

Intro by BCLA

## **SLIDE 1**

INCLUDE TITLE, NAMES, ASSOCIATIONS (VPL, RAIG)

Who we are:

- Caroline Crowe
- Jorge Cárdenas
- Tim McMillan

## **SLIDE 2**

Today we'll be talking about innovative methods for performing readers' advisory services

I'd like to start by drawing on the wisdom of French novelist Marcel Proust as a way for us to understand the history, current relevancy and future viability of RA service.

Proust once articulated: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

In other words: We have to recognize the future that is already unfolding right in front of us. What we need are eyes to see it. SO we don't need to invent the future of public library services; we just need to see what is already in front of us!

Librarians have been historically, traditionally, and still currently associated with books & reading. Books and reading services are objectively known to bring our patrons joy and the satisfaction of getting something that they want from the library. in order for reading services to continue in the future we need to make them more accessible in a better, faster, more convenient and personalised way. And for us: we argue, in order to maintain RA's future viability in the 21st century we must remove all current service barriers for those who are not middle-class, digitally savvy, born in Canada, or have English as their first language

BUT WE ARE FACED WITH A PROBLEM WHICH IS WHY WE ARE  
HERE

### **SLIDE 3**

The problem

A wealth of recent data indicates that while the public rates the library as a highly valuable institution, we are not recognized as a place to discover great leisure reads. Codex Group just revealed that less than 2% of readers use the library for discovering their next read.

### **SLIDE 4**

Our mission

Clearly:

This is a crucial point in history for us to take action and re-commit to readers' advisory services: the library is faced with intense competition from commercial retail, as well as automated book discovery tools and social media, such as Goodreads or Amazon's recommendations.

Our presentation will demonstrate that our competitors skew the reading experience through commercial, cultural and social biases, privileging contemporary and popular titles from the English speaking world. Readers are presented with an incomplete perspective of the vast world of literature. Additionally, corporate/digital book selection tools—when used in the absence of the public library—are only really accessible to a small segment of our user population.

The success of a number of recent initiatives at the Vancouver Public Library as well as work done through BCLA's RAIG provides encouraging evidence that libraries can still make the vital connection to readers. We will share our experiences near the end of this presentation.

Transition: speaking to an audience of librarians it is not difficult to convince you of the importance of reading and in particular leisure reading. However we feel it is necessary

to have empirical evidence to both buttress our case and confirm the validity of readers advisory service to public library stakeholders.

## **SLIDE 5**

### **Fiction nourishes the brain - current research**

Librarians, linguistics, literary scholars have long held the assumption that fiction reading is good for you. Qualitative studies in these fields have shown how fiction provides readers with

1. Escapism - relaxation by abandoning the here and now
  - Means of escape - escape into another world. escape by association
  - Reading for practical instruction - learn information, improving language skills
  - Self- Development - insight into other person's life

## **SLIDE 6**

A compelling study came in 2002 by Joseph Gold in *The Story Species* where he argues that storying is a survival tool for the human species. Gold's argument is that the ability to read literature is a human adaptive behavior. Drawing from his own experiences as a family therapist, gold claims that stories have healing power by helping human beings find balance. He argues, "Reading other people's stories allows people to step outside of their own story long enough to decide what they want to change about it. Even if founded on some some fact, we create disabling stories about ourselves, that are difficult to escape. A good example: "I must be a bad person because bad things always happen to me". When one reads fiction, Gold argues, we are able to rewrite our personal story by grafting into it new experiences derived from literature (171 Ross cont, Gold: page 145) and break these vicious cycles that stick and can disable us.

We now have scientific backings for these findings. Current research from Brain science shows the claims we have been making about the importance of fiction reading are truer than we could ever imagine.

### **SLIDE 7**

Neuroscientist at Emory University found that the changes that occurred when an individual read a novel were registered in a region of the brain where neurons have the ability to “trick the mind” into doing something it is not, like thinking about playing basketball can activate the neurons associated with the physical act of playing basketball. Likewise, the brain does not make much of a distinction between reading about an experience and encountering it in real life; in each case, the same neurological regions are stimulated.

When we read a fictional story, readers find themselves feeling the emotions, thoughts, and internal responses of the characters as if they were their own. The concerns and circumstances prompt emotions in the reader, but it is not the emotion of characters that one is feeling. The emotions are one’s own.

### **SLIDE 8**

And finally, two psychologists in 2006 - Oatley & Mar - reported that individuals who read fiction have stronger real-life skills, as they are better able to understand other people, empathize and understand the complexities of social life.

All this aside, the library’s connection to reading promotion has become increasingly problematic. Before we begin our critique, Tim will talk about alarming statistics that prompted our call for activism.

END CAROLINE

*(10 including introductions)*

## **SLIDE 9**

### **START TIM**

There is ample recent evidence that public libraries are falling short when it comes to prioritising readers and readers' experiences. The Pew Research Group's recent and exhaustive surveys of attitudes towards American public libraries confirmed that we are widely recognised as a place for books but we are almost invisible as a service institution.

## **SLIDE 10**

However, the responses displayed an alarming ambivalence about using the libraries for expertise and services, including reading recommendations. Many respondents claimed a lack of awareness, others indicated a lack of interest, viewing the library more as a repository space than as a place for active engagement and sharing

## **SLIDE 11**

This dispiriting picture is further borne out by recent market research conducted for the publishing industry which indicates that our institutions barely register as a place for trusted book recommendations: less than two percent of the Codex Group's respondents listed the public library as a source for book discovery.

## **SLIDE 12**

To test these findings in a Vancouver context, our own library conducted a smaller-scale survey to determine where readers discover titles for leisure reading. The results have been predictable: most respondents have indicated that the most used resources are those people who are closest to them, but retail and media rate just as highly.

## **SLIDE 13**

Across all three surveys we see an increased reliance on digital discovery tools and either a lack of awareness or a lack of interest in what the library can do. Overwhelmingly, the retail world is driving the public's discovery of new titles. They are acting as the de facto intermediary. Clearly, the data indicates that we are failing to be the locus for reading recommendations, let alone as engaged intermediaries to the larger world of literature.

## **SLIDE 14**

the numbers paint an alarming picture, but why does it matter that libraries have a stake in curating the reading experience? Is it so terrible that commercial retail interests and digitally curated social sites have taken on the role?

We have identified three reasons why this matters:

1. Skewed by commercial interests recommendations are privileging bestsellers, trends and new titles
2. automated results are usually inaccurate and do not represent individual needs
3. Neither reflect nor serve the diversity of our population.

When we examine our competitors in isolation, these problems become clearer:

## **SLIDE 15**

The problem with big publishing: the bestseller conundrum

At considerable expense, libraries purchased bulk orders of the latest hits only to find that we are stuck with overstock a year later as our users' interest have moved on. For publishers though, bestsellers are an effective tool to maximize profits at the expense of a broad range of titles.

## **SLIDE 16**

No matter its quality or content, the bestseller represents the merest tip of the iceberg for the reader: there is considerably more substance out of view.

## **SLIDE 17**

For purely economic reasons, the publishing industry and their retail partners have no interest in promoting a wider range of titles. It is certainly accurate to note that those few independent publishers capable of taking on this role are evaporating from the market as "the vast majority of publishing houses are owned by multinational, multimedia corporations" (Bartel 25). This last qualifier is salient: by controlling the "broad spectrum of news and entertainment sources" (*ibid.*) publishers can reinforce their sales pitch across all media.

The net result is a very limited pool of voices available to readers through commercial retail channels. What should worry us is the public's reliance on such a compromised stream

It's easy to be negative about our neighbours in commercial retail, but the picture isn't all bad! Many brick and mortar outlets employ passionate and knowledgeable staff who are as keen as we are to broaden readers' horizons. However, the commercial sector will always prioritise profits and more often than not, that means western-produced blockbusters!

### **SLIDE 18**

We use traditional media all the time and not just the venerables like *Quill and Quire* and *Library Journal* but more populist sources as well: even *People Magazine* has its place. However, the familiar shortcomings remain! All too often the focus is on the next big hit which is invariably a western author writing in English. The aggregation of media into the hands of a few multinationals further complicates the validity of these resources.

### **SLIDE 19**

When it comes to our online competitors, the picture is far more ambiguous: algorithmically powered recommendation tools are democratic, free and available around the clock, but reliant on technical expertise and infused with a pervasive western bias.

**(6 for a total of 16 altogether)**

END TIM

START JORGE

### **SLIDE 20**

Humans vs. Algorithms

We're not luddites. We use and love technology. Digital Readers Advisory tools, like Goodreads, Amazon, Your Next Read, Shelfari, Bibliocommons, and NoveList are great. They're specialized, democratic, crowd and professionally sourced, free, constantly updated and available around the clock. They make our life as librarians

easier. They also rely heavily on algorithms, a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer. The problem in this case is: What should I read next? Analyzing big data, millions of users and their input, and taking into account every aspect of the interaction (book, author, reader, medium, etc), algorithms in recommendation systems take different routes to arrive at the same goal: present the reader with the perfect book. (e.g. Goodreads algorithm, being a social network, is based on friends, Amazon algorithm, being a store, is based on previous purchases.)

## SLIDE 21

Algorithms not only recommend books, they also answer questions like: What movie should I watch next? or, Can you recommend an album? In the last few years, algorithms seem to be the solution to every problem in general, and the problems created by individuals looking for new movies, songs and books in particular. In digital circles, and increasingly in the library world, algorithms are The Answer.

## SLIDE 22

However, those data-run companies realize that numbers and formulas are not enough when appealing consumers. Even the experts in algorithms are turning back to humans to fix what a machine can't, and because they need to label everything to make it sound new, they call this trend "Human curation", as opposed to machine curation. Some examples:

1. Songza is a popular music app that uses humans to create lists based on moods, genres or activities. Struggling in the music streaming business, Google acquired Songza [in order to use its human-curated technology to improve its offers, including Youtube](#). That is, The Kings of Algorithm acquired humans, experts to offer a better service.
2. A company so data driven as Netflix, acknowledges that it's [secret special algorithm is a human](#). They use humans to improve both their streaming and their production businesses.

Human curation improves the results these companies get with their algorithms. In the words of experts at South By Southwest, the music, film and emerging technologies conference, "Where we currently stand is solving the integration of human data with machine data and algorithms to generate personalized recommendations that mirrors

the nuances of human curation. This formula is the holy grail". The holy grail, if I may, already exists. It's called public library.

### **SLIDE 23**

Algorithms, aside from lacking the nuances of the human curation, are limited in other ways.

- Readers are likely to get bad or inaccurate recommendations from algorithms, that is, we might end up with a "frustrated reader". Many studies have shown that frustrated readers simply won't pick up a book again.
- Recommendation systems have an English, North American focus, given that most internet companies are American and first create products in English. We have no equivalent for recommendation systems in most languages, and the existing ones are not as advanced as those in English. If a patron mentions a book in another language, these tools are almost useless.
- Privacy. Recommendation engines are based on big data, and this data is collected from the users. They promise they will never, ever misuse or sell your information. However, how many of us have actually read the terms of use?

### **SLIDE 24**

Effective use of digital tools. you need to know how to use a device, how to create accounts, how to understand layouts, websites and apps, etc. And not only that: while you may be able to go online, you may still be missing how the digital world works, and Salman Rushdie can tell you about it.

### **SLIDE 25**

- Last but not least, community work. Our cities are full of places that could be used as a poster for the digital divide, where most people can't afford current technology and a data plan, and where even those few who could don't have the digital literacy to use them effectively. In these places, digital recommendation tools are not an option. Instead, pen, paper, conversations and a book truck make things happen. That truck is pushed not by an algorithm but by a librarian with the technical, social, academic, digital, literary and personal skills to create community.

It's hard to point at all the great things and shortcomings of recommendation systems without specific cases. We don't mean to pick on Goodreads (I already mentioned that we like it and use it on a regular basis, I'm sure many of you do too), but it's a great example because it's increasingly popular, it's mainstream and it was the only recommendation system mentioned by name, and praised, in our recent survey. We can talk about more examples after this presentation.

## **SLIDE 26**

- Goodreads: A social cataloguing website that allows individuals to freely search extensive user-populated database of books, annotations, and reviews.
- Great features: e.g. groups and discussions, cataloguing. Great for book lovers.
- The recommendation system: you need at least 20 books on your list, it recommends based on what friends like first, then your reading history and then what similar readers liked.
- What makes Goodreads good? Critical mass. The more reviews and ratings a title gets, the better we can judge it, and the better it is recommended: a combination of popularity contest, social media and social cataloguing.

## **SLIDE 27**

- Limitations: technical knowledge, dedication (the more you post, the better the recommendations), languages.
- If you don't know, I recommend you to do some research on the issues Goodreads faces, including Trolls (both ways, authors and readers), bullying (don't you dare posting a bad review, you'll hear from the publisher, agent or author themselves), spam, fake profiles, ghost reviews, reviews of unread books (John Green), reviews based on many things but the book (personal issues).

## **SLIDE 28**

- Junot Diaz (Ellen Glasgow, Z.Z. Packer, Sherman Alexie, Haruki Murakami, Farley Mowat, Zadie Smith, Henry Kissinger, Robert F. Kennedy). Roberto Bolaño (Cesar Aira, Horacio Castellanos Mora, Javier Marias, Fernando del Paso, Jose Donoso, Macedonio Fernandez, Julio

Cortazar, Carlos Fuentes Javier Cercas). Daniel Sada (Yuri Herrera, Alvaro Enrigue, Javier Marias, Lucia Perillo, Rafael Bernal, Carlos Fuentes), Haruki Murakami (Yukio Mishima, Banana Yoshimoto, Ryu Murakami, Yasutaka Tsutsui, Kezamburo Oe, Yasunari Kawabata, Kenneth Koch).

After explaining the humans vs. machines conundrum, it is a good time to explain why we, libraries, are a better option. Remember: We have the humans, the knowledge, the tools and we welcome everybody. More importantly, we take advantage of the digital world and improve it.

END JORGE *(This section is 9 minutes and 30 seconds for a total of 26 minutes)*

START TIM

## **SLIDE 29**

### **Why us?**

As Jorge indicated, we have many advantages to recommend us to the reading public.

#### We are mandated to serve a diverse range of communities

not only is our mission serve all socioeconomic groups, ethnicities, but also we as public libraries are already connected to community groups such as: neighbourhood houses; language centres; shelters, universities & colleges; art galleries, etc... so we can draw on our existing partnerships to inform our knowledge.

#### We are free

Free access is critical in presenting everybody with an opportunity to participate in the reading experience. Moreover, free access was identified in Usherwood and Toyne's focus groups as crucial in maintaining the reading habit. Their interviewees also noted the price of the book often dictated their purchases and, therefore, the breadth of the leisure reading experience.

#### Wide range of stock

This is a crucial: breadth allows patrons to take risks with their reading; readers change, so they need the range to assist them in their change

As Catherine Sheldrick Ross, described the importance of variety most succinctly in her work, noting that "the range of tellable stories is unlimited, readers who dip their net

often enough into the ocean of narrative are almost certain to encounter the particular they need to hear”

### Privacy

We respect and protect personal information. Historically, this has been one of the library’s core values, and in the era of big data, it’s even more important. We won’t tell anybody what you just read, what you like or the genres you’re interested in. The library is the perfect paper wrap for the digital era. It’s our duty to remind our patrons of this.

### **SLIDE 30**

#### **Why is it not working?**

We pride ourselves in these facets that differentiate us from our competitors, but there’s something wrong if, as indicated across the surveys we looked at earlier: people know we are about books, but not reading. For too many of our users, the library is not a resource for discovery

We feel that there are some clear reasons for this situation:

### **SLIDE 31**

#### Our relentless focus on all things digital

Are we to be a start-up or a library? No, and If we try to play the catch-up game with start-ups, we lose. We don’t have the same mandate, resources and technical knowledge. We can, and do, take advantage of technological and digital tools as they become available, but when it comes to digital technology, we don’t innovate --and we don’t have to. We discover, learn, acquire, classify, catalogue, share, teach and create spaces for people to use that technology.

### **SLIDE 32**

#### The bestsellers game

We’re playing the best sellers game, and losing. Comments from the survey we conducted indicated clearly that we’re just not respected for our “taste” in fact, we are, in the pithy phrase of a respondent: “populists, not intellectuals” >gasp<! We are also called to task for “[probably] having too many silly suggestions: not everyone likes badly written, top 10 fiction.”

Embarrassing yes, but popular reading is popular for a reason and all readers should be supported. Unfortunately, we're failing our readers at this as well: "likely recommendations are usually way behind the NYT or other media" said one respondent; another notes "I often use bookstores and media to discover new books, before the library has ordered them."

As mentioned previously, we've made the mistake of trying to satisfy the market when we lack the resources and mandate of a market oriented enterprise.

### **SLIDE 33**

#### We're not invested in our unique knowledge

Most staff aren't trained and they're not invested! Our collective focus has shifted so far to the future that we have failed to manage what we are indelibly branded with: books! Education has failed as well: the debate as to whether readers' advisory is a technical skill or a discipline with academic credibility has left us without systematised training in BC.

#### Lack of Trust

In the survey and in conversation with borrowers who opt out of our readers' services we've discovered that they felt the library was too vast, and talking about books is too intimate of a conversation to have with a stranger: "you only get reviews from the librarians, not by the actual teen who's read it or who's the same age as you." >many of our YA reading colleagues were a little taken aback by that comment!<

A local artist and new immigrant articulated this succinctly: i feel more comfortable asking a person in a bookstore because the store is smaller and the experience is more intimate which is more conducive to a conversation about reading - which is a personal experience and a conversation and why family/friends ranks the highest as a trusted resource.

### **SLIDE 34**

#### Lack of knowledge

We've seen that many people don't approach us because they either don't trust us or feel that they can't: We've worked to abolish the stereotype to prevent a patron's fear of approaching the reference desk, but this really has nothing to do with it. It is lack of awareness: patrons do not realise they can ask us for reading recommendations:

There is an antidote to this: we must invest our resources in strong marketing to promote what we do as librarians OR we must go there; inhabit spaces that are book related but are not associated with the library; marketing departments should not just emphasise NEW programs or sexy initiatives: we need them to TELL the public what we do, what we are good at, our core services. We feel that it is time to do this.

*(8 for a total of 34 minutes)*

END TIME

### **SLIDE 35**

Creative solutions where the MEDIUM IS NOT THE MESSAGE  
>With apologies to the late great Marshall McLuhan...<

### **SLIDE 36**

#### **START JORGE**

Based in our library's mission and values, going out to the community is one of the most important activities we do as librarians. Some of these outings include shelters, food banks, transition houses, etc. Let's talk about the Readers Advisory work we do, and the many successes and lessons we've got from it

### **SLIDE 37**

These are some of the quotes I've saved from my visits to these places. My favourite is the last one, from a big, fully tattooed guy in a shelter. It's not a surprise (and it shouldn't be), that the shelters and food banks are full of readers of every level, taste, age, and background. Most of them are library patrons, some aren't and a few don't like going to the library for several reasons. Any given day, I'll bring a bicycle trailer full of books, will set up a table and people will come to me to check out books, have conversations, leave a book sometimes, and ask for recommendations (I'm not the only one, other community librarians do this at VPL). The conversations can be as simple as an opinion, or as complex as a discussion on Tolstoy or the screen adaptation of The Hunger Games series vs. the books.

### **SLIDE 38**

My goal is to try to find the right book for every person. I keep lists on preferences and interests, I write down questions and requests and try to pick the best options. Sometimes I'm successful and the patron is happy, other times I fail. That means I have to try harder. Sometimes I go back to the library with my bike truck still full, several times it's empty. They're never disappointed, nobody has ever yelled at me for not bringing the right reading.

### **SLIDE 39**

A different goal, and this is something I'm still working on at the food bank, is try to get feedback and engage the patrons. I don't mean evaluation forms or comments, even when they're useful. I mean real engagement. One of many projects is the community booklists. (Here tell the story of the Romance lists: people waiting in line). The idea is to get those patrons to share their knowledge about books and reading, and to take advantage of the RA digital tools we use but they don't.

END JORGE

### **SLIDE 40**

START CAROLINE

### **Build new communities of readers**

While jorge is building new communities of readers at the foodbank, we are also doing something similar with new immigrant communities through our EETf program, an RA service targeted specifically for new immigrants

### **SLIDE 41**

#### **WHAT IS EXPLORE ENGLISH THROUGH FICTION**

Public libraries have always played a large role in assisting newcomers, through citizenship tests; language testing; job searching, but there is a gap when it comes to leisure reading services. Recent studies, specifically Dr. Keren Dali, have revealed that leisure reading plays a very significant role in the acculturation process by helping new immigrants cope with culture shock; illuminating the humorous side of challenging situations; sharing the immigrant

experience of others; re-evaluating the national cultural heritage; learning about a new country; and improving English language skills

How we performed this service has changed from when we started - we are learning and adapting as we continue to develop the service.

## **SLIDE 42**

we started by using the forms based RA technique: by form I mean: we provide newcomers with a questionnaire (both online and in print) asking them to list their personal reading interests, habits, and english reading level. Questions like: what did one read in their native language: what are their favourite novels in English? Why are you interested in reading fiction in English>?

After a patron has completed a questionnaire we send them back a personalised booklist., through bibliocommons for direct access to the catalogue

## **SLIDE 43**

**CHALLENGE-** this set up more barriers than access; technical barrier, bibliocommons barriers, language barrier, and library barrier! and

Another problem we've encountered is the way in which we assess reading interests. we use north American categories (genre, subject, topics, tone) These are not universal classifications. for example: the concept of romance literature does not even exist in Finland

## **SLIDE 44**

Second Phase:

Moved to one-to-one person appointments and promotion in-house mostly (generate guests via existing in house VCC connection; staff referrals

better: because the questionnaire was used just to get the conversation started, natural conversation, learn how to adjust your speaking to the correct reading level

Here is an example of how the form is used in a one-to-one.

## **SLIDE 45**

This patron was an advanced English learner interested in cultural movements and the impact cultural change has on interpersonal

relations: [https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/134340301\\_vpl\\_booksjustforyou/298946807\\_vpl\\_-\\_explore\\_english\\_through\\_fiction\\_-\\_cultural\\_signposts](https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/134340301_vpl_booksjustforyou/298946807_vpl_-_explore_english_through_fiction_-_cultural_signposts)

Third Phase:

We were not reaching enough people by just targeting patrons already inside the library. Our service has now evolved into a combination of 1-1 appointments and presentations out in the community.

We have been attending ESL sessions/classes out in the community. For example: an ESL conversation circle at the neighbourhood house Kiwassa in East Vancouver. I find it useful to bring books directly to the classroom; booktalk a few samples for each reading level and reading taste; promote the questionnaires; assist patrons who need help completing the questionnaires; set-up 1-1 appointments with VPL librarians; Added benefit of helping patrons become library members; and check-out books directly from my book cart.

## **SLIDE 46**

A FINAL REASON FOR WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY is that by leaving the building and working directly with community language groups we can better understand what is read by various native cultures. We Ask the immigrant readers: what is popular in literature in their native language? We can then translate that appeal into the appeal of various English language literature genres. And, like Jorge's shelters example, we can co-develop booklists. get recommendations from the language groups

## **SLIDE 47**

### **PERSONALISED SERVICES**

We have already discussed the importance of personalised service.

Along with one-to-one appointments - book a librarian, we at VPL have had a lot of ongoing success for almost four years using our Books Just For you and Good Gifts services

ANd for those of you not familiar with forms based RA services we do the following:

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1. reader completes a form on the reading interests, such as listing top three favorite reads

**SLIDE 49**

2. librarian creates a personalised reading list in bibliocommons

**SLIDE 50**

3. the booklist is sent in an email to the patron with an explanation for selections

**SLIDE 51**

return to slide that shows her top three favorite writers:

I'd like to show you an example of lit in translation as it displays how limiting algorithm can be: her books are only similar because they are literature and in translation (if we match up subject headings keyword similarities we only get literary fiction and fiction in translation)- misses out that they share a similar theme: (Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, the idea that events will recur again and again infinitely.) and all the authors are political activists in their personal lives...

**15 minutes - caroline!**

**SLIDE 52**

**Getting Into New Markets:**

By this I mean: promoting or performing our services outside the library context or non-traditional places

**Social Media - Facebook & Twitter & Instagram**

**SLIDE 53**

We started with Facebook because when we started RA services FB was still a popular enough forum

VPL's Facebook channel provides a great platform for reaching engaged readers and library users in Vancouver where they are spending their time – on social media.

We used Facebook in two ways:

asked RA questions like “name a book you liked and we will recommend one similar” and for creating community generated booklists: pose a question like, ‘what is your most influential read? repost as a booklist: Vancouver’s most influential reads

We were also creative: as you can see we above one that was popular was: travel around the world in eighty days. name a country and a corresponding novel that best represents life that country ...

Challenges: if we are using social media, we have to prepared that forums will go out-of-style or get used differently. So even if we have invested energy into developing programs (facebook) we have to ready to quickly restructure our services for another type of forum that becomes in vogue. Agility is key. FB is no longer useful as an interactive services, but Twitter is, so we’ve moved our services to (twitter)

## **SLIDE 54**

Twitter service: we post a question every day at 1:00pm. name a book you liked and we’ll recommend one you love, and link to our catalogue. and from 1-3 answer about 8-10 reference questions.

We are also aware that instagram is the next hot thing. we are in the process of thinking of ways to use a visual medium for RA services. NYPL provides us with an excellent example i’d love to follow.

## **SLIDE 55**

NYPL is currently taking photos of book recommendations from their old card catalogues; perfect way for us to market these gems (hidden older collections) that we have that are rarely seen by the public.

I also love this idea of using new technologies for promoting core library services.

To quote tim: “A marriage of old and new media that combines nostalgic sentiment with the emergent love for analog formats”

***social media is 5 minutes!!jk***

## **START TIM**

### **SLIDE 56**

Vancouver is awesome:

In order to highlight our staff's expertise and promote the library's collections in a very non-traditional place – we have secured a column in someone else's blog! Vancouver is Awesome. We have been contributing with a regular column 'walk with me' that offers a walking tour of a gentrified neighborhood. we recommend library books that unveil the history of the neighbourhood, and current public art. for example: Union Street (books on history of hogan's alley; italian immigrants; current public art (ken lum)

### **SLIDE 57**

#### **Marketing techniques**

Surveys revealed above an overwhelming % of friends/family as the primary choice for book recommendations. Ross' qualitative study shows the same results with the additional information: Yes, family/friends are used, but only for people who share similar interests (page 759 “selecting fiction” article) So its about trust and shared interests - which is achievable for librarians Libraries can apply same principle with named staff pick.

### **SLIDE 58**

recently launched a Readers' Advisory service at [Surrey Libraries](#) . On our Recommended Reads page, patrons can now learn about the [Surrey Libraries Book Advisors](#) and their reading interests and send us an email for book recommendations. For example, see Book Advisor Naomi's bio belo

### **SLIDE 59**

VPL has been receptive about promotional What do I read next posters, on the checkout receipts, bookmarks in books, etc. - we should ask Stephen for samples from their stock to bring

## **SLIDE 60**

### Thinking about the Future

RAIG's upcoming projects

## **SLIDE 61**

Readers' Advisory Education - Improvements needed

Anna Ferri from the RAIG committee is acting as the Education Liaison, a point of contact with local Library education programs. She will be reaching out to connect with administration, faculty and students on what they are doing and what our committee can do to support in both formal and informal learning opportunities around readers' advisory

## **SLIDE 62**

One area we are addressing this year is our ability to provide readers' services to Canadian newcomers and those who are new to English. We've recognized a gap in their knowledge regarding leveled reading frameworks (e.g. Lexile or Canadian Language Benchmarks). When working with customers in a library setting, we often find that there is a mismatch between how ELL customers are explaining their reading needs (using leveled frameworks) and how we understand and respond.

## **SLIDE 63**

On October 20th, as part of RA in a day, we will include training in this area: The emphasis will be on how to demystify reading levels; what is happening while the readers are reading; how we should frame our questions at the reference desk; how to interpret the information given from a client and what to do with the information (in other words: how to match the individual to the correct reading level)

## **SLIDE 64**

## Metrics

metrics: we need to develop and implement strong research techniques for measuring the impact of RA services (developing methods of assessing if recommendations lead to increased physical circulation)

## **SLIDE 65**

## Thoughts