Notes from Committee Planning Workshop

South Hadley Public Library
February 29, 2016

1. The context: What's happening globally, nationally and locally that is, or will, have an effect on MLS and its members? Think about technology, social/generational trends, consumer patterns, institutions, etc.

- Access to facilities
- Acting as an agent instead of passively waiting for the community. Broadband access is still limited for rural and some urban communities.
- ADA compliance for websites, cuts to state funding for libraries, changes in technology gives opportunities to take risks, but dilutes what we do in the eyes of patrons, idea of what a library is for patrons is in flux, less face to face interaction, changes in population (aging communities) mean changes in services, challenges for delivery costs, can MLS fund both quality delivery and quality other services? Supporting continuing education.
- Balance between early childhood materials being in print or new formats, what is best for kids?
- Balance between larger and smaller libraries (equal services for all)
- Benefits to most, competition, internet delivered, effective messages
- Budget cuts
- Budget cuts -- fiscal realities
- Budget cuts, inadequate funding, school system budget cuts, lack of staffing, changes in technology, financial challenges,
- Changes in formats, what do we keep, what do we add?
- Collections -- more formats and we can get rid of any of them.
- Collections budget has stayed static.
- Committee work, partnership with MBLC, surveys, priorities for services
- Copyright
- Creating connections between new library leadership
- Databases used by school libraries, budget, academic library use
- Digital rights
- Diversification of our population: challenge and opportunity
- Ebooks
- Entertainment and demand for life long learning is a central component for tourist serving libraries.
- Expense of education and steppingstone situation--not sustainable.
- Focus on enrichment for young people, even as young as 2 years old. Tutoring and teaching aspect is very important.
- Full time position need for marketing
- Geographic limitations
- How to make them welcome and relevant
- Huge patron demand for bestsellers and multi copies; not much money left over for other things.
- Inclusion
- Inequality of library resources
• Information literacy
• Keeping for users attention
• Libraries expanding community role(s), engagement, etc.
• Libraries relationship to parent institutions/consortiums, etc.
• Logistics of providing adequate staff training; continual need to improve technology and patron communication skills
• Marketing plus and minus, advocacy
• Meeting expectations for non-traditional services
• Our tech lags behind amazon, which the patrons demand.
• Overcoming old attitudes about libraries
• Overdrive is not Amazon.
• Pace of tech change gets faster and faster; staff training is big issue
• People looking for social connections
• Perceptions of library
• Physical limitations of the library space; what is there room for? No parking. Limits on programming, YA room, cafe, etc. Especially with a historical building.
• Population is aging; age-related disabilities: sight, mobility
• Potential users, demographics, technology use by different users
• Publishers and their demand for money. They are struggling too.
• Rapid changes in technology, plus and negatives, training, pressures in helping the public with their technology (iPad etc.), super Tuesday - election year, politics, outcomes for budgets
• Reaching the non-user
• Reinventing the concept of librarianship. This is a time for experimentation and being nimble enough to change with the time-constraints and other distractions and pressures on our library users. How can we ensure the library supports our communities in a time of rapid change? How can we ensure people that are comfortable with 20th century services are also welcome in our libraries without losing the innovation necessary to adapt and thrive?
• Resource management
• Responsibility of being a gatekeeper
• School library use and needs, lack of survey responses
• Serving more patrons who don’t ever come into the library
• Shift from conventional 20th century services (from collections to community services). This shift facilitates requests for instruction and meeting space, in addition to traditional collections
• Social service surrogates
• Staff training--time, money, etc. Big need.
• Sustainability
• Technological infrastructure
• Technological savvy
• Time
• Turnover of staff
• User wants immediate service, programs, reference services.
• We need a single platform for ebooks, multiple platforms are too difficult for patrons to use
Themes and further thoughts: Budget, rapid changes...tech, formats, materials, etc.; expectations of the public for the libraries/patrons; user needs...schools, patrons, all age ranges and the expectation that libraries will provide them; community space; staff development; marketing/advocacy; demographic; physical space and how it limits what a library can offer; lifelong learning, as the pop ages they are very active and want to continue to be active, how does the library contribute to this?; libraries as de-facto social service agencies; unified digital platform, discovery too, etc.
2. Envisioning our future: It’s 2025 and libraries everywhere and of all types are thriving hubs of their communities. Draw a picture describing what’s happening. What do libraries look/feel like? Where are they? Who is in and around them? What are they doing? How are libraries connected to the rest of the community and the world? Who are our partners/collaborators? What services do they offer and for whom? What new skills do librarians have and what new roles do they take on?

Rich Picture Team 1
Rich Picture Team 2
Rich Picture Team 4
Rich Picture Team 5
VIBRANT LIBRARIES - GIVE + TAKE

POLITICIANS $$$

MBLC MLS

C/W MARS
- SERVICES/SUPPORT
- STAFF

OTHER LIBRARIES
- SPACES
- COLLECTIONS

TOWN HALL
- HR
- FINANCE
- TOWN CLERK
- ASSESSORS
- DPN
- POLICE/FIRE

COMMUNITY
- SOCIAL SERVICES
- HEALTH CENTERS
- CHURCHES

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOLS
COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES
CHARTER SCHOOLS

LIBRARY

BUSINESSES
- CHAMBER
- BID

RESIDENTS
- PATRONS
- NON-PATRONS

Riverfront 8

Rich Picture Team 6
3. Strategic analysis: Thinking about the context and what we want to achieve, what are we doing really well that we want to **KEEP**? What isn't working that we want to **ABANDON**? What might we **INVENT** or **REINVENT** that, if we did, would make a big difference to our success? **Note: Repetitions are intentional to show emphasis.**

**KEEP**

- Advisory services offered by MLS, professional development, etc. (or reinvent)
- BiblioTemps
- Breadth of databases and collections
- Building access
- Buildings, brick and mortar
- Collaboration among the libraries. Openness to new ideas
- Commitment to services/people/resource sharing
- Community building
- Connection with patrons on personal level
- Customer service/patron satisfaction
- Delivery
- Delivery
- Good customer service
- Library advocacy (or reinvent)
- Library designation. We should never not be called libraries. We are not community centers or information hubs, be proud of library designation
- Our commitment to lifelong learning.
- Resource sharing
- Resource sharing; maintaining collections regardless of format; collection development; librarians; skilled personnel;
- Tolstoy

**ABANDON**

- Get rid of the myth that libraries have to change their mission; reinvent ourselves. We are still doing our mission.
- Goldie Jr.
- Impediments to physical access
- LSTA grants (too restrictive), reinvest funding into more open funding sources
- Multiple platforms, lack of interoperability
- Services outside our purview/social services. Sometimes lib. Staff doesn't have the training to do the kinds of things that people in the community need.
- Staff reluctant to innovate
- Stagnant/programs that are not working;
- State wide research databases (or reimagine) Gale, Boston Globe. Put resources toward customization of data base services so each lib gets what it needs.
- Unsustainable practices
INVENT

- Access to eBooks
- Continuing education for staff of all levels
- Equalize database access/ purchasing
- Increase opportunities for inter-library face-to-face interactions
- Library at the center of municipal document policy
- Local cable through the library
- New credentials for librarians
- Opportunities for group purchases for databases, state-wide
- Our ILS, depending on money!
- Post professional training opportunities with credentials, example: a certificate or other leadership training
- State provided tech support
- State wide library card
- Unified discovery platform

REINVENT

- Discovery services, unified platforms
- How we work with digital publishers to make services patron focused
- Library education -- certification for various professional roles, implemented by Simmons.
- Make everything free. Example: copy and faxes would be free. Printing would be free.
- Our responsiveness to include more users.
- Outreach and communities we service
- Programs; staff training; advocacy; marketing; eBook platforms; response to new technologies; services to disseminate information; delivery service; WMA continuing education opportunities; professional development opportunities
- Regional approach to library services (needs are not uniform state wide)
- Relationships between different types of libraries, i.e. School, public, professional
- Requirement to the profession
- Roundtable discussions (MLS should support)
- School library and public library partnerships
- Staff development
- Visible and vocal advocacy that is proactive, rather than reactive

MLS

- MLS: a broker for group purchases, rather than networks
- MLS: Invent - technical services advisor; Reinvent: more programs for school libraries; public library construction roundtable
- MLS: create a forum for discussion of programs, effective forum
- MLS: create a forum for roundtables upon library request
- MLS needs to be more responsive to the Western region. Delivery, training that met our needs, support, the MARLS Coop, tech support,
- Allow MLS advisors opportunity to get their hands dirty and advise in more helpful ways
4. Taking action: Thinking about what we’ve learned so far, what project or program might we start right away—individually and/or collectively—that will help us achieve our vision for libraries? What successful models/programs might we borrow from other states/countries? What might we do that could become something for others to emulate?

1. **ONE STATE ONE CARD**: Creation of a state wide library card, using ComCat as a the discovery platform for all networks and ILSs. Integrating the Five Colleges and other academic libraries into resource sharing. Adds to the concept of the Library for the Commonwealth. Western Mass library users rarely visit BPL, we need to have better access or expanded notion of Library for the Commonwealth.

2. **Regional Advocates for MLS**: Listening tours; what do the libraries need? Create relationships; who are their contacts? Rebuild connections. We need measurable goals and follow-up by MLS. More member-focused training opportunities. Customized. Not just statewide. More responsive advisors with standard response times.

3. **Encourage/facilitate borrowing statewide across all library types** (public, private, school, academic)

4. **One Size Fits All**: Unified Platforms. Promote advocacy of unifying platforms through MLS. MLS up through ALA and other library organizations and networks. Communication and brainstorming and collaboration with other states, organizations, and the private sector.

5. **One Network To Unify Them All**: motivation of individual lib of all types to expand base user by allowing other users to use their collections. Beneficial to each community. Breaking down walls that distinguish us by who we say our audience is. Give everyone access to our collections. If everything is digital, why would we wait for that to happen before we give folks access to our print collections.

6. **Develop grass roots advocacy** to elected officials in order to create sustainable funding for important programs. Example: community building relationships between schools and public libraries, Hispanic population, population who do not use the library, homeless. How might we create sustainable funding so we're not always going for grants or having to explain why/advocate for what we need? Develop our message to our elected officials.