REPORTER

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2017 | VOLUME XXXV ISSUE 2

The Illinois Library Association Reporter

is a forum for those who are improving and reinventing Illinois libraries, with articles that seek to: explore new ideas and practices from all types of libraries and library systems; examine the challenges facing the profession; and inform the library community and its supporters with news and comment about important issues. The *ILA Reporter* is produced and circulated with the purpose of enhancing and supporting the value of libraries, which provide free and equal access to information. This access is essential for an open democratic society, an informed electorate, and the advancement of knowledge for all people.

ON THE COVER

New worlds of data and communication are becoming increasingly important parts of our lives. To keep up with these trends, academic libraries are turning to podcasts as a tool to reach and engage students, as described in Eric Edwards' article on page 4. Another article in this issue addresses learning how to find and access government data as a key skill for both librarians and library users, while two university researchers share their findings on school library data in Illinois in an article that begins on page 12, urging library advocates to use facts and measurement to strengthen their case. And if you're tired of being data driven, turn to the eclectic collections in Libraries of Things on page 8.

The Illinois Library Association is the voice for Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. It provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services in Illinois and for the library community in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. It is the eighth oldest library association in the world and the third largest state association in the United States, with members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. Its 3,200 members are primarily librarians and library staff, but also trustees, publishers, and other supporters.

The Illinois Library Association has four full-time staff members. It is governed by a sixteen-member executive board, made up of elected officers. The association employs the services of Strategic Advocacy Group for legislative advocacy. ILA is a 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization.

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APRIL 2017 | VOLUME XXXV ISSUE 2

CONTENTS

4 PODCASTING: EVERYBODY'S DOING IT!
by Eric Edwards

8 IS YOUR LIBRARY A "LOT?"
by Keisha Hester

12 DATA BACK UP THE HEADLINES: ADDING WEIGHT TO ADVOCACY
by Michelle Guittar and Kelly Grossmann

17 2017 LEGISLATIVE MEET-UPS

18 GOING TO THE SOURCE: LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH TIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR PATRONS
by Eric Edwards

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Podcasting: Everybody's Doing It!

Podcasting is not a new technology by today's standards, of course, and it has a lengthy history in academic libraries. According to Max Anderson, University of Illinois College of Medicine, the term "podcast" was originally used to refer to lecture recordings, and there were two separate terms, one for audio (podcast) and another for video (vodcast). Today the term includes a wide range of digital files that can be downloaded from the web to a variety of devices.

The technology has improved significantly over the last decade, particularly in terms of sound quality. But a podcast is much more than just the finished product. From deciding to create one in the first place, to using it as an opportunity to promote a library's resources and programs, to managing the "behind-the-scenes" work necessary to make it an interesting and enjoyable listening experience, what are the best strategies?

WHY PODCAST?

For academic librarians, podcasting offers a method of reaching students outside the classroom setting. Zaray Buenrostro, Career Education Corporation, is in the early stages of producing a podcast series. She learned from students that, while they found the instructional sessions useful, the hour-long format took up too much of their time. Podcasting enables librarians to distribute the information in more "bite-sized" chunks, to which students can listen at their convenience.

Podcasting can also be a way for a library to inform members of the campus community about programs and events taking place both inside and outside of the library. This can be especially effective at a non-residential college, with many students not spending much time on campus outside of class. The length and format of a podcast also give guests an opportunity to discuss their work in greater detail than would be possible through a newsletter, for example.

Additionally, podcasting can be an opportunity to engage fellow librarians in professional development discussions. Jennifer Lau-Bond and Martinique Hallerduff, both of Harper College, noticed that the number of podcasts produced specifically for librarians was relatively small. Their program, *The Library Sessions*, gives academic librarians another opportunity to exchange advice or ideas on professional development topics outside of conferences or other face-to-face encounters.

[continued on page 6]

"Podcasting can be an opportunity to engage fellow librarians in professional development discussions."

Photo credit: Troy Swanson

[continued from page 4]

TIMELY TOPICS, PERSONAL INTERESTS

A topic might focus on a particular event or theme, such as a February episode on Black History Month. If a library is hosting a speaker or exhibit, the podcast can be an effective way of promoting events or providing follow-up information and perspectives for people unable to attend. David Bell at Eastern Illinois University helped created a podcast version of *Frankenstein* for an exhibit titled "Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature," and it was also a tie-in for the library's "One Book, One Campus" program. In many instances, however, the topic can simply be anything that might be of interest to listeners, such as a current trend in a particular field.

For librarians starting a podcast not directly related to their professional position, the possibilities are virtually endless. Lynne Thomas, Northern Illinois University, has hosted several award-winning science-fiction podcasts based on her personal interest, knowledge, and enthusiasm for the subject. Even though there were already many science-fiction podcasts available, she and the other members of her podcasting team found their niche. Thomas discovered, for example, that there were few *Doctor Who*-related podcasts featuring any women (and none featuring all women), so they stepped in to fill the gap. Since that time, the number of *Doctor Who* podcasts hosted partly, or entirely, by women has increased significantly.

In coming up with topics, keep the subject matter fresh and seek feedback from listeners. If the podcast is designed for students, ask them ahead of time what topics would interest them most, particularly those directly related to academic success. One of the advantages of a team production is that members can bounce ideas off each other and provide alternate perspectives on a particular topic.

IT TAKES TIME…AND TEAMWORK

The time commitment to produce a podcast can often end up being more than initially expected, especially taking into account all the stages of the production process. For Lydia Howes and Karli White, both at Southern Illinois University Medical Library, producing a fifteen-to-twenty-minute episode of their podcast, *Sound & Query*, takes between five and ten hours. This includes researching a topic, coming up with questions, preparing guests, actual recording time, and then editing it. That time frame does not include additional "behind-the-scenes" work, such as selecting topics, finding guests, taking photos and recording documentation during production, and uploading the finished product to the website.

Photo credit: Carol Gordon

Having enough staff to produce a podcast is crucial for long-term viability. In particular, technical support is critical for dealing with equipment breakdowns and installing updates. A liaison with the campus IT department brings needed expertise and support into podcasting production, while also removing some of the burden from library staff. Another benefit of having a podcasting "team" is that members can step in for each other if someone is unable to complete a specific task.

BIGGER AND BETTER BAG OF TRICKS

In addition to highlighting campus events, a podcast can promote a library's resources, particularly if the recording studio is on-site and is available for students to use. If a library does not already offer podcasting support for courses, adding the technology gives the library an opportunity to both expand services to students and collaborate with faculty. Spencer Brayton, Blackburn College, notes that faculty needed to use the technology in their courses, particularly media and journalism classes, and asked the library for assistance. In addition to improving students' information literacy and technology skills, podcasting support can also make a library seem more "exciting" for today's students. A "students-only" podcast is another way to engage students, while providing necessary technical support.

"The podcasting journey is always a learning experience, and taking chances or experiencing setbacks comes with the territory."

If a library is adding podcasting resources as part of a larger renovation, that presents an opportunity to promote podcasting and the library-wide improvements at the same time. Scott Walter, DePaul University, notes that a renovation project at his library will include major improvements to technology for media content creation, including podcasting support.

ADVICE AND COUNSEL

If this is your first experience with podcasting, listen to existing podcasts and make a note of what you liked and disliked about them. Better yet, talk to an experienced podcaster directly, if you can. Find out what triumphs or setbacks that person has experienced. As far as the technical aspects of producing a podcast, do your research beforehand and become as familiar as possible with the equipment you will use and the technical jargon that will arise, and if possible, take a workshop or online training course.

As you start producing and releasing episodes, seek feedback from listeners. Make certain that the sound quality is good and you are speaking clearly. No matter how engaging the content might be, that won't mean anything to listeners if they can't make out what you are saying. Keeping the podcast reasonably short is another good idea. In today's world, people have more hectic schedules, and attention spans are not as long. To engage the listener, make the person feel as if she or he is actually part of the conversation, instead of merely hearing a lecture.

No matter how outstanding the podcast, few people may actually bother listening to it unless the library spreads the word. Troy Swanson, Moraine Valley Community College, whose library has hosted a podcast since 2006, distributes it through a number of media. These include not just the library's website, but also YouTube, iTunes, and Stitcher. In addition, the podcast is cataloged in OPAC and preserved in the college archives, so future listeners will have access to current and past episodes.

There is no "right" way to design or produce a podcast. It often depends on personal experiences and the intended audience, in addition to the broader needs of the library or the institution. Even for experienced podcasters, experimentation is sometimes necessary, particularly as new technology becomes available. The podcasting journey is always a learning experience, and taking chances or experiencing setbacks comes with the territory.

[In addition to the individuals mentioned in this article, special thanks to Evelyn Cunico, independent information specialist and writer on consumer health, for providing background resources and recommending several experienced podcasters to contact.]

Keisha Hester, Broadview Public Library District

Is Your Library a LOT?

Libraries and librarians constantly look for ways to bring innovative services to patrons. This inclination has given rise to a type of collection named with an ironic play on words: Library of Things (LOT). Typically, a LOT is a collection of related items that go above and beyond the usual offerings of books, music, and movies, and include such diverse items as power tools, baking pans, ukuleles, even sewing machines, as well as ever-increasingly technology-related items such as hotspots, tablets, computers, etc. The offerings are limited only by the imagination and patron request.

Before developing a specialized Library of Things, libraries would do well to take into consideration many factors, including seeking legal counsel for feasibility and policy recommendations and implementation. However, the factors below can help to inform the discussion with affected staff, the public, and legalities.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Patron demand certainly plays a large part in acquisitions; however, as librarians are often trend spotters, their assessments about particular items or collections should be considered as well. Allow item requests to come from all levels of employees, not just frontline staff or managers. The request should be in writing, with supporting research and/or documentation, including future uses and price to acquire, when possible. This is especially helpful if the decision to purchase will rest with the library board of trustees due to the item's price point or intrinsic value. It also helps keep board members informed of these special collections so that they may promote them while representing the library in the community.

Next, identify the stakeholders in acquiring and promoting the item or collection and seek their input. Look at this from a holistic point of view, with as many viewpoints as necessary taken into account. For example, an item that can't be stored or displayed easily is difficult to promote. Additionally, items that are too costly to replace if checked out and not returned create financial risk for both the patron and the library.

Ideally, if the decision to purchase is made, these items are cataloged and inventoried along with the rest of the collection of more typical materials—e.g., along with books and media. It helps if usage can be quantified to judge the item's popularity, and also serves as inventory control over the items for tracking purposes. Involving multiple stakeholders from the beginning, including a representative from technical services/collection management, will ensure the groundwork has been laid to get the items shelf-ready in the most expeditious manner possible.

AND THINK BEFORE YOU LEND

Ideally, policy implications should be brought up while the item is under consideration and before it is purchased. Stakeholders should be consulted before drafting final policies so that the full impact can be understood. The library board will necessarily have the final say in approving a policy, however staff can allay concerns they may have during this vetting process if they are informed of the implications and ramifications. A Library of Things can convey special risk that may or may not be covered in the library's current insurance coverage, so that needs to be addressed. Fully understanding the risk involved to ensure the item's return when writing lending policies will promote fair and equitable access to the item in the first place. The goal is to allow full use of the collection by all patrons.

A first line of defense could be to have the patron sign an acknowledgment form or some other document where they expressly accept responsibility for the item until it is returned. This is a step above the regular patron lending policy, and calls specific attention to patron actions in using the item. Due to the newness of the item or collection, a LOT could be made available only to cardholders of that particular library. The argument can be made that the local taxpayer should be given first access before opening it up (if ever) to the larger community. In theory, local users are more known to staff, and will be easier to follow up with should anything go awry during the loan period or in trying to recover the item.

[continued on page 10]

[continued from page 8]

Limiting use to in-library-only lending is a viable option that can open up a newly acquired item or collection to all patrons, regardless of their cardholder member status. This method can sometimes remove the monetary barrier by requesting that the patron leave some form of identification in lieu of a cash deposit, or making it mandatory that the patron sign a waiver stating that lending only extends within the library building itself. This is particularly useful for more expensive items, or those that may be less intuitive to use, as staff is nearby and can assist. One big consideration for this type of lending policy is weighing the value of the item against how a patron desires to use it. It's nice to have video cameras and projectors, for instance, but if the patron needs them for a project that cannot be completed inside the library, how has adding this item to the collection enhanced a patron's life, or put the library in a position to deliver on its brand promises?

BALANCING RISK AND EQUITY

One of the most common methods to reduce risk in lending items is to require a monetary deposit, sometimes equal to the purchase amount of the item itself. We reason that if the patron has financial responsibility and has created a cost-sharing relationship with the library, they are highly likely to return the item in good working condition in order to get their money back. If the patron does not return the item, or does so in less than favorable conditions, the library has collected the replacement fee up front, and can almost immediately replace the item so no time is lost on billing, etc.

One drawback to this method, however, is that those who may benefit the most from being able to check out a "free" item won't be able to because of this monetary barrier. Additional consideration should be given to exactly how this deposit is handled with in-house accounting practices. It may unduly burden frontline circulation/customer service staff to take in money that will be refunded in a short amount of time, especially if the cash drawers do not typically have enough money to cover the amount of the deposit.

"Typically, a LOT is a collection of related items that go above and beyond the usual offerings of books, music, and movies."

Age-limit minimums, coupled with cardholder-type restrictions, help to minimize risk by not allowing use of a juvenile card to check out certain items. It puts the onus on the patron to be a responsible cardholder, and gives the library an added layer of protection should the item not be returned or damaged to the point of requiring a fee. The library can pursue the right person for the monies owed, as typically some libraries do not penalize juvenile cardholders for certain kinds of debts.

One last point to consider is the library's general fine and fee policy currently in place, and determining if it needs amending for Library of Things collections. Will the new items fall into the current overdue and replacement fee structures, or will a different one need to be created? If the library is fine-free, as more are increasingly moving in this direction, will this Library of Things be an exception to that policy, or fall in line with it?

MANAGING THE COLLECTION

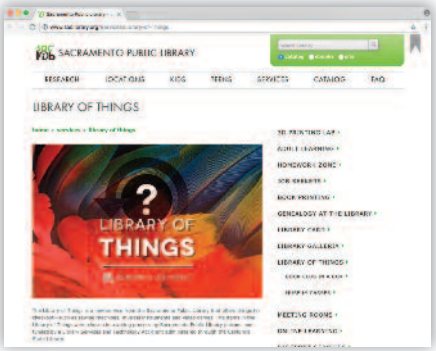
Finally, as with any other collection, you need to evaluate circulation on a regular basis. If an item has been popular but is no longer circulating, do you consider retiring it and upgrading, or deciding that it's time to remove it entirely? What other steps do you take with either popular or unpopular items—duplicating some, removing others? These will have to be individual collection management decisions, hopefully considered during the planning phase along with acquisitioning.

However, even if realized after the fact, one would do well to pause and think about removal implications for those patrons who did use an item. At what point do you consider the number of times circulated to be your break-even point versus the cost? Is the collection now dated, are there better, shinier items at a cheaper price to be had, even though the current collection works just fine? Do you add these newer items alongside the older ones, or do you remove the older ones and have to begin a new learning curve in teaching patrons (and staff) how to use it?

All of these points and more are considerations when adding a Library of Things, and we hope they empower all levels of staff with the knowledge that is needed whenever a collection like this is being considered. The process mimics some of the steps taken when adding traditional items to the collection, but precisely because they are not the usual things one would come to expect in a physical library, extra care and consideration must be given.

This article was submitted on behalf of the ILA Best Practices Committee. The committee will host a panel conversation to explore these points and more at this year's ILA Annual Conference in October.

A SAMPLING OF LIBRARIES OF THINGS



SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY (CA)

www.saclibrary.org/Services/Library-of-Things/

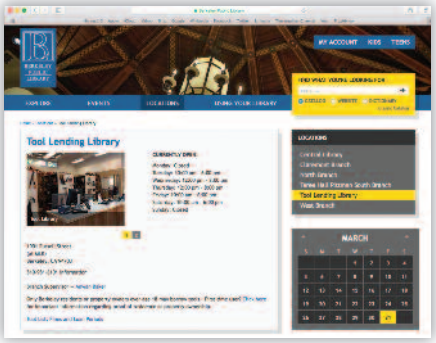
The Library of Things is a new service from the Sacramento Public Library that offers things for checkout—such as sewing machines, musical instruments, and video games. The items in the Library of Things were chosen in a voting process by Sacramento Public Library patrons and funded by a Library Services and Technology Act grant administered through the California State Library.

CAPITOL AREA DISTRICT LIBRARIES (MI)

www.cadl.org/find-books-and-more/lot-heading/what/

What is the Library of Things?

The Library of Things service supports lifelong learning and creativity. Adult cardholders can borrow these practical, hands-on items to learn new skills, explore areas of interest, or help with everyday tasks. The loan period is either one week or two weeks, depending on the Thing. All Things have an option to renew for an additional week, if no one else is on hold. Browse the collection here. Before checkout, cardholders must sign a Library of Things agreement acknowledging financial responsibility for overdue, lost, or damaged items. Have a suggestion for an item you'd like to see in the collection? Let us know!



BERKELEY PUBLIC LIBRARY (CA)

www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/locations/tool-lending-library

Tool Lending Library

Only Berkeley residents or property owners over age 18 may borrow tools. First-time user? Click here for important information regarding proof of residence or property ownership.

MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY (AZ)

www.mesalibrary.org/find/stuffbrary

Libraries already have so many great resources we share with our community. We wanted to build upon that model with some other, well, stuff. Enter the Stuffbrary! Library card holders can check out household items, play equipment, and more. Stuff is available at all locations, though some items are branch specific. To what's currently available, check out our catalog. Love the Stuffbrary? Have a great idea for something else we could add to it? Have an awesome cake pan you'd like to donate? Drop us a line!

Michelle Guittar, Northwestern University and Kelly Grossmann, Eastern Michigan University

Data Back Up the Headlines: Adding Weight to Advocacy

Since 2010, a growing number of headlines have hinted that support for school libraries in Illinois has been on a downward trend. A few examples:

- In October of 2010, the *Chicago Tribune* reported the "CPS library void transcends one sit-in: Lack of money, space forces more than 160 schools to go without."
- A few years later, *WBEZ, Chicago Public Radio* revisited the issue: "Losing school librarians in Chicago Public Schools."
- In 2015, the loss of a school librarian came under national attention when the *Washington Post* covered the student protest to save the position of Sara Sayigh, a Chicago school librarian at the multi-school DuSable campus that serves Daniel Hale Williams Prep and the Bronzeville Scholastic Institute.
- In 2016, more sobering reports began to appear: "Librarians disappearing from Chicago schools" (*WBEZ*); "3 out of 4 CPS schools don't have a librarian, union says" (*DNAInfo Chicago*); "CPS school loses beloved library due to budget cuts" (*WGNtv*).
- And then, Sayigh's position was among those eliminated in October 2016, due to "shrinking budgets and declining enrollment," as reported by *WTTW Chicago Tonight*.
- That fall, *American Libraries* issued a statement on its website, "Speaking out against Chicago school library cuts," regarding the reduction of CPS library positions.

These individual reports led us wonder if the pattern was a localized issue confined to the Chicago area, or if a similar trend was emerging statewide. We sought broad, quantitative data that could definitively tell us how the funding allocations for educational media services of Illinois high school have changed over time. Through the analysis of budget reports of Illinois school districts, we discovered that, on average, districts with high schools experienced a decrease in funding for school libraries.

MAPPING THE RESULTS

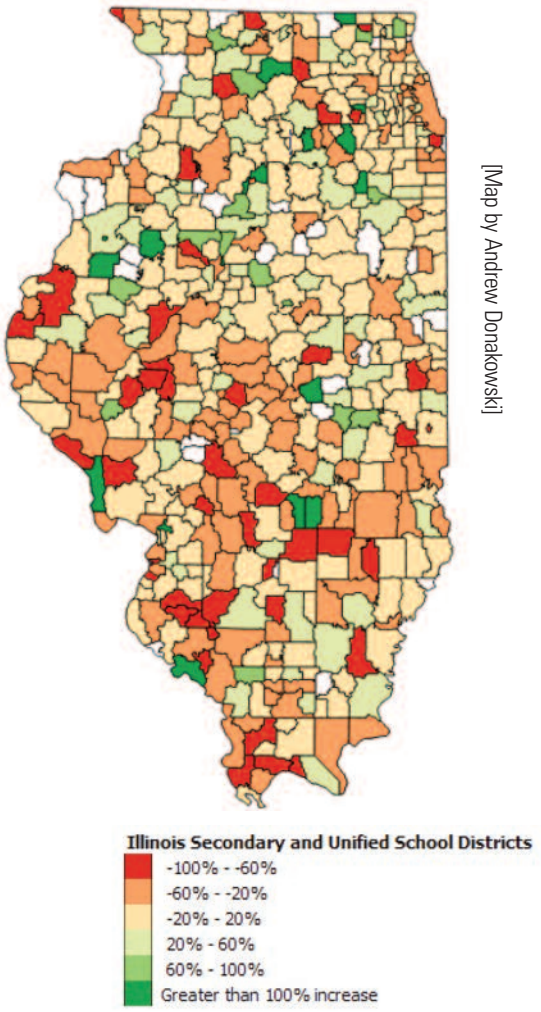
Due to its coverage in the local news, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) may be the district that most immediately comes to mind when referencing eliminated librarian positions or supplies budgets, but school districts downstate have felt the most dramatic cuts to their budget allocations for Educational Media Services (EMS). We worked with Andrew Donakowski, a graduate of Northeastern Illinois University's Geography and Environmental Studies master's program, to use GIS to map the amounts of gains and losses to EMS budgets over the four-year time period of our investigation. On the map, the red and orange districts are those that lost percentages of their budgets from 2009 to 2014, while the light and dark green indicate districts that gained percentages of their budgets from 2009 to 2014. The beige districts have remained relatively neutral, at gains/losses of +/- 20 percent.

[continued on page 14]

"Through the analysis of budget reports of Illinois school districts, we discovered that, on average, districts with high schools experienced a decrease in funding for school libraries."

[continued from page 12]

The map demonstrates that the districts south of Interstate 80 have generally seen more severe cuts to their budgets for EMS than those districts on the north side of the state.



[Map by Andrew Donakowski]

ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES

These changes to EMS budgets go far beyond CPS. And, as coverage on the reduction of school librarians has continued, there has also been an increase in the amount of coverage of a related problem: students arriving at college unprepared for the demands of college research and not able to effectively evaluate sources. Multiple studies, including those from Project Information Literacy, have found that students are routinely underprepared in their levels of information literacy competency at the undergraduate level. In 2010, Hargittai et al. found that young adults used a variety of factors to judge the credibility of web content, but students often did not investigate who authored a website or look past the first few search results.[1] In 2012, Gross and Latham found that self-views of their own research capabilities often did not correspond with students' actual information literacy skills.[2] The Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries (ERIAL) study, which was conducted at multiple Illinois academic institutions including Northeastern Illinois University, revealed that students struggle with basic information literacy skills, including conducting effective searches, evaluating resources, and seeking help from information professionals.[3] Students' evaluation skills have not been improving since these initial studies, even with increasing access to personal technology devices. Most recently, researchers at Stanford's Graduate School of Education released the report, "Evaluating information: The cornerstone of civic online reasoning," which evaluated the abilities of students at all levels to evaluate information presented in different kinds of online media, including web articles, tweets, and comments. They found that all students demonstrated a "stunning and dismaying consistency" in their abilities to evaluate information found on the Internet, and summed up those abilities as "bleak."[4]

It is clear that these budgetary losses stress librarians at every level: school librarians, whose work environments are under siege; public librarians, who are now asked to also provide academic library resources and training; and academic librarians, who now have the difficult task of preparing students for college-level research when they are already in college. And of course, these losses are directly felt by the students themselves, who may lose access to books, support staff, and places that they keenly adore—and who still may not be able to properly evaluate web sources upon high school graduation.

COLLECTING BUDGET DATA

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) currently makes budget data public for school districts throughout the state. At the outset of this project, ISBE provided the most complete budget data for the years of 2009 and 2014, with information available from over 800 school districts.[5] Our analysis focused on those districts with secondary schools to gain a more complete picture of the kinds of library environments that theoretically prepare students for college-level research. We found 473 districts with secondary schools that existed both in 2009 and 2014. From the district-level budgets, we extracted allocations data from the EMS line (line 2220), which includes Service Area Direction, School Library Services, Audio-Visual Services, Educational Television Service, and Computer-Assisted Instruction. This budget line is broken down by spending category: Salaries (Regular, Temporary, and Overtime), Employee Benefits, Purchased Services (includes any services that may be contracted out), Supplies and Materials (includes the purchase of library books and periodicals, as well as binding and repairs), and Capital Outlay (building projects and improvements).[6] The budget line for EMS is included under the broader category of "Educational Support Services." School-level data are not collected by ISBE.

MEASURING CHANGE

We calculated the average EMS budget lines of 473 Illinois state public school districts with secondary schools in 2009, and 491 in 2014. In 2009, the average (mean) budget was $491,827. In 2014, the average dropped to $464,294. Average total budgets dropped by 5 percent, salaries dropped by 5 percent, and supplies dropped by almost 15 percent. However, there is great disparity in changes in individual districts during this five-year time period; slight gains in some districts offset losses in others, with some districts losing far more than the 5 or 15 percent averages.

TABLE 1: Changes in budgets for EMS in school districts with high schools, by number of districts (average 5.5 percent loss, 2009–2014)

	0–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–99%	>=100%
Gains (n=212)	130	40	11	0	21
Losses (n=257)	116	75	37	25	4
No change (n=5)					

Overall, in districts with high schools, a greater number of districts lost money from their budget for EMS than gained money. Of the 474 school districts with secondary schools that we could compare across this five-year time period, slightly under half of the districts had gains below 25 percent. More than half of the districts experienced negative changes in their budgets. In 2014, there were 12 districts that had no budget allocation at all for EMS.

TABLE 2: Changes in salary allocations for Educational Media Services in school districts with high schools, by number of districts (average 4.73 percent loss, 2009–2014)

	0–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–99%	>=100%
Gains (n=220)	142	41	13	7	17
Losses (n=226)	94	66	31	7	28
No change (n=26)					

Salaries, the first budget category analyzed within the total budget allocation for EMS, also experienced a 4.73 percent drop on average, with wide disparities between districts. Slightly under half of the districts saw increases in salary allocations for EMS, with the majority being between 0 and 25 percent. More than half of the districts had cuts to their salary allocations between 2009 and 2014. Seventeen districts added salaries where previously there had been no allocation, while 28 school districts cut their entire salary budgets for EMS. In 2014, there were 63 districts that had no allocation at all for salaries within EMS.

TABLE 3: Changes in supplies allocations for EMS in school districts with high schools, by number of districts (average 15 percent loss, 2009–2014)

	0–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–99%	>=100%
Gains (n=140)	61	20	9	13	37
Losses (n=323)	106	105	68	29	15
No change (n=10)					

Supplies, the second budget category analyzed within the total budget allocation for EMS, had the most dramatic negative changes over the five-year period with an average loss of 15 percent. Most districts experienced a loss to their supplies budgets, with 64 percent of those districts losing up to 50 percent of their supplies allocation. In 2014, there were 27 districts that had no budget allocated for supplies within EMS.

Due to its size, the inclusion of the CPS budget in the calculation greatly inflates the average in every category, therefore the median budget may provide a more accurate representation of the average budget experience for EMS in the state of Illinois. From 2009 to 2014, CPS dropped almost 25 percent from its overall budget for EMS, a total of $11,068,383, the majority of that coming from staffing ($8,196,931), and supplies ($223,793, a loss of 69 percent).[7] A reason for this dramatic shift in budgets for staffing and supplies is due to the FY2014 shift of student-based budgeting in CPS, based on enrollment and number of pupils, that also gave principals control over large portions of their budgets (50 percent) that had originally been controlled by the district, including money for core staff, educational support personnel, supplies, and additional instructional programs.[8] Student-based budgeting continues to be the funding model for CPS.[9] Because ISBE does not collect school-level data for EMS, we cannot know how much its funding has changed within individual Chicago Public Schools. However, even removing CPS from the equation, just 256 school districts with secondary schools still lost a combined total of over $25 million from their budgets for EMS. This is a financial loss that broadly affects all levels of libraries throughout the state.

[continued on page 16]

[continued from page 15]

For this reason, we all must be concerned about the future of high school libraries. The Illinois Library Association (ILA) lays out the key actions for each year, the initiatives worth supporting that will provide for the continued state funding of libraries at every level. Your advocacy, and your professional expertise, are absolutely crucial for the ongoing existence of school libraries—and now there are data that show how crucial that advocacy continues to be.

Note: This research was completed while we were both librarians at Northeastern Illinois University. Thanks to Dave Green, Associate Dean of Libraries at Northeastern Illinois University, Andrew Donakowski, GIS extraordinaire, and for funding this research, the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois and the Committee on Organized Research at Northeastern Illinois University.

1 Eszter Hargittai, Lindsay Fullerton, Ericka Menchen-Trevino, and Kristin Yates-Thomas, "Trust Online: Young Adults' Evaluation of Web Content," *International Journal of Communication* 4 (2010): 468-494.

2 M. Gross and D. Latham, "What's Skill Got to Do with It?: Information Literacy Skills and Self-Views of Ability Among First-Year College Students," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 63 (2012): 574–583. doi:10.1002/asi.21681

3 Lynda M. Duke and Andrew Asher, *College Libraries and Student Culture: What We Now Know* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2012).

4 "Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning: Executive Summary," *Stanford History Education Group*, November 22, 2016, https://sheg.stanford.edu/.

5 To give some context to the number of school districts in the state, of the 859 school districts in 2015, just 23 districts served over 10,000 students (3%); 681 districts, the vast majority, serve less than 2,499 students (79%); on average, in 2015 Illinois school districts served 2,399 students per district (Dabrowski and Klingner, 2015).

6 "Illinois Program Accounting Manual," Illinois State Board of Education, accessed February 20, 2017, https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ipam.pdf.

7 For Chicago Public Schools, there was an additional budget category, Termination Benefits, which is severance pay, and does not appear in the budget reports of any other district. In 2009, the allocation for these benefits was $1,037,818 in 2009 and in 2014, it was $404,536.

8 "Chicago Public Schools Fiscal Year 2014 Budget," *Chicago Public Schools*, accessed February 20, 2017, http://www.cps.edu/finance/FY14Budget/Pages/schoolsandnetworks.aspx.

9 "Chicago Public Schools Fiscal Year 2017 Budget," *Chicago Public Schools*, accessed February 20, 2017, http://cps.edu/fy17budget/Pages/overview.aspx.

"Your advocacy, and your professional expertise, are absolutely crucial for the ongoing existence of school libraries—and now there are data that show how crucial that advocacy continues to be."

2017 Legislative Meet-ups By the Numbers

Two new locations for library supporters and legislators to "meet up" were added this year: Chicago and Mt. Vernon in southern Illinois. These two sites joined the five locations from previous years—Buffalo Grove, Edwardsville, Normal, Oak Brook, and Tinley Park. In all, 530 people attended the events compared to 418 in 2016, for a 27% increase in overall attendance. The ever-changing calendar for the Illinois General Assembly presented scheduling challenges, but each site had representation from our elected officials, both in person and by their staff members. Thanks to all who attended, and we look forward to seeing results from deepening our relationships and connections to each other.

Legislative Lunch, Chicago, February 6, 2017

2017 Attendees: 75 Legislators: 4 (2 elected and 2 staff) out of 28 or 14%

This was the first meet-up at this location

Legislative Lunch, West Suburban, Oak Brook, February 13, 2017

2017 Attendees: 85 Legislators: 10 (9 elected and 1 staff) out of 28 or 36%
2016 Attendees: 105 Legislators: 13 (11 elected and 2 staff) out of 29 or 45%
2015 Attendees: 76 Legislators: 17 (13 elected and 4 staff) out of 29 or 59%
2014 Attendees: 85 Legislators: 13 out of 29 or 45%

Legislative Breakfast, South Suburban, Tinley Park, February 14, 2017

2017 Attendees: 82 Legislators: 10 (7 elected and 3 staff) out of 38 or 26%
2016 Attendees: 66 Legislators: 11 (8 elected and 3 staff) out of 40 or 28%
2015 Attendees: 48 Legislators: 7 (3 elected and 4 staff) out of 40 or 18%
2014 Attendees: 37 Legislators: 4 out of 42 or 9% (Lockport)

Legislative Breakfast, North Suburban, Buffalo Grove, February 20, 2017

2017 Attendees: 141 Legislators: 14 (9 elected and 5 staff) out of 41 or 34%
2016 Attendees: 138 Legislators: 10 (8 elected and 2 staff) out of 41 or 24%
2015 Attendees: 124 Legislators: 17 (13 elected and 4 staff) out of 41 or 41%
2014 Attendees: 156 Legislators: 13 out of 47 or 27%
2013 Attendees: 150 Legislators: 17 out of 50 or 34%
2012 Attendees: 145 Legislators: 20 out of 50 or 40%
2011 Attendees: 147 Legislators: 23 out of 50 or 46%

This was the 27th North Suburban Library Legislative Breakfast

Legislative Lunch, Southern Illinois, Mt. Vernon, February 27, 2017

2017 Attendees: 34 Legislators: 4 (3 elected and 1 staff) out of 8 or 50%

This was the first meet-up at this location

Legislative Breakfast, Metro East, Edwardsville, March 3, 2017

2017 Attendees: 63 Legislators: 3 (1 elected and 2 staff) out of 17 or 18%
2016 Attendees: 58 Legislators: 5 (2 elected and 3 staff) out of 16 or 31%
2015 Attendees: 59 Legislators: 6 (3 elected and 3 staff) out of 16 or 38%
2014 Attendees: 54 Legislators: 5 out of 17 or 29%

Legislative Lunch, Central Illinois, Bloomington-Normal, March 3, 2017

2017 Attendees: 50 Legislators: 3 (2 elected and 1 staff) out of 18 or 17%
2016 Attendees: 51 Legislators: 4 (3 elected and 1 staff) out of 22 or 18%

Eric Edwards, Illinois State Library

Going to the Source: Legislative Research Tips for You and Your Patrons

Even though it may seem as though this is the year of legislative paralysis, as opposed to legislative action, it may be more important than ever to pay attention to what our representatives in Springfield and Washington, D.C., are doing. Coupled with the need to check the reliability of news and information in the many forms available today, knowing how to navigate original sources is a key skill that benefits not only your patrons, but your own ability to be an effective advocate for libraries.

Many websites that track legislation or have updates on the latest votes are available. But "going to the source," or conducting firsthand research on legislation, can be a good way not just to find more in-depth information, but also to become aware of what new legislation might be particularly relevant to libraries and librarians. Indeed, identifying an important bill or resolution as soon as possible after it is introduced—and taking preemptive action, such as informing fellow librarians, bringing it to the attention of ILA's Public Policy Committee, or being prepared to contact sponsoring legislators—can sometimes mean the difference between a piece of legislation becoming law or the bill not making it out of committee. Similarly, library users can benefit from these resources, as they are free of charge to the public and are easily accessible.

With this in mind, what resources are most useful for librarians and patrons, and what special features do they include that make navigating the legislative maze a bit less cumbersome? For ILA members, many of these features and resources are also linked through Advocacy pages on the ILA website (www.ila.org/advocacy).

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (ILGA)
(www.ilga.gov)

This site should be the first stop for anyone researching current legislative issues that affect Illinois libraries. If you already know the bill or resolution number, you can view either a summary of the legislation or the full text. More importantly, if you are researching a piece of legislation that is currently making its way through the legislature, you can view the status of the legislation, including who the sponsors are and what votes have already taken place. When conducting a general search, it is a good idea to include a specific term or terms, such as "property taxes" and "library," in order to narrow the results.

Having trouble distinguishing among different types of legislation, the parts of a bill, or the various actions that the Illinois General Assembly can take? The site includes a useful legislative glossary. Also, do not forget about the "Legislator Lookup" feature. If you are not sure who your elected officials are, you can search by your home address or use an interactive map. (Both desktop and mobile versions of this feature are available.)

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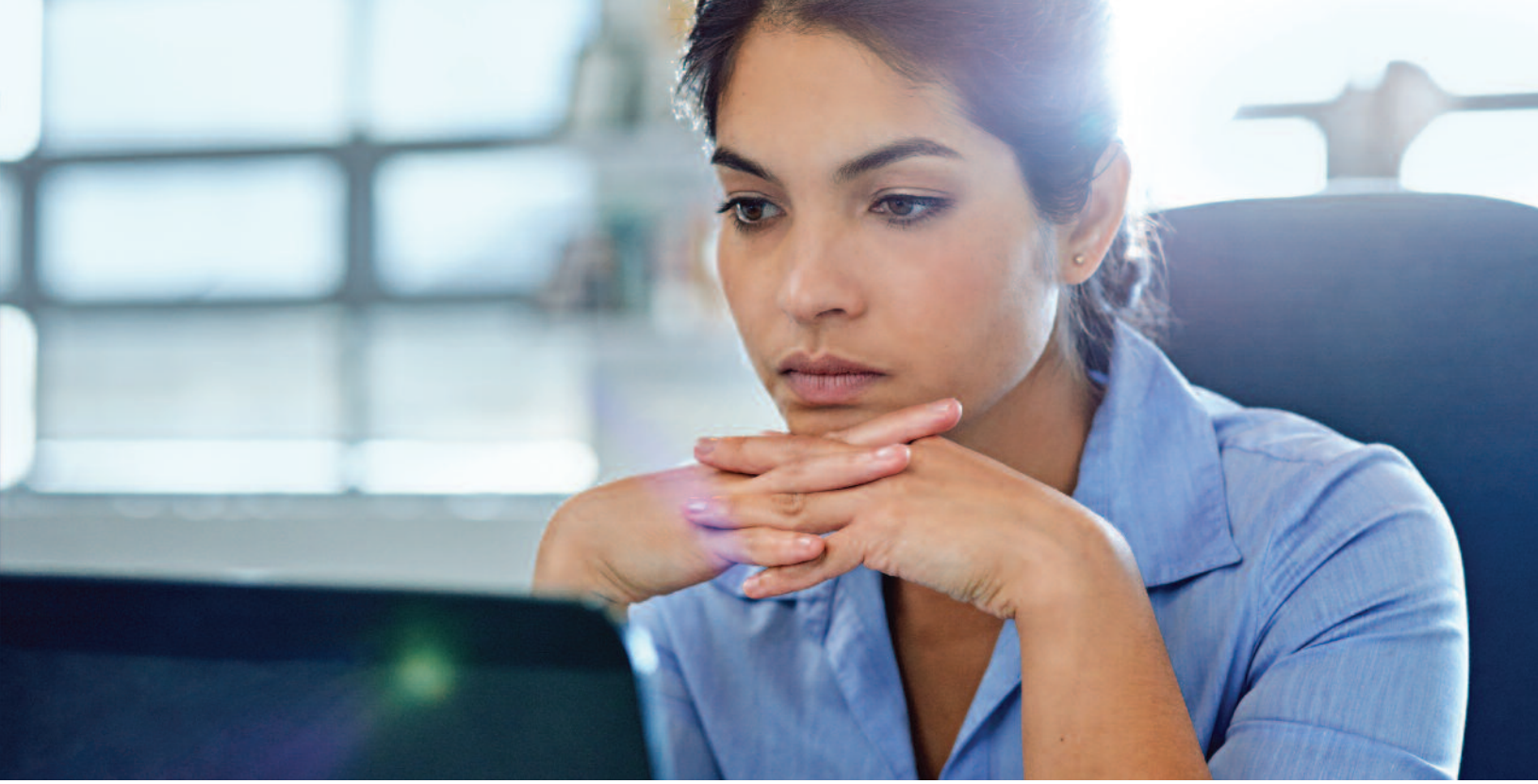

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UNITED STATES CONGRESS
(www.congress.gov)

This is the new version of the retired Thomas.gov site. As with the ILGA website, it is best to search by a term that is more specific than just "library" or "libraries" by itself. This site has the added benefit of allowing perusal of bills by subject matter. Critical for staying on top of the most current legislation, results can be sorted by the date of introduction or the most recent actions taken. Under each piece of legislation in the list of results, there is a tracker that shows exactly where in the legislative process the bill or resolution is right now.

Want to know which legislation has received the most attention from people visiting the site (possibly including legislation related to libraries)? Make sure to browse the list of the top ten most-viewed bills. Need a primer on the legislative process? The site has a series of videos, each of which covers a particular stage in the "life" of a bill and clearly illustrates key points with graphics. As with the ILGA website, there is a glossary that demystifies some of the "legislative lingo" found in bills and resolutions.

Congress.gov also has a state legislatures page. Clicking on a state's map will take you directly to the homepage of its legislature. Although each website has its own design and special features, many of the same research tools are available. (See below for more on researching state legislatures.)

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES (NCSL)
(www.ncsl.org)

If you are interested in not just the legislative activities of individual states, but broader issues and trends affecting legislatures across the country, this is a good source of information. While the NCSL is a professional organization for legislators and their support staffs, it has a number of resources that are useful for general users. Interested in how various legislatures have addressed a particular issue, such as drone regulation or redistricting? The site has a regularly updated blog. For those researching the "mechanics" of the legislative process, such as when different states hold their legislative sessions, or how many staff members each state's legislature has, the site includes the latest information. Trends can also be compared over time, such as the changing percentage of women in state legislatures.

If you are not sure where to get started with research, you can access issues of NCSL's magazine, *State Legislatures: The National Magazine of Policy and Politics*. This publication brings together all of the latest news and views on issues affecting state legislatures across the country, and it includes a number of helpful graphics illustrating key trends. Among the site's newer features is a podcast, titled "Our American States." It presents the latest perspectives on timely subjects, such as election security.

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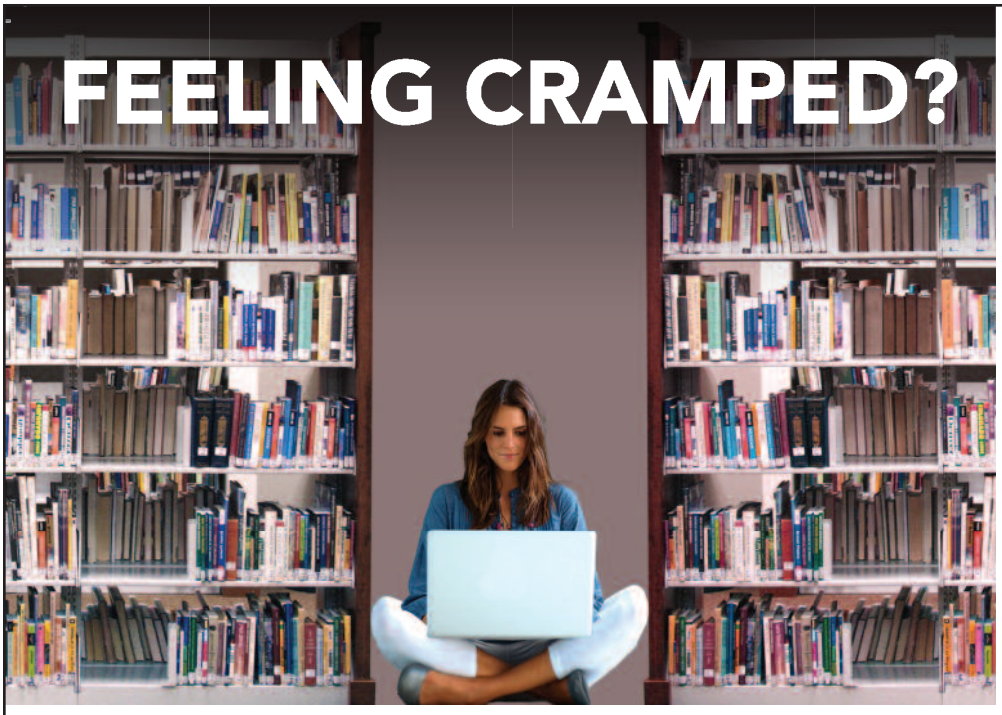

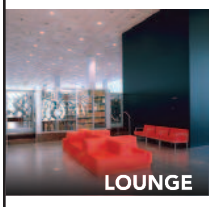

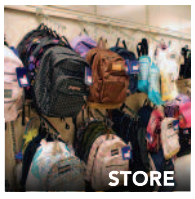

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