Provoking Change: Creativity, Leadership, and Planning for the Future
Sunday April 1, 2012, 11:00am - 12:30pm, Sheraton Hall A

Moderator: Lindsay King, Yale University.

SESSION ABSTRACT
In keeping with the theme of this year’s conference, this session proposes new ways of thinking about our profession. How can we innovate and move beyond the traditional roles—whether in academia, in society, or in the individual workplace—of libraries and librarians? Shelley Archibald and Fiacre O’Duinn urge librarians to be “thought leaders” in society and use their influence on leaders and decision-makers beyond the library, based on strategies explored at the TEDx event they hosted in 2011. Annette Haines outlines ways of nurturing creativity in oneself and others, mining literature on workplace creativity and innovation for ideas that apply to art libraries. Ellen R. Urton discusses her transition from Visual Arts Librarian to Visual Literacy Librarian as part of a reorganization that removed subject specialist roles but created opportunities for leadership and continuing collaboration with subject constituencies. Daniel Payne addresses library space planning via theories of what creates emotional engagement in a space, or a feeling of “place,” and asks how those with specialties in art and design can contribute to planning spaces that better serve our users’ needs.

SPEAKERS, INTRODUCTIONS, AND PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS:
Shelley Archibald, Burlington Public Library, and Fiacre O’Duinn, Hamilton Public Library. "Thought Leadership in Librarianship: A Necessary Discussion".

Shelley Archibald is a technology trainer at Burlington Public Library. Apart from library studies at University of Toronto’s iSchool, she also has an MA in Religion and Culture from Wilfrid Laurier University. She has a background in documentary-making and new media, and instructional design.

Fiacre O’Duinn has presented at library conferences in Canada and the United States on the impact of emerging technologies on libraries and librarians. He blogs at LibraryCult about digital justice, technology, and maker culture, and currently serves as a councilor-at-large for the Ontario Library and Information Technology Association.

On June 25, 2011, we will host a TEDx event entitled, TEDx Librarians TO: Librarians as Thought Leaders. This event attempts to create a space for a conversation within the librarian community about our place as it relates to the wider society. We believe that librarians must step out from behind their various institutions and make themselves known – not only to their local community, but to the society in which we live. By making our voices heard, we will articulate our relevance and take our place as Thought Leaders within various fields. We, therefore, propose a paper that uses the TEDx event as a tool to talk about Thought Leadership in Librarianship. We will discuss the necessity of Thought Leadership in tough economic and
cultural times and ways to try to cultivate it. We will discuss the use of social media to take a localized day event and translate that into a global conversation. We encourage debate within the audience as to their interpretation of Thought Leadership and how this concept can be used as a tool to move the profession forward. We will also encourage those in the audience to discuss the potential areas of Thought Leadership within their own library fields. How do we encourage it? How do we support it? Where do we learn the skills to both do our daily jobs and to actively engage and take leadership within a wider cultural context? The objective of this discussion is not to discuss the TEDx event, but to encourage those in the audience to take on the role of Thought Leader within Art Librarianship and to discover ways to make their voices heard beyond the walls of the library.

Annette Haines, University of Michigan. "Get Your Creative Groove On, or How to Stop Worrying and Learn to Love the Backlog".

Annette Haines has served as the Art & Design Field Librarian at the University of Michigan since January 2002. As an active member of ARLIS/NA and the ARLIS/NA Midstates Chapter, Annette has also written articles for Art Documentation including “Out in Left Field: The Benefits of Field Librarianship for Studio Arts Programs” and “The Institutional Repository: Storing and Sharing Digital Scholarship” which she co-authored with Lisa Blankenship.

With never-ending work to do – projects, emails, backlogs, etc. – arts librarians can become paralyzed in overload and lose the sense of joy and creativity that brought them into the profession. Librarians produce extraordinary work under pressure, but rarely if ever do they get to take a breather and spend time cultivating their creative abilities and selves. Arts librarians, however, perhaps more than librarians in other disciplines, need creative nurturing. Of course one reason is that they value artistic approaches, but a stronger, more compelling reason relates to the fact that arts librarians interact with clients who expect and feel motivated by artistic and creative methods and solutions to their own research needs. More broadly speaking, the field of librarianship and information technology in general, is moving quickly and all librarians must be able to innovate and nimbly adapt to this constant change. This paper will explore the existing theory on workplace creativity including research that addresses burnout (Sheesley, 2001), ways leaders can cultivate creativity in their employees (Shalley and Gilson, 2004) and the relationship between play and innovation (Kurt et al., 2010). The paper will also look at recent ideas of leading thinkers and creators. For example author, Daniel Pink’s surprising ideas about what motivates people to do their best and choreographer, Twyla Tharp’s playful advice on how to approach the first steps toward a creative endeavor. Based on the research and ideas presented, the paper will go on to explore what tools, and strategies arts librarians can use to manage workplace stress and foster creativity in themselves and others. A proposal for future research addressing the specific situation and needs of ARLIS/NA librarians will also be presented.
Ellen R. Urton, Kansas State University. "From Subject Librarian to Free Agent: How One Specialist Braved Reorganization".

Ellen R. Urton is an Associate Professor and the Visual literacy Librarian at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. Prior to the K-State Libraries’ reorganization, Ms. Urton was the Visual Arts Librarian, a subject specialist assigned to the Department of Art, the Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design Department, and later assumed additional responsibility for liaising with the College of Architecture, Planning and Design. In her new role as the Visual Literacy Librarian in the Undergraduate and Community Services Department, she works primarily with the undergraduate population and retains a focus on the arts, advocating for the unique information needs of the design-based fields.

Subject librarian positions were re-purposed at Kansas State University as part of the K-State Libraries restructuring in the summer of 2010. Prior to the reorganization, subject librarians were members of either the Sciences or the Social Sciences/Humanities Departments. Last year, these departments were reorganized into the Undergraduate & Community Services (UCS) and the Faculty/Graduate Services (FGS) Departments, and the librarians were assigned by patron community rather than by academic disciplines. The new organization presented opportunities for librarians no longer focused on individual colleges/departments based on their academic expertise. The transition from a subject librarian structure notwithstanding, the Visual Arts Librarian aimed to expand her subject specialization, continue teaching undergraduates and staff reference services, and work across disciplines to effectively partner with faculty on undergraduate curriculum and research skills. In response to the focus on interdisciplinary themes, a new identity as the Visual Literacy Librarian helped to justify continued investment in the visual arts and exploration of related fields. Additionally, a leadership role emerged by trading a position as a solo arts specialist for a position as team leader assembling a group of like-minded librarian collaborators. As the K-State Libraries transition continues, remaining an asset to formerly assigned departments, new faculty colleagues, and the reinvented K-State Libraries is of primary importance. This paper outlines one librarian’s transition from the Visual Arts Librarian to the Visual Literacy Librarian including: the challenges and benefits of the new structure for academic faculty and librarians alike; the professional rewards of assuming a leadership role within the restructured organization; concerns moving forward; hopes for the future; and a reflection on change.

Daniel Payne, OCAD University. "Place-ing the Library".

Daniel Payne is Head of Instructional Services at the OCAD University’s Dorothy H. Hoover Library and, since 2008, has taught Art Librarianship: Theory Informs Practice at the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Information. He has promoted an active, innovative information literacy program at OCAD U that includes a site intervention curriculum where students produce installations designed to be embedded in the library’s physical space. Through the creative production process, students learn to interpret and comment on topical issues in librarianship through the lens of studio-based pedagogy.
What makes a space, a place? Theorist Henri Lefebvre provides a compelling framework for defining this well-used, but illusive term by envisioning the spaces that we physically inhabit as sociologically structured by three “layers”: the abstracted domain of space planning, the emotional sphere of how we think or feel when occupying a space, and the social grounding of our daily usage patterns.

A space becomes “place”—meaning an environment where agents are free to explore, learn, interact and ultimately live in a fulfilling manner—when there is a “seamless fluidity” between all three layers; thus, those who plan spaces have direct connection with usage and an intuitive understanding of how people emotionally and psychologically feel when present in a given location. Librarians are often familiar with planning based on statistical measures of how people use their print and electronic collections; however, the middle component—how users emotionally respond to their collections—is much more difficult to gauge. Yet according to Lefebvre’s theory, this emotive sphere is the bridging feature that binds planning with usage, allowing space to be qualified as place.

Building on Tancheva’s concept of “infinite semiosis,” the paper will try to decode how creative researchers—particularly students and faculty users at academic art and design institutions—think about libraries, so that institutional planning can better integrate the cognitive, social and physical activities that occur in our environments. The paper will reference ongoing curriculum assignment at OCAD University that require students to study specific libraries and create designs that would enhance these facilities’ services and spaces. Through the design process, students launch on an exploration of what libraries offer communities, leading to a more intimate understanding of why libraries exist. Personal testimonials from participating students demonstrate that through an evaluation of usage patterns and an active involvement in planning and design, they are given a more holistic understanding of what a library means for its social community of users.