The Washington Library Association Journal

March 2020

Volume 36 | Number 1

Alki

Keeping Count

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WASHINGTON LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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The Washington Library Association Journal

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"Alki," a Chinook word meaning "by and by," was suggested by the late Nancy Pryor, Special Collections at Washington State Library, as a title for the Washington Library Association's journal. "Alki" is also the "unofficial" state motto, signifying a focus on the future.

Alki (ISSN: 8756-4173) is published online three times per year in March, July, and November.

Alki's purpose is to communicate philosophical and substantive analyses of current and enduring issues for and about Washington libraries, personnel, and advocates, and to facilitate the exchange of research, opinion, and information.

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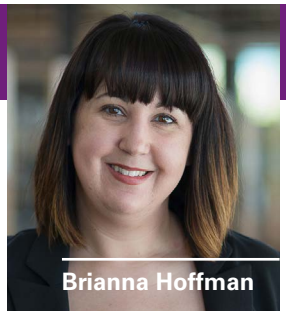
Most of the work for this issue of Alki was done in a pre-Covid environment. We are glad we were able to make a nod to the current pandemic in our special letter from the WLA president and the letter from the editor, realizing that the situation continues to envolve. Thank you for your compassion and understanding during these truly unprecedented times.


Brianna Hoffman

Keeping Connected: Thoughts on the COVID-19 Pandemic from WLA Executive Director

by Brianna Hoffmann

On Saturday, March 21st, I had the strangest thought. Just three weeks prior to that, on February 29th, I was sitting in the Nashville airport waiting to board my plane home from the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference. Three weeks. It feels like everything has changed. In those three weeks we've added phrases to our personal lexicons like "social distancing," and "novel coronavirus," and learned new songs to sing while washing our hands for 20 seconds. We've learned just how important toilet paper truly is.

I realize as I write this that the rate of change is so fast that the things I say here have a good chance of being outdated by the time of Alki's publication.

In the wake of Governor Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order, I am feeling the value of connection more than ever and I continue to be inspired by the examples of connection I see in our Washington library communities. Academic librarians supporting the transition to online classes, teacher librarians hosting virtual library hangouts and virtual book clubs, countless Facebook live storytimes from public libraries and increases in digital collections are just a few of the examples of libraries connecting.

> **"I am a firm believer in taking care of yourself in order to take care of others, so please, take care of yourself and keep connecting."**

While we continue to connect with our communities in new and inventive ways, I want to encourage you to continue connecting with one another as well. Use those digital resources to video chat with your friends and family. Thankfully there are many platforms to aid you in that:

Facebook Messenger has a video call option and in my experience, has been the easiest to use for connecting with parents. If you parents or grandparents already have Facebook Messenger, it's easy to describe how the video function works on it, rather than trying to explain how Zoom works.

Google Hangouts are making a comeback! I'm seeing more and more people coming back to Google's chat and video app lately. I've only used it for chat, but it seems to be another popular (free) choice for video chatting.

Zoom appears to be the video chatting juggernaut of 2020. Several universities are pivoting to the platform for their online instruction and even some public schools are using it to keep connected to their students while Washington schools are closed. You can get a free Zoom account. It does limit your meetings to 40 minutes and to get around that, you need a pro account which is about $149 for the year. I have personally really enjoyed using Zoom for virtual hangouts with friends. We even managed to figure out how to play Cards Against Humanity even though we were scattered across the state.

Those are only three of the options out there right now. Apps like WhatsApp and Marco Polo are also fun to use in staying connected. For me, that is the most important thing right now - staying connected. We are all in this together and being able to chat with one another, see each other's faces on the screen, see each other's pets and home offices... it goes a long way towards humanizing this weird reality we find ourselves in. I am a firm believer in taking care of yourself in order to take care of others, so please, take care of yourself and keep connecting. 📖

Brianna Hoffman has worked in libraries since 2001. She received her MLS from Emporia State University in 2013 and has been a WLA Member since 2010. Brianna currently serves as the Executive Director of the Washington Library Association.

Advocacy in Libraries

by Emily Keller

Emily Keller

"Legislators are people". This timely reminder came from Leah Griffin, Washington Library Association (WLA) member and active legislative advocate, at WLA's Library Legislative Day in Olympia in February. By putting the human aspect of our task front and center, Leah put us at ease and helped prepare for meeting with legislators from our own districts to advocate for libraries.

I needed to hear Leah's message. As a member of the WLA Legislative Committee for the past couple of years, I've become attentive to the specific legislation that we're monitoring during the legislative session, tracking bill numbers, sponsors, testimony, and important deadlines as bills move through the process of becoming law or dying in committee.

But being in Olympia was a remarkable illustration of just how intensely human our democratic process is. Hundreds of regular folks from a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and interests travelled from around the state. They rallied, protested, met with their legislators, and testified, committed to voice their concerns about issues that mattered to them and their communities.

Standing in the swarm of this energy refocused my attention from bill details to the value of relationships, stories, and human values in the legislative process. I was proud to be there as part of this collective effort that WLA undertakes to represent important issues relevant to all types of libraries across the state, and keen to have face-to-face conversations with decision makers who are there to represent our interests. If you have ever wanted to attend Legislative Day and have been intimidated, please give it a try: you have colleagues to support you!

Also intensely human is the work that we do in libraries. And yet it is very easy to focus on the important work of gathering data, assessing the demand for our services, collections, and programs, and attending to funding that we might lose sight of the bigger picture: the details and data are only meaningful in the context of the needs of the people we serve. You will see articles in this issue of Alki that integrate both the data side and the human side.

Over time, our means for keeping count have become more robust, integrating qualitative approaches that include photographs and stories, in addition to gate counts and circulation statistics. We've become more fully engaged with users, even co-creating spaces, services, and collections with our users. In order to have the most meaningful impact in their lives, whether through job programs, services for people who are incarcerated, teaching media literacy, or technology training, those impacts are richer and deeper when we are fully engaged and attentive to the lives of our users. This issue of Alki illustrates a number of ways in which libraries endeavor to keep count of what counts.

Likewise, WLA is keeping count of what matters to library workers and moving forward with efforts that benefit libraries across the states. In addition to our work through the Legislative Committee, WLA has also recently established the Advocacy Committee, which works to address a wider range of advocacy issues all year long. This might include awareness among library workers of the ways that they are building relationships and creating value for their communities in their everyday work. The more effectively we can track and tell our stories, the better prepared we'll be to communicate our value in conversations with stakeholders as opportunities arise.

Our Member Services Committee is crafting a member needs survey to better gauge what our members want from their participation in WLA. This survey will complement the data gathered from the Washington State Library's Continuing Education Needs Assessment that will go out to all library workers across the state. Data from both surveys will help drive WLA's activities to support our members.

Keeping count is about staying focused on the drivers for change. The legislative process is driven by the civic engagement of constituents around the state, libraries are driven by community needs, and WLA is driven by what will help members be more effective in their work in libraries. The means for surfacing those needs and responding to those needs are as varied as the communities that we serve. But in aligning our resources and activities with our priorities, we can count on change moving in the right direction. 📖

Emily Keller is the Political Science and Public Policy Librarian at the University of Washington Libraries, and 2020 Board President for WLA.

From the Editor

Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman

How We Connect With People; How We Build Community

by Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman

As I write this, I want to acknowledge that I am on the land of the Coastal Salish people, the traditional home of all tribes and bands within the Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations. I recognize their elders past and present for their ongoing efforts to sustain tribal sovereignty, preserve their culture, and care for this place. During my tenure as Editor, I plan on acknowledging the land I am situated on for each Alki issue that is published. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions about why I am doing this; I would love to talk with you.

I am currently reading Elizabeth Acevedo's The Poet X at the fiction book club I run with a colleague at our university library. Xiomara, the main character in the book, is a talented young writer and slam poet; the book traces her struggles with religion, her ability to speak up and out, and her coming of age and discovery of self. At one point, Xiomara remarks: "The way the words say what I mean / how they twist and turn language / how they connect with people. How they build community."

I want to begin my tenure as Alki Editor thinking about the last two lines of verse presented above: the role of words in building community. The library community in Washington State is extraordinarily large, increasingly diverse, distributed across 39 counties, and with every type of librarianship represented. Tribal libraries, parochial libraries, independent and public school libraries, special libraries, public libraries, and academic libraries: we work with the mindset of empowering our patrons, and yet how often is it that a school librarian works with a special librarian? Or an academic library worker with a public library worker? Those interactions are, sadly, rare.

As Editor, I see our sharing of words in Alki as a way of building a community across library types, engaging in themes that matter to all of us. In this issue, you will see explorations of themes surrounding keeping track of information and data. We have an exploration on data privacy, a core belief that is codified in the ALA Code of Ethics (Smith). Two articles highlight Excel worksheets that work in inter- and intra library data analyses, including an Open Access tool that allows you to crunch Washington Public Library statistics (McConnel). You will also see how data-driven assessment helps in collection development (Peters), and how, when historical information tracking is poor, we can still integrate values of equity and inclusion into the work we do to help make our collections more representative (Miles). The work that libraries in Washington state are doing in preparation for the 2020 Census (Gale) is a good companion to our article about the Washington Children's Choice Awards and civic engagement (Bruno). And we have a great infographic on the state allotments (Walsh), and an exploration of the Statewide Database Licensing Project (Stuivenga). Our journal is rounded out with an examination of the role a library plays in its community when budgets fall short (Carlson-Prandini), and all of our usual, amazing columns!

To further understand our community, I also ask you to consider responding to our Alki 2020 Community Survey. Results will be published later this year.

While I may not have Xiomara's gift of words, I still will use my words to express sincere gratitude for this opportunity to be your new Editor. What is so readily apparent to me, even after just a few months, is that folks in this state have a passion and excitement and care for upholding core library values and engaging with the field in more meaningful ways.

As we head into a time period of certainty, where social distancing because of the emergent Covid-19 virus pandemic may compete with our need to connect with people, let's rely on each other and share resources and tap into this community. Let us agree to compassion, and give each other ample understanding for extenuating circumstances. Let us also take this opportunity to apply an equity lense to our work, reexamining and supporting fair labor practices as we attempt to move our work into a remote context. We will get through this trying time, and have an amazing community to draw strength from.

Thank you to the WLA community for welcoming me, and thank you to former Editor Di Zhang, Graphic Designer Sonya Kopetz, Executive Director Brianna Hoffman, and Editorial Committee Chair Suzanne Carlson-Prandini for coaching me through this process! If I have shortcomings, I will listen to feedback and advice and do better. I look forward to the next two years of working with you all. 📖

Yours, Johanna (she/her/hers)

Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman is a Instruction and Research Services Librarian at the University of Washington, Tacoma. She also loves reading Young Adult novels and may be found with a parrot on her shoulder.

Alki 2020 Community Survey

by the Alki Editorial Committee and Alki Editor

Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash

In keeping with our theme, the Alki Editorial Committee is asking for your help. We are hoping to survey you—our readers—to understand who we are reaching, what sort of libraries you work for or are interested in, and what kind of content you would like to see in future Alkis. This is your journal and your community hub, and we strive to keep content relevant, interesting, and accessible to all librarians!

This survey will be opened through the summer, and can be accessed at the following link or using the following QR code: https://forms.gle/LTXhbm2jYmFJcVkM8

SCAN ME

We will publish results later this year. Thank you so much for helping us keep this journal current!

Please send questions to alkieditor@wla.org. 📖

How Good is Good Enough? Talking to your Patrons about Data Privacy in the Era of Digital Convenience

by Kelsey Smith

As a public librarian at the Lacey Timberland Library, I spend a lot of time navigating data privacy concerns for the community that I serve. This community ranges from digital natives of all ages that are expert users of technology to those without regular access to technology who struggle with using a mouse or a touch screen. Across the board, however, the general consensus seems to be that patrons prefer convenience and ease of use, and are willing to make some privacy concessions if it makes their lives easier.

> "As library workers, we should be providing privacy information about third-party products to our patrons so that they can make their own informed decisions."

This presents an increasing conundrum for library staff: how do we talk about data privacy to those who might not want to hear about it, even as our privacy is progressively being eroded? This article first examines policies and third party apps, and then offers a few tips and tools. As is always the case in our profession, we can do what we do best: provide resources and alternatives for our patrons so that they can make their own informed choices.

Library Privacy Policies

A good place to start when considering data privacy as a library worker is to evaluate and audit your library's policies and procedures that relate to the internet, personally identifiable information (PII) and data privacy. Your library might have a specific privacy policy, or it may be part of several policies regarding internet use and confidentiality of library records. Your library should be regularly auditing policies related to privacy, especially since technology is changing at such a rapid pace these days.

I work for the Timberland Regional Library, and my library addresses privacy in multiple places, including the Internet Use Policy, an Open Data Policy, and a Confidentiality of Library Records Policy.[1] Timberland's Internet use policy focuses on source accuracy and content, confidentiality, access by minors, and rules governing use. Other libraries include information on third-party vendor privacy policies, disclosure related to public records and law enforcement, consent (for example, opting into keeping a record of your checkouts or allowing someone else to pick up your holds), and how PII is used and also protected by the library.

If you are in need of creating or updating your privacy policies, the American Library Association has an extremely useful privacy toolkit that includes an overview of the ALA's core values around privacy, sample policies, issues to address in your policies, how to perform a privacy audit, and talking points for staff.[2]

Third-Party Library Apps: Overdrive and Kanopy

Libraries are providing the digital services that their patrons want, but privacy is a concern with many library apps and databases. Among these services, Overdrive digital book service is currently among the most popular resources. More than 95% of public libraries in the US and Canada use Overdrive for digital lending.[3] Overdrive takes PII seriously, and only requires a library card, pin number, email address, and location in order to set up an account.[4] With the Overdrive Libby app, you have a choice of whether or not to show your checkout history on your app. Libby also does not display your name, only your library card number and your email address when you place a hold. Library patrons find it convenient to see books that they have checked out in the past, and many utilize this option, but you can also opt-out of seeing your checkout history if you prefer.

Overdrive usage gets a little muddier when used in tandem with an Amazon Kindle. When checking books out through Amazon, users start in the Overdrive catalog and finish checking their book out using their Amazon account. Amazon collects a great deal of data from users, including names and numbers of books checked out, number of books finished, books that were originally checked out through Overdrive but then purchased through Amazon, length of time to complete a book, and other ambiguous data used "to power its 'Reading Insights' features for tracking reading goals and celebrating milestones."[5] Patrons do have some control over the data that Amazon collects, including the ability to request that Amazon delete existing recorded data and the ability to opt-out of future

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Kelsey Smith is the Information Services Supervisor (Librarian 2) for the beautiful Lacey Timberland Library. In her spare time she enjoys letterpress printing, reading and making zines, live music, BINGO, and hanging out with her husband Dave and their dog Bruno.

collecting of reading data. These options can be accessed in Kindle settings under advanced options, then privacy.[6]

Most recently, in a quiet transaction that took place during the holiday season, Overdrive was purchased by KKR, a global investment firm that also owns Recorded Books/ RBmedia and associated publishing imprints, including Tantor Media and Highbridge Audio.[7] In the event that KKR decides to consolidate RBmedia and Overdrive, they will corner a large portion of the digital book market, for better or worse.

Public Services Specialist Zachary Stewart-Glaze from Lacey Timberland Library. Photo by Heather Moore Photography.

Another extremely popular library resource is the on-demand film streaming service Kanopy. In March of 2019, Kanopy experienced a data breach that leaked detailed information about the viewing habits and geographical location of its users.[8] Kanopy quickly remedied the situation, but the breach serves as another example of the lack of control that libraries have when they contract with third-party products. As library workers, we should be providing privacy information about third-party products to our patrons so that they can make their own informed decisions.

Librarian Jennifer Robertson from the Lacey Timberland Library. Photo by Heather Moore Photography.

Informing and Empowering Patrons

Every day, we help our patrons navigate technology, from helping them fill out job applications to helping them learn how to use their own devices. It is in this role as educators that we can have the greatest impact. By providing resources and insight for our patrons, we can get patrons thinking critically about privacy issues.

One technique is to teach our patrons the basics of the THREAT model. The THREAT model is "a computer security optimization process that allows for a structured approach while properly identifying and addressing system threats. The process involves systematically identifying security threats and rating them according to severity and level of occurrence probability."[9] This model encourages library users to ask themselves important questions such as: what are my most valuable assets? What counter-measures could I implement to reduce risk? What are my security requirements, and are the devices I use meeting those security requirements?

The answers to these questions can vary widely, depending on the patron's current situation. Is the person in an unstable living situation? Are they in an occupation where privacy is of utmost importance? Are they a senior citizen who has fallen victim to internet scams in the past? Are they a teenager who is trying to buy something online that they don't want their parents to know about? All of these patrons will have a different perspective on their own privacy needs. It will be easier for them to achieve their individual privacy and security goals if you collaborate with them and find the level of intervention that they feel necessary.

After consulting with patrons about their needs and experiences with technology, you can begin teaching them security and privacy basics such as how to create strong passwords and use password management tools or 2- factor authentication. You can work with your patrons to adjust security settings on their own devices, spot phishing emails, links and websites, and relay information in a secure fashion (e.g. avoid sharing your social security number over email). Sharing information about cloud computing (Google docs and Google drive, Office 365 and OneDrive, etc) will give your patrons more tools to decide whether the convenience outweighs the risks with these products. Incognito browsing and alternative search engines like DuckDuckGo and Startpage are also quick and easy options to share with your patrons. For those using their own devices, introduce them to anonymous browsers like Firefox and Tor that they can install as alternatives to Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge. For those who express concerns about the privacy of their email, there are free secure email alternatives including Protonmail and Hushmail.

By taking privacy seriously as library educators, we can help our library patrons make more informed decisions when utilizing informational resources in the library and online. It all begins with a conversation with our users. 📖

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RESOURCES

General Privacy Education
American Library Association Choose Privacy Everyday
https://chooseprivacyeveryday.org/resources/

American Library Association Privacy Toolkit
http://www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy/toolkit/policy

Data Detox Kit
https://datadetoxkit.org/en/home

Electronic Freedom Foundation
https://www.eff.org/

Library Freedom Project
https://watech.wa.gov/Privacy-Data-Protection

The New York Times Privacy Project
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/opinion/internet-privacy-project.html

Practical Internet Privacy- Jessamyn West
http://www.librarian.net/talks/privacy/

Stay Safe Online
https://staysafeonline.org/

Washington State Office of Privacy and Data Protection
https://watech.wa.gov/Privacy-Data-Protection

Library Privacy Policies and Pages
LA County Library Privacy Policy
https://lacountylibrary.org/privacy-policy/

San Jose Public Library Virtual Privacy Lab
https://www.sjpl.org/privacy

Privacy Oriented Browsers
Brave Browser
https://brave.com/

Firefox Browser
https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/

Tor Browser
https://www.torproject.org/download/

Privacy Oriented Search Engine
DuckDuckGo
https://duckduckgo.com/

Ecosia.org
https://www.ecosia.org/

Startpage
https://www.startpage.com/

Privacy Oriented Email Services
ProtonMail
https://protonmail.com/

HushMail
https://www.hushmail.com/

Tutanota
https://tutanota.com/

NOTES

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6 Ibid.

7 Breeding.

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Washington Libraries & Census 2020

by Troi Gale

As Census 2020 quickly approaches, libraries are championing census knowledge for their communities. The inherent belief in libraries that "everyone counts" is prevalent in the most literal of ways as we set out to provide resources to ensure that each individual is counted in the census. Libraries are addressing issues as they pertain to reaching "Hard to Count" populations, as well as seeking to ensure that staff are adequately trained on how to answer questions about the census. Washington libraries are not shying away from community collaborations and partnerships which seek to amplify the access points for patrons and members of their communities.

The census results assist in determining the allocation of hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding for states and communities. Knowing the demographic make-up of a geographical area allows for a better understanding of the funding and services needed in those communities. It is especially important that "Hard to Count" populations are counted to ensure accurate distribution of specialized funds. Additionally, the census data is responsible for the drawing of districts for federal, state, and local elected offices. In short: the census is responsible for determining the impacts of democracy on the daily lives of individuals.

Below are some facts about Census 2020 to get you situated.

The Facts

Timeline:

- March 12 – The Census Bureau will start mailing Census information to 95% of homes in the United States.
- April 1st – Official Census Day.
- May 2020 - If people have not responded, census staff will visit households or call households to collect responses.

Information:

What we will send in the mail

On or between	You will receive
Mar 12–20	An invitation to respond online to the 2020 Census. Some households will also receive paper questionnaires.
Mar 16–24	A reminder letter
If you haven't responded yet	
Mar 26–Apr 3	A reminder postcard
Apr 8–16	A reminder letter and paper questionnaire
Apr 20–27	A final reminder postcard before we follow up in person

Census Bureau mailing timeline

- This will be the first year where people are able to respond online, although no one is required to. The information sent out in March will give instructions for how to access the online questionnaire for 80% of households. The 15% receiving mailed instructions will also receive the physical questionnaire. The U.S. Census Bureau will reach the final 5% via other outreach measures.
- According to the ALA Libraries Guide to the 2020 Census, 99% of "Hard to Count" individuals live within five miles of a public library. "Hard to Count" is defined by the Census Bureau as "[...] those for whom a real or perceived barrier exists to full and representative inclusion in the data collection process."[1]
- There will not be a citizenship question.
- Census 2020 will be the first to allow for indication of same-sex relationships within a household.
- Responses to the census are protected by Federal Law. Privacy measures are being taken to ensure that all answers are safe and secure. Refer to the Census Bureau Confidentiality Fact Sheet for more information.

Washington Libraries

Many Washington Library systems have championed involvement in the 2020 Census. Libraries are making it their mission to ensure that everyone in their communities gets counted. Additionally, many libraries are acting as Census Questionnaire Assistance Centers. There are multiple gateways to connecting patrons to information and services regarding the census, including:

Troi Gale is a Branch Librarian who has worked in Public & Special Libraries.

continued on next page

- community collaborations
- library programs
- staff training
- census information access via web presence
- census information access in person
- online access to the census form itself via library computers

To get a better sense of what is happening in our state, I surveyed five library systems, informally, to ask them questions about census preparedness.

Community Collaborations & Programs:

When Governor Jay Inslee launched the Complete Count 2020 Census Committee in late 2018, librarians witnessed an opportunity to engage in community collaborations and expand their networks. Libraries ensured their spot at the table for planning, outreach, and collaboration by participating in the Complete Count meetings.

> **"Disrupting misinformation is a critical role for libraries to play in the 2020 Census."**

Among the Library systems surveyed, being present at the Complete Count meetings was the common theme in Library action and engagement.

- While each Library system enacted their unique collaborations, meetings with leaders who ultimately have the same mission helped create community action and unity.
- North Olympic Library System will be posting "Census Parties" in partnership with the US Census Partnership Specialist at their two largest branches. These parties will include number-based games and refreshments.
- Sno-Isle Libraries is collaborating with organizations including the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) among many other organizations who serve "Hard to Count" populations. They will also be posting multiple events called "Census Day Party!" with community leaders as well as continuing to enact civic roadmaps by hosting a "Civic Engagement Resource Fair."
- Bellingham Public has collaborated with the League of Women Voters to enlist volunteers in their Questionnaire Assistance Centers held multiple times a week in the library. They will also be hosting a Community Dialogue sponsored by Opportunity Council, a leading organization in their county focusing on poverty alleviation, and Western Washington University.
- Jamestown S'Kallam Library has worked with their Tribal Government to ensure information to promote access to census information.

Overall, these meetings have acted as a space to ensure that distribution of census information and services are congruent with community needs. While these community collaborations certainly work towards an accurate count, they also have inspired community collaborations which may last long after the confines of census information and engagement.

Staff Training & Engagement:

Each library system surveyed included the importance of staff training needed to meet their goals for involvement in the 2020 Census. Some library stems are bringing in US Census Staff to provide training, while others are providing training specifically based on their unique missions and goals with assistance from American Library Association resources. A common theme was that disrupting misinformation starts with information access, training, and engagement beginning on the staff level.

Census Information Access:

Disrupting misinformation is a critical role for libraries to play in the 2020 Census, and especially so in "Hard to Count" communities where there is fear about how census data will be utilized and what sort of privacy protections are in place. The harmful perpetuation of misinformation can lead to misrepresentation of various populations in the data, which is harmful to the community (county/state) at large. While libraries and their community partners cannot disrupt all misinformation for everyone in the community, they are taking strong steps to reach out and host various mediums of information access.

Library systems are utilizing social media and their websites to encourage patron engagement with census information. Websites (e.g., Sno-Isle Library System as well as Bellingham Public Library) link people directly to fact sheets from the Census Bureau, information from the American Library Association, and various other stakeholders. North Olympic Library System will be launching their webpage in early March.

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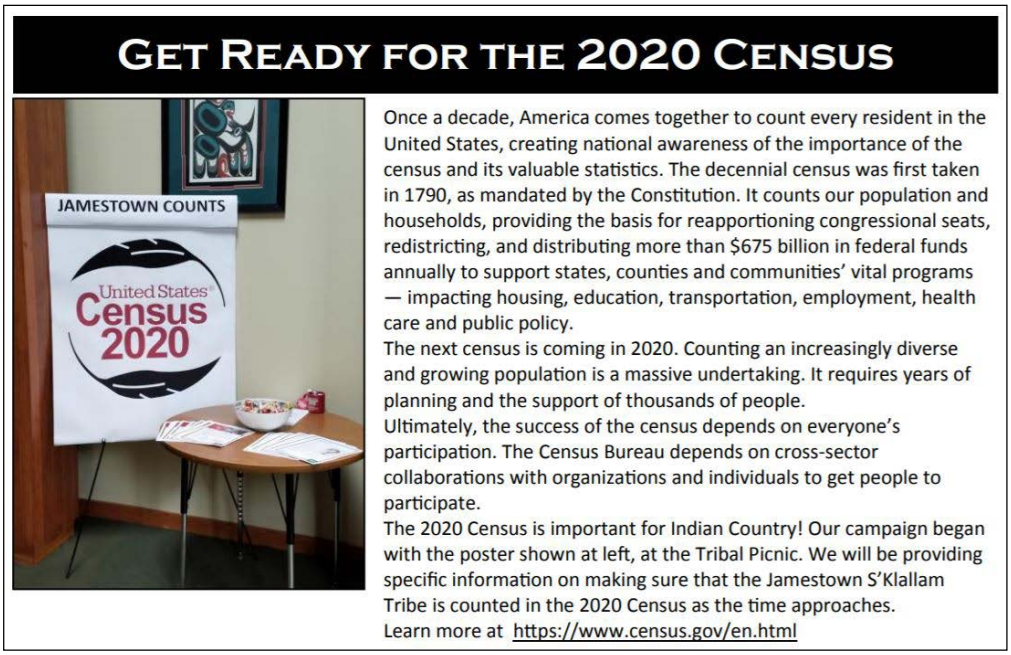

Library systems are also creating displays during the month of March and announcing census information and access points in Family Storytimes or at other library specific programs.

Additionally, newsletters and social media posts started linking patrons to concrete bite-sized facts, beginning early 2019.

Computer access is also a key theme across libraries. North Olympic Library system is providing a link to the online census form directly on their patron internet computers to maximize ease in accessing the form. Seattle Public Library will ensure computer access is available to all individuals (with or without a library card) through their internet computers. Sno-Isle Library system is depicting the library as an access point for one to engage in their civic journey; connecting people to voter registration, library cards, and census access as a way to minimize common barriers.

American Library Association Resources

The ALA has empowered Washington State Libraries to be successful in their navigation and ideas around census information access. Below are some direct links to the resources information professionals referenced in their deliberate planning and coordination of census information access.

- ALA Census 2020 Webpage: Resources includes tip sheets, promotional material, resources for community partners, and recorded webinars.
- Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census: Every library representative who was consulted, raved about the ALA Libraries' Guide as a phenomenal resource to expand their ability to best serve their community during the 2020 Census.
- Key Facts for Libraries Tip Sheet
- Programming, Outreach, & Partnerships Tip Sheet
- In addition, people mentioned recorded webinars:
- "Census 2020 Outreach to Communities of Color" (February 18, 2020)
- "Responding Online to the 2020 Census: What Libraries Need to Know" (January 30, 2020)
- "Library Programs and Partnerships in the 2020 Census" (December 16, 2019)
- "Preparing Your Library for the 2020 Census" (November 14, 2019)
- "Connecting Your Community to 2020 Census Jobs" (November 6, 2019)

Conclusion

The Alki Editorial Committee thanks the Library systems involved in sharing their lens and involvement in the Census 2020 planning. Have anything else planned that we missed? Let us know for our Summer 2020 Alki! 📖

NOTES

1 "Libraries' Guide To The 2020 Census," American Library Association, Public Library Association, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty & Inequality, January 2020, http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/govinfo/CensusGuide Update_Jan2020.pdf.

LSTA Funding at Work in Washington

by Maura Walsh

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is an independent agency of the United States federal government. Its mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people with information and ideas. It is the main source of federal support for libraries and museums. IMLS works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. Their vision is a democratic society where communities and individuals thrive with broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and lifelong learning.

> **"The amount [of funding each state receives] is partially determined by population and recent stewardship of previous funding."**

Through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), each state receives an allotment to help further the mission and work of IMLS. The amount is partially determined by population and recent stewardship of previous funding.

In Washington State, the Washington State Library, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State, receives and administers this allotment. Our mission, connecting Washington through the power of libraries, is to help build prosperous and informed communities by providing technology, access to information, resources, and professional support.

- Our state goals, approved by LSTA, for the use of our allotment, include:
- Contributing to the state's economic prosperity and cultural richness by supporting relevant and high-quality education, literacy and reading, and life-long learning.
- Connecting Washingtonians to their history, employing digital initiatives, and other preservation strategies to tell the stories of local communities and to celebrate our common heritage.
- Expanding the reach and effectiveness of the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) with innovative outreach initiatives to increase overall user population, establishing and strengthening borrower relationships, and promoting high quality, accessible library and information resources.
- Expanding and enhancing the provision of direct library and information services to incarcerated and hospitalized populations in support of education, literacy, recovery, and re-entry.
- Elevating the statewide quality of library service and caliber of library staff through projects, facilitation, consulting, grants, training, and modeling best practices to build capacity in libraries.

The Library Council of Washington advises the State Librarian and the Office of the Secretary of State on statewide library issues and the expenditure of federal funds. We think it is important to share with our broader community of library workers how 2019 funds were spent, and are happy to share this infographic. We also have versions that show the same by legislative and congressional districts across the state. 🕮

Maura Walsh compiled this information. She is the LSTA Grants and Contracts Coordinator at Washington State Library.

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Office of the Secretary of State
Washington State Library

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Washington State Library

Library Services and Technology Act Funding at work
2019

214,767
Visits to our 13 WA state library branches
- *State prisons and hospitals*
- *Washington Talking Book and Braille*
- *The Washington State Library in Olympia*

Providing services to special populations

265,088
Materials supplied
- *E books*
- *WA Newspapers*
- *WA historical artifacts*

Promoting growth, education, and culture

4.5 M
Washingtonians access
- *WA Newspapers online*
- *WA historic collections*
- *Research articles*

Building skills and providing access for civic engagement and education

249
Opportunities for librarians across WA
- *Professional training for librarians*
- *Creating WA historical collections*
- *Large print books for school libraries*

Developing library services professionally

23,447
New items digitized and available to the public
- *Historical documents*
- *Local photographs and objects*
- *Oral histories*

Preserving and sharing Washington's stories

Funding for Washington State from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) for Fiscal Year 2019 was **$3,490,908**.

Our work across the state is highlighted above, and here are a few additional facts that may be of interest:

- There are over 300 public libraries & branches and 23 tribal libraries.
- 123 libraries received grants for special programs and training.
- Washington Talking Book and Braille Library provided services to 6,326 individual patrons plus 251 community groups.

For additional information, please visit www.sos.wa.gov/library/
Questions may be sent to askalibrarian@sos.wa.gov

February 2020

Counting On WLA Book Awards

by Elizabeth Bruno

Levy and bond issues were run as special elections by many school districts throughout Washington on Tuesday, February 11, 2020. Most county elections websites reported voter turn-outs ranging between 30-38%. Why do some elections have a low registered voter turn-out? Are there ways in which libraries could demonstrate the value of the democratic process in younger generations to encourage higher voter turn-out in the future?

If young children are given the opportunity to make meaningful decisions through voting, it might be one of the catalysts needed for them to vote later on in every local, state, and national election. An opportunity for Kindergarten-6th grade Washingtonians to vote takes place annually during March and April for four book awards sponsored by the Washington Library Association School Library Division. School librarians from public, parochial, independent, and charter schools may have their students cast votes for any combination or all of the awards. Home-schooled students and public librarians may also cast votes for the Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award (WCCPBA).[1]

The total combined number of votes cast for the OTTER Award, the Towner Award for Informational Text, the Sasquatch Award, and the WCCPBA was 162,795 in 2019. Though the turn-out of voters for the WCCPBA is high (134,336 votes), it is important to ponder whether there are barriers that may be preventing more participation. After introducing the awards—several are quite new—practical tips for integrating voting into your curriculum are offered.

OTTER Award: "The OTTER Award is designed for ALL students in grades K-5. The committee recognizes that elementary children transition into chapter books at different ages and, as such, do not limit the reading or voting to a specific age or grade level. There are 6 nominees per year and students may vote after reading two or more nominees. Votes may be submitted April through mid-May. The first award was given in 2017 for Hilo: The Boy Who Crashed to Earth by Judd Winick."[2]

The Towner Award for Informational Text: For the purposes of this award, informational text is defined as that which serves chiefly to convey factual information to the reader and may contain biography, narrative and other forms. Second through sixth grade students who have read or listened to two or more titles may vote for their favorite of 10 nominees. Votes may be submitted early March through mid-May. The first award was given in 2014 for Snakes by Nic Bishop.

Sasquatch Award: Fourth through sixth graders may vote for their favorite on the list of 12 nominees after reading or listening to two or more titles. Votes are submitted between April 1st and April 30th. The novels on the list comprise various genres, reading and interest levels, and include diverse religious, racial, social, political, and economic viewpoints. The first award was given in 1998 for Mick Harte Was Here by Barbara Park.

Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award: Kindergarten through third grade students may vote for their favorite book on the list of 20 nominees. Votes may be submitted through April 30. There are informational text and poetry titles as well as a broad mix of fictional genres on this list. The first award was given in 1982 to Cross Country Cat by Mary Calhoun.

As a former committee member of the WCCPBA (December 2007-October 2012) and the Towner Award (Feb 2013-May 2016) committees, I heard concerns throughout the years about the awards. Each concern is addressed by providing thoughts and tips for consideration.

What if my library budget is limited?

- Scholastic Book warehouses have most of these titles available for their fall book fairs, so make sure you ask your representative to include those titles in your school's fair.

- Convert a portion of your book fair profit into Scholastic Dollars to purchase books on the four lists. Since you decide the number of titles on any list to purchase, not every title needs to be acquired.

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Elizabeth Bruno is an elementary school librarian at Rainier Elementary School, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA.

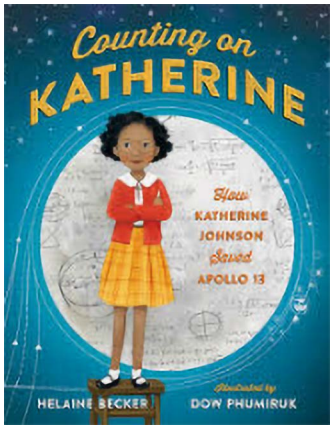
- Read the summaries to determine which books best match your student's interests and your teachers' curricular needs.

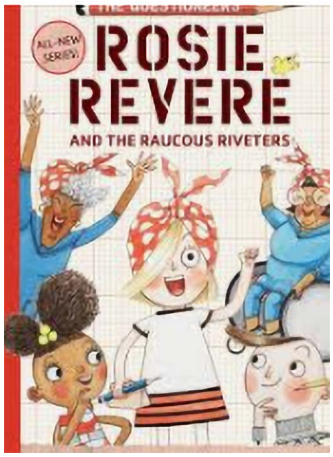
- If all else fails, check these books out from your local public library to share with your students. Ask staff to consider purchasing them. If you have families that purchase books as donations for your library, give them a specific title to give as a gift.

What if I have limited time to read picture books or promote books from the other three lists?

- Classroom teachers may read the books. Parents may read the books to their children and children may read to each other or themselves.

- If you have no time available to introduce the books, then hang posters and display the books. Simply tell your students to read two or more from the WCCPBA, OTTER, Towner, and Sasquatch lists and they can vote for their favorite from each list in March and April.





In addition to increasing student engagement and participation in voting and democracy, there are some instructional advantages as well. Although each of these lists have a specific purpose, it can be fun to combine titles during library instruction. For example, Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13 (2020 Towner Award Nominee) and Rosie Revere and the Raucous Riveters (2020 OTTER Award Nominee) can be used to compare and contrast as how Katherine and Rosie used the scientific method.

The most important reason students should have access to these books is that it exposes them to a wide range of carefully selected, current children's literature. Since they can vote for their favorites, they have a voice and can use it to make meaningful decisions with impact. Discussions about class voting results, grade level voting results, and overall school totals provide the platform for children to ponder various viewpoints. There is another opportunity to compare and contrast an individual school's results with the state totals, after they are posted online.

Perhaps their experience of voting for the four WLA Book Awards will be the first step for our young students to grow into active citizens that vote in all local, state, and national elections! 🕮

Why can't a Kindergartener, 1st, 7th, or 8th grader vote for their favorite Towner Award nominee?

- If you have students from grade levels outside the target range who want to vote or you want them to vote, then have them vote! The committees set a target grade range for each award. Librarians are not asked how many students per grade level voted when they submit totals to an award's voting link. They are only asked how many votes were cast for each book on the list.

There are so many other award lists. Why should I consider the four Washington State award nominees?

- You can count on the four Washington State Award Committees who have all given due diligence, time, and effort to selecting nominees each year that meet the personal, cultural, geographic, and curricular reading needs of students and teaching staff in this state.

- Adding these books assists in maintaining the currency of your collection. Your collection will not stagnate and become unappealing to your patrons.

RESOURCES

OTTER Awards: https://www.wla.org/about-otter-award

The Towner Award for Informational Text: https://www.wla.org/towner-award

Sasquatch Award: https://www.wla.org/sasquatch-award

Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award: https://wala.memberclicks.net/wccpba-award

NOTES

1 Detailed information about each of the awards, additional resources on using and promoting the books, and links to submit votes are available at https://www.wla.org/wla-book-awards.

2 "OTTER Award History," Washington Library Association online, https://www.wla.org/otter-award-history. 🕮

Weeding in Libraries Lacking Data: A Reflection

by Aimee Miles

I came into my school library a year and a half ago and quickly found that I was in a library with minimal data. I am the only library worker in my elementary school library. In order to make sense of the chaos, my first plan was to conduct an information audit and see what kind of school library I found myself running.

The library had been run by non-librarians in the years before I was hired. They worked at a time when the library was under threat from a director who wanted to get rid of the library. Specific challenges included: no current inventory, little collection development, and no weeding, as well as little family engagement with missing items. Invented call numbers meant that even if my data was current, the software couldn't read them. Additionally, the library's software, Follett Destiny, had not even been kept up-to-date.

It took months to begin to untangle all the various issues. A tunnel through the firewall was made so that my software could update automatically. I added emails so that I could notify families about their children's checkout materials, and therefore request replacements for lost materials. I began laying the groundwork with my students about the importance of checking out books before carrying them out of the library. At the end of year, I inventoried the library myself, putting my hands on all 8,000 books in my collection. In the summer, I had an iSchool grad student come in to fix the issue of fabricated call numbers.

Before the Big Weed

During the Big Weed

I started the weeding process by getting rid of the most extreme examples of unsuitable materials for this unmaintained collection. I ran circulation reports on books that hadn't been checkout in 10 years and pulled those off the shelves. Without time or better data to employ, I brought out ALA's M.U.S.T.I.E. to pare down the collection into something usable for the students.[1] Though I did not have good collection data for my library, I had good weeding data and reduced my collection by 1,600 books that were misleading, out-of-date, of no interest to my users, irrelevant to the needs of my users, and available elsewhere, especially at-home. After taking this step to weed over one-eighth of the collection, it is now less time-consuming to maintain the collection through regular weeding maintenance.

The library software still doesn't run a full-data analysis through Destiny. I would need to pay Destiny for further records in order to use their data analyzing software, so my collection development has had to make due with my own data generation and analysis. Among other things, I can use the catalog to generate data about circulation, average age of sections in the library, and create lists of books that haven't been checked out in 10 or more years. It's a little slower and not as visual, but it still gives me data to work with.

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Aimee Miles is the school librarian at a private elementary school in Seattle, WA. She graduated from UW iSchool in 2017, is the mom of two book-obsessed kids, and she sometimes writes about books around the internet. When not reading or cleaning the house, she likes to eat vegan doughnuts and watch rugby.

As part of my collection development plan for the library, I want a diversified collection that will prepare my students to see themselves, as well as people they may not have encountered yet.[2] As part of this plan, I make a count of the books I'm bringing in that are by people of color. I tally my selections when placing an order for new books, aiming to get close to half authors of color. While quotas aren't necessarily the best way to go, I've found that without keeping count to see where I'm putting my time and money, diversifying my collection would not happen in the quantities it needs to make a difference.

> **"There had been no inventory done in several years.... Invented call numbers meant that even if my data was current, the software couldn't read them."**

For me, a good collection is a mixture of data and trained instinct. It is harder to make this work in certain areas of the collection, such as children's non-fiction, but it's always worth trying. I want to make sure that I'm putting my budget toward supporting under-represented publications and that I am making well-done stories and utilizing materials about a variety of peoples. I built the habit of being more aware of the authors' identities while writing for Book Riot. I do this in my personal life as well. I find this practice to be invaluable for mirroring my subconscious with the software data.

After the Big Weed

My last word on the importance of data in libraries is on how much administrators love good data. In running my circulation numbers at the end of my first year, I could demonstrate to my supervisors the value of having a trained librarian in the school library. Circulation had doubled in my first year from each of the previous years without a librarian. My boss mentioned it publically to the rest of the staff and my budget doubled for my second year in the library. So: keep track of data that demonstrates your own value and proudly share it with bosses. While I don't expect to double circulation every year, hard data confirmed to my supervisors that the library and I are actively serving the students, and that we deserve money to do the library work. 📖

NOTES

1 "Collection Maintenance and Weeding," American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2018, http://www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/weeding.

2 Rudine Sims Bishop,"Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors," Perspectives 1, no. 3 (1990), ix–xi; Uma Krishnaswami, "Why Stop At Windows and Mirrors? Children's Book Prisms", The Horn Book, Inc., accessed February 29th, 2020, https://www.hbook.com/?detailStory=why-stop-at-windows-and-mirrors-childrens-book-prisms.

Collection Development and Data: Using Data to Improve Decision Making Processes

by Jay Peters

We have nearly 300,000 print materials in our collection at Mid-Columbia Libraries. Data is thus essential to my role as a collection development librarian. In our twelve branch library system, we lean on data to ensure that we are getting the right items to the right branches, while saving money and increasing circulation. Data influences day-to-day decisions, such as helping to determine how many copies of a book are needed where, and impacts high-level and long-term decisions, such as collection right-sizing and collection supplementation during busy seasons.

> **"[W]e lean on data to ensure that we are getting the right items to the right branches, while saving money and increasing circulation."**

Data alone is not enough, though. To get the most out of our data, I created two Microsoft Excel-based tools to synthesize raw data, create new statistics and recommendations, and display it in a digestible format. Excel is familiar to many librarians and has the lowest barrier to entry. In what follows, I talk about two tools that I created, and share some additional insights on data-driven collection development.

Tracking collection capacities

The Load Balancing tool tracks our collection capacities. Our ILS allows us to set the maximum number of items that can be checked in per collection at each branch. Any item checked in over the collection limit is sent in-transit to a branch that has room in that particular collection. The Load Balancing report, populated by two raw data sets, allows us to keep our finger on the pulse of all collections at all branches. One set shows the number of items checked-in and out for every collection and branch. The other shows items that are in-transit at the time the report was created (fig. 1).

Once the report is generated, it is automatically emailed to the appropriate parties, keeping them abreast of the status of their collections. Graphically, the report uses primary colors (branches over 100% capacity in red and under 80% capacity in blue) to draw our attention, ensuring that we are aware of areas of need. Receiving this report twice weekly allows us to proactively respond when issues arise.

FIGURE 1

	Basin City	Benton City	Bookmobile	Connell
Adult Non-fiction				
Shelves	12	62	6.0	34.1
Capacity	335	1693	225	675
Checked In	300	1586	233	628
In-Transit To	8	0	0	0
In-Transit From	0	0	0	0
Assigned	394	1794	244	747
% Checked Out	23.86%	11.59%	4.51%	15.93%
% Capacity	91.94%	93.68%	103.56%	93.04%

This figure shows the non-fiction collection data at a handful of branches. As an example, Bookmobile's Adult non-fiction capacity is at 103.56%, which equates to eight items over its capacity of 225. In this case, we may relocate some items from the Bookmobile to a branch that has more room.

Jay Peters is a collection development librarian at Mid-Columbia Libraries. He can be reached at jmpeters@midcolumbialibraries.org.

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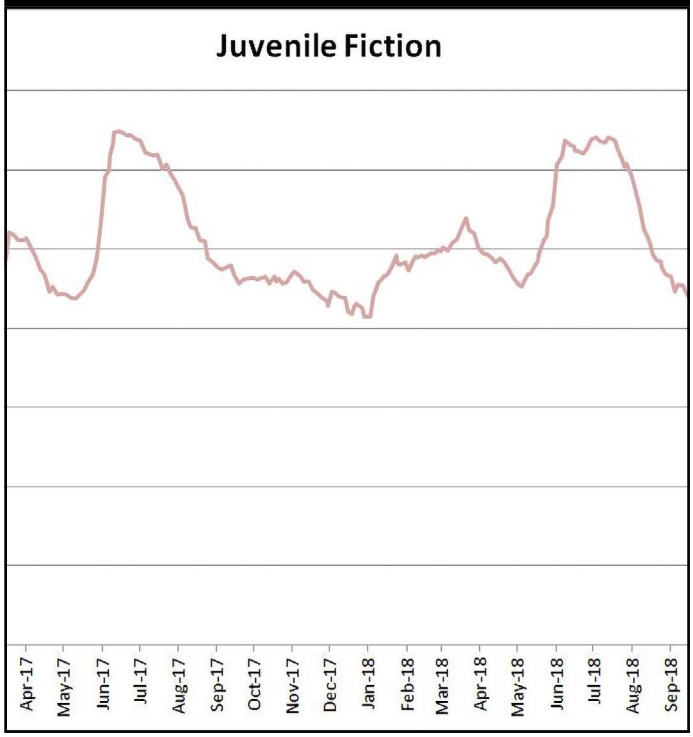
In addition to the collection limit data, the Load Balancing tool features a series of charts that show the number of items out per collection at the time of the data update. These charts show nearly five years of data, allowing us to easily see longitudinal trends (fig. 2). This shows how checkout patterns change over the course of the year.

Are we circulating as many books during the Summer Reading Challenge as we used to? We can take a look at this chart and immediately get an answer. Having this information readily available allows us to make appropriate adjustments to the collections by purchasing more copies in the summer and then weeding in the winter. We can also see whether a change we made has an impact: did a major renovation impact the number of items checked out?

FIGURE 2



This figure illustrates the ebbs and flows of checkouts throughout the year.

Analyzing collection content

To understand our collection better, we also make use of a tool called CAT—Collection Analysis and Action Tool. CAT is built with raw data pulled from our ILS, including all active and inactive (withdrawn, lost, etc.) items that have at least one year-to-date circulation. CAT automatically applies a series of formulas, returning over 24,000,000 data points about our items to help shape decisions. We gather and track circulation data (snapshot and historical), as well as location information.

Snapshot circulation data shows select metrics at the time of the most recent data update, including months since the item was added to the system, months since the item last circulated, circulations per month, and projected annual circulation. Historical circulation data is saved on a monthly basis and includes dead items, items that circulated in the last check-out period, and items with zero lifetime circulation. Every four weeks, a new set of data for these metrics is saved. This allows us to see trends and behaviors over a longer time frame.

Examining trends also allows us to see if changes we made have had an impact. If we have made a concerted effort to reduce the number of dead items, we can refer to this historical data for a definite answer. Viewing items circulated in the last check-out period over a long time frame helps us get ahead of high-demand times of the year and respond appropriately.

Based on circulation statistics of an item since it was added to a system, we can also make purchasing and weeding recommendations that help to ensure that we are meeting the demand for titles, authors, and subjects accordingly. If this metric is above a certain threshold (variable by collection), then copies are recommended to be added. Conversely, if this metric is below a certain threshold (also variable), then copies are recommended to be removed. This metric works on a title, Dewey range, and author basis.

Finally, CAT helps us with location related analyses, determining which copies of a title are extra and where these extra copies are needed. Formulas determine which branches are understocked and overstocked by author and Dewey range (based on circulation by stat code); these items are then allocated to branches without duplicating titles at the receiving branch. Between March 14, 2019 and November 27, 2019, we moved 21,628 items using the extra copy criteria. After being relocated to where they were needed, these items circulated a total of 42,201 times, resulting in a 49% increase in circulation.

Using data is pivotal in collection development, but in order to make use of it we must have a way to synthesize it. With the Excel-based tools I created and explored above, we are able to make better purchasing and weeding decisions, relocate items more intelligently, and respond to trends more proactively. Doing so allows us to get more usage out of our materials while stretching our budget. 📖

Washington Public Library Statistics Data, Merged

by Jon McConnel

Would you like to use data in telling your library's story to your board and community? If you would like a hand exploring how your Washington state public library's metrics have changed over the years, or with comparing your library's measures to others in the state, there is a free tool available that can help you get started!

The Washington State Library has been collecting annual data from the state's public libraries since the early 1920s.[1] They have been publishing a report of that data annually since at least 1992, providing comparisons and rankings of the state's libraries. Data for reporting years 1999 – 2018 are available online as individual files to download. However, if you wish to see multiple years of your library's data, or make comparisons between several libraries over multiple years, data provided by the State Library is not provided in a format that makes it quick or simple to compare.

Shortly after starting at the Whatcom County Library as their ILS Administrator, the Board of Trustees requested a presentation on multi-year trends between multiple Washington libraries. I built my own comparison tool using my previous experience with wrangling data and creating visualizations. You can use this open source tool to download data and use it to help meet your library's data comparison needs. I am consistently updating the tool as new data is published.

About The Tool

The tool is an .xlsx workbook consisting of:

- The data from the Washington Public Library Statistics reports, 2002-2018
- Consumer Price Index data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002-2018
- An 'Info.' worksheet that describes the contents of the workbook
- A 'Master' worksheet that controls which libraries are being compared
- ~60 charts
- Category worksheets that collate all the data for a single topic (or several related topics) over all available years:
    - Population
    - Circulation
    - eCirc (Circulation of Downloadable Electronic Resources)
    - Users
    - Visits
    - Full time Employees
    - Revenue
    - Expenditures
    - Budget Variance (Difference between Revenue and Expenditures)
    - Hours
    - Programs
    - Program Attendance
    - Compensation
    - Interlibrary Loans
    - Collections
    - Expenditure on Materials
    - Square Footage
    - Computers
    - Computer Use

When the State Library publishes each year's new data, I take a few hours to incorporate the data into an updated version of the workbook. Each year's published data gets manipulated so the columns are all the same for every year, even though the State regularly makes minor changes to its questions. Each year's data worksheet must have exactly the same columns and column order as other years for this tool to work. After updating the Category worksheets and all the charts to include the new year's data, the updated file is made available for download.

I now work at the Bellingham Public Library and the file is currently available from its website.

Using the Tool

For those of you who may be worried about diving into an Excel spreadsheet, don't be! If something goes wrong with your copy of the workbook, just download a new copy and start fresh.

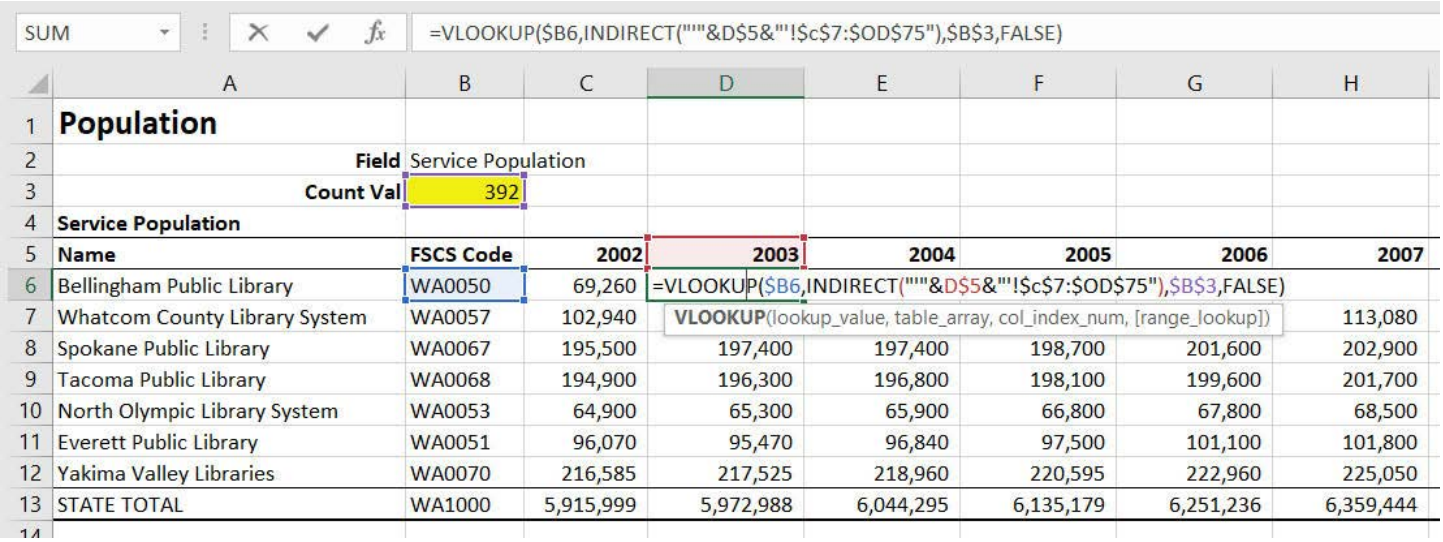
To use the tool, start with the Master worksheet. As you make

continued on next page

Jon McConnel is the Head of Digital Services at Bellingham Public Library.

Libraries and their codes for inclusion in the comparison				Customize these 8 libraries to meet your needs.	
	Abbrev.	Name	FSCS Code		
1	BPL	Bellingham Public Library	WA0050	This row gets the heavy red line on the charts -- probably your library	
2	WCLS	Whatcom County Library System	WA0057	peer	
3	Spo.	Spokane Public Library	WA0067	peer	sometimes excluded from charts
4	Tac.	Tacoma Public Library	WA0068	peer	sometimes excluded from charts
5	NOLS	North Olympic Library System	WA0053	peer	
6	Everett	Everett Public Library	WA0051	peer	
7	YVL	Yakima Valley Libraries	WA0070	peer, but often excluded from the charts (you'll have to double check)	
8	WA	STATE TOTAL	WA1000	Probably leave this one alone. The FSCS code is made-up.	

Master Table. Changing the data in the table at the top of the Master worksheet will update all of the other tables and charts automatically.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	**Population**							
2	**Field**	Service Population						
3	**Count Val**	392						
4	**Service Population**							
5	**Name**	**FSCS Code**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
6	Bellingham Public Library	WA0050	69,260	=VLOOKUP($B6,INDIRECT("'"&D$5&"'!c7:OD75"),B3,FALSE)				
7	Whatcom County Library System	WA0057	102,940					113,080
8	Spokane Public Library	WA0067	195,500	197,400	197,400	198,700	201,600	202,900
9	Tacoma Public Library	WA0068	194,900	196,300	196,800	198,100	199,600	201,700
10	North Olympic Library System	WA0053	64,900	65,300	65,900	66,800	67,800	68,500
11	Everett Public Library	WA0051	96,070	95,470	96,840	97,500	101,100	101,800
12	Yakima Valley Libraries	WA0070	216,585	217,525	218,960	220,595	222,960	225,050
13	STATE TOTAL	WA1000	5,915,999	5,972,988	6,044,295	6,135,179	6,251,236	6,359,444

Population Data Page: The workbook uses VLOOKUPs to collate data from the yearly sheets based on FSCS Code, Year, and column Count Value.

changes to the list of libraries in the 8 rows at the top of the Master, all the category tables and charts automatically update to match.

The Master worksheet includes instructions on how to customize the 8 rows that feed the rest of the tables and charts in the workbook. It also lists all of the libraries in the state with their Federal-State Cooperative System (FSCS) Code for easy reference.

The automatic updating works through cell equations that reference data in other worksheets and cells. The first table on each category worksheet references the Master sheet to determine which libraries are included. Other tables on the sheet reference the top table.

The rest of the cells in each data table use the VLOOKUP function to pull values from the worksheets holding the State's published data. The year tells it which worksheet to look in, the FSCS Code tells it which row, and the Count Val tells it which column.

Most of the Category worksheets include several tables that either already have charts created for them, or could. For example, the Circ worksheet includes these tables:

- Total Circulation
- Change in Total Circulation
- % Change in Total Circulation
- Indexed Total Circulation
- Turnover: Total Circulation divided by Total Collection
- Cost per Circulation: Total Operating Expenditure, constant dollars divided by Total Circ.

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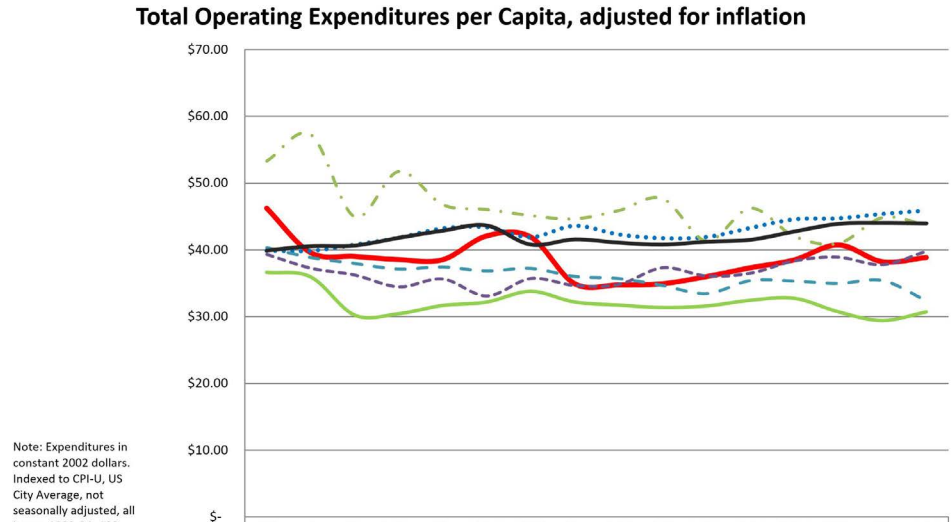


	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bellingham Public Library	$46.24	$39.59	$39.02	$38.55	$38.52	$42.08	$41.94	$34.95	$34.75	$34.93	$36.00	$37.31	$38.50	$40.74	$38.23	$38.85
Whatcom County Library System	$39.91	$39.88	$40.80	$41.83	$43.21	$43.39	$41.90	$43.60	$42.32	$41.76	$41.93	$43.28	$44.57	$44.71	$45.37	$45.87
North Olympic Library System	$39.31	$37.26	$36.24	$34.48	$35.66	$33.12	$35.72	$34.69	$34.82	$37.33	$36.10	$36.51	$38.36	$38.90	$37.78	$39.79
Everett Public Library	$40.33	$38.87	$37.98	$37.14	$37.45	$36.86	$37.24	$36.04	$35.73	$34.69	$33.47	$35.42	$35.34	$34.98	$35.42	$32.40
Tacoma Public Library	$53.30	$57.24	$44.94	$51.75	$46.77	$46.05	$45.13	$44.65	$45.89	$47.68	$41.33	$46.24	$42.03	$40.97	$44.84	$43.75
STATE TOTAL	$39.92	$40.56	$40.66	$41.82	$42.87	$43.65	$40.80	$41.58	$41.09	$40.79	$41.23	$41.52	$42.76	$43.90	$44.02	$43.97
Spokane Public Library	$36.66	$35.98	$30.23	$30.43	$31.67	$32.18	$33.80	$32.20	$31.73	$31.36	$31.59	$32.45	$32.75	$30.72	$29.39	$30.70

Example Chart: Total Operating Expenditures per Capita, adjusted for inflation

- Circulation per Full Time Employee Staff Hours: Total Circulation / (Annual Public Service Hours * FTE)
- Circulation per Capita
- Circulation per Resident Registered User
- Circulation per Hour (Annual Public Service Hours)
- Circulation per Visit
- Circulation per Full Time Employee

A major convenience of the tool is that it includes some metrics that are difficult to calculate, like Total Operating Expenditures per Capita, adjusted for Inflation. This chart can help tell a story about how efficient your library is, or perhaps how your funding is falling behind population growth and inflation.

I would be remiss if I didn't admit that not every aspect of the tool is automatic. Chart labels do not move automatically, so most any time you change the libraries on the Master worksheet, some of the chart labels will need to be manually moved around. The text of the labels does update, though.

Despite all the data it currently draws on, the tool is still just scratching the surface of the possible analyses you could do with the State's data. The 2018 data table has 393 columns, but the existing category worksheets only use 39 of them! While not every column would be of use, there are certainly more than 50 that could be interesting! I look forward to hearing about the new analyses you might try out. 🕮

RESOURCES

Download the file: https://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/wplsr-merged

Original source of the data: https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/libdev/publications.aspx#WAStats

NOTES

1 Washington State Library, Washington Libraries. Public Library Statistics (Olympia, Wash.: Washington State Library, 1984), http://stlow.iii.com/record=b1027276~S2.

Keeping Count with Key Results from the SDL Needs Assessment Survey

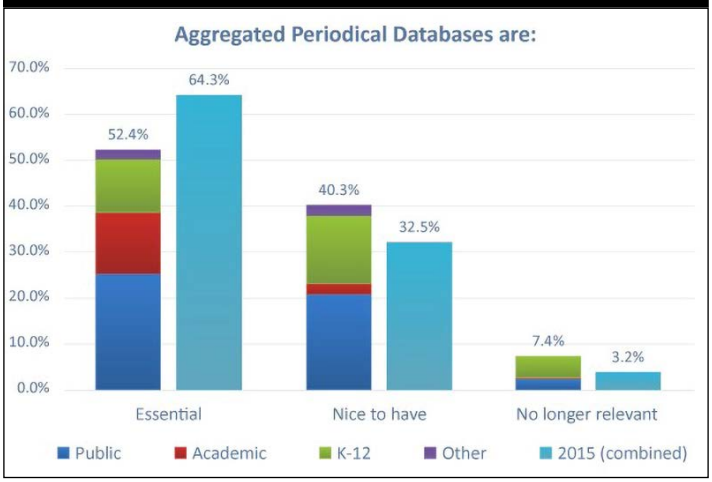
by Will Stuivenga

Statewide Database Licensing (SDL) is the longest-running Library Development project at the Washington State Library (WSL). It has provided online resources to multiple types of libraries since 1998. The project delivers a suite of research databases from ProQuest, including aggregated periodicals, K-12 resources, and national and regional newspapers. The ProQuest package includes several aggregated periodical databases including

- Research Library (6600+ titles covering all subjects)
- The Trade & Industry portion of ABI/INFORM (3100+ titles)
- Consumer Health Database (350+ titles)
- eLibrary (2090 full-text magazines, newspapers, books, and transcript titles, plus a collection of over 7 million maps, pictures, weblinks, and audio/video files)

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2



In addition, WSL now offers access to a large newspaper collection from NewsBank, which has over 140 sources from Washington State including digital "page-view" editions of six prominent in-state papers.

Last fall, the SDL project conducted a needs assessment survey of library staff throughout the state. Some key results based on the 497 responses received are presented below. Participation rate was comparable to previous surveys in 2015 and 2010, which had 407 and 588 responses respectively. The 2019 response rate favored public libraries more heavily with fewer academic responses than previous surveys (fig. 1).

Results

We asked library staff to select the statement that best reflects how they view aggregated periodical databases in general, and specifically in their library (fig. 2). While the number of respondents who said that aggregated periodical databases are "no longer relevant" remains low, the percentage has increased. At the same time, the percentage of those who think periodical databases are "essential" has decreased to just over 50%. The percentage of those who think these databases are merely "nice to have" has also increased.

We asked how often library staff use the databases (figs. 3 & 4). Over time, the number of respondents who say they use the ProQuest databases daily has declined fairly substantially. While the number who report weekly use has remained about the same, the number who report using ProQuest only monthly or less has tended to

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Will Stuivenga is Library Development Cooperative Projects Manager for the Washington State Library, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State. He has managed the Statewide Database Licensing project since 2004, and the Washington Digital Library Consortium, which provides the Washington Anytime Library to 45 of the state's smaller and mid-sized public libraries, since 2010. In his "spare" time, Will moonlights as a church musician, reads avidly, collects and wears vintage neckties, enjoys digital photography, and takes walks with his wife. He can be reached at will.stuivenga@sos.wa.gov or 360.704.5217

increase.

The 2019 numbers for NewsBank are relatively comparable (fig. 4). Since NewsBank has only been available since September 1, 2018, compared with 20 years for ProQuest, a lower use frequency is to be expected. Because we don't have multi-year data, we showed the library type breakout instead.

> "We … [have an] opportunity for trying for a new approach, while attempting to meet the ever-evolving needs of Washington libraries."

The Future of the Statewide Database Licensing project

We asked whether the SDL project should continue forward and keep doing what it has been; change direction and do something different; or be discontinued, freeing federal LSTA funds to be used elsewhere. By a large margin, respondents continue to indicate their strong support of continuing the project as is, although this response has declined slightly over the years (fig. 5).

Ironically, after indicating a strong preference for having the SDL project "keep doing what it has been", respondents chose the opposite course of action in the next question. Respondents were given a choice between having the SDL project offer:

- The option for libraries to select (and pay for) only the specific products that they want;
- Different products based on the type of library;
- The same products to every library regardless of type.

Libraries strongly favored the first and second options over the third option, which represents the status quo (fig 6). The responses were essentially the same, regardless of library type.

Implementing either of the first two choices would be a major change of direction for SDL. Given the statewide scope of the project, and the nature of the marketplace, it would be difficult to accomplish. The current system rewards a "one size fits all" approach. That means there are significant savings through leveraging the combined purchasing power of the state's many different libraries buying as a single entity.

One cannot help but wonder if responses to the previous question might have been different, had the questions been presented in the opposite order. Perhaps respondents were not thinking about specific changes they might like, but were rather expressing their strong support for the continuation of the SDL project.

Results from the survey, which also include "breakout" numbers by type of library, by type of staff position, as well as questions about cost subsidies, will be used to guide the upcoming procurement process and while drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP), to be released later this year. The current contract

FIGURE 3

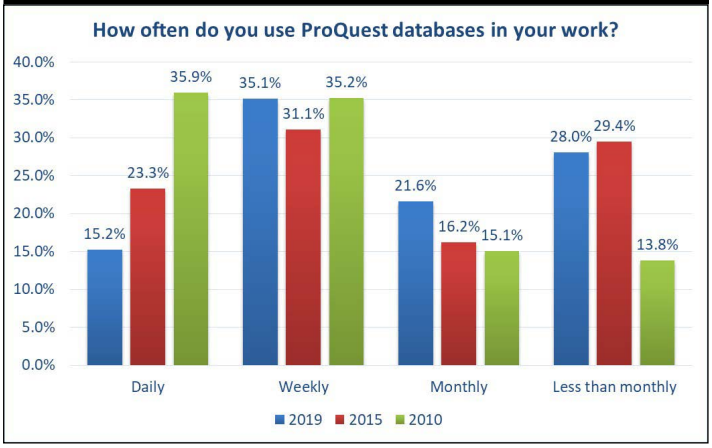


FIGURE 4

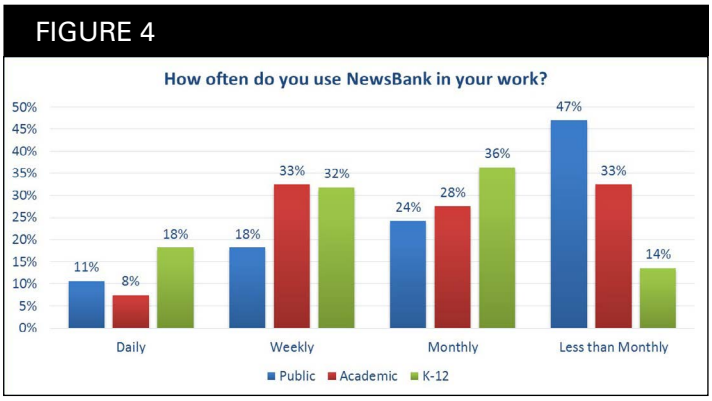
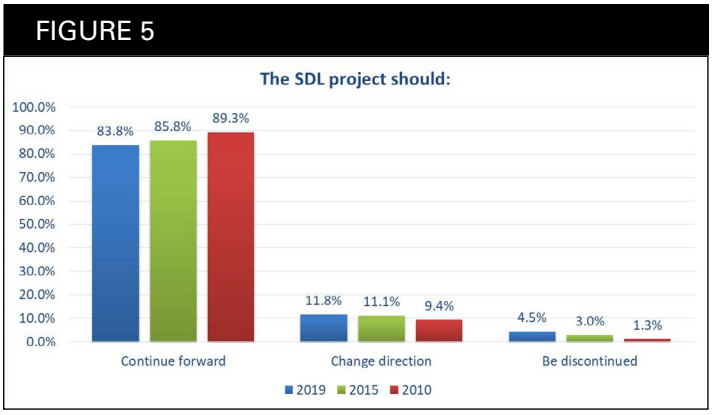


FIGURE 5



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Counting in Community: Shelter Overwhelm Revisited

by Suzanne Carlson-Prandini

A year ago, the Bellingham Public Library hosted an emergency day shelter for two weeks during a period of severe weather.[1] The question of whether the library would continue to serve as a severe weather shelter in the future remained open, especially as there had been a wide range of responses to the Library's actions.This article follows up on that question and reflects on the importance of libraries as a public forum.

> **"There are so few public places where individuals can be heard, where complexity can be explored, and where there is room to air opposing and sometimes conflicting needs."**

Quick Recap

In the winter of 2019, Bellingham's shelters were overwhelmed during a long period of unusually cold and snowy weather. Citizens turned toward their local government and demanded an immediate increase in shelter capacity to meet the pressing need. The city worked with community partners to provide shelter both day and night. They did this, in part, by offering designated shelter spaces in public buildings, such as the library and some park facilities.[2]

Outcomes

The short term impacts were discussed in the first article. Enough time has now passed to look at the mid term impacts. Initially, while many expressed gratitude that the library stepped in as a designated space to be warm and dry, both staff and library patrons expressed concerns over how traditional library services were affected. The largest impact was to those library users who had reservations for the Lecture Room.

The shelter required the use of the Lecture Room due to capacity and connected kitchen facilities. Groups with reservations were reassigned on the days the shelter was active, sometimes to other locations in the building or to other locations in City facilities. Library staff warned groups in advance of potential impact, but the logistics of relocating meetings took a great deal of staff time and good will from the community.

A secondary effect was the unanticipated exposure to intimacy. The weather event extended into Valentine's Day, which may seem odd to mention. However, the Lecture Room is located directly across from the Children's Library, creating some interesting dynamics between the people accessing the shelter, their romantic partners, and families coming in for Storytime. Schools were closed, increasing the overall volume. The hallway, usually an overflow space for strollers, hosted ardent couples and conversations not usually held outside the Children's Library. Privacy is not a luxury afforded to those who are unhoused. Some parents bringing their children into the library expressed their dismay at the content of the conversations overheard. The staff members who could get into work did their best to be present, but were stretched thin just covering the public service desks as well as spaces that didn't normally require staff presence. At one point branch locations were kept closed in order to adequately staff the Central Library.

Finally, as the weather stretched into the second week, needs for clean laundry, showers and a more varied diet became evident. All these factors contributed in the following months to many conversations inside and outside the building about what it would take to create a sustainable solution that would fully address the complex range of needs of people experiencing housing insecurity in this community. These conversations were not always easy and staff did not always have answers to people's questions. Nevertheless, the conversations were essential to deepening community awareness and understanding.

A shelter, ideally, provides more than just a physical place to be. The privacy and dignity of those accessing services should be considered as should availability of other services like food, clothing, medical expertise, showers, laundry, and counseling, to name just a few. The emergency day shelter underscored the importance of building capacity that included full services and appropriate staffing.

Due to this knowledge and awareness of a scheduled library renovation in 2020, the City worked with community partners to

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Suzanne Carlson-Pradini is a full-time public services librarian at the Bellingham Public Library and a very part-time reference librarian at Whatcom Community College.

build alternative capacity in both the county as well as in the City for this winter.

Although this winter's shelter schema does not include the library as a shelter location, the library has found other ways of continuing to remain a vital support to those experiencing housing insecurity. Library materials are loaned out to a new seasonal Women's Shelter which is open during the winter months. Library staff still provide outreach services to the local low barrier shelter that is open year-round. They also continue to receive training on best methods for working with patrons experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

At this point in time, the role of the library has reverted to one of referral services and providing access to materials.

Conclusion

In November of 2018, planning to provide an emergency day shelter in addition to functioning as a library felt risky as it was not clear if the emergency day shelter at the library would be temporary or permanent. And yet the hope was that the library would function as a space for public discussion and solution creation on an urgent community topic, and thus the risk was worth taking.

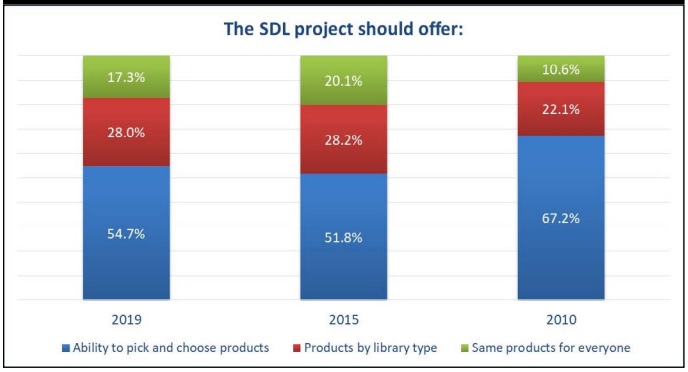
In hindsight, this experience proved invaluable towards informing more permanent options. It serves as an excellent reminder of the role libraries can play in their communities as spaces for the airing of communal grievances and uncovering greater needs. Not all may see this role as comfortable, but it is a necessary one. There are so few public places where individuals can be heard, where complexity can be explored, and where there is room to air opposing and sometimes conflicting needs. Libraries continue to be vital places where community process unfolds and where human experience counts. 🕮

NOTES

1 Suzanne Carlson-Prandini, "Shelter Overwhelm: One Community's Response," Alki 35, no 1. (2019): 8-9, https://wala.memberclicks.net/assets/Alki/Alki_March2019_r6.pdf

2 Ibid.

FIGURE 6



with ProQuest expires June 30, 2021. This provides an opportunity for trying for a new approach, while attempting to meet the ever-evolving needs of Washington libraries.

Volunteer opportunities

We can always use more help in scoring vendor proposals and reviewing their proposed online resources. Anyone interested in volunteering to assist in the procurement process should contact SDL project manager, Will Stuivenga. His contact information can be found at the bottom of this article.

Note: A big thank-you to Jeremy Stroud, WSL Senior Graphic Designer, for creating the charts and tables used in this article. 🕮

Join WLA

The Washington Library Association includes some of the best and brightest members of the Washington library community.

We are united by our care for the well-being of Washington libraries. For more information, visit our website at wla.org. Explore the site and make our business your business.

Membership information is at wla.org/membership.

Milestones

Milestones focuses on significant moments for libraries statewide – recognizing notable new hires, transitions, expansions and retirements, as well as remembrances of those who have passed. We're looking for submissions, of approximately 250 words, that highlight notable accomplishments in the careers of those profiled. Photographs are encouraged. Please send information to alkieditor@wla.org.

Seattle Public Schools Welcomes....

After eighteen years with King County Library System, former WLA president Darcy Brixey has started a new position with Seattle Public Schools as the manager of Library Services and Instructional Materials.

CIELO wins Library of Congress Literacy Award

CIELO in Olympia has won a Library of Congress Literacy Award and $2,225 in recognition of their innovative approach to literacy education that focuses on the entire family as well as the entire person. Centro Integral Educativo Latino de Olympia (CIELO), a nonprofit with a focus on reaching immigrant individuals and families, offers free ELL, GED prep, adult basic education, sewing, and certified computer classes. Their mission is to promote community, self-sufficiency, and leadership of Latina/Latino and other immigrant/refugee communities in the South Puget Sound area.

Kindra Galan and Charo Portaro of CIELO

CIELO was nominated for this award by the Washington Center for the Book, which is a partnership of The Seattle Public Library and the Washington State Library, and is an affiliate of the National Center for the Book. Library of Congress Literacy Award winners are nominated by state Centers for the Book. Ten awards are given each year, and this marks the first time an organization has won from Washington state. Congratulations to CIELO!

~Submitted by Linda Johns, Assistant Managing Librarian (interim), Humanities and Reader Services, The Seattle Public Library

Award for Lasting Innovative Community Service Programs

Tiffany Coulson, a literacy consultant and librarian at the Mattawa Branch of the North Central Regional Library, will receive $1000 in books for her library and national recognition as a runner up for the Penguin Random House Library Award for Innovation Through Adversity. In partnership with ALA, the Penguin Random House Library Award recognizes U.S. libraries and librarians who create lasting innovative community service programs that successfully inspire and connect with new readers. Her work with Wahluke School District's six-week summer program called "Wordless Conversations" helped Spanish speaking parents teach their children reading comprehension skills at home, using wordless picture books with semiotic tools. The program was also presented as a white paper and workshop at Central Washington University's "Teaching Equity is Central" Conference last October. Coulson is an MLIS graduate of the University of Washington's iSchool.

~Submitted by Tiffany Coulson Mattawa Branch of the North Central Regional Library

Whatcom County Library System notes with sadness the passing of a library champion.

Sigrid Brorson joined the Whatcom County Library System in 1974 as a Local Librarian and retired as Assistant Director in 2010. Her tenure is legendary. Some say she kept a sleeping bag in her office so she could burn the midnight oil and be up and at 'em early the next day. She capably supported Branch Managers through times of challenge and times of celebration.South Whatcom Branch Manager Lizz Roberts said, "Sigrid was feisty and unapologetic about her passion and support of library services for everyone. I loved working with her!"

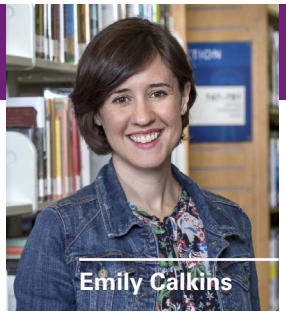
Sigrid was also a founding member of the Whatcom County Library Foundation whose mission is to "promote and enhance WCLS programming and foster intellectual freedom."

We received word on Thursday that Sigrid passed away. She was a force to be reckoned with and remains strong in our memories and in our hearts. Thank you, Sig.

~Submitted by Kate Laughlin, Strategic Advisor (she/her), Washington Library Association 🕮

I'd Rather Be Reading

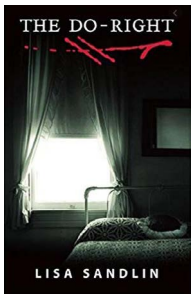
by Emily Calkins

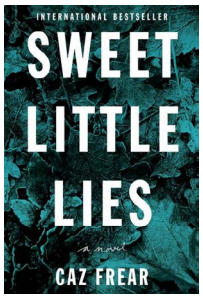


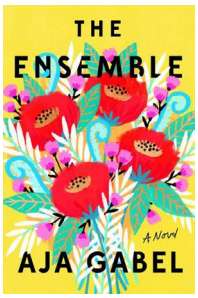
An Introduction and Six Favorites

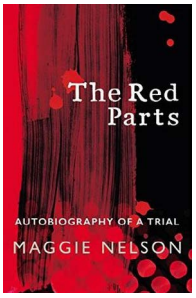
I'm delighted, if a little intimated, to be taking over this column from the inimitable David Wright. I'm currently the readers' services program coordinator at the King County Library System, where I organize system-wide readers' advisory efforts, organize readers' advisory training for staff, support book groups, coordinate author events, and co-host our podcast *The Desk Set*. Before moving into this role, I worked on KCLS's social media team and as a teen services librarian at KCLS and elsewhere. I'm sure what you really want to know, though, is what I'd rather be reading!

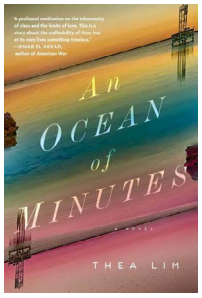
My plan for the column is to keep it much the same as it has been during David's tenure—some specific recommendations, some musing on readers' advisory-related topics. For this issue, by way of an introduction, here are 7 of my favorite titles to suggest. They are my go-tos for several reasons: they're lesser known (familiar to library workers, but probably not to patrons), they're old enough that they're usually available without holds, and they fulfill a common readers' advisory question.

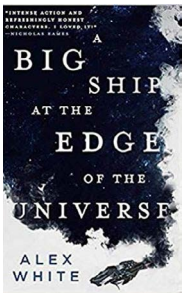












Patrons using our form-based readers' advisory service BookMatch are more likely to ask for mysteries than any other genre. *The Do-Right* and *Sweet Little Lies* are two of my under-the-radar favorites, both series starters. *The Do-Right*, by Lisa Sandlin, is an atmospheric historical mystery set in Beaumont, Texas in 1973. It follows new PI Tom Phelan and his secretary Delpha Wade. Sandlin's evocative writing has a noir quality, but she juxtaposes it with dry humor and deep empathy for her characters. Delpha, recently out of prison after serving fourteen years for killing a man who was raping her, is especially unforgettable. For fans of mysteries with unusual and well-developed settings and characters.

In *Sweet Little Lies* by Caz Frear, a young police detective living in London hides her family's potential connection to a high profile murder case and remembers the missing girl who changed her view of her father forever. This is an excellent police procedural with a flawed but essentially likable protagonist. For fans of Michael Connelly, Kate Atkinson, and Attica Locke.

For readers who like Ann Patchett, Meg Wolitzer, Celeste Ng, and other character-driven literary or popular fiction, I love to recommend *The Ensemble* by Aja Gabel. Gabel's debut follows the four members of a string quartet over a couple of decades as their careers and personal relationships evolve. It has lovely character building and fascinating details about the world of professional musicians.

During the recent true crime boom, I've turned frequently to Maggie Nelson's *The Red Parts*. Like the blockbuster *I'll Be Gone in the Dark*, it combines true crime with elements of memoir; Nelson recounts the trial of the man who murdered her aunt nearly 30 years before his arrest. It's a thoughtful meditation on crime, the idea of justice and our cultural obsession with violence.

Finally, two science fiction picks. First is Thea Lim's lovely and melancholy *An Ocean of Minutes*. For readers who like fiction at the border of literature and genre, this gorgeous novel uses a sci-fi premise—a global pandemic and time travel—to explore both contemporary issues like immigration and economic inequality as well as timeless themes like distance and loss. For fans of *Station Eleven* and *American War*.

A Big Ship at the Edge of the Universe is action-packed, effortlessly inclusive fun featuring LGBTQ characters and relationships, space battles, and unique world-building that combines elements of sci-fi with a complex magical system. Although it's less character-focused and more plot-driven than Becky Chamber's series, the diverse cast and essentially light-hearted nature of *A Big Ship* make it a nice read alike for *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet*. 📖

Emily Calkins is the readers' services program coordinator for the King County Library System, where she organizes system-wide readers' advisory efforts, supports book groups, coordinates author events, and co-hosts the library's podcast, The Desk Set.

Keeping Count

by Sarah Threlkeld

As a librarian it can be challenging to keep count of all of our responsibilities. From ordering the latest and greatest literature to planning engaging activities, displays, and events that will reach a variety of patrons and everything in between, we have a lot on our plates. Luckily, you can count on the Puget Sound Council to recommend high-quality titles that will pique readers' interests and fly off the shelves. Here are six recently reviewed books that focus on math and science in unexpected ways.

How Many? A Counting Book. Danielson, Christopher.Stenhouse Publisher, 2018. ISBN 1625311826
Recommended for Kindergarten through 6th grade
Review by Sarah Threlkeld

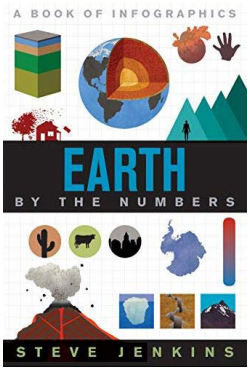
This is not your traditional counting book! This square-shaped nonfiction title starts off by informing the reader that its job is not to tell you what to count or how to count; instead, it prompts you to count whatever you fancy and notice relationships between objects and photographs. When looking at an egg carton with only one egg inside do you count one egg or eleven empty spaces? Or perhaps you notice the number of letters printed on the carton or the flaps that hold the carton closed? This book will make an excellent classroom resource for discussions about number sense and the idea that math is all around us, but it can also be enjoyed individually. A recommended purchase for all elementary collections.

Will Robots Ever Be Smarter Than Humans? Theories About Artificial Intelligence. Jackson, Tom.
Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2018. ISBN 1538226596
Recommended for 4th-6th grade
Review by Teresa Wittmann

Despite the intriguing title, this book is focused on the history,

uses, and possible future of artificial intelligence. This complex topic is broken down into six chapters with subsections. The chapters include robots, logic and decision making, artificial intelligence, testing artificial intelligence, everyday uses, and a little theory on the future of artificial intelligence. The organization and appealing format of this book and the clear information are the strengths of the book. Each subsection has a title, mini introduction, clear paragraphs, and captioned photos, diagrams, or illustrations on a colored background with an overall futuristic look. A timeline, glossary, list of resources, and index are included. It is part of the Beyond the Theory: Science of the Future series. This is an appealing and informative book that will appeal to students who love technology as well as those researching the topic.

Earth: By The Numbers. Jenkins, Steve.
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2019. ISBN 132885101X
Recommended for 3rd-5th grade
Review by Paula Wittmann



Filled with infographics, young readers are able to explore the physical earth through visuals in this book. Jenkins' signature cut-paper illustrations and clear sense of design and organization makes each spread interesting and clear to understand. The infographics are not too complex, and encourage readers to slow down and compare. What are the sizes of different features such as mountains, lakes; what is the depth of the ocean and continents; what sort of natural events exist, including volcanoes, storms and earthquakes. There is also a multi-page illustrated timeline of events in the earth's history. Back matter includes a useful glossary and bibliography. This is part of the By the Numbers Series. This book is a welcome addition to the non-fiction section, especially for readers who shy away from dense texts.

Sarah Threlkeld is the current Chair of Puget Sound Council, the head librarian at Briarwood Elementary in the Issaquah School District, a member of the Sasquatch Committee, and recovering podcaster. When she doesn't have her nose buried in a book, she is probably baking, running, singing, or building Lego with her family.

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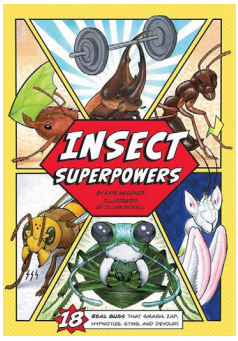
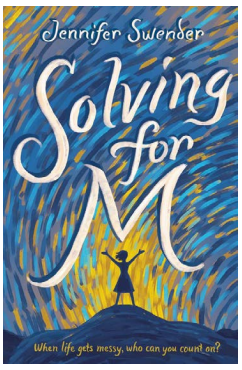
Insect Superpowers: 18 Powerful Bugs that Smash, Zap, Hypnotize, Sting, and Devour! Messner, Kate.
Chronicle Books, 2019.
Recommended for 5th-8th grade
Review by Teresa Bateman



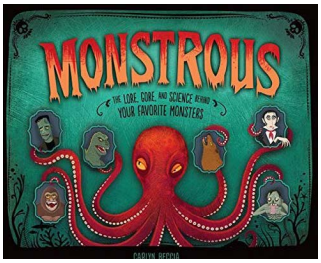
You like the Incredible Hulk? Superman? Hawkeye? Well, there are insects that also have what amount to superpowers, and they use them to further their own agendas. Are they heroes, or villains? The author lays out the facts, leaving readers to draw their own conclusions. She first explains how insects are classified, then divides them by superpower. Some are fierce and fast assassins. Others use their gift of camouflage to lure in innocent victims. Some are armored, or powerful, while others use chemical warfare. Still others are architects. Each featured insect gets a short fact box listing common name, alias, super-scientific name, trademark features, size (metric measurements), secret hideout, and superpower. Then bold, high-action graphic-novelesque illustrations by Jillian Nickell, and crisp fascinating text, combine to show that insect in action. This is terrific nonfiction that will both horrify and delight readers. Perfect!

Solving for M. Swender, Jennifer.
Crown Books for Young Readers, 2019. ISBN 1101932902
Recommended for 4th-6th grade
Review by Merrilyn Tucker



This debut novel was a pleasurable read from cover to cover. Mika is in fifth grade, starting at a new school and now separated from her best friend. When Mika begins her math class, she's surprised to find a very unorthodox math teacher who starts in the middle of the math book, eats candles that he lights in class, and regularly awards his students billions of extra credit points. Mika finds that, unlike in previous years, she is now liking math, at least the way Mr. Vann teaches it. She even likes the math journals he assigns, where she can combine her math and art skills. When Mika's mom discovers she has melanoma, Mika relies on the friends she's making in math class, her math applied learning, and her journal to work through an extremely challenging time in her young life. This author and the illustrator take a difficult subject and turn it into a lovely, well-paced journey of a fifth-grade student and how she handles the turmoil in her life.

Monstrous: The Lore, Gore and Science Behind Your Favorite Monsters. Beccia, Carlyn.
Carolrhoda Books, 2019. ISBN 1512449164
Recommended for 6th-12th grade
Review by Eve Datisman



Whether they lurch out of labs, terrorize entire cities, envy our use of mirrors, sing sailors to their death, howl under the full moon, or want to eat our braaaaaiiinnnns, we can't get enough of monsters. This book intrepidly investigates the science behind eight monsters and cryptids, digging into the possibilities of their existence, exploring ways to react in case of a hypothetical encounter, and drawing real-world parallels. Each scenario is loaded with data: chapters describe why King Kong's size makes him a mathematical impossibility (the square-cube law!), why the mechanics of bodily decomposition might have made people a few centuries ago inclined to believe in vampires, and map the places in the world where Godzilla might like to stop fill up on radioactivity. Beccia illustrates in a ghoulish cartoon style, adds dialogue asides, diagrams with helpful tips and infographics exploring the monsters' anatomical features and primary characteristics. Additional sections offer "How to" tips on surviving creature attacks. Even the sillier segments have practical applications—the advice for werewolf attacks can also be used for dogs; Zombie apocalypse? Info straight from the CDC. Also includes source notes, index, glossary, bibliography, and spots to avoid. 📖

Dispatches from Swellville

by Darcy McMurtery

The Very Stressed Out Manager

One Sunday night, in the light of the cell phone the manager checked her messages and pop! an angry email sat in her inbox. She started to answer it.

Then on Monday she had one library board meeting and she was stressed out.

On Tuesday she had two incident reports and she was still stressed out.

On Wednesday she had three staff evaluations and she was still stressed out.

On Thursday she wrote four letters and she was still stressed out.

On Friday she answered five comment cards and she was still stressed out.

On Saturday she ate two cookies, went to one spin class, drank three glasses of wine, read one book and binged four episodes of Orange is the New Black. That night she had a headache!

On Sunday she woke up and none of her pants fit anymore. She wrapped herself in quilts like a cocoon and stayed there all afternoon. By Sunday evening, she wasn't stressed anymore. She was standing strong, and was a beautiful butterfly.

Darcy McMurtery is a program manager for school libraries in a large district on the west side. She'd tell you she loves to read, but it's an expectation of the job.

WLA Thanks Our Organizational Members

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Bellingham Public Library
Big Bend CC Bonaudi Library
Burlington Public Library
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Community Colleges of Spokane - Library Services
Eastern Washington University Libraries
Ellensburg Public Library
Everett Public Library
Foley Center Library Gonzaga University
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District
Grandview Library
Green River College
Highland Terrace Elementary
Highline College Library
James Brooks Library, Central Washington University
Jefferson County Library
King County Library System
Kitsap Regional Library
La Conner Regional Library District
Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Liberty Lake Municipal Library
Longview Public Library
Lopez Island Library
Lower Columbia College
Lower Columbia College Library
Mount Vernon City Library
National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Pacific Northwest Region
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Orcas Island Library District
Pierce College Library
Pierce County Library System
Port Townsend Public Library
Puyallup Public Library
Renton Technical College Library
Ritzville Library District #2
San Juan Island Library
Seattle Central College Library
Seattle Public Library
Sedro-Woolley City Library
Shoreline Community College
Skagit Valley College/Norwood
Sno-Isle Libraries
Spokane County Library District
Spokane Public Library
Stevens County Rural Library District
Tacoma Public Library
The Evergreen State College
Timberland Regional Library
University of Washington Libraries
Upper Skagit Library
Walla Walla Community College Library
Walla Walla County Rural Library District
Washington State Library
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Yakima Valley Libraries