



Libraries and Production

How to provide value to 21st century communities

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Great Examples

pictureannarbor.org

a Flickr just for our town, that won't ever go away. Anyone can contribute, and staff highlight great contributions.

oldweather.org

Powered by zooniverse, this site rewards visitors for transcribing scans of old weather records. Crowdsourced science!

murrayhill.gc.cuny.edu

An omeka-powered exhibit of images from the Metro New York Library council

loc.gov/podcasts

The Library of Congress puts together some amazing podcasts in several series that serve many different audiences.

arborwiki.org

A community wiki that found a home at the library. Every library should be hosting one for their community!

legaciesproject.org

A nonprofit focused on pairing up teens and seniors to produce new oral histories found an online home at the library.

Great Tools

omeka.org

Outstanding digital exhibit & participatory tool from the makers of Zotero.

WordPress.org

Don't post to blogspot or hassle with Drupal! Wordpress hosting is cheap and easy.

Drobo.com

Need to store a lot of data cheap and never lose any? Get a Drobo!

Back to our Roots: Providing Lasting Value to our Communities in the Absence of Commercial Collections

Libraries were around for a long time before there was a publishing industry, and we'll be around long after there's a publishing industry. But the value of the library, for so many staff and patrons, is tied up in the acquisition and circulation of popular materials that getting there from here can be a challenge. Here are a few types of digital products that can provide value to our communities long after the bestseller business has disappeared forever:

Digitization & Access to Local History & Content

This has been a staple of libraries for years already, but doing it right isn't easy. Making collections findable, accessible and participatory for our communities takes local digital infrastructure, a progressive approach to rights management (such as a creative commons license) and most importantly, choosing the right products and tools. The Web is a powerful preservation medium. Keeping it online for good will be an increasingly important value for the library.

Library Production of Original Content

Libraries are beautifully positioned to produce new documentary work that pulls together their resources, tells a story from a neutral viewpoint, and doesn't aspire to - or require - commercial success to be sustainable. Film historians looking through old photos and talking about them; produce podcasts with visiting authors or celebrities, or get local know-it-alls blogging for the library about the history behind the news. Nobody will do it better, so long as you do it well!

Being the Best Place for Patrons to Post

The cloud is an attractive place right now, but after Flickr vanishes and Facebook sells us all out there will be more reluctance from our patrons to give their work away to corporations. Libraries can provide professional storage, curation, and exhibition of our patron's works, be they documentary, descriptive, or expressive. Patron contributions are precious, no matter how banal, incorrect or whacked-out they might be! The library IS its patrons.