

Composite Notes from Interviews

1. What in your view are the big social and technological changes that are having an impact on libraries and librarians?

Technology

- Digitization of information
- Huge advances in technology that happens ever more quickly
- Huge variation in how people use technology for learning, entertainment, etc.
- Moving to a wireless digital society
- Technology is treated with ambivalence at best in many school situations, e.g. students not being allowed to have their mobile tech with them in testing rather than having them display their ability to use it wisely.
- There are technologies available that allow libraries to engage in just-in-time interaction with users, like apps that suggest material based on the books someone is looking at in the moment (Brian A.)
- “Disintermediation”: consumers going directly to their information sources...link between people and content may be hard to justify
- “We need to crusade for literacy and the ethical use of technology.”

Information

- Fake news
- Lots of information sources that may or may not be reliable. People increasingly use sources with which they agree.
- The amount of information that is being published has exploded. We need to have better ways to connect communities with it with few barriers to access

Society, Education and Civic Engagement

- Consumer expectations like having everything instantly and with little effort to get it
- Economic upheaval
- Huge increase in ethnic/cultural diversity (library community does not represent the communities they serve--largely white and female)
- People are caring more about issues and are beginning to engage civically more than before. Communities need a trusted place to do this.
- School libraries and librarians on the wane. Utility of school libraries is not well understood and school librarians do not have an equal place at the table, which they need in order to deliver the value they know they can provide.
- There is a need for librarians to be engaged as collaborative colleagues in all sectors and activities
- There is a need for the library to move out into the community
- Trust level way down for social institutions. PEW research says libraries are still trusted sources/places/people

2. What are the top 3-5 activities that will be important for the libraries of tomorrow to engage in?

- Be leaders in the ethical use of technology, particularly for young people
- Be more collaborative and out in the community partnering with people to do things that matter to them. This is different from tradition “outreach”, which is a push strategy. We need to offer ourselves into the community, so we will be pulled by it to provide value.
- Brand around trust, intellectual freedom, information literacy and civic engagement
- Manage technologies so they fit users’ needs better.

- Provide people (adults and kids) with the kind of experiences they would love to have, e.g. all want comfy, Barnes-and-Noble-like places to gather, read and eat. People want hassle-free access to media, etc. This includes “can-do”, empathic attitudes. Be open when people want to come to the library. (see the book *The Experience Economy*)
- Provide space for people to disconnect from the virtual world and engage with each other around non-digital activities: cooking, crafts, conversation, gardening, etc.

3. *What new approaches (ways of thinking, policies, organizational practices, etc.) will libraries and their staff need to adopt in order to be successful in these activities?*

- Develop the profession so that librarians and library staff represent the communities they serve in all kinds of diversity
- Engage in “adaptive planning for disruptive change”. Planning goals and strategies need to be broad enough to adapt to changing conditions.
- Get out of your building and into other buildings that are not libraries: schools, train stations, etc. Cut the cord and get out there.
- Rethink having “little libraries two miles from each other”. Home rule writ large. How do we give great, personalized service to our communities and also consolidate to deliver better service at scale?
- Rethink our brand: How can we inform the public that we have amazing professionals who can help them solve their problems?
- Revise policies and procedures that make it difficult or cumbersome for our users to interact with us
- Shift away from a “lawyer” (advocacy) mindset to a “scientist” (clear-headed evaluation) mindset, so we can really improve what we do and who we are to our communities.
- Think differently about whom we hire? Do we need professionals besides MLS folks? Social workers? Business advisors? People with combined expertise?
- Thinking about and relooking at what staff responsibilities are. Changing organization structures to be more useful/adaptive?
- Thinking about the perspectives of the communities first

4. *In what ways can LLNJ help move libraries forward?*

- Figuring out ways to foster innovation is Job #1!
- Help school librarians get their workshop and session proposals accepted in professional education conferences (NJASA, NJPSA, NJSBA--see transcript)
- Continue communication with school libraries re. Professional development and other needs
- Have some funds available to offer libraries aside from incubator projects to fund innovation as it shows up
- Mixers: events to bring people together to talk shop and socialize
- Facilitate conversation with NJSL re. bandwidth and working with ISPs
- Keep up the Professional Development
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5. *These are LLNJ’s current four areas of service focus:*

- ***Delivery***
- ***Discounts***
- ***Professional Development***
- ***Innovation/Incubator Projects***

With delivery as a given, please rank the next top two choices in order of their importance to you or your library. Please also share your thinking about your choice.

Of the people who answered this question definitively:

- 4 people chose #1 Professional Development, #2 Projects, #3 Discounts
- 3 people chose #1 Discounts, #2 Professional Development, #3 Projects
- 2 people chose #1 Professional Development, #2 Discounts, #3 Project

6. *What other insights might you offer that would be helpful to our planning process?*

- Request: Bring back mobile hotspots to the table for outreach for incubator projects for FY18.
- Doing a great job. "No one is worried anymore that one area of the State is going to dominate."
- "Advocacy is more NJLA's bailiwick"
- In the event that funding required it, it would be great to have LLNJ headquartered at the State Library (Mary C.)
- As you develop programs and policies for the general library community, consider asking whether there is a component of the program that can be made available/accessible to school librarians.
- Very much appreciate having a dedicated meeting for school librarians on a day when it was easy to attend

Note: Joyce Valenza had some interesting project ideas. Abby be sure to include.