy is also on the rise, partly in response to economic downturns. The Smart Investing @ Your Library programme, run by many libraries in the U.S. including Queens Library and Jackson District Library, offers grants to educate on money matters and financial responsibility (Brandes 2013). Libraries are also providing opportunities to gain formal qualifications. In 2014, Los Angeles Public Library began to offer access to an online accredited high school diploma course in partnership with Career Online High School (Lepore 2015). In 2015, Carson City Library planned to offer an entry-level certificate in manufacturing (Peet 2015). Public libraries are also investigating the possibilities offered by MOOCs (Massively Open Online Courses). Libraries can provide students with the facilities for their MOOC learning, with access to computers and the internet, as well as hosting MOOCs on library platforms, and creating MOOC content themselves. New York Public Library have partnered with MOOC provider Coursera to host weekly discussion groups to support offered online course content (Enis 2014a), and have also created their own MOOC content in order to promote their resources on Chinese history to learners (Chant 2013a).

New Outreach

Digital technology and the use of mobile devices have enabled libraries to diversify the delivery of their services, exploring services and resources that can be provided external to their buildings.

From the traditional outreach role of libraries, new outreach sees libraries making use of new technologies to take advantage of further outreach opportunities in an effort to better integrate the library with the community, to reach under-served parts of the community, and to take advantage of external opportunities to promote the library service. This trend sees libraries delivering services outside of their network of branches, in a range of mobile, temporary, online or automated spaces. The driver of efforts for new outreach is the desire for libraries to deliver services to the community independent of a library building, in a direct interaction with community members as part of their daily lives. It combines a desire to promote the library with a recognition that a library needs to work outside of its buildings to improve engagement with the community, with library services being where the community is, at the point of need.

As part of this trend, libraries are exploring ways to maintain a presence at community events and in public places. Pop-up libraries are one way in which libraries are doing this. The concept of pop-up libraries comes from the retail sector, which uses pop-up shops as a low-cost way to pique interest about products. The concept of these small, temporary spaces began to migrate from the retail sector in 2009 (Wikipedia contributors 2016). Davis *et al* defines the purpose of a pop-up library as 'literary-based engagement', providing informal access to library resources (2015). Pop-up libraries are attractive to libraries as engagement and promotional tools due to their low cost, simple set-up, and their ability to target particular events or demographics. They can also be experimental, fun and creative, and their temporary and unexpected nature can spark people's interest.

A recent development of the pop-up library concept is book bikes, library services delivered from bicycles. The bicycle is adapted to carry books and a laptop, and may pull a small trailer that is used as a mobile shelf to display library material. A staff member rides the bicycle to community events and other places, providing a small-scale mobile service. Seattle Public Library's Books on Bikes programme began in 2013, with staff visiting local events on bicycles with custom built book trailers (Lee 2013). The bicycles are equipped with mobile wi-fi hotspots, can issue books, sign up new

members, promote e-resources, and are used for pop-up storytimes and information sessions (Lee 2013). In 2013, six book bikes were used to raise interest in Helsinki Library's central library building project, riding through the city over two days and making an appearance at the plot party to celebrate the announcement of the winning building design. Helsinki planned to use two of the bikes on an ongoing basis to promote the library on the streets and at events (Helsinki Library 2013). In their announcement about the book bikes, Helsinki stated,

"The library belongs where all people are, on the streets and in the alleys, wherever people get together, run their errands and live their lives" (Helsinki Library 2013).

Technology enables libraries to circulate resources without the physical and technological infrastructure of their branches. RFID technology and mobile wi-fi hotspots have enabled libraries to provide self-service options such as resource vending machines and smartlockers. These machines provide additional service points, often placed in convenient, public, and high-traffic areas, and make physical collections accessible beyond library building opening hours. Edmonton Public Library have installed book lending machines and returns machines at light rail stations, for example at Century Park station in Edmonton. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, U.S., have installed smartlockers at a community centre and a 24-hour supermarket (Enis 2014b). Patrons request items, which are kept in the smartlocker for three days, and are collected using a library card (Enis 2014b).

New outreach also sees libraries creating a physical presence for their digital collections in public places. QR codes, a type of matrix barcode, are facilitating easy access to digital collections using smartphone technology. QR codes can be scanned from a poster or other physical display, and link the user to a digital resource such as an e-book or library website. Using stands, posters and other tools to create a visual and physical presence for digital collections in non-library settings promotes awareness of the library and its resources to non-library users. Airports, where large numbers of

people spend time waiting each day, offer opportunities for libraries to promote their resources. They have been seen as a perfect place to promote digital collections for libraries like the Kansas State Library, which used QR codes on cards located around Kansas' Manhattan Regional Airport as part of its Books on the Fly initiative, providing on-the-spot access to library e-books (Chant 2013b). Campaigns using QR codes that link to e-audiobook and e-book collections by vendor Bolinda have been used by Brisbane Library, Australia. Posters with audiobook covers and QR codes were placed in bus stops and other public places with the slogan 'We're always open' (McGlinchey 2016). Another example of providing digital collections in public places is LibraryBox, a self-contained wireless network that can be used for digital file sharing, providing access to pre-loaded content via mobile devices. Barr Memorial Library, U.S., placed LibraryBox devices at several locations within their community, targeting high-traffic areas including cafés, a chemist and a shopping centre food court (Steinmacher and Harmon 2015). The LibraryBox provides links to digital resources, public domain content, and information about the library.

The focus on delivering services outside of library buildings can also be seen in examples of staffing priorities, such as Edmonton Public Library's community librarian positions. Edmonton hired a community librarian for each of its 17 library branches, whose position is entirely focussed on being outside of the library building, working within the community, and working to form relationships with community organisations (Berry 2014). The community librarians represent the visible presence of Edmonton Public Library in the community and their work promotes the Edmonton Public Library, provides a point of access to the library in non-library settings, and demonstrates Edmonton's commitment to community engagement (Berry 2014).

Partnerships

This trend sees libraries proactively seeking partners to deliver a broad range of services and initiatives, collaborating with a more diverse range of partners, and increasing the number of partners involved for any single initiative. Libraries are also identifying library members and community members as partners for developing services, bringing together the theme of partnerships with that of participation.

Partnerships provide the ability to achieve something a library is unable to do on their own, either because it lacks the necessary resources, expertise, knowledge or technical skills. Partnerships provide a range of other benefits. Liaising with a variety of organisations allows libraries to share knowledge and learn new skills. Exposure to different ways of working can foster innovative thinking and improved problem-solving. Additionally, working in partnerships often includes collaborative work, building team skills for staff that have to work with people with different backgrounds and strengths. This presents an excellent professional development opportunity, enriching the library working environment. Through working in partnership, libraries may gain exposure of their services to different demographics, taking advantage of their partner's networks and contacts.

By working collaboratively, libraries are able to do more with less, sharing the costs of running a project, contributing staff or other resources. In places where libraries have experienced funding cuts and reductions in staffing, utilising partnerships may be the only way to run a particular service. Indeed, the growth in all types of partnerships can be attributed in part to cuts in funding and resourcing to public libraries, forcing them to look elsewhere to achieve their operational and strategic goals. Although there can also be problems associated with partnerships, such as unequal responsibilities, communication issues or confusion over purposes and outcomes, the potential benefits are driving libraries to seek partnerships more frequently, for a wider range of services and partnering with a greater number and type of organisations. Grand Rapids Public Library, U.S., are

enthusiastic about collaboration, and have partnered with a broad range of organisations, listing cemeteries, the zoo, bars, the ballet, and cheesemakers as among their partners (Warner 2011). Grand Rapids note that working in partnerships requires a paradigm shift in libraries, from self-sufficiency to utilising crowd-sourcing, engaging systems thinking and accepting synchronicity (Warner 2011).

Libraries increasingly tie their activities into city or government initiatives, partnering with other agencies to deliver programmes in areas like health, education and multiculturalism in order to contribute to the strategic goals of funding bodies. Additionally, city initiatives in economic development or addressing skills shortages provide opportunities to work with local businesses that are invested in such initiatives' success. In these areas, the goals of libraries and business align and can provide opportunities for partnerships. For example, in their learning centre, Lärcentrum, Malmö City Library, Sweden, partnered with companies in a programme called Open Office. Invited to work in Lärcentrum for a week, a company uses the space and delivers programming (Wahlstedt and Cederholm 2013). Their employees also participate as living books, making their knowledge available to library visitors (Wahlstedt and Cederholm 2013).

Libraries may be working on similar projects or towards outcomes that other organisations in the community share. Libraries can take advantage of existing resources and support structures, and achieve a co-ordinated effort that has a greater collective impact on joint objectives. Working with other organisations in their community contributes to community engagement objectives, and is a way of connecting with local individuals and groups to better understand and serve their needs. The push to seek partnerships can also come from above, with funding bodies such as local governments fostering greater co-ordination between their departments to achieve strategic and community objectives. Salt Lake City Public Library, U.S., supported a city-wide initiative at tackling homelessness by co-ordinating and hosting Project Uplift, a resources fair for at-risk individuals. The

library partnered with Salt Lake City Government and non-profit organisation Volunteers of America to organise the fair, which brought together over 30 community organisations, businesses and service providers (Torres 2015). The location of a library can also provide collaboration opportunities. For example, partnerships with cultural institutions such as museums and galleries can arise when libraries are located in cultural precincts. When the intermunicipal library in Colomiers, France, was co-located with the contemporary arts centre to form Le Pavillon Blanc, the library was drawn to collaborate on programming, partnering on the delivery of events and workshops (Blanchet 2013).

Libraries are also forming networks and partnerships with their peers to deliver joint programmes and services. For example, a partnership between East Sussex Library and Information Service and the University of Brighton developed a year-long training programme aimed at professional skills development in library staff. The partnership aligned with the University of Brighton's policy of local community engagement, delivering a comprehensive training programme to public library staff (Marshall, Chrysostomou and Luthmann 2013). Such partnerships are often local or regional, yet with libraries across the world facing similar challenges and opportunities, the potential for global partnerships exists. This can be seen in Aarhus Library, Denmark, and Chicago Public Library's partnership to develop an innovation toolkit based on the concept of design thinking (Design Thinking for Libraries 2016).

Conclusion

Five trends are evident in the activities of innovative public libraries: participation, making & creating, learning, new outreach and partnerships. It is in the areas encompassed by these trends that libraries are investing their time and resources, and developing new services and programmes to meet the evolving needs of their communities. These trends see public libraries moving towards a model in which their focus is on active engagement with their communities, with a high emphasis

on collaboration, participation, and outreach in order to facilitate this engagement. The focus of their core business is shifting to fostering learning, creativity and digital skills. In these areas libraries are utilising technological advances and are rethinking traditional service delivery to create innovative services for their communities, acting responsively and flexibly to the needs of their users. The breadth of innovative library activities demonstrates a significant commitment and energy on the part of public libraries to the development of forward-thinking services for their communities. The scope and scale of initiatives that libraries seek to deliver is significant, and there is a need for investment into skills and knowledge building for library staff in order to maximise the potential benefits of new service ideas. These trends present an exciting and relevant role for the future public library, where the library interacts daily with the lives of its users, works collaboratively with them to develop services and provide resources, inspires and provides them with the tools for creating and learning, and equips them with the skills to navigate the modern, digital world.

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