Four Technologies Important for Libraries

Beth Staats

As librarians in the 21st century, we all know that there will always be new trends, new technologies, and new tools to help us perform our jobs and daily tasks more efficiently, and with higher quality results as well. We are bombarded by these tips, tools, and trends on an almost daily basis – so how do we know what is important and what may soon be swept under the rug? Some folks with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals were asked to look into “The Top Technologies Every Librarian Needs to Know,” and lucky for us, they came up with just four of them. Here they are:

1) **Augmented Reality (AR)**, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “an enhanced version of reality created by the use of technology to overlay digital information on an image of something being viewed through a device (such as a smartphone camera); also: the technology used to create augmented reality.” It would seem to me that Google Glass would be a prime example of AR. QR codes placed around the library can act, at the simplest level, as AR, in that they could help to inform patrons about the collections. Layar, a smartphone application, takes a photo and returns layers of information relating to that object, also known as interactive print.

2) **Discovery**, an important tool that libraries offer to researchers and patrons, makes library content and holdings more easily “discoverable” to users. It makes library searching simple for researchers. Instead of searching different resources or search tools separately, more institutions are offering the single search box to locate all types of materials or content relating to a specific topic.
3) **Large-Scale Text**, or the mass digitization of books. The HathiTrust was the first and largest of its kind. The HathiTrust now holds about 12.5 million volumes, and 4.5 million of those are in the public domain. Libraries are realizing that in most cases a digital copy can serve their users’ needs just as a print book can. For libraries with little shelf space this is a great alternative.

4) **Open Hardware**, similar to open-source software, is mechanical tangible technology or “physical artifacts of technology” that are free to distribute, modify, or use. This could be a big money saver for libraries in the future. For example, rather than purchasing from a vendor, a library could build their own traffic sensor, or adapt one from another library’s creation.

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‘Creepy’ New Internet Takes Jobs and Privacy, Sells Them to Consultants and Investment Banks?

*Matt Lee*

The *New York Review of Books* recently published an article by Sue Halpern called “The Creepy New Wave of the Internet” that details the positions of four new books on the “Internet of Things,” the growing network of devices, machines, people, and resources that share data online automatically. It’s very readable, very realistic, and provides some interesting examples and anecdotes.

The four books take different positions on the trend. In brief:

- Increased connectivity will lead to a third industrial revolution that overthrows capitalism by dropping production costs to near zero. We’ll move out of the “age of privacy” and into a utopian creative era where very few people hold traditional jobs.
- Enchanted (read: internet-connected) devices will radically transform human encounters.
- Systems will use personal data to anticipate individual needs. That personal data will be out of reach of the individual who created it, but not those willing to pay for it – perhaps for the purposes of advertising, law enforcement, or government surveillance.
- Certain segments of the population may revolt against the use and sharing of personal data online, as evidenced by the recent interest in ad-free social media site Ello.
In addition to discussing these books, Halpern raises interesting questions on the topic. What incentives do proprietary networks have to share data with other networks, and if there isn't one single network of shared data, does the whole thing fall apart? What happens to pervasive online networks in the event of a widespread loss of power due to natural or human-inflicted disaster? How do we maintain security over all this data?

The article as a whole paints a rather bleak portrait of the Internet of Things, where companies sell their users' personal data for profit, where enhanced data management streamlines human jobs into nonexistence, and where a shocking amount of personal information is shared in shockingly insecure ways. Seems this trend is well upon us. And who benefits the most from it, according to Halpern? The "companies, consultants, and investment banks that saw it coming."

For a lighter look at the emerging 21st Century, take a look at this Richard Scarry parody:
Richard Scarry’s 21st Century Busy Town Jobs

Tom the Dancing Bug comic strip

by Ruben Bolling

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http://referencenotes.minitex.umn.edu/category/december-2014/

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Your Smartphone’s Personal Assistant: Usage Report

Carla Pfahl

Do you have a smartphone? Have you ever used the personal assistant that comes with most smartphones? Do you use it on a regular basis? There is new data out by researchers at Northstar for Google highlighting personal assistance usage.

Adults over age 54 were more likely to use their personal assistant on the go and in the car than those between the ages of 18-29. The latter were more likely to use their personal assistant at home. The one piece of data that stood out for me was why teens, aged 13-17 years old, were using their personal assistant. Asking for directions was second on the list for teens (and number one for adults) but third on the list for teens, 31% of teens surveyed, used their personal assistant for help with their homework. If we, as librarians, are to meet teens where they are, we need to give Siri, Google Now, and Cortana library cards!

To read more: http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Personal-Assistants-Mobile-Users-Service/1011449/1

History Day Research Help: Your Visit to Wilson Library

Jennifer Hootman

Minitex, the University of Minnesota’s Wilson Library, and the Minnesota Historical Society have created a short video to prepare students throughout the state to conduct History Day research at Wilson Library. Librarians from Minitex Reference Outreach & Instruction (ROI) and Wilson Library have been
collaborating on History Day for the past six years. Each year, Wilson Library staff facilitates library visits for thousands of Minnesota middle and high school students. Meanwhile, Minitex's ROI unit visits libraries and classrooms to show teachers, librarians, and students how to use the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) and the University Libraries catalog (MnCAT) to do research for History Day and prepare them for their Wilson Library research trip.

Digital Collections from Tennessee

Jennifer Hootman

For upcoming student History Day projects and a myriad of other historical research needs, take note. Middle Tennessee State University's Walker Library, working with campus and external partners, have created and made available digital collections, such as:

- **Trials & Triumphs** – photos and documents on the history of African Americans in Tennessee from the end of the nineteenth century to 1945
- **Southern Places** – photos of historic properties in Tennessee and other Southern states
- **Shades of Gray and Blue** – photos, artifacts, and documents of life on the home front in Civil War
You can find those collections and more on MTSU’s digital collections website.

LearningExpress for Adult Learners

*Matt Lee*

*LearningExpress Library* is proving highly relevant to adult educators and learners across the state. We’ve presented on *LearningExpress* at Adult Basic Education (ABE) consortium meetings and conferences, held webinars for ABE educators, and are working with the Department of Employment and Economic Development to get *LearningExpress Library* integrated into WorkForce Centers across the state. We know that many libraries maintain connections and partnerships with adult education programs and workforce development offices. Please share some of the *LearningExpress Library* support materials below if you think they'd be helpful to your partners.

- Recorded Webinar: An Electronic Library for Adult Basic Education (Minitex)
- Recorded Webinar: LearningExpress for Public Libraries (Minitex)
- Video: LearningExpress User Guide (LearningExpress)
- Fact Sheets (Minitex)
- Hands-on Activities (Minitex)

And join State Library Services for an upcoming webinar to learn more about opportunities for libraries to support workforce development:

*Libraries and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*

Thu, Dec 11, 1:00 pm (1 hr 15 min)
Still Kidnapped! Minitex Blue Tubs Missing, Ransom Note Found

Matt Lee

Did you see our announcement last month about Ransom!, an ELM database game for library staff? We hope you’ve had a chance to check it out. We’ve gotten a great response to the game, but would like to ask for your help to see if it can go further.

Do you have co-workers, colleagues, employees, or volunteers that would benefit from learning a bit more about ELM? Please share Ransom! with them.

Almost everyone that completed an evaluation used some variation of the word “fun” in their feedback. That’s excellent, but it’s not the best part. The best part is that fully 100% of respondents said that they learned something that will positively impact their job. Not bad for an hour (or so) of time investment.

Please share Ransom! We need you, because…

Ransom! A Database Search Game

Oh no! All of Minitex’s blue interlibrary loan tubs have been KIDNAPPED!

A ransom note was found, but it is missing several words.
Can you put the pieces together to solve the mystery?

Your first step is to find the missing letters by searching the ELM databases.

Then compile and unscramble those letters to read the note and find a clue to identify the crook.

To get started, go to: 2.umn.edu/ransom

Ransom! is a learning game that challenges library staff to find unique content within the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) databases.

Although it's intended for library staff, it is open to anyone interested in exploring and learning more about ELM.

Timo Commitment:
There are four Clue Sets and each Set contains four search exercises. In total, it will probably take 10-20 minutes to complete each Clue Set. The game is completely self-directed and asynchronous. Play it whenever you have the time.

Learning Objectives:
1. Gain new knowledge of unique content within the ELM databases
2. Build refined search strategies to find very specific content
3. Gain ideas for future potential uses for ELM and how it can support your library users

To get started, go to:
2.umn.edu/ransom

AskMN Libraries: Request for Best Transcripts of 2014!

Carla Pfahl

It is December, a time for reflection and the time I ask our AskMN participating libraries to review their transcripts from the year and send me the best of the best, the cream of the crop. I ask for no more than 30 minutes of your time to review a sampling of your transcripts and forward to me one or two
(minus personal information) that you feel represents a high quality reference transaction in a chat environment. It could be a session either one of your librarians had or another librarian had with your patron. It could be a short interaction, or a lengthy detailed one, or somewhere in between.

This is the third year we have made this request and it has been incredible to see the great sessions we have received and shared with everyone. As it stands, Bethel University has had the winning transcript the first two years now. I'm not saying they have the best librarians or the best patrons, but they have set the bar pretty high, and it would be exciting to see what transcripts we get this year to give them a little competition (friendly competition, of course).

The easiest way I know to review transcripts for a full year is to go (in QP) to Ask > Service History then narrow by date range per month or whatever date range you want to limit views:

Clicking on the title link will bring you to the transcript record. Again, I'm not asking you to spend too much time with this, but I would like to compile the best transcripts from each library and then have a TBD group vote on the best one. The winning transcript will be featured in January's Reference Notes as a “Best of 2014” article.

I would appreciate it if you could send me your selected transcript by Dec. 22nd. Good luck and happy reviewing!

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Spotlight on Publication

Jennifer Hootman
Jayne Blodgett, Assistant Director and Technical Services Coordinator, and Peter Bremer, Reference Coordinator, of Briggs Library at the University of Minnesota Morris had their article, “Rolling the DICE in an Academic Library,” recently published in American Libraries. The librarians at UMM facilitate a Game Night @ Briggs Library one Friday night a month. This outreach activity has afforded the library staff an opportunity to engage with students and make collaborative connections with student organizations and units across campus. UMM librarians decided to focus on table top games and to create a welcoming space for students to relax, take a break from their studies, and enjoy the library from a different perspective. Read and learn more about how Briggs Library staff makes their Game Nights a success!
Tell Us: Strictly Research or a Little Fun Too?

Does your library outreach to students include fun and games?

- Yes! Our outreach program includes games and/or entertaining events for students.
- No! Strictly research. Curriculum is king!
- Not yet! But we would like to facilitate some fun and games for students.
- I don’t know?

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Kristen Mastel, Outreach & Instruction Librarian, of Magrath Library at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities had her article, “Extending Our Reach: Surveying, Analyzing, and Planning Outreach to Extension Staff,” recently published in the Journal of Agricultural & Food Information. Expanding on the literature addressing library outreach to Extension staff, Mastel adapted a survey to send to Extension program staff in Minnesota to investigate their information-seeking strategies, challenges, and sources used as well as the effectiveness of current University of Minnesota Libraries’ services to Extension staff. Read and learn more about Mastel’s findings and conclusion!
Valerie Horton, Director of Minitex, and Greg Pronevitz, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Library System, have written and co-edited *Library Consortia: Models for Collaboration and Sustainability* which was recently published by the American Library Association. The book highlights the history, current trends, services, and management practices and approaches of library consortia today. Included are sixteen case studies addressing online instruction, ebook projects, interconsortial licensing, interstate delivery, shared physical depository, and digital initiatives to name a few. Authors of the case studies come from a broad range of experience and institutions across the U.S. in which you will also find included staff from Minnesota libraries and programs: Kathleen Drozd, Assistant Director of Minitex; Jeanine Gatzke, Technical Services Librarian and Associate Systems Administrator at Concordia University (St. Paul); Jennifer Hootman, Reference Outreach & Instruction Librarian at Minitex; Belinda Lawrence, Public Services Librarian at St. Catherine University; Matt Lee, Reference Outreach & Instruction Librarian at Minitex; and Mary Parker, Associate Director of Minitex. Learn more about the book's content and purpose at the ALA Store.

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**Fresno County Librarians Hit the Road**

*Carla Pfahl*

Read in a recent article from the *Fresno Bee*, Fresno County librarians have a new way of reaching out to their community – in a Prius! Fresno County Library has started a new program to reach out to business owners and organizations to promote the free services offered through the library system. The program is called *Library Without Walls (WoW!)* and has been up and running for about nine months. The program came about as a way to revamp the library's connection to the community citing a 46% drop in reference questions from 2005 to 2012 and overall low usage rates by county residents (35%).

One challenge to the librarians was learning new ways of social outreach. One librarian noted that communications and social outreach are not skills taught in library school. Cataloging, research skills, and program organizing are the focus, but little emphasis is placed on social outreach. It took a while for the librarians to feel comfortable in their new roles, which include additional training sessions, but they are starting to see positive results.

Twitter, Now Searchable, Exposes Your Best and Worst Quips to Discovery

Matt Lee

Twitter's archives are now fully archived and searchable. Anyone can search for tweets back to 2006, when the service began, at https://twitter.com/search-home.

The Advanced Search page offers some interesting options, including place specification, date limiters, and positive vs. negative tone: https://twitter.com/search-advanced.

Rest assured that you can remove tweets from the public collection (although do remember that the Library of Congress maintains an archival, non-editable, and currently non-searchable collection of tweets). Just sign into your Twitter account and locate any questionable tweets from your past. Then delete them. This could be quite a chore for some of us.
One-Second Poll: Emoticons

What is your favorite emoticon?
- :)  
- :)  
- :(  
- ಠ_ಠ  
- "_(ツ)_/"  
- I avoid using emoticons  
- Other:  

Submit

Here are the results of last month's poll:
SWETS Information Services, a content management company, recently declared bankruptcy. This is:

![Emoticons](image)

Scary 19%

Not Scary 19%

I don't even know what SWETS is, so I'm not...

sweting it.

(31 responses)