Montana State Library Commission (MSLC) April 8, 2015 Brainstorm Discussion

Objective: Surface stakeholder insights on priorities that advance the MSLC mission and support Montanan libraries.

Foundation: Montana State Library Commission FY15 Work Plan: Vision, Mission, Values, Goals

Inspiration: Discussion to be informed by Aspen Institute report, <u>Rising to the Challenge: Re-envisioning Public Libraries</u>.

These notes summarize insights from attendees. They do not represent vetted ideas or state library priorities.

1. Agenda

1. Introductions

2. General impressions of Aspen Institute libraries report: <u>Rising to the Challenge</u>

3. Insights and collective wisdom on community needs

4. What are 21st Century library services?

5. Identify strengths (to build on) and challenges

6. Top priority investments – your wish for the future of Montana libraries

7. What falls off the list? Initial ideas on possible area to divest or cut back

8. Summary and Next Steps

2. What resonates from the Aspen Report

Libraries are traditionally decentralized and highly local, but information technology and economic trends are creating an increased need to aggregate services.

- Community engagement emphasis
- Library as people
- Library as destination; library as place. Starbucks without the coffee
- Library as essential civic society place

- Libraries are a bright spot in local government
- Access is a key concept; who controls information determines how the public relates to information
- Access equity
- Platform and scale resonated. Similar offline presentation from Dempsey (2014)
- Libraries as curators – a force multiplier for community information and resources. Similar to the Chester GIS project where the students were a force multiplier to create community information
- Are libraries everything for everybody? What don't we do? What is the role of the library?
- Libraries can't do everything. Specialization is needed. Libraries need to focus
- Libraries need to make community priorities their priorities; use community focus to drive library focus
- Libraries are traditionally decentralized and highly local; but information technology and economic trends are creating an increased need to aggregate some services

3. Community Needs – Insights and Collective Wisdom

Montanans need:

Libraries leading strategic planning discussions in and for their communities.

- Broadband: Improved technology infrastructure including broadband access at public libraries and more devices, especially in rural and low income areas of the state
- Bridge the digital divide: broadband, technology equipment, training and software.
- Teen and pre-teen programs
- Senior programs including programs that reach seniors at home and in nursing homes and senior centers
- Libraries leading strategic planning discussions in and for their communities
- Information that helps people do their jobs – both for state agency partners and for the broader community
- Access to government information and services
- Community curation: helping people access resources inside and outside of the library collection
- Community curation: bringing our library users to the world; publishing local voices

Learning spaces should be any space in the community.

Montana libraries need:

- Support and training for community engagement and civic engagement
- Services and support structures for reaching teens, pre-teens, and seniors

- Tools to support community needs efficiently, including a focus on services that scale effectively

4. Library Responses – What are 21st Century Library Services?

Every library should have the opportunity to read the Aspen Institute report and discuss the implications for their library.

Platform for Civic Engagement

- Civic engagement: Convene purposeful conversations that inform community planning and that inform library services, creating a positive community feedback loop. Montana State Library Commission should model the engagement practice
- Create a how-to-guide for convening community conversations and/or share expert facilitators across the state
- Libraries are an expression of community and represent an opportunity for people to work together

Programs and Services

- Expand concept of Lego Labs and maker spaces to include more "programs in a box"
- Teen story time
- Database use by average end-users is difficult. Information literacy and discernment tools are needed
- Story telling – space, staff, training to curate and create local stories
- Content needs: context, accuracy, access, transparency, preservation, protection, security.
- Publish local voices using the Montana memory project and local partners such as the historical society of schools, possibly as a part of the 8th grade Montana history curricula

Collaboration and Shared Services

- Curated sharing platform; collect examples from libraries with strong programs and share them!
- Further increase cooperation between schools and libraries and other community anchor institutions. Break down silos
- Improve library efficiencies by providing more shared services; battle perceived lack of local control with increased opportunities for unique local services
- Centralize cataloguing; centralize marketing; centralize tech support
- Provide more training for rural library staff – or ideally more staff!

Broadband and Technology

- Insert the Montana State Library into ANY broadband development initiative or discussion
- 21st Century tech: mobile friendly, data security, web presence
- Redistribute technology resources in the community

Outreach and Engagement

- Look for community resources and partnerships
- Website for every library
- How do we emphasize community engagement in standards? How do we create exemplary practices that are proactive?
- Media release packages that run statewide such a billboards for magazines and data services available @yourlibrary
- Increase library presence at community events, at other boards, and at partner programs. This can include library staff, commissioners, board members, trustees, Friends, etc.

5. Library Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- The Library Shared Catalogue is a huge asset – even without of the catalogue. It represents a structure for local libraries to come together to collaborate and achieve shared objectives. It is about human capital and community
- Emerging academic consortia
- Excellent models exist for school/community libraries
- Previous statewide media campaigns have been effective. We could do it again
- Our trustee and board training is excellent. We could build on this capability –and Lauren's approach - to develop a stronger approach to civic engagement
- We can build on local library relationships as a foundation for civic programs
- Library development is strong across Montanan libraries; could the Montana Library Association be an even stronger partner in sharing best practices for library programs?
- The state's GIS mapping program is also a model for partner development and civic engagement
- The MSLC could do more to convene conversations with other state boards and commissions. We could engage more.

Challenges

- We could do more to model civic engagement and partner outreach. Could we be inspired by the Chester GIS kids and encourage patrons and junior staff to take a stronger role in outreach and relationship building?
- In efforts to provide shared services, programs must address needs for local control… and communities need to evolve to be selective about where local control is important
- While some communities have successfully merged school and community libraries, others are hampered by policy, budget, and governance barriers
- While not all librarians are introverts, community engagement and relationship building is a skills that many library leaders need to further develop. We need more skills for community and civic engagement

6. A Wish for the Future – Possible 2015/2016 MSL Priority

Broadband

- Broadband
- Broadband plan to move forward with partners
- Benefactor for broadband. We'll name the network after you!

Shared Platforms, Knowledge-base and Content Sharing

- Fully funded statewide regular scheduled courier service
- Viable content management system, knowledgebase, and collaboration platform
- Facilitate a shared knowledgebase, possibly working with the Montana Library Association
- All libraries on the shared catalogue
- Reduce duplication of efforts by providing more centralized services to public libraries
- More cooperation and collaboration, giving up some local control for larger consortia and districts
- Collaboration for working smarter. Start with Montana Shared Catalogue but make that model for all libraries

Programs and Marketing

- Community outreach materials and programs – billboards, radio, TV
- Preteen and teen program development
- Grow – Acquire adequate funding to aggressively expand the Montana Memory Project
- Facilitate user-friendly platform for publishing and curating community member information and objects

Civic Engagement and Community Convening

- Every librarian recognizes and acts of their primary role as a civic leader
- The Montana State Library would support local libraries to work with communities to create strategic plans for themselves with the goal that communities would become more self-reliant, freer, interdependent, creative, productive and neighborly, with greater social focus that recognize the expectations in our midst

Approach and Funding

- Stable and adequate funding
- An enlighten legislature – such as the 1972 legislature and subsequent 73-75 sessions

7. Secret Ballot – Possible Areas for Decreased Investment

Databases

- Under-utilized databased should not be renewed.
- Perhaps we are spreading our online databases net too wide. Maybe scale back depth of investment in favor of better penetration, i.e. less databases, more end-users
- Do we really need all these databases?

Program Services Focus

- All of the "mini" statewide projects.
- Lego labs, maker space kits. Just because the pilot has educated librarians. This can be self-sustaining.
- MSL collection codex to enhance platform focus and integrate agency efforts
- Reduce on-site training – not enough ROI.

Approach and Structure

- Less local and more regional/statewide and national thinking
- Some local control in favor of collaboration and resource sharing
- Let go of current budget and start fresh (Hard to do)
- MSL has its hand in many pots. I would like to see prioritization and perhaps letting the extra go to other departments.

8. Note

These notes represent the output of brainstorm conversations at the Montana State Library Commission working meeting in Bozeman on April 8, 2015. The meeting had roughly 18 participants including Montana State Library Commissioners and State Library Agency staff. The meeting had roughly 18 participants who shared ideas, concerns and insights. Comments from participants reflect the sense of their input though not all are recorded verbatim. The grouping of comments by category in sections 4, 6 and 7 is provided by the note-taker and is not intended to limit or shape the scope of comments provided.

These notes do not represent vetted ideas or state library priorities.

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Montana State Library Commission

Vision: Develop and deliver 21st Century library resources and information services.

Mission: The Montana State Library is committed to strengthening library and information services for all Montanan's through leadership, advocacy, and service.

Values:

- An educated and inquisitive citizenry.
- Library services that are responsive to users' needs.
- Free government information that is easily accessible and widely distributed.
- Patron privacy.
- Equitable access to all library resources and services.
- Competent and professional staff.
- Open, direct, and timely communication.
- Economic development of Montana and Montanans.

Role:

The role of the State Library Commission is to set forth policies and funding priorities that empower the State Library to meets its mission and statutory obligations and to advocate for the State Library and the Montana library and information communities whenever possible.

Goals:

1. **Content:** MSL acquires and manages relevant quality content that meets the needs of Montana Library users.
2. **Access:** MSL provides libraries, agencies, and its partners and patrons with convenient, high quality, and cost-effective access to library content and services.
3. **Training:** MSL provides appropriate trainings and training resources so that the best use can be made of the resources offered.
4. **Consultation and Leadership:** MSL provides consultation and leadership to enable users to set and reach their goals.
5. **Collaboration:** MSL promotes partnerships and encourages collaboration among its users.
6. **Sustainable Success:** MSL is efficient and effective (measured against partner and patron outcomes) and is engaged in fulfilling its mission.

Rising to the Challenge: Re-envisioning Public Libraries

Forward (IV)

The time has come for a new vision of public libraries in the United States. Communities need public libraries—more people are visiting them and using their services, materials and programs than ever before—but communities' needs continue to change…

The Public Library in the Digital Age (IX)

Libraries are essential to success and progress in the digital age.

The process of re-envisioning public libraries to maximize their impact reflects:

- Principles that have always been at the center of the public library's mission— equity, access, opportunity, openness and participation
- The library's capacity to drive opportunity and success in today's knowledge-based society
- An emerging model of networked libraries that promotes economies of scale and broadens the library's resource reach while preserving its local presence
- The library's fundamental people, place and platform assets

Strategies for Success (XI) Leveraging Library Assets: People, Place, Platform

1. Aligning library services in support of community goals
2. Providing access to content in all forms
3. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of public libraries
4. Cultivating leadership

What People and Communities Need to Flourish in the Knowledge Economy (page 5)

- **Lifelong Access** to an ever-increasing and ever-changing body of knowledge and tools to ensure that their skills remain relevant to the current economy as it continues to evolve.
- **The Capacity and Disposition to Learn in Small, Quick Doses** rather than wade through mounds of links and piles of data that provide too much information and too little knowledge
- **The Ability to Use, Understand and Process Information in Many Different Forms** including text, data, audio and video and to evaluate the quality of information from different sources and understand its relevance
- **Places to Gather**, collaborate and contribute to knowledge development
- **Access to Conversations Among Creative People** in their areas of interest so that they can innovate or maintain a competitive advantage in the knowledge economy

Creating Good Community Outcomes (Aspen 25)

- Coordinated, informal and nontraditional learning
- Jobs and Economic Development
- The Library as a literacy champion
- The library as a civic resource
- Addressing the broadband and participation divides