Scott La Counte

Writing Portfolio

Blogs

Sample Post: How to Tweet Like a Bestselling Author

When people think authors, they think of books hundreds of pages long—not 140-word tweets. Still hundreds of writers have used Twitter successfully to build their platform: Augusten Burroughs has over 40K followers on Twitter; Joyce Carol Oates has over 175K; Jackie Collins over 180K; J.K. Rowling has over 11 million; Paulo Coelho has over 12 million. These writers aren't just popular on social media because they have popular books—they're popular because they're actually saying things on Twitter that people are responding to. Here are seven tips to help break down Twitter for authors and make sure you are tweeting like a bestselling author!

You Are More Than Your Book

Hundreds of millions know J.K. Rowling for Harry Potter, of course, but the last book in the series was published over 10 years ago and since then Rowling has, in many ways, worked to establish herself as more than just a children's author. She uses Twitter to feed her Potter fans with gossip and news, but she also uses it to voice political opinions and grow her fanbase beyond the children who grew up with her series. Twitter is a place where you can show your fans who you really are; don't be afraid to shake things up a little. Be funny. Be controversial. Be political—just be personal: be you.

Master the Pen and the Lens

Twitter may be known for words, but photos are certainly allowed. Some authors, such as Paulo Coelho, tend to post lots of photos of their daily lives. But there is a catch: your photos should tell stories. While you might have a few friends who think it's fascinating that you had coffee at Starbucks before you started writing, the majority of your followers will want something a little more interesting.

When In Doubt, Copy Someone Else

Your fans certainly want to see "you" on Twitter, but part of being "you" is showing your tastes; there is no shame in retweeting someone else, and, in fact, many authors do this well. This is why being social means more than just saying things—it means being aware of what others are saying. Avoid retweets that everyone else is already talking about. Your fans will see them almost as recommendations—tweets screened by someone they admire and respect. Think of it like this:

Link: http://www.ingramspark.com/blog/how-to-tweet-like-a-bestselling-author

Sample Post: How to Tweet Like a Bestselling Author

if someone comes up to you and says, "I'm looking for something to read, what do you recommend?" That person is going to be disappointed if you say "Have you ever heard of this guy named Stephen King?" They want something original—something they've never heard of before.

Give Your Fans What They Expect

Imagine you just found out your favorite romance author was on Twitter, and you navigated your browser quickly to their feed—then you saw it: hundreds and hundreds of tweets about politics. Being "you" is important, but don't forget to give your fans what they expect. The voice and tone of your tweets should come close to matching the books that you write.

Self Promotion Is(n't) Allowed

Twitter is a great place to build your platform and sell more books—but no one wants to read a Twitter feed that is nothing but "buy my book" and "read this review of my book." In short, nobody likes self promotion. You have a new book coming out? Tell your readers. Is there a discount? They'll want to know. But remember to keep the focus of your feed away from promotion.

Talk To Your Fans

Finally, talk to your fans! They'll love you even more for it! It may become time-consuming and even impossible to talk to everyone as you get more popular, but if you reply to even three or four fans a day, it will make their world, and they'll support you even more. Your fans are your product evangelists, so make them feel special.

It takes time to grow your Twitter following, but Twitter is certainly for authors. Be patient, don't give up, and be sure to pay attention to your Twitter analytics in order to keep growing.

Link: http://www.ingramspark.com/blog/how-to-tweet-like-a-bestselling-author

Sample Post: The Rebirth of Learning: Teaching Financial Literacy

James White, M.Ed, President of Marquette Catholic High School, did the unthinkable in some eyes: he got rid of his school's library! Before you wag your finger in shame, consider this: 100% of Marquette's students are accepted into college. Eliminating the library at a school may sound like blasphemy, but for Marquette Catholic High School it turned their school into a state of the art learning institution.

Old Becomes New

Marquette Catholic High School has been a vital part of Michigan City, Indiana for over 120 years.

It began in 1886 with just eighty students who were taught by six nuns. Even though it now has several hundred enrolled from sixteen countries, it maintains small class sizes.

As enrollment grew, one of the school's core missions was the same: "Young people become more here."

When White came to Marquette over ten years ago, he was faced with the same challenge as nearly every school across the nation: how can you use technology to ensure student success?

Six years later, White stood in Marquette's dusty, unused library and came to a bold conclusion: the unused library space could become the centerpiece of the school once more if the school accepted that students are learning differently.

White didn't want to destroy the library; he wanted to revitalize it by moving the collection into a virtual space and using the physical space for an immersive learning environment that cultivated "faith and character development along with intellectual growth."

Start With What You Have

White began to think out of the book--literally. His vision for the library was to install a finance lab where students could learn about business careers in a hands-on environment. Through referrals and online searching, White was introduced to Rise Vision.

The initial cost for Marquette was several thousand dollars, but White encourages educators to start with what they have and grow from there. Some schools have turned computer labs into finance labs at a fraction of the cost. You can read about how one enthusiastic business teacher bootstrapped his

Link: https://www.risevision.com/blog/teaching-financial-literacy

Sample Post: The Rebirth of Learning: Teaching Financial Literacy

finance lab into an award-winning space.

Marquette saved thousands of dollars by repurposing old library space. They added new flooring and LED lighting, then took the old computer lab area of the library and used it as the platform for thirty trading computers. The entire renovation of the space took only a few weeks and it looked brand new when they were finished.

To cover the regular ongoing cost of licensing and other fees, White approached local banks and businesses and was able to acquire sponsorships. The school funded the initial investment, but donations cover all future fees.

If your school is looking for ways to raise funding for your digital signage, check out our tips here and here. We have also compiled a list of grants available to fund technology improvements.

The finished lab consists of a fitted wall-to-wall LED ticker on the ceiling displaying the NASDAQ 100 with a smaller ticker beneath it showing major markets around the world. Two 60-inch TV screens display live quotes for currencies and commodities, live market news, and a stock watchlist. The school also has a ticker in the cafeteria where students can track their portfolios while on break.

Learning for students at Marquette exists largely in virtual spaces where walls do not bind them and there are infinite possibilities. Teachers don't teach from books. Every student enrolled gets an iPad that they take to each of their classes.

Marquette has about eight business classes per semester in the finance lab where they utilize their own Marquette-branded Stock Market Simulation and Curriculum site. The lab is used for both economics and global trading courses.

75% of students are taught at a college level, and about 70% of the students who take the courses go into the field. Through a career path, students also have the option to earn an associates degree before they graduate.

Even though White got some pushback when he first introduced the idea of replacing the library with a finance lab, the results speak for themselves.

Because Marquette is near Chicago, they can bring real-life experts into the classroom regularly. Once a week, students either take a field trip to a business or trading floor or have someone from the field come in and lecture.

The Future Is Bright!

Marquette Catholic High School's finance lab has been successfully running for over four years. It is one of the hallmarks

Sample Post: The Rebirth of Learning: Teaching Financial Literacy

of the school that visually shows the school is invested in the future of their students.

The finance lab was one of the first of its kind and since opening, it has helped the school recruit the best and brightest faculty in the country--educators who are extremely passionate about teaching and want to work at a school dedicated to helping their students succeed. White hopes to have an additional teacher for the lab soon so that they can utilize it even more.

If you are interested in learning more about how to start a finance lab at your school, we have a post here that will walk you through getting started on a budget. If your school has a finance lab, we'd love to hear what you are doing so we can share it with other schools--tell us about it here.

Link: https://www.risevision.com/blog/teaching-financial-literacy

Sample Post: Bootstrapping a Dream Financial Literacy Lab

Ryan Monoski visited Penn State's financial literacy lab and had one thought: why can't his high school kids have something that cool and educational too? Most people would say it's because Penn State is a college and has lots of money; Monoski, a former stockbroker turned high school finance teacher for the Montgomery Area School District, decided not to let money stop him from getting his students the finance lab they deserved.

Monoski has since created one of the best high school finance labs in the country. His students have won multiple state and national finance competitions. This post will show you how your school can follow his model.

Why Do Schools Need Finance Labs

Money is tight for every public school. In a dream world, your school should have everything; unfortunately, it's not a dream world, and the question must be asked: why do schools even need finance labs?

Monoski has spent 15 years teaching and knows exactly why: students aren't prepared with financial knowledge when they leave school. When they enter college they're already a step behind all the students who had financial training in high school, and it gets worse with all the loan and credit offers they are bombarded with.

To an 18-year-old, the offers seem too good to be true...and for good reason: they are too good to be true. Suddenly, they can have expensive phones, computers, and more, and they have zero knowledge about debt and risks entailed by accepting the offers. Further, for some students, school might be the only chance they have to learn about retirement and savings before they enter the workforce.

For schools, Monoski believes a finance lab is "one of the best investments a school can make for the next generation of citizens. It allows students to understand budgeting, investing, credit, and many other financial issues that they will face during their lives."

How to Get Started

Link: https://www.risevision.com/blog/montgomery-financial-lab-post

Sample Post: Bootstrapping a Dream Financial Literacy Lab

If you are looking to create a finance lab at your high school or college, you can start by reading this post.

Monoski didn't start big. He knew it was unrealistic to get everything he wanted at once. Instead, he took a bootstrap approach where he'd show how one resource is applied in the classroom and used it to build interest and help fund other resources.

His first step was to speak to his superintendent. He told her about his vision and why it was needed. Once she was on board, his next step was reaching out to the school foundation and local businesses to ask for contributions.

Monoski's advice was to pitch the vision to the students first; if he couldn't get students excited about it, then he knew he wouldn't be able to sell it to parents. When students understood what he wanted to do, they would go home and excitedly tell their parents, many of whom were part of the school foundation, all about it.

What's most impressive about Montgomery's lab is that it's entirely funded by grants and donations. It's a great example of how a little motivation can create a program that is life changing for students.

The biggest hurdle for Monoski was fundraising. He persistently knocked on doors for months to get seed money for the first steps. Many people loved the idea of the program but wanted to see something before making the initial investment. Our website has some great pictures of how others have set up their labs and the financial content we offer to help them look great.

Schools in need of money for their lab can check out this post on tech grants for schools. This post gives you some tips for applying to grants, and this post has some creative ways you can fundraise for your digital signage equipment.

What Activities Are There for Finance Labs?

Monoski says one of the best things about having a finance lab is the teaching is no longer just out of the book. Before the lab, he felt like it was him standing in front of students reading something. Now students are creating college-level presentations on subjects not expected in a high school setting.

Students learn better when it's a more hands-on environment, where the education is more visual. That's what his lab does. His student's trade virtual money in a stock game and the learning feels more like a game than education. About 20 to 24 students take each of his classes.

To help schools get started, we have put together the following activities that teachers can implement in their classroom:

Link: https://www.risevision.com/blog/montgomery-financial-lab-post

Sample Post: Bootstrapping a Dream Financial Literacy Lab

- [Bitcoin In Your Classroom?](#)

- [Teaching Stocks Through Edutainment](#)

- [5 Steps to Creating a STEM Project with Digital Signage](#)

- [75 Financial Words Your Students Should Know](#)

A Finance Lab is Never Complete

Monoski's journey to create a finance lab started about three years ago. His room now has a stock ticker and three displays for teaching and showing financial data. But his journey doesn't stop there. He is continuing to raise money for more hardware (such as new computers for his students). The finance industry is always evolving, and he is always looking for more ways to incorporate technology in the classroom.

You can see what Monoski's classroom looks like below.

[image]

Students who have taken his classes have gone on to major in business at colleges around the country, and are more prepared than other students. Monoski's students have won many state and national investment championships, but more importantly for Monoski, " they learned how to invest into their own financial Independence down the road."

If you are interested in seeing Monoski in action, check out this video, which was produced by Charles Schwab: https://vimeo.com/270977860

Next Steps

For schools interested in taking the next step creating a finance lab, we have easy to usetemplates below. If your school has a finance lab, we'd love to hear what you are doing so we can share it with other schools--tell us about it here.

[images]

Link: https://www.risevision.com/blog/montgomery-financial-lab-post

About:
The Steve Laube Agency is a boutique literary agency.

Audience:
Their audience is aspiring authors and industry leaders.

My Role:
In addition to having industry news and tips, the agency has it's authors do guest post to talk about their journey to publication.

Sample Post: An Author's Journey

Platform. It can make or break a writer.

But what happens when you don't have a platform? Are you destined to stay forever at the bottom of the slush pile sometimes known as the trashcan?

When I sold my first book, *Quiet, Please: Dispatches From a Public Librarian,* I had no problem at all finding an agent; I sent query letters to six agents and didn't get a single rejection; that book started as a series of blogs for McSweeneys.net, and, it turned out, I had established a platform without even knowing it.

I followed it up with a self-published YA series called The N00b Warriors, which went all the way to #1 on Kindle's bestseller list; this happened when Kindle was new and writers were just beginning to understand what this meant to self-publishing, so the market wasn't quite so crowded.

For my next book, I wanted to break away and try something different: write about my faith. My wife was pregnant with our first child, and as I looked at her bump, I wondered how I would explain why I believe to my son one day.

Christianity wasn't so hard in my youth. But as I aged, it seemed to get more…extreme. Crazy Christians were everywhere spewing hatred out of a gospel that was full of love.

Millions of Christians were walking away not because they felt God had let them down, but because Christians had let them down. One day, I knew my son would ask why I believe when so many Christians seem to be not so Christian.

#OrganicJesus was born out of this question. It was my attempt to explain the real history of the gospel to a generation born in a world where Christianity sometimes felt a little unloving—a generation that questioned how God could be real when so many Christians were deeply flawed. Christians who say hurtful and horrible things and use the Gospel to back up their agenda.

While I was still working on an outline and sample chapters, my son, Mordecai Max, died in childbirth. It was a cord accident that doctors would never be able to explain with any other rationale than "freak accident."

Link: https://stevelaube.com/an-authors-journey/

Sample Post: An Author's Journey

I didn't have the doubts or anger that typically follow tragedy. In the place of anger, I had a pen. While working through grief, I wrote the book that my son would never get to read because there were still people who needed to hear its message.

Writing it was the easy part. The hard part: platform. I had spent the duration of my writing career not really thinking about the word. I had built it effortlessly. But this book was something new—having a bestselling YA series and a blog series from ten years ago wasn't the kind of platform agents and publishers would be looking for—especially when both of those things were in a completely different genre and the readers wouldn't necessarily follow me over.

Before a publisher would look at it, I needed an agent; more than an agent, I needed someone willing to shepherd the work even though my platform was limited and I had never published a Christian book. In short, I needed an agent who was willing to bet against the odds.

As I worked on the proposal, I thought a lot about platform. Platform takes time. Years, even. Did I really have the endurance to spend five years working on platform before going to agents with this idea for a book that may or may not be relevant in five years?

I thought about how I could build a platform around the book; I thought about how I could make the book itself social and sharable. I added to the narrative sharable images, social responses, games, polls—dozens and dozens of things that would pull the reader out of the book and onto the Internet. It was an experiment. It was different. I needed an agent who was willing to see it for what it was and take a chance on it. Dan Balow was that agent.

Dan took the book, helped me develop a book proposal and patiently knocked on the door of nearly every English speaking publishing house.

On the one-year anniversary of my son's death (October 2, 2014), I signed a contract with Kregel Publications to publish #Organicjesus. (Book link here)

The journey continues; in March 2016, I signed a contract to write a second book with Kregel…the same week I found out my wife was pregnant again.

Books

Excerpt: Quiet, Please

Chapter 372.6	Being the Chapter
-LIBR-	in Which Our Hero Discovers
Librarians	He Wants to Be a Librarian
Can't Read:	

"You catch a guy on a computer jacking off, just get a librarian— don't try and handle it yourself."

That was the first thing Faren, the library manager, said to me on my first day of work.

I was a library page.

Library page is the lowest place you can be on the library totem pole. Besides putting books back on the shelf, the library page is also responsible for doing the jobs that nobody else feels like doing, which include, but are not limited to, cleaning up vomit, washing the windows, scraping gum off the tables, moving furniture, and keeping a watchful eye out for male patrons who are jacking off on the computer. Being a library page also means you are stupid until you can prove otherwise.

"So tell me why you want to work here?" This was the next thing Faren said to me. She asked the same question to all the new employees as a way of showing politeness. She didn't care about my answer, but I didn't know this, so I told her with great passion how I loved books and was even studying literature in college—I told her all of this while she checked her e-mail. When I finished my monologue, she yawned and then asked, "Do you know how to cut paper?"

I looked at her, confused. "Paper?"

She nodded. "We have a bundle of fliers that need to be cut in two—you'd have to use the paper cutter. Do you think you'd be able to do that?"

I got nervous. I imagined that I had said something wrong, and she had marked me out as an idiot. But it wasn't that at all. Like I said, a page is stupid until proven otherwise, and apparently I hadn't proven otherwise. I wanted to assure her that I really was smart, but instead I just nodded and assured her I knew how to use a paper cutter.

"Great!" Faren said, adding as I walked out the door of her office, "And make sure you don't cut off any of your fingers. I hate filling out incident reports for stuff like that—it's so time consuming."

Excerpt: Quiet, Please (2008)

A form of pornography is what lured me to the library. To be more precise, a stripper lured me to the library. It's not as kinky as it sounds. I was young, in college, and in need of a new job, but not actively seeking one. I was looking for the sports section when the classified section fell to the ground and conveniently opened to the job listings. As I bent down to pick up the section, a large busted, scantily clad woman looked back up at me. I was morally outraged and violated by the ad, and felt I owed it to the poor woman to at least find out what she was advertising. It was a local strip bar looking for new strippers, and they were using the large-busted, scantily clad woman to entice applicants. Seeing no other pictures to be morally outraged and violated by, I went to put the classified section down. But then another job ad caught my eye. It said, in bold letters:

DO YOU LIKE BOOKS?

I liked books. I kept reading. The ad was for a library page in the City of Anaheim. It was dry and simply written—it basically said,

"Come shelve books." Most people probably passed the ad off as too boring, but to me it sounded like a literary haven. I applied, was hired, and thus began my library career.

I was sent to a small branch library built in the sixties. It sat next to a park, off all the main streets of the city. It was hidden, and everyone seemed to like it that way. The furniture was as old as the library itself. The carpet was stained. The paint on the walls was faded. There was the smell of old books, a smell that has a way of making all libraries seem the same. Some say that smell is asbestos. It was a run-down little library, but no one seemed to notice.

Those who came into the building made it seem like their secret little library. It had been there for nearly fifty years, and most of the city's residents had never heard of it, let alone been inside. Its parking lot was small, but no one cared, because most patrons walked. People didn't go there for research—that task was left to the city's larger library three miles away. They went there for

> FOR SHELVING
>
> Over 20 countries share the number-one rank for literacy, with 99.9 percent of their country being able to read. Niger and Bukina Faso take the bottom two literacy positions, with less than 15 percent of their citizens being able to read. The combined population of both these countries is 27 million, which means there are 23 million people who can't read.
>
> ---
>
> This is a commercial society; we can't take anything without a commercial break. So periodically I will fill this book with short pointless interludes to fill your mind with nonsense. It is my hope that such breaks will distract you from the contents of this book, if only for a moment, so you can regroup and return to the pages with a fresh sense of interest.

Excerpt: Going Mobile (ALA, 2011)

There are over 100,000 mobile apps on the iPhone, and Android is quickly catching up to this number. Universities have apps, sports teams have apps, authors have apps--everyone seems to be into the app market, and for obvious reasons; unlike the previous generation, which didn't mind waiting to get their information when they got home, today's generation wants their information on the go. In many respects they could be called Generation Mobile because for the first time ever there is a group of people who can have everything they could ever want in the palm of their hand.

What's alarming, however, is of the 100,000s of mobile of apps available for phones, the amount of apps built by librarians for libraries can be counted on one hand! By the time this book is published, a few other libraries will join them, but the number isn't anywhere near where it should be. A few libraries have tried using third party solutions such as Boopsie, but these often prove too expensive for the average public library.

What does this mean? It means there's an entire generation that's being overlooked.

Businesses have successfully got a new generation of clients simply by promoting services to them in ways that speak to a new type of user: the mobile user. They have proven that successful apps work and should not be overlooked.

For as long as computers and the Internet have been around, libraries have been on the cutting edge of implementing them; perhaps the first time ever, libraries are lagging, and it's time to catch up.

Mobile app development has become a pretty lucrative business; it's a fair statement to say that it is the 21st century's equivalent of a gold rush--upstart companies are making literally millions of dollars annually.

In 2010, a developer for the Android phone reported that he was making $10,000 a month on an app that helped people find their car. He's not alone.

It's not libraries best interest to go into app development with the intention of making money, but I preface it as a way of saying there is a huge market for mobile development.

Mobile websites allow patrons to avail

Excerpt: Going Mobile (ALA, 2011)

historically been greater than what most libraries can afford; an app programmer can cost several hundred dollars an hour. Building a phone app using its native programming language can be hard work and take literally hundreds of hours.

Fortunately, new open source software has made it easy for people with more limited programming skills to take advance of the apps. Using the technologies available, it's possible for any library to create an app at a low cost and to offer patrons a way to access the wealth of knowledge and entertainment stored in every library facility.

The point of this book is to show you what an app is, how to build it, and how to successfully market it to library patrons. In the forthcoming chapters of this book, you will learn not just how to build an app with relatively no programming skills, but also the best practices for marketing the app to your target audience; and both free and paid services that are out there to make Going Mobile even simpler and seamless.

There are many challenges that are ahead for any library attempting to enter this new form of development; these challenges is one of the biggest road blocks for many libraries interested in extending library services into the mobile market. I will address some of the problems in the coming chapters, but the

point of this book is to offer cost effective solutions to library staff interested in experimenting with building an app for the library.

By the end of this book you will have the knowledge needed to go to library administrators with the idea of going mobile.

About:
Scarecrow Press publishes professional publications.

Audience:
The audience of their books are professional librarians who have worked in the profession at least five years.

My Role:
Write an introduction that matched the style on tone of the book.

Mobile Library Services (Introduction)

June 29, 2007. Nothing about that date seems important--at first glance. But that's the day that changed everything about information as we know it. That is the day the iPhone was introduced.

The iPhone was a phone that could connect you to the Internet from anywhere in the world. In essence, the iPhone meant nearly all the information in the world could be stored in your pocket…but that's not exactly innovating—that's an idea that had been around for over ten years! Nokia SmartPhones were really the first to capitalize on the idea of mobile computing, and that was in the nineties. So what made the iPhone so innovating? In a word: Apps.

Apps had also been around for quite sometime as well, but Apple did something no other company had tried to—it made people want them. It courted developers and turned them into millionaires. It started a post-modern Gold Rush; developers were making literally millions $0.99 at a time; before the end of the year, developers from every continent were capitalizing on Apps.

By the end of the year, Google already had engineers working on their own mobile operating system. In short, *everybody* wanted in on what Apple had discovered.

Everyone, that is, except libraries. Even today, few libraries have gone mobile. Libraries used to be at the forefront of any technology boom—they were among the first to have computers, Internet, and even eBooks (before people, by and large, had even heard of eReaders--most librarians probably remember Stephen King making eBook headlines with "Riding the Bullet" nearly ten years before Amazon released the first Kindle). Budget cuts and untrained staff have plagued the digital resources of libraries big and small—but that's only an excuse and not a reason for the lack of innovation. In reality, mobile computing can cost the library next to nothing. There are plenty of free and cheap resources available— you just have to know where to look.

This book will show you how your library can create apps, but it will also show something more important: it will show you that you don't have to

Mobile Library Services (Introduction)

build apps--apps are just one small part of mobile computing. This book will help you get the library off the desktop and into the palm of your patrons hands. Most importantly this book will help your library stay relevant even on a shoestring budget.

Before continuing on, there are two things to consider. First, what is mobile computing; and second, why does it matter.

First, mobile computing can be several things. It can refer to resource the library can use on feature phones (the phone that most Americans still use--the basic bar or flip phones are considered feature phones); it can refer to smartphones (i.e. Android, iPhone, Blackberry, Symbian, Windows phone); it can refer to tablets. The reality is mobile devices can refer to essentially any device someone uses on the go. Unfortunately, unlike computers where you can get a website to run smoothly on any computer regardless of the browser or operating system being used, mobile computing rarely works this seamlessly.

It's important to identify how your library wants to implement. Ideally, you will want to implement a strategy that is useful to all devices. The reality is, however, this can't always happen. Many mobile solutions, such as a "text a librarian" option for patrons will let even libraries on a shoestring budget have a

solution that is appealing to nearly all of their mobile users-- these are the guide of solutions you want to look into before considering something a little more complex and device specific.

As you begin to explore what steps to take, remember to keep it social. Mobile computing isn't a small undertaking. Group collaboration is a key strategy. You will need input from young and old users alike. With so many directions to go, working in groups will help you stay focused and insure you don't get off track or lose site of your goal.

It sounds like a lot of work. Don't worry: it doesn't have to be. This brings us to the second point: why does it matter? It's easy to raise that question considering the amount of people lacking smartphones devices. Before you ponder it to deeply, look around--how many teens would rather text a question than ask one out loud? How many people now prefer ebooks to real books? How many people have their phones nearly glued to their hands 24/7? In short, every year the number of people relying on mobile devices is going up. There will always be people who want reference the old fashion way, and we can't forget about them--but we also can't forget about the people who want reference on the go.

It's also important to consider the number of people who are

Mobile Library Services (Introduction)

abandoning computers altogether in favor of tablets that they find are easier to use. Tablets are more relevant than ever for the mere fact that there is almost no learning curve. They are perfect for people who only want to email, social networking, and light Internet browsing. These people are expecting resources that are easy to use, and libraries need to find them. They don't want pages of instructions--they want a two or three step process; this means now, more than ever, libraries need to look at the UI of any resource and question the usability of it--is it easy to use? Can the website be used by someone with a touch screen? Do the colors show up well inside and outdoors? Is the text the right size? Look at Apples app store--reviews are critical! If you rush out the gates just to do something mobile, your patrons will likely respond unfavorably. When considering mobile computing, remember: first impression is everything. Patrons have seen the power of their phone / tablets and they don't want second best.

As you read this book, decide what your budget is and remember there really is something for every one. This book will show you free and paid resources alike; it will show you what to do if you have lots of time and what to do if you only have a little. If there is a larger budget, remember there are plenty of contractors online (like elance.com and odesk.com);

on these sites, you can find mobile developers who can build and maintain mobile resources for as little as $1000. Paid contractors often require more direction communications than subscription type mobile services, but the end result is something that can be more relevant to your patrons.

Mobile computing is the future. It is not only what people want--it is what they will eventually expect. It is not time to consider the possibility of going mobile--that time has come on gone. Mobile computing is here and will not go away. The urgency to offer mobile solutions grows more everyday. It is an exciting time to offer reference--librarians are at the forefront of how people will get information; for the first time since the Internet was first adopted by the mainstream, libraries get to offer something new and different--to pave the way for the librarians who come next. Now is the time for libraries to do what they do best: adapt, enhance and innovate.

Link: https://www.amazon.com/Mobile-Library-Services-Best-Practices/dp/0810887525

Humor Blog Post

Sample Post: Three Tales of the Internet

Tale #1: In Which an Elderly Patron Unintentionally Tries to Destroy a Computer

Elderly patrons are very sweet people who very frequently bring me food, tell me how much they appreciate the library's presence in the neighborhood, and small-talk about their favorite mysteries and true-crime books. They're pleasant to be around—unless they want to use a computer. I am convinced that grandkids are inherently evil people who tell their grandparents to "just go to the library and open up an e-mail account—it's free and so simple."

Of course, the free part gets them to the library in swarms, and, of course, they don't want to take part in the library's free Internet classes, because … well, in the words of one elderly patron, "I don't need a class, because my grandkid said it was simple, and you can just show me the basics." One such elderly patron came to the library not too long ago with such ideals. Strangely, his trouble was not so much opening an e-mail account as it was using the print card.

Print cards are pesky little things librarians institute for the sake of harassing patrons and discouraging them from printing anything. Often, it works, but this little old man was persistent. I showed him step by step what to do to print, and he was doing pretty well. He seemed to be paying careful attention: he hit the print button like a pro, walked to the print station like a king. Then he screwed up—big time. At the print station, another patron told me some teenagers had just said the "f" word to her five-year-old son and then ran off to the boys' room, where she was pretty sure they were up to no good. I told the elderly gentleman to hang tight and I'd be right back to help him.

I learned in just a short time that expecting him to hang tight was a mistake. When I returned to the man, he looked hopelessly confused. "It didn't work," he explained, frustrated. "And it won't give me my print card back." I walked to the print station and stared for several seconds at the card reader. I studied it from several angles but did not see his card. "You're sure it didn't come out?" I asked. He nodded, but then pointed at his computer. "It's in there."

I looked at the computer, confused. He pointed at the floppy-disk drive and said, "I tried pushing the button, but it still won't come out." I kneeled down and immediately saw the print card wedged deep inside

Sample Post: Three Tales of the Internet

the floppy-disk drive. I had seen paper clips, scrap paper, and pencils inside the floppy-disk drive, but this was the first print card.

I went to the workroom to get out some tweezers, and when I returned, the man was gone. I never saw him again.

Tale #2: In Which a Patron Decides to Record the Internet

Because I work in a small branch library with only a dozen or so Internet terminals (all of which are very close to where I sit), it has become a habit to do my best to ignore what patrons are viewing, so as to ensure their privacy. Last week, however, I noticed a woman sit down at a computer and pull from her small handbag a video camera. She logged in to her e-mail account, turned on her recorder, and proceeded to record messages that had been sent to her inbox. Using a video camera in a city building without prior consent from the city is not allowed, but I let her do it for a few minutes, more for the sake of personal amusement and curiosity than anything else. Finally, after about five minutes, I became bored watching the woman, so I approached her and explained that she would have to get city approval if she wanted to use her video camera in the library. She rolled her eyes and said, "Well, I was finished anyway." She stuffed her camera back into her bag, looked suspiciously around, and left in a hurry.

Tale #3: In Which a Patron Has a Little Too Much Fun

There are different types of Internet users who visit the library. There's the casual user, who uses the library's Internet service perhaps once a month; the regular user, who uses it every day; the college user, who comes to the library only when their school's lab is full; and many other types, which I'll leave out for no real reason.

This final tale involves what I would describe as a regular user. I rarely saw him doing anything on the computer except sending and reading e-mail. He was quiet and never asked for help on the Internet. Then one day, as I was helping a younger patron find a book for his state-report assignment, the man came to me seeking help with printing.

When I got to his computer, I saw a picture of an overweight, fully nude Caucasian woman holding a jar of peanut butter. I told the man that this kind of material went against the library's Internet usage policy. I have had to explain this policy to several patrons who have used the Internet terminals to view pornographic images, and every time, the patron does one of three things: they act embarrassed and apologize for their actions, they nod and quickly leave, or they try to defend their actions by saying that they are a taxpayer and can look at whatever they want to on the computer.

Sample Post: Three Tales of the Internet

This man, however, explained quite seriously that, "I didn't know you weren't allowed to look at pornography on the Internet." I nodded and pointed at the large sign above the computers, which stated clearly the library's stance on this issue.

The man nodded and asked if he could still print the picture. I said no and added that, because he'd abused the library's policy (a major no-no), he would now be banned from using the Internet. He nodded; then, to my surprise, flipped over a computer printout of a nude woman; and left with no further comment.

I did not bother asking how he was able to print the other picture without help.

Link: https://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/dispatch-8-three-tales-of-the-internet

Is Illiteracy So Bad?

Literacy's flaws are many and obvious: Reading can be boring, suggest ideas about how to destroy things, and give voice to people who shouldn't have one, in addition to a platform to voice that voice. But these are only surface issues—there are whole other arenas that are rarely discussed. For instance, literacy causes colds; case in point, I developed a horrible cold just hours after an entire night reading *Infinite Jest*. I also discovered a strange raging sexual lust when I read *All the Best, George Bush: My Life and Other Writings*, and though I'm actually a little embarrassed to say what happened after finishing *The Power and the Glory*, the itchy rashes in sensitive spots still have not gone away. If we simply give into the will of our hearts and stop reading, we will finally be able to establish the utopian world that great thinkers have been planning for centuries.

A Bookless World With Lots of Extra Space

Bookstores and libraries take up lots of space. It's obvious if the world went illiterate, bookstores would become video/record stores and Starbucks outlets, but libraries are a different story. Closing a public library would mean thousands of displaced homeless people with no place to brush their teeth, millions of parents with no place to send their kids after school

while they work, and worst of all, thousands and thousands of bitter unemployed librarians cluttering up social service offices with their sad tales of how they use to get paid to do nothing. Libraries, as useless as they are, cannot be turned into franchised retail venues, but that doesn't mean millions of city dollars must be spent to keep open buildings that, in an illiterate world, are useless. As it turns out, libraries can become useful again—if they are converted into more practical things.

One possibility is a television center, where we can feed on five- or 10-minute slices of entertainment. Today's man is a creature on the go, so clips rather than whole shows would prevent wasting patrons' time, or worse, boring their minds. For instance, feeds might show all the various ways and reasons Homer has said 'D'oh' on *The Simpsons*, or slow-motion clips of characters being killed on *The Sopranos*. This center also solves cities' other big problem—what happens to our overpaid librarians in this new illiterate world? Obviously those with too much seniority to be fired would act as personal TV guides. And those unfortunate enough to finish their graduate degree in library science without getting a full-time job aren't necessarily out of luck. Many of these former aspiring librarians are also former aspiring children's librarians,

Is Illiteracy So Bad? (continued)

which, as it happens, means they're perfectly prepared for a career in acting—they will likely be able to find jobs in Hollywood, as the ugly old hags in the background behind beautiful stars. The other librarians (the ones who did not aspire to be children's librarians) can take the jobs that no one wants in the library—these jobs include, but are not limited to, dressing up as favorite TV stars and entertaining the patrons, explaining to older patrons that times have changed so deal with the bookless world, and being the greeter at the door.

Former library buildings might also be refitted into community weightlifting centers. Everyone likes to stay fit, but no one likes to pay the high membership dues. Why not put the gyms out of business? It would boost everyone's morale. And librarians are, of course, known for their great physical strength, which they achieved by picking up and putting away the library-bound reference collection edition of the OED. They could be put to work as trainers. In larger former libraries, boxing rings can be installed and librarians can serve as spotters.

One last possibility for library buildings is one many libraries are already experimenting with: Stocking up on computers so patrons can search the web for really neat graphics and games. This, like the TV center, would also benefit those overpaid librarians, who in this scenario would advise patrons on the best places on the web to find games that are addicting but, of course, not challenging, because challenge would only add stress in a graphical world. To the literate, this task may seem meaningless and mundane, but to the illiterate, pictures and pretty graphics provide fulfillment. To help get rid of all the text on the Internet, and thus provide more precise image matches, a U.N. council could be formed to investigate and solve the problem.

Everyday Life

We mustn't, however, examine only the places that house books. Illiteracy is a very serious issue that should not be taken lightly. Words, we must admit to ourselves, are everywhere.

One of man's most sacred items, the computer, will have to be equipped for the illiterate mind. A computer keyboard with letters, for example, holds no value to an illiterate. Our new, more perfect world will need a Windings keyboard. The Wingdings keyboard, modeled after and inspired by the Wingdings font, will replace the letter on each key with a cute illustration. A formal greeting might therefore look like:

. And a formal farewell might look like: :-l. Not only do these new communications save space, and, further, ink, but they will also be easier to remember. Many years ago, the mightiest, smartest men of them all—the cavemen—used signs and got along pretty well in life; we should not be so quick to mock this sort of communication as primitive.

Is Illiteracy So Bad? (continued)

And we cannot forget about television, which will be one of the leading devices in this graphical age. Of course there will be no need to have titles for TV shows. Graphics will be used instead. For crime dramas, there could be a couple engaging in something promiscuous while holding a gun and a badge. For half-hour situation comedies, there could be a couple engaging in something promiscuous while holding a cup of coffee. And for reality shows, there could be a man holding a camera and a handful of cash while filming a couple engaging in something promiscuous.

The Future is Near

Now with no books or literacy we can finally eliminate language, at least language in the traditional sense. Hearing somebody speak in complete sentences will be confusing and hard to follow. When the world is surrounded by graphics, speaking in words seems inappropriate. Since it is impossible to speak in images, something else needs to be worked out. At first it will be best to speak using chat room abbreviations; when you find yourself amused at something, you will smile and tell the person 'L-O-L' or when you are leaving you will say 'B-F-N.' A formal, romantic wedding proposal would look something like, 'W-Y-M-M?'

Abbreviations sound clumpy and will become quickly boring to the illiterate world. This is why people will eventually need to learn how to speak solely in rhyme. Rhyme is catchy. And for those who are horrible at rhyming, there is always song. Song is the most effective way to communicate, right next to rhyming. And even when you're saying hurtful things, they'll come out sounding pleasant and delightful, and probably no one will even notice that you're being mean.

I am quite aware that what I am saying seems to be a bit of an oxymoron, and that even writing it goes against all my principals as an illiteracy activist. Without using literacy, however, I will not be able to convey my message of illiteracy fully. For more information on how you can more fully prepare your home, town, and country for the illiterate world, you can read my forthcoming book *Illiterate Living for the Illiterate Man*, a 2,500-page illiteracy manual for better living.

Note to the reader: æßÞÆ¬§

æ=If
ß=Reading
Þ=This
Æ=You
¬=No/Not
§=Illiterate