“In the Library” by Charles Simic, 1938

for Octavio

There's a book called

“A Dictionary of Angels.”

No one has opened it in fifty years,

I know, because when I did,

The covers creaked, the pages

Crumbled. There I discovered
The angels were once as plentiful
As species of flies.

The sky at dusk
Used to be thick with them.

You had to wave both arms
Just to keep them away.

Now the sun is shining
Through the tall windows.

The library is a quiet place.

Angels and gods huddled
In dark unopened books.

The great secret lies
On some shelf Miss Jones
Passes every day on her rounds.

She's very tall, so she keeps
Her head tipped as if listening.

The books are whispering.

I hear nothing, but she does.

April is National Poetry Month. For more information about events, poets, and other poems visit http://www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/home.

Back to April 2015

The Second Machine Age

Matt Lee

When does a growing economy lead to fewer jobs? Today and the near future, according to Bohyun Kim’s closing keynote “Libraries Meet the Second Machine Age.” Kim’s presentation was intriguing, wide-ranging, and challenging. (And it began in a wonderfully surreal way with an unintroduced or commented upon video about a wearable robot that feeds tomatoes to runners (pictured to the right)).

https://youtu.be/cQJaDDO38kk

I don’t trust myself to succinctly reproduce the highlights in narrative form, so here are some bullet points:

- The Second Machine Age is represented by technical innovation (and automation) leading to economic growth and greater productivity, but with accompanying stagnant or decreasing levels of employment and wages.
- Simple labor is increasingly eliminated (and replaced with machines), and there is more demand for jobs that work at the interplay of human and machine (either programming or working collaboratively with technology).
- This potentially leads to a thinning middle class and diminished upward mobility.
- We may also be embarking on a new guilded age where the best opportunities for real economic gain come from capital investment as opposed to earnings from work.
- Libraries continue to help bridge gap between technology haves and have-nots.
- Educational systems, including libraries, are increasingly positioning themselves to respond to
demands of the job market and to provide competency-based education.

- Makerspaces in libraries, for example, are often positioned as a way to deliver what the workforce wants. But makers are privileged in terms of access to materials, time to play and learn, and intrinsic knowledge of technology.

- The example of makerspace as a tool for workforce development also puts the responsibility and risk on the worker, rather than the employer, to continually evolve.

- We, as workers, are often willing to exploit ourselves and tie ourselves to work in unreasonable ways.

- Makerspaces are examples of neo-liberalism, similar to other technology in the Second Machine Age that ignores systemic inequality and attempts to provide an unsustainable case-by-case solution to systemic problems.

- Many technological innovations in the Second Machine Age seem to pursue economic growth and efficiency for its own sake, with little regulation and oversight.

- The sharing economy opens regulatory holes and brings the harsh logic of capitalism into "sharing."

- The fundamental goal of education should be to “alter the ground upon which life is lived,” not to promote efficiency and economic growth for its own sake.

- Does the educational obsession with outcomes and return on investment position knowledge as a commodity? Where do libraries stand in that environment?

- The ACRL Framework reflects an ambitious goal for the types of learning libraries should promote, which is beyond the expectations of many faculty members and other library stakeholders.

- Libraries should refocus around social responsibility and meaningful community contribution, in addition to information sharing.

- Libraries can play a pivotal role in social justice.

Did you attend this presentation? Have you grappled with these ideas? Where do you think libraries fit into the context Kim builds? Share your thoughts in the comments below.

(I'm also not super clear on the idea of Makerspaces as neo-liberal or the specific role that libraries might play in social justice – if you have any insights, please share!)

If it takes you a moment to digest all of this, you're in good company. The room following Kim's speech was a tad awestruck. Twitter user @612to651 correctly noted that: “I think @bohyunkim could justifiably do a mic drop and walk off the stage after this keynote.”

You can watch a recording of the session via the conference website: “Libraries Meet the Second Machine Age.”

Back to April 2015
Can’t I just Google it? : Informational Literacy and the Digital Native

Carla Pfahl

One of the sessions I went to was “Can’t I just Google it? : Informational Literacy and the Digital Native” presented by Deanna Munson, Assistant Director for Crown College Library. Munson’s session focused on understanding the undergraduate students of today and how to best teach an information literacy class with them in mind. She placed students in three categories of the digital wave: digital natives, digital immigrants, and digital foreigners.

A digital native is someone born after 1980, is very comfortable with technology, needs pictures, multitasks, is a parallel thinker, wants instant access, prefers user-generated content and working cooperatively. Digital natives also have short attention spans, don't like sitting in a lecture hall for a long time but can sit for a long time if there is something they are interested in, such as video games. They also love interactive things, expect interaction with the internet, and use multiple sources for information.

A digital immigrant is someone that prefers learning from text, is single task oriented, thinks sequentially, and will use limited sources for information. She didn't speak about digital foreigners much other than to say they don't get it and tend to be much older.

With this said, the look of information literacy has changed. For digital natives, research and Google have become synonymous. What does this mean for libraries? Libraries need to market themselves differently. They need to tell digital natives why the library is relevant to them in order to garner attention. If you tell them, “Here's how to get an A on your next research paper,” they will listen to that.

Libraries can use Google to their advantage by playing off this familiar tool. Do comparison searches using Google and library databases or one-search platforms. Show the basic searches and highlight the subject headings within the databases. Start with the basic search and show them how to use that before talking about advance searching. Digital natives are trained to click on the first or second link they see. They don't usually go beyond that. Their technology proficiency does not equate to being information literate.

Another point of Munson's was to focus on five areas of information literacy: need, access, evaluate, synthesis, and ethics. Students are lacking on what they can use on the internet and what they can't.
They think if it's on the internet it's free for the taking.

Other good points she made were that digital natives want personal interaction; tell them stories. When you are preparing an information literacy session, try not to throw 250 things at them in 15 minutes. No one is going to remember that. Pick a couple of themes and work with those. It's helpful to make it interactive, and students love to collaborate so let them do that. Screen shots can be helpful if the internet fails, and they allow you to highlight what you want. Finally, always revise, redo, fix, throw things out, and adjust your information literacy sessions to keep them refreshed, current, and tailored to students' needs.

Overall, it was very informative. While the session was academic-based, I can see how this information could be easily used with younger audiences.

Back to April 2015

Elements of Engaging Design

Jennifer Hootman

In attending the Library Technology Conference 2015 I gleaned many practical takeaways. One session in particular, "Let's Make This Look Good: Graphic Design for Maximum Engagement," presented by Meggan Frost of Paul Smith's College, addressed work that many of us librarians are now expected to produce:

- Reports in the form of infographics
- Engaging posters or flyers to promote events, resources, or classes
- Promotional images for the website

Moreover, to meet these demands many of us are learning promotion and marketing design tools on the fly. Frost shared 4 fundamentals, 3 shortcuts, and a few extra tips to help us visually communicate more effectively.
4 Fundamentals:

- Layout – Below are key questions to ask in determining an engaging layout. Keep going back over the layout and tweaking.
  - What does this need to do?
  - What are my constraints?
  - How will I organize the info?
  - What is most important?
  - How do I share this importance?
  - Does the flow make sense?
  - Is it clear?
  - What isn’t needed?
- Color – Frost recommends using no more than 3 colors at a time. This helps it look cohesive. Below are some tools to help with color selection.
  - Colorzilla – (One of my favorite color tools to use!) This tool is a browser extension and can help you determine the exact colors used on websites, logos, etc. Very helpful when attempting to match colors.
  - DeGraeve.com – Color Palette Generator. This tool will help you create effective color combinations.
  - Design Seeds – This tool, too, will help you design well-balanced color schemes and provide inspiration for color combinations.
- Images – Below is a list of tools for locating images
  - Flickr: Creative Commons
  - Google Advanced Image Search – You can limit search by usage rights.
  - morgueFILE – Free stock photos
  - Pixabay – Free photos, vectors, and art illustrations
  - The Noun Project – Free icons
- Fonts – Below is a list of tools for locating and previewing fonts. Be sure not to use too many different fonts for one design.
  - 1001 Fonts
  - dafont
  - Typewolf

3 Shortcuts

Below is a list of tools that will help you design great visual pieces when you don’t have a lot of time. (Caution: You will have to invest some time to get to know these tools. But once you learn how to use them, they can save you a great deal of time.)

- Picmonkey – photo editor
- Canva – (One of my favorite tools to use!) – infographics, posters, flyers, web images
A Few Extra Tips from Meggan Frost

- When you come across examples on the web that are visually appealing, save those. Collect visual communication pieces that are inspirational.
- Use Pinterest to collect inspiring images and designs.
- Follow and participate in Librarian Design Share. This blog shares visual designs by librarians. The blog may also be helpful in solving design problems.
- Learn more about design and design tools.
  - Lynda.com
  - Canva Design School
  - Skillshare
  - CreativeLive

Hopefully these tools and tips will help you on your next promotional and marketing project!

Back to April 2015

Teaching and Learning iPad Apps

Beth Staats

I attended many great sessions at this year’s Library Technology Conference and I’m continually amazed by all of incredible educational iPad apps that are out there. In her session, “The 25 Best Apps for Teaching and Learning (and How to Find More Like Them),” Connie Jones of Concordia College highlighted 25 iPad apps that have been designated as the Best for Teaching and Learning by a group of AASL (American Association of School Librarians) practitioners. These apps fell into 5 broad categories: Enhanced Books or Ebooks, STEM, Organization and Management Tools, Social Sciences, and Content Creation.
Enhanced Books/EBooks

- A Day in the Market (interactive book app for early elementary)
- Audubon Guide to Butterflies (middle to high school)
- Wonders of Life (upper elementary through high school) – contains 3D effects that move you around the world for exploration
- Disney Animated – takes you behind the scenes of Disney movies
- War Horse (middle to high school)—the book is read by the author while showing behind the scenes of the film and history of the era

STEM

- Dragon Box (elementary)—secretly teaches algebra
- Kodable Pro—builds on users skills to teach basic coding skills
- Monster Physics—solve missions and refine inventions by teaching basic physics concepts
- NOVA Elements (middle and high school)—play with and explore elements and the periodic table
- Water Cycle HD (early to upper elementary)—visual games test a student’s knowledge of the rain/water cycle and correlates to state standards

Organization and Management Tools

- Easy Portfolio (elementary through high school)—students’ artifacts can be saved in one spot—save videos, images, audio, and add links to external sites and documents
- Good Reader (elementary through high school)—handles content from a variety of sources- can download, read, manipulate, highlight and add notes, and great for working with PDF files
- InstaGrok—educational search engine, useful in narrowing searches
- Pocket (upper elementary through adult) one of the best free apps that allows you to save items for reading later from any browser and tag them for easy sorting and finding
- Subtext (elementary through high school) free web-based reading program, teachers can select free articles and books to add to it

Social Sciences

- Kids Discover (upper elementary and middle school)—based on the Kids Discover magazine- great Civil War app that includes activities
- Duolingo (upper elementary through high school)—free interactive language learning tool that includes Spanish, German, French, Italian
- History Pin—explore maps, channels, tours, images, stories pinned to maps. Browsable by date or location
• Umano (middle through high school)—free access to the latest news, similar to smart radio
• Discovery Education U.S. Geography—discover U.S. regions, overviews, landforms, bodies of water, etc.

Content Creation

• Notability (upper elementary through high school)—allows for annotating PDFs including writing, drawing, recording voice and more
• PhotoEditor by Aviary—free tool to enhance photos with effects, frames, lighting, color, and allows for sharing
• Timeline (early elementary through high school)—graphically represent time frames and incorporate labels, images, and annotations
• Shadow Puppet (early elementary through high school)—create presentations by uploading photos and videos and voice recording—very intuitive
• Tellagami—create and share quick animated messages called Gamis—customize characters and record or type a message for character to say

As mentioned, some of these apps are free but most do cost. It seems that prices range from $1.99 up to about $9.99. With so many apps out there it can be difficult to know which one to use with your students or children. Thanks to Connie and AASL for sharing this list of amazing teaching and learning iPad apps.

Back to April 2015

Offering Technology Help off the Desk

Beth Staats

I would imagine that most public libraries struggle with finding time to help technophobes with technology. In many cases there isn’t time while at the Reference or Information Desk to instruct someone on how to download an eBook, set up a device, manage photos, or use Cloud storage. In their session, “Tech Tuesdays: Taking Time to Teach Technology to Technophobes,” Jennifer Cook and Peter Rudrud of L.E. Phillips Memorial Library in Eau Claire, WI, discussed how they handle staffing issues and teaching technology in their library.
At L.E. Phillips Library digital checkouts have grown immensely, with Overdrive being the most popular and what they get the most questions about. They also check out iPads for two weeks at a time. Their first attempt at tech help came in the form of homegrown flyers and video tutorials. They also offered iPad classes focused on teaching patrons downloadable media. Cook and Rudrud asked themselves, how can we offer assistance to patrons with tech questions on a more individual basis AND provide enough time? So Tech Tuesdays was born and offered on a monthly basis with expanded times.

The best promotion method for Tech Tuesdays was a news release that appeared in the local newspaper, The Leader-Telegram, and on Wisconsin Public Radio. Tech Tuesdays was listed on the Community Events calendar in the local Sunday paper. They also promoted it via social media and Facebook. They delivered flyers to the local senior center, and created in-house promotional flyers and video monitors. The flyers tell what the librarians can and cannot help patrons with.

Some of the challenges they confronted with Tech Tuesdays were patron technophobia and the reluctance to learn (some just want the librarian to do it for them), attendance was either too large or too small, patrons not being able to work devices or forgetting or misplacing their passwords, and patron follow-up. They often expect the same service time commitment they get on Tech Tuesdays when they come back to the library on days that aren't Tech Tuesdays.

So what lessons did they learn from offering Tech Tuesdays? First, librarians need to create or set expectations. They need to realize and be comfortable with the fact that there are limits to what they, as librarians, can help with. Having patience and a willingness to help was mandatory for heading up Tech Tuesday. Being personable is important. For example, learning patrons' names and calling them by name creates a personable experience. Always look for opportunities for patrons to teach other patrons on skills they feel comfortable with. And finally, always allow the patron to drive as this can empower them.

Back to April 2015

Going Paperless: First Year Students, Selfies, and Information Literacy

Matt Lee

Have you used an online survey to collect and review library instruction activities? That’s the radically
simple solution Solveig Lund and Virginia Connell from Concordia College, Moorhead, described to make their first-year outreach paperless.

Concordia’s Library Launch instruction is connected with students’ first-year experience courses. Librarians visit nearly every course and use the Library Launch to introduce the library and its role in academic success. The Library Launch includes, among other components, a multifaceted activity comprised of finding a book, investigating circulation desk services, finding the full text of an article, and consulting with a librarian.

Lund, Connell, and colleagues recently moved the activity portion paperless by using a Qualtrics survey to collect activity responses. This move makes the collection of activity responses more sustainable, provides for easier qualitative assessment, includes analysis and reports for synthesis, and focuses on the use of library resources on mobile devices, which is what students at Concordia Moorhead typically use.

During a class workshop, students are presented with the activity and work in pairs throughout the library to complete it. The questions are randomized to prevent clustering at any one point of the activity. As students move through the activities, they are introduced to library services to support their immediate research assignment in that class. But research anxiety is also reduced for future research assignments. One of the activity points includes student selfies with library materials, which are posted to a service called Tagboard where they can be viewed by the class during a debriefing discussion.

Lund and Connell feel this new method increases student engagement with activities, is a sustainable practice that involves less work for library staff, and encourages social media connections with students.

Back to April 2015

Free LearningExpress Library Flyers: Test Prep

Jennifer Hootman
You likely encounter a number of students or patrons studying for a college or graduate school admissions test and asking for test prep materials.

ELM's *LearningExpress Library* is a robust resource for exactly that! For instance, in the *College Preparation Center*, you'll find ACT, SAT, AP, and more with practice tests, tutorials, and reviews. Likewise, in the *College Center* you'll discover test prep materials for the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, and more.

Using the free, online software, Canva, I've developed several flyers to help you promote *LearningExpress Library* test prep resources through your library links. These flyers can be customized with your library's information and downloaded as a pdf or image file.

Take a look at the available flyers. If you'd like any one of them or all, simply email me your library's name and *LearningExpress Library* direct link. And I will send you a pdf and image file of the customized flyer(s).

**Back to April 2015**

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**Gale Database Redesigns Now Live**

Remember the updates in a number of Gale databases that are now live. You can read more in “Updates to Gale Databases Coming Soon.”
EBSCO recently announced the availability of its new Explora interface. The interface can provide access to any EBSCO database, but is targeted toward K-12 and public library researchers. It seems like EBSCO is positioning it as a replacement for Searchasaurus, KidsSearch, and Student Research Center.

See below for the announcement from EBSCO. We'll work with them on details of the transition, but if you have an EBSCOadmin account and are an administrator, you can switch to the new interface right now.

Explora is Now Available!

Reach new heights with Explora, an engaging new interface from EBSCO. Designed to meet the unique needs of its users, Explora supports both student research and classroom instruction with
rich, reliable content and easy-to-use functionality.

A dedicated search interface for all of your library’s EBSCO databases, Explora offers a variety of benefits that will help students of all ages and their instructors achieve success in the classroom and beyond.

We encourage you to get started with Explora today. Account administrators can activate the new interface by logging into EBSCOadmin. For instructions, click here.

You can also visit our Explora migration support page at http://support.ebsco.com/explora for additional information, promotional materials, and links to online training sessions.

Please note that you do not have to take any action at this time. You can continue to use the existing school interfaces – Searchasaurus, Kids Search, and Student Research Center – until they are discontinued on June 30, 2015. We will be in touch soon with additional information about the migration process.

Back to April 2015

Legal Questions!

Jennifer Hootman

Liz Reppe, State Law Librarian at the Minnesota State Law Library, recently announced the following:

“Do you ever get questions from patrons about where they can get legal help? The State Law Library has put together legal referral sheets for every county in Minnesota. These can be a great resource for librarians and patrons!”

http://referencenotes.minitex.umn.edu/category/april-2015/
Check out these legal referral sheets today! Consider bookmarking them and having them at the ready for your next patron with a legal question.

Back to April 2015

90-Second Newbery Films from Minnesota Students

Matt Lee

State Library Services hosted the inaugural Minnesota 90-Second Newbery Film Festival this winter. The Festival relies on video submissions from kid filmmakers that “tell the entire stories of Newbery-winning books in 90 seconds or less.” You can see all of the Minnesota submissions via this State Library Services webpage.

The culmination of the festival was a screening of submissions at Hennepin County's Central Library on February 28th. The founder of the film festival, James Kennedy, wrote a recap of the screening including several of his favorite films. If you want creative, silly, charming, and very short recaps of titles like Holes, Shiloh, My Father's Dragon, and others, you'll find them nowhere else.

You can learn more about how to participate at the 90-Second Newbery website.

Back to April 2015

Library OnConference
Mary J. Soucie, State Librarian, North Dakota State Library

Mark the date: April 16, 2015. Not only is it National Bookmobile Day and National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day, but it is also Library OnConference 2015. This is the second annual Library OnConference. This a free, online event open to all librarians. The keynote speaker for the conference will be the amazing Beck Tench, who is sure to inspire and motivate you. A simplifier, illustrator, storyteller, and technologist, our keynote speaker encourages librarians and museum professionals to not be afraid to fail. She also swims with sharks and turns squiggles into robots. After the keynote, attendees will break out into small groups, via Google Hangouts, to talk about a variety of topics. I am honored to be one of the small group moderators this year. Other moderators are from Illinois and Indiana. It will be worth your time to hear Beck and to give Google Hangout a whirl if you haven't already. Registration opened on March 16.

Back to April 2015

Remember the Card Catalog?

Carla Pfahl

Minnesota Public Radio’s Tracy Mumford recently published an article about the clever new uses of the old library card catalog. Artists are using the 3 x 5 index cards as valuable real estate for their art work. Mumford interviewed two artists, Vickie Moore and Stephanie Duimstra, who put their own unique signature on the cards. Moore, a painter, paints small images on the cards representative of the title. The cards bring back a flood of memories of beloved childhood books for her and her customers. Duimstra uses the cards to make notebooks and journals. She too, hears of the nostalgia people feel when they see her items.

Both artists’ websites highlight their collections with a wide variety of items to choose from. Moore notes that she has over 1000 more cards in

https://www.etsy.com/listing/151264939/little-house-on-the-prairie-print-of-my?ref=shop_home_active_8
storage waiting her creative additions. There seems to be no shortage of cards to go around. When was the last time you saw a catalog card?

Images courtesy of the artists’ Etsy sites.

https://www.etsy.com/listing/84357935/recycled-library-card-catalog-notebook?ref=shop_home_feat_1

Back to April 2015

One-Second Poll: ALA Annual
And here are the results of last month's word association poll:
Word association: What is the first word you think of when you see: **Weeding**

Word cloud of 73 responses

You can see all the words submitted, even those not well displayed in this word cloud, [here](http://referencenotes.minitex.umn.edu/category/april-2015/).

Back to [April 2015](http://referencenotes.minitex.umn.edu/category/april-2015/)