We started the New York based website We Are Librarians in order to help expose the personalities of librarians and market them to a new audience.

New Librarianship is a term that has been receiving a lot of hype recently.

Like this presentation, the buzz surrounding new librarianship is a reaction to the changing realities and constant evolution in our field.

Identity crises are stereotypically reserved for middle-aged men in red convertibles.

However, the identity of 21\textsuperscript{st} century librarians is one that is both misunderstood and constantly being redefined.

Yes, we are librarians and archivists, but we are also researchers, digital asset managers, information architects, usability analysts, metadata specialists, and social media experts.

When I hear that someone wants to become a librarian because they love books, I know they are in for a stark awakening when they enter library school and especially when they exit.

I myself love books. The shelves of my home would be vacant without my collections of art books, creative non-fiction, cookbooks, vintage magazines, and last but not least library science books.

They are beautiful objects that we treasure, but the sustainability of this profession as we all know cannot rest in the pages of a book.
It’s still about reading and knowledge. And it’s certainly about media.

But our identity as we know it in traditional libraries and archives is radically changing everyday.

The current job market leaves many new librarians feeling hopeless and exhausted.

The dream job in the brick and mortar library does not need to be the end all be all for our careers and our identity.

I currently work as a Librarian in the fashion industry.

When I meet someone new and they ask me, “what do you do?” I am often searching through an abundance of words that describe my job.

I have my MLS and in my family I am a third generation librarian.

Although the scope of my work defies a singular label, I naturally reply, “I’m a librarian.”

I hold dearly the traditions that I learned in school.

Our traditional skills are rooted in the foundation of our identity with the public and how they perceive us.

The public library, the reference desk, and the check-in check-out system of physical books are what have been engrained into the public for centuries.

These traditions carry a lot of weight outside the library and can be extended into other areas.
These should be the principles that the public associates us with.

Some of these traditions include.

Social Responsibility and the public good

Democracy

Education

Intellectual Freedom

Access

This translates into the recent appearance of SOPA and PIPA. Librarians around the world took to the Internet to protest these bills that threatened to censor the Internet and our capability to access information online.

Confidentiality/Privacy

Privacy concerns have always been at the forefront of physical libraries, but the birth of e-content and digital lending has increased these ethical concerns.

The data that companies collect from their transactions violates a great deal of what librarians stand for.

This is an issue that we see again with the rise of big data.

In February, we witnessed many librarians voicing concerns over Google’s new privacy policy and the web history that they collect on everyone’s accounts.
Preservation

Now from analog to digital we see more and more companies investing in digital preservation through DAM projects.

Service

Service is a huge tradition within librarianship if not the largest. We see this translate into social media as well as the ways companies serve up digital asset management. We have transitioned from visitors and patrons to users, customers, and consumers.

These traditions along with the skills that are typically associated with librarianship contribute to our value.

These skills include:

Administration and Management
Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
Organization of Knowledge and Information
Technological Knowledge and Skills
Reference and User Services
Research

And they can be extended well past the boundaries of the library.

Our value is growing everyday as we develop additional new skills.

These skills that we are learning and performing now enhance our traditional skills.
The key to the profession’s future success lies in sharing traditional skills and principles while showcasing the new ways that librarians are valuable.

As new opportunities are presented through developments in technology, the librarian’s role continues to evolve and our value within the field expands.

Technology is responsible for a gross amount of changes in our industry, but it also provides the tools that bind us culturally.

Our audience has become global.

Digital asset management, usability, and information architecture are the new driving principles of 21st century librarians, yet the majority of people still associate librarians with the Dewey Decimal System.

Although many academic and public libraries have suffered from the economy in recent years, the corporate environment craves the skills of librarians.

Corporations are clients who greatly need DAM and IA professionals.

They see a tremendous return on investment from implementing digital asset management for internal use and usability and information architecture helps drive their e-commerce.

Data analysis and manipulation helps companies understand their customer and gives marketing teams the freedom to be creative while knowing exactly how to target their audience.

Big data is a driving force in the technology industry and will create new jobs that librarians can and should occupy.

We obey a code of ethics that could greatly influence the rise of big data.
But first we have to show companies and new industries that our skills are capable of serving their needs.

Metadata creation and taxonomy management, I think are the number one jobs that librarians should be looking for in untraditional environments.

Without metadata, digital assets are lost.

The faster a company can find assets in the DAM, the more efficient the company becomes and the faster they can serve their customers’ needs.

This ultimately leads back to data analysis as well as infographics and data visualization.

We see more and more websites thinking imaginatively about how to serve up their content to users.

Here we have a website called Nowness, which offers many different ways to explore and find content.

Visitors to the Nowness site are able to browse and explore content by category, but also by geographical location, as well as through a web of interactive tags, which we see here.

This path leads us to find their editorial on artist Aurel Schmidt.

Interview Magazine is also progressing in the way users can find their content.

Here we can browse within entertainment, art, design, and lifestyle categories, to find their editorial on Cory Archangel.
Then find more content and their history of magazine covers.

In both of these examples, the user is never forced to go back to where they started, only offered new opportunities to move forward and find more.

This is all commonplace today within our everyday experiences on the Internet.

But there is no reason why librarians should not be spearheading the progression of content through our knowledge of usability, Information architecture, and web development.

Social media has transformed the way users and patrons connect with librarians and cultural institutions.

Librarians are incredibly active in social media.

It enables us to speak out and reach an audience we could never have imagined 10 years ago.

We are marketing ourselves online whether we know it or not. Participation and interaction with the public is the best way to activate change and communicate with a wider audience.

The changes that are happening in our field require a dynamic amount of leadership in order to take those changes and make them opportunities.

And leaders need support.

The conference theme, “colouring outside the lines” demonstrates the field's focus on the immense changes in librarianship and highlights the benefits of collaboration and how it can facilitate the future sustainability of libraries and their collections in the 21st century.
The IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program is a huge support to both libraries and new librarians preparing their careers.

The Laura Bush Program nurtures early careers and the professional development that helps prepare us for the challenges of the 21st century.

SLA’s Information Outlook is also particularly vocal about new librarianship and the changes happening in the field.

Over the last year we have seen them run issues driven around the idea of librarians and their image and stories on marketing and successfully delivering your identity online.

Many professors at Syracuse’s ischool are becoming the driving forces of the new librarianship movement and are pushing the boundaries everyday.

Without a doubt, the topic of new librarianship is on everyone’s minds within the field.

There are so many supporting efforts in new librarianship today, but we need an outside presence to showcase our skills beyond the library.

Partnerships between libraries and companies with large digital collections could transform the way we connect with content.

Flickr Commons’ 2008 project and Google Books Project, as controversial as it might be, are good examples of how partnerships can expose library collections to new audiences and drive traffic back to library websites.

Google Books may have led to lawsuits and intellectual property disputes, but it put libraries in the minds of millions of people.
And we need to do more.

With the rise of big data and social media, we need to look ahead to how we can connect our content and expand our audience in order to shift our identity into the 21st century.

The American Library Association’s ilovelibraries.org is an amazing advocacy website for libraries.

I propose advocating the librarians themselves and actively create a new public vision for our profession’s future.

We are information professionals who are in desperate need of a major global marketing tactic.

Ultimately, the power to change the public’s view of what it means to be a librarian is in our hands.

That means staying up to date on current changes in technology and expressing your identity to people who you meet.

Create a website and express your ideas through social media. Librarians need to become comfortable outside their traditional circles.

If the field is to survive, we need to start embracing the changes that are happening everyday.

And that means interacting with people, organizations, and companies who can use our skills and services in non-traditional settings.
It is up to us to show the public what it means to be a librarian in 2012.

To me a librarian is someone who has their MLS.

Someone progressive.

Someone focused and organized, but with the flexibility to think imaginatively.

A leader.

Someone innovative.

And that often means “coloring outside the lines.”