11-18-15 Library as Center of Innovation Q&A Log
Questions from Live Demco Webinar as answered by Traci Lesneski, MSR and Janet Nelson, Demco

General

Q: The examples are very inspiring! Are there sites that compile innovative library event or space ideas that you would recommend? Just hearing what other libraries do is very useful.

A: We put together a resource list that is available along with the webinar and this Q&A but here are some suggestions off the top of my head (links to all of these are included on the Resource page). There is the Library as an Incubator website which has great ideas. The Bubbler at Madison Public Library is always posting great things about what they are up to. Janet mentioned that I'm on the committee for the IFLA Building and Equipment section and we have just started a Facebook page we're constantly posting imagery and ideas about libraries there. It's just getting started so give us some time but that has some interesting things on it about things that are going on with libraries around the world. ALA has some resources on their own website and I do have a list of things that I tend to go to that are included on the resource page.

Q: Are there specific wall color combinations that tend to inspire innovation?

A: That's a very good question. You know, the concept or topic of color is always a very difficult one because people from different cultures have different reactions to different colors and people have different experiences with different colors. Blue might be a very calming and wonderful color for one person but it may be a color that makes someone else feel very tired and uninspired. Color can be a very difficult thing so how I tend to think about spaces that are set up well for innovation is first of all, the variety mentioned before is so important regardless of scale of library. If you are thinking about setting up an innovation room or a maker lab or a production studio, the thing I try to think about most is not interfering. So kind of quietly fading to the background to let whatever activity there is take the stage. So rather than paint it all red to get everyone excited and get blood pressures going, and thinking of the room that way, I tend to think about how can the walls be writable to let people get ideas out as quickly as they can, or how can we use technology in a smart way to make sure that it is one touch and it's going and it's convenient. How can we light an area so it feels like a good place to perch and collaborate and sit for a bit while you let an idea take form? For me it's less about infusing a space with color but more about infusing it with the programmatic tools that allow that kind of work to blossom.

Q: Is the "Bubbler Room" a package or offered with options and potential to purchase more as funding and space comes together?

A: The Bubbler Room is the branded name that library uses for their program that is actually system wide and has a home base at the central library which we were involved with which is why I show these images. They help me to talk about what we think about as we create spaces that support innovation and creativity. I don't think you would necessarily have to "purchase" or "specify" or "design" every single one of those aspects as a completed package. I think that you could phase that in if; for example, the person asking this question has an existing meeting room that has some but not all of those aspects, I think that a lot of what is achieved can still happen there. So it's an interesting idea to consider as a package that can be bought like a "library-in-a-box" kind of thing. But, what I would start with if I had limited resources and limited space is the premise that it shouldn't be precious and as best as possible, it needs to be the most flexible tool that it can be. The lighting isn't directed in a particularly way that makes you not able to do other things or the furniture is not hardwired into the floor. I would free things as much as possible and untether and then start adding in some of the other aspects mentioned. You don't have to have storage space, you can just have tables and chairs that can be folded and tucked into a corner for example. I think that there are things that you can do that don't that don't require buying "the whole package" of something like the Bubbler Room.

Q: How do you keep your space clean when offering messy activities?
A: There are a few things to keep in mind about this. If you are working with an existing condition, you may need to think about where these activities are going to be provided. For instance, if you have a choice between space that has soft, plushy carpet or a space that has vinyl tile you probably want to opt for the space with vinyl tile. There are many types of materials that are comfortable to stand on and use and contribute to the acoustic qualities of the space that still have cleanability and durability. I think that it is important to have a space somewhere, it can be a small space, where people have the freedom to be a little messy. This could be facilitated with mats for task chairs layered under an area under a table or putting craft paper out on the table or floor so the table or floor can take some additional abuse.

If you are able to design from the ground up, you need to be very mindful of the myriad of activities that may occur in a particular space. You can be thinking about light fixtures that don't hang down and get hit or a floor that can easily be mopped after a messy activity.

Q: Aren't libraries duplicating what schools should be doing (even after they close for the day). I remember (1950's-70's) schools being available evenings for various "DIY" activities. How cost effective is it for both schools & libraries doing same thing?
A: Not all schools are doing this anymore, and with ever-expanding options for schooling (e.g., homeschools) libraries are often called upon to be an extension of the more formal learning – but in an informal way. Certainly if there is a robust program in a community it doesn't make sense to duplicate efforts – but maybe there is a way to work off of one-another, to enrich the community overall.

<u>Community Engagement</u>
Q: I'm not sure if this will come up later, but I'm curious how the library can be used as a wedding venue.
A: This is something that we are seeing increasingly and the use of the library as a wedding venue is a fairly simple endeavor. It involves offering the kind of space that would attract people and it offers the ability to get people in and out of it during "off" hours without having to traipse through the building. In the Madison Library example, there is a secure stair and elevator to get up to the event space leaving the rest of the building including materials and equipment that are part of the library proper are protected when the library is closed. The furniture is able to be cleared out to make space for events. They have set up a pretty robust set of policies [http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/policies/meeting-and-study-room-policy#v] and information including who they have paired with to provide catering for events. The key is having space designed in such a way that it makes people want to be there.

Q: I have around 100-200 students coming in each hour that do not have classes and we have a coffee shop open all day, they even eat lunch in here! How do I build my library program back? Keeping in mind "no clutter" and flexible mobile book cases.
A: Traci and I are neither one librarians, but I would say that you may have an opportunity to tap into this captive audience that is already coming into your space. You could survey them or have some type of interactive display/wall that solicits feedback from them. If you can find ways to be relevant to them and begin incorporating spaces and programs that appeal to them and are driven by their interests, you may have greater success.

Q: how do I get people who are tenured full professors nearing retirement to be more engaged in making a better future?
A: One thing you could try is to call a faculty summit at the library to discuss the future of learning. Pitch it as a way to glean ideas from the seasoned as well as newer faculty, maybe tied to the 4C's.

Q: How do we encourage people to take advantage of library resources. We have tried all the conventional means: bulletin inserts, open houses with food; book tables in busy places; published material reviews.

A: One way would be to consider how the library is key to each of your customer "types" – put yourself in their shoes and think about what could make their lives easier/richer/better/more informed. And then create marketing around that (through display, social media, bulletin boards, etc.).

Q: I believe it is an interesting time when we are teaching students for jobs that do not exist right now. How can we encourage collaborative thinking using the library space to encourage and motivate this way of thinking and learning? Thank you!
A: This can be done through simply offering space and "seeding" it by suggesting possible uses…maybe photographing people using the room in different ways (rearrange furniture, get staff into character, and have fun with different layouts that suggest collaboration!). Another is by holding workshops or programs that demonstrate and practice collaborative work – i.e., lead by example.

Schools
Q: How can you create quiet working spaces in a smaller room in a k-12 school? What are some ideas for school libraries? How can one large space be separated into smaller spaces, especially quiet spaces in a noisier library environment?
A: Furniture layout says a lot about how to behave in a space. Single-use tables instead of tables that invite chatting/group work. Screening can be created with shelving or display, or inexpensive movable screens. Filzfelt also [link: https://www.filzfelt.com/index.php?/products/categories/] has great acoustic panels.

Q: I am in a private school library that is 120 years old. We have updated for Wi-Fi, 5 computer centers and a smart board. How can I update more with very little money?
A: Some ideas would include i-pads to experiment with stop-motion animation, Lightboxes, Paint a corner green for experimenting with green screen, Clear a wall for gallery space and invite artists to hang a show on a rotating basis. You can also take a look at our resource list which includes a resource from *Make* magazine for creating makerspaces in schools.

Q: How do you envision the role of elementary school libraries moving forward? Follow up: Innovative space vs. the traditional school library (read stories, check out books)
A: Actually I don't see a huge distinction between the types of libraries--university, school, public. I think that all libraries need to further embed themselves into the daily lives of people. We are inundated with information and opportunities to partake in so many things that sometimes it's hard to see the forest through the trees. So by becoming a very important goto by thinking about what it is we need on the various journeys of our lives including when we are small children moving through high school, university, etc. At all those different stop points of our lives, our needs around how we use and access knowledge are going to change and evolve. As elementary age children I think of those as being opportunities to expose children to the kind of things that they are going to need to master to thrive in a world that they are eventually going to become an adult in. Everything is pointing to mastery of visual literacy and mastery of finding and mashing up and integrating technology, mastery of the sciences because everyone seems to be pointing to nanotechnologies and those aspects of our world as the next frontier. As exposure to those things generate excitement and a joy in learning about those types of aspects.

But, I also think that the elementary school library is a place first and foremost to engender a true love of learning and a true love of reading as a way of learning. My own children are in an elementary school and I think about what I would love to see as their school library and I would like to see a place where they can have a little part of their day that feels like an oasis and that they're excited about exploring and coming away with new worlds in their hands that they can bring home.

Small/Flexible Spaces
Q: I work in a very small library, 882 square ft. I'm trying to bring in small changes to encourage children to "play" & be creative. I'm concerned about noise levels possibly hindering adult patrons' pleasure at the same time. We have no closed rooms. Any advice?

A: Many adults don't mind the noise, but you are right to be cautious because many certainly do. What about quiet pods for the adults, similar to what I showed from Amsterdam's public library? Or using screening that can be moved around to create a separation between noisy/quiet?

Q: How would you suggest segmenting the space when you're limited in size? Specifically, I'm a middle school librarian.
A: Some of the things described about multi-use or multi-functioning, I think of Alton Brown from the Food Network. He likes to talk about "the evilness of unitaskers" and how every tool in his kitchen needs to be a multi-tasker. That's kind of how I think of the 21st century library whatever kind of library you might be. Spaces need to be pressed into multiple types of service. So if you have only 1 table and chairs available for studying, it may be that you need to create the space throughout the day when it can be used for innovation or makerly or STEM related activities and other times of the day it is set aside for quiet study or research. It could be that you need to think about the kind of tables or chairs that would allow for that to take place. It may be that you have craft paper on hand that can be spread out over a table so that if it is moving from a clean activity to a mess one that can be done with minimal cleanup or it may be that you can do some reconfiguration of a space and that may help you to find more space. Sometimes taking a fresh look at how your shelving is located, how windows are used or not, can help free up space that otherwise may not have been available and that can create the variety in your spaces.

Q: Need ideas for WIFI areas for both study groups & individuals. We are limited on space. Busy downtown public library small-medium size
A: Booth furniture can help with this – it is comfortable for both uses, and the higher backs can help with noise between a group that is collaborating versus an individual that wants to focus. Movable screens can also help.

Q: How to get multiple uses from library? Learning center, listening area for teacher led book reading or author visits, media center area and furniture for best use.
A: Take a look at the information in my presentation around ways to make a space a versatile tool. Following these principles can

Q: Many public libraries have small, often old, buildings. What do you recommend as some innovative ways to create new space from old?
A: Old buildings are sometimes the best since they are not perceived as "precious." Many artists seek out old buildings so they can "make them their own." Not knowing exactly what the barriers might be, it's somewhat difficult to suggest specifics – so I'll suggest a few generalities. If access to power is an issue, sometimes power poles to bring power from the ceiling is best. Or a battery pole – like was featured at ALA last summer from Lightning Power Station [http://www.lightningpowerstation.com/] Another way to bring power is to use power tape under the carpet. If lighting is an issue, floor lamps can solve that. A brainstorming space requires little more than some inspiration, seating (lounge chairs, or stools) and a markerboard or pinup board.

Makerspaces
Q: What resources are available? What types of activities work well in a high school setting? How to handle theft issues? What kind of staffing is required for a makerspace?
A: Take a look at some of the resources on our Resource page. There are some materials there that I think could help with your questions.

Q: What are the best items to purchase to start different types of maker spaces?
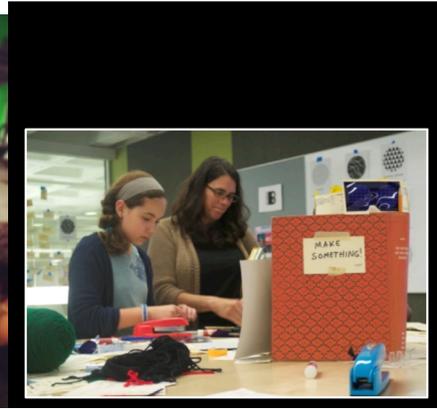A: It really depends on what kind of making you want to promote. Some libraries have a few i-pads on stands for stop-motion animation; some have a table with craft materials; some set out design magazines, a whiteboard and comfortable chairs for a brainstorming area; some have MakeyMakey's. All have a table and stools or chairs!

Lightbox   I-pads for stop motion animation   Craft materials

Q: What are the essentials for a small makerspace for children ages 7-12 when you don't have a dedicated room, only a small space?
A: It really depends on what kind of making you want to promote. Some libraries have a few i-pads on stands for stop-motion animation; some have a table with craft materials; some set out design magazines, a whiteboard and comfortable chairs for a brainstorming area; some have MakeyMakey's (http://www.makeymakey.com/). All have a table and stools or chairs!

Q: Has anyone had any experience with sound booths/recording booths in a library setting?
A: Yes, this is increasingly popular, particularly with recording oral histories and/or music samples. Madison Public Library has a small stand-alone/all-inclusive sound booth inside their production lab (see attached photo). Missoula Public Library has forged a collaboration with their cable access TV group to bring a studio and sound booth into their new library when it is built.

Funding
Q: Are there grants available for creating this type of innovative spaces?
A: Absolutely, yes. There are grants available but there is a lot of competition for them right now, however. The key that we have seen with clients who have gone after these types of grants is to frame it in such a way that the idea itself sounds innovative. So saying I would like to create a Makerspace because that's what libraries are doing is not going to get you there anymore. It might have a few years ago when Makerspaces were a little more of a novelty but by talking about how innovation is at the heart of driving our global economy but how it fits into your local economy whether that economy, which I use broadly, is the economy of the campus and the output of the students, setting them up well for the future or if it is literally the commerce of a small downtown for a small community library. Framing it in such a way that it shows the impact that the library is going to have in its community and region is going to be a very important way to have your proposal for those kinds of grants rise to the top.

Q: I was once employed as the Youth Services Librarian at my branch. I have had bands for two teen events. I also have done theatre evens. What do you think of a small branch bringing regular theatre events? Would love to have this after hours at least twice a year. Money is a problem, because I would love to give the actors a stipend for their time, but also give the community a great outreach opportunity. How could I reach out to large businesses and get donations from them?

A: There are some great examples of libraries that have done this. Take a look at the program carried out by Eastern Illinois University for some ideas. http://ideas.demco.com/trends-topics/community-engagement/library-program-ideas/ They had some grant money for this program but also pulled from talent in their local community. In addition, you may find some ideas in this article on Reimagining Fundraising. http://ideas.demco.com/blog/reimagining-fundraising-improve-finances-cultivating-relationships/

Staffing

Q: How do you manage the regular library responsibilities while also providing these activities? Do you hire on additional "event" staff just for the events? Are they library assistants/librarians, or event planners? Or, is this a new skill that is added to already current staff and they are expected to make time for this, as well as their other responsibilities. Thank you!

A: What I'm seeing is kind of a two pronged approach. One is reaching out into the community as I was describing earlier to find partners who are engaged citizens and want to contribute because it's surprising how many people, if asked, want to participate. So if you are in a university town, for example, there are students who are looking to practice skills and learn and get access to technologies that they otherwise wouldn't have access to and so they are going to be very willing to come in and help you. If you have staff that have particular passions, lateral kinds of things that are complementary, that's also often times a good place to start. Because, if they're passionate about something they are going to be more willing to change or morph their job description or take on something in addition to a more traditional kind of role. So that's one, outreach—finding those people in your network that you can connect with and reach out to for help. It really is remarkable how many people want to be part of something that is successful, exciting, innovative, new and bring their own talents to bear. Especially with the change in the growing number of baby boomers that we keep hearing about and the mixing of generations now it's really wonderful with this large population that is coming to terms with whether they are ready to leave the workforce whole-heartedly or not and what impact that has on volunteerism and giving back to communities.

The other prong is what I am seeing from my vantage point and that is that librarianship is changing and the skill sets that are needed are shifting and growing and so I think that these kinds of spaces are not a fad. I think that the idea as library as a place for innovative activity and economic growth these aren't necessarily new ideas, but I think that what's new is that libraries and librarians are needing to be much more aggressive and proactive about contributing than they maybe have been in years past, so I think that is going to compel a broadened skill set.

Q: While being creative and innovative is good - how does that happen in a library with one person?

A: Tap into your community's network. Nearly every community has people that are willing to share their knowledge. Local arts organizations are often looking for space and for exposure; local schools look for opportunities to collaborate; university students want access to tools/technology the may not have, etc. And reach out to the library networks too! Library as Incubator Project has lots of great ideas, connections and resources.