



# **LIBRARY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Challenges and opportunities  
in the digital age

Edited by Carolyn Rankin and Avril Brock

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**facet publishing**

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The chapters: the contributors 2012

Published by Facet Publishing,  
7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE  
[www.facetpublishing.co.uk](http://www.facetpublishing.co.uk)

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7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-85604-712-8

First published 2012

Text printed on FSC accredited material.



Typeset from editors' files by Flagholme Publishing Services in 10/13 pt  
University Old Style and Chantilly.

Printed and made in Great Britain by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon  
CR0 4YY.

## Contents

### Dedication

This book is dedicated to our families of readers – beginning, developing and advanced – from two years to over eighty years – reading picture books, academic texts, novels or PhDs.

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## Contributors

### Tricia Adams

Tricia Adams, BA MCLIP, has worked in several sectors, including government libraries, and as a self-employed information specialist, but came back to her favourite role – working with children – in various guises, which she has done for the last 19 years. This has included a period as a primary school librarian, before moving back to public libraries in her home county of Northamptonshire, where she was Head of Children's and Young People's Public Library Services and the manager of the Schools' Library Service – Learning Resources for Education. She has been Director of the School Library Association – an independent charity – since 2008.

### Briony Birdi

Briony Birdi (née Train) is a Lecturer in Librarianship and the Director of the Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society (CPLIS) at the Information School, University of Sheffield. Her research interests include public libraries and librarianship, youth and school libraries, libraries and social inclusion, reading research and the promotion of minority genre fiction. Briony has been at Sheffield University since 2002, prior to which she was a Research Fellow in the Centre for Information Research at the University of Central England in Birmingham (now Birmingham City University). Before that, she worked in marketing for both Dillons and Waterstones booksellers. She completed an MA in Librarianship at Sheffield University in 1997.

### **Carolyn Bourke**

Carolyn's work as Outreach and Marketing Co-ordinator at Fairfield City Library Service allows her to be involved in researching, planning, marketing, implementing and evaluating the outreach services and programmes, including those for babies, children, youth and adults, from a huge range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. As well as library qualifications, she holds a Master of Education degree, specializing in literacy, and is interested in expanding the current thinking on emergent literacy and numeracy, in order to encourage parents to help prepare their children for life-long learning. Working in a highly multicultural environment, Carolyn is passionate about demonstrating that public libraries provide opportunities to build social capital in their communities, through the processes of connecting and engaging with local government, community groups, schools, businesses, families and individuals.

### **Avril Brock**

Dr Avril Brock is a Principal Lecturer in the Carnegie Faculty at Leeds Metropolitan University, lecturing on Early Childhood Education and Childhood Studies. Her current research interests include professionalism and reflective practice, children's early language and literacy development and supporting bilingualism and story play.

Avril comes from a family of readers. At the age of 81 her father was still reading a book a day, albeit in large print and normally a crime or mystery novel. The library was both a rich resource and a haven for her – a place that has offered many delights, since her father first took her there at four years old. Avril began reading Enid Blyton's vast range of stories and then gravitated towards C. S. Lewis, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Mary Norton and hundreds of other authors. An avid reader from the age of seven onwards, her reading would often continue far into the evening. To escape detection by her parents, who would object to late nights on a weekday evening, a torch under the bedclothes helped the reading process immeasurably. Radio Luxembourg provided accompaniment in the background.

### **Alix Coughlin**

One of Alix's earliest memories is being told off for not coming to dinner, because of always having her head in a book, and that hasn't really stopped since. Trained as a primary school teacher, she also got into trouble in this role, for encouraging children to read books that were not in the set reading scheme and for letting her class out late, so as to finish the last chapter of the latest Alex Rider. After teaching in the UK and Australia, Alix is now Lecturer at Craven College, Skipton, on both

the BA and Foundation Degree in Young Children's Learning and Development, where she continues to encourage early years' practitioners to introduce high quality literature into their settings. She is currently completing an MA in Childhood Studies at Leeds Metropolitan University, with research interests in children's literature and film.

### **Mel Gibson**

Dr Mel Gibson is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Northumbria, working in the area of Childhood Studies. She trained as a librarian and specialized in work with children and young people, in school and public library services. In addition to this, Mel has also run training and promotional events about comics and graphic novels for libraries, schools and other organizations since 1993, when she contributed to *Graphic Account*, edited by Keith Barker, which focused on developing graphic novel collections for 16 to 25 year olds and was published by the Youth Libraries Group. A National Teaching Fellow, she has used that award to develop a website - [www.dr-mel-comics.co.uk](http://www.dr-mel-comics.co.uk) - and thus support a range of comic collection, promotion and scholarship activities.

### **Lucy Gildersleeves**

Lucy Gildersleeves is a Chartered Librarian and Lecturer on the MA Library and Information Studies degree at the Department of Information Studies, University College of London (UCL). She is also Programme Director for the department's Master in Research degree. Her teaching and research interests are in the areas of school and public libraries, evaluation, information literacy, library design and management. From 2011 to 2012, she is running a UK-wide school library impact study - *Do School Libraries Make A Difference?* Before joining UCL, Lucy worked in various children's librarian posts, as a deputy branch public librarian, as a library advisor in secondary schools and as the leader of an Essex Libraries area team of professional librarians. She is actively involved with CILIP's youth and schools work, in particular, with the joint CILIP and School Libraries Association information literacy taskforce.

### **Edward Halpin**

Edward Halpin is a Professor in the Faculty of Arts, Environment and Technology at Leeds Metropolitan University and has a background in politics, community development and social informatics/information management. For his PhD, he studied 'the use and application of information and information technology for

human/child rights'. He describes himself as a political scientist, with a particular interest in human rights, child rights, peace and conflict resolution and the use of information in the pursuit of these issues.

Edward has worked as an expert for the European Parliament Scientific and Technical Options (STOA) Unit; he is also a Member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Managers and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts. He is Chair of the Geneva-based Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems International (HURIDOCs) – an international non-governmental organization (NGO), helping human rights organizations use information technologies and documentation methods to maximize the impact of their advocacy work.

### **Christine Irving**

Christine Irving was the Scottish Information Literacy Project Researcher/Project Officer from 2004 to 2010. She researched information literacy skills and competencies in early years' education, schools, university, the workplace, public libraries and adult literacies agendas. Christine worked on the development of a National Information Literacy Framework (Scotland), with cross-sector partners linking primary, secondary and tertiary education to life-long learning, including the workplace and adult literacies agendas. She is a strong advocate of information literacy, dedicated to researching and promoting the understanding and development of information literacy in all aspects of life, from the cradle to the grave. She was involved in petitioning the Scottish Parliament for the recognition of information literacy in the Scottish school curriculum. Previous projects include co-authoring post-16 online information literacy materials and a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) information skills qualification. She holds a BA (Hons) in Information Management from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and an MSc in Life-long Learning and Development from Glasgow Caledonian University.

### **Sandra Miranda**

Sandra Miranda recently retired after 23 years as Director of the White Plains Public Library, New York, USA. Her time there afforded many wonderful opportunities for capital and service improvements, most notably The Trove children's area. She was inspired throughout her career by many colleagues, as well as by her community. She still marvels at the freedom given to her during The Trove project, but credits that trust to a shared conviction that libraries and literature are critical in our lives, and that serving children and families in powerful



new ways is possible and truly exciting. Sandra trained as a librarian and holds a second Masters in English. She served as Library Director in two other communities prior to White Plains, and held leadership positions in various professional associations, including that of President of the New York Library Association in 1994.

### **Carolynn Rankin**

Carolynn Rankin worked for 20 years in special and academic library and information services before moving into professional education in 2000, most recently as a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences at Leeds Metropolitan University. She is Deputy Chair of the CILIP Library and Information Research Group and External Examiner for the CILIP Qualifications Board. Carolynn's research interests are interdisciplinary, exploring the connections between civil society and social justice and access to literacy and learning via libraries. She has undertaken research on the social impact of the National Year of Reading in the UK and is currently evaluating the development of the *Sister Libraries* programme of the International Federation of Library Associations.

By chance Carolynn met Avril Brock during a coffee break about five years ago and as research partners they have now co-authored and edited four books including *Delivering the Best Start: a guide to early years libraries* for Facet Publishing, and *Professionalism in the Interdisciplinary Early Years Team*, published by Continuum.

### **Laura Topping**

Laura Topping's first school report said 'Laura's reading is excellent. I wish I could say the same about her behaviour!' She has been breaking boundaries ever since. She is a radical librarian, who pursues social justice and believes in the power of the professional to make a difference. She works in Huddersfield Library in West Yorkshire and considers herself a 'story time' veteran. Her background includes working as a children's bookseller and as a teacher. She is a passionate believer in the rights of the child and is an activist, of the quiet variety, in areas such as feminism and LGBTQ rights. Her dissertation on stock selection was produced for her Masters in Information Studies, with the vision of an equal society and making a difference through public libraries. Her research interests include childhood, ethics, feminism, learning styles and unschooling, parenting, education, children's and young adult literature, politics and dystopias.

### **Philippa Trevorrow**

Dr Philippa Trevorrow is a Research Fellow and Lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University. She has a BSc/BEd (Hons) in Mathematics and Education and a PhD from the University of Exeter. Her current research interests include youth participation and the use of new technology by young people, and the use of new technology in sport. She has co-edited two books and published in a number of journals and conference papers.

### **Rachel Van Riel**

Rachel Van Riel is Director of Opening the Book - the library design and training company that she founded in 1991, after discovering that libraries offered the best possible context for the work she wished to do. Sometimes challenging as a 'critical friend' to libraries, Rachel is a passionate advocate for public and school libraries in the wider cultural and educational sector. Rachel introduced the concept of reader development, which has changed the way public libraries in the UK engage with their customers. Starting from the reader viewpoint has led Opening the Book into developing training, promotions, collections policies, websites, library furniture and new library designs.

Rachel has taken reader-centred ideas to European countries, from Norway to Hungary, to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. She has designed and installed more than 80 library interiors in the UK and has given consultancy advice on library design in Norway, Sweden, Ireland and the Netherlands.

### **Carol Webb**

Carol Webb is co-author of the book *The Innovative School Librarian: thinking outside the box*, published by Facet Publishing. A CILIP Fellowship was awarded to her in 2007, particularly noting her work in reader development. Carol began her career in health and public libraries, before specializing in school libraries. As part of developing her expertise in the education field, Carol has completed a Masters' degree and is now studying for a Doctorate in Education. She has also designed and provided professional training to both librarians and teachers.



## Foreword

### *Annie Everall OBE*

As a child, I was regularly taken to the children's library in Gloucester, by my parents. It was in a separate building to the main library, and I have very strong memories of those visits and the impact that they made on me, as I chose, and then proudly carried home, my books. At the time, you couldn't join or use the adult library until you reached the age of 12, and how excited I was on the day that I was finally old enough. We had a ceremonial visit for me to join the adult library. As a school student, both the public library and my school library were vital in enabling me to access the range of books and information resources that I needed for my studies. As a teenager, I started working one evening a week in my local community library, in order to earn some pocket money, but, in fact, I got much more than this. While working there, an inspirational librarian showed me the vital place that a good library has in its community and taught me what 'being a librarian' really meant. He made me realize where I wanted my career path to take me. Today, some 40 years later, spanning a career spent working in the field of children and young people's library services, my belief in the value of library services – the role they have in their local communities and the impact they can have on the lives of children and families – is as strong as ever.

Communities need libraries, and, in difficult times, libraries are needed more than ever, because they provide safe and trusted spaces for communities, as well as resources that can be used and borrowed, instead of having to be bought. In this digital age, this is a time of great change for libraries. The pace of change is rapid, with many challenges affecting how library services continue to shape and deliver their services. In the UK, the Government's agenda for public sector reform, combined with ongoing budgetary restraint, has seen changes and cuts in many library services, with new models of service delivery starting to emerge, which will redefine the role of library services and librarians in this country. The

needs of children and young people are also changing, in terms of what they read, how they read, how they access information, and how they use and access library services. While the debate over the direction of library services is ongoing, children's and school librarians must deal with 'what is' now and be able to respond proactively, innovatively and imaginatively to the many challenges that they are facing in their local libraries.

This book provides a timely and insightful look at the role of libraries in this changing world and draws on case study evidence from the UK and internationally, to show how they can, and are, continuing to make a difference in the lives of the children and communities they serve. Carolyn Rankin and Avril Brock have taken a thematic approach to help readers quickly identify their target areas of interest. However, the overall chapter structure also provides a natural framework and narrative, which encourages a progressive exploration of the key themes at play. Following this path through the book will reward the reader with a much deeper understanding of the connections and interdependencies between the government policy agendas that shape the delivery of library services: the ways in which we connect and engage with our communities, design libraries fit for purpose in this digital age and seek to maintain high, professional standards. All of these aspects have an important bearing on the future development of library services. I believe that these outstanding contributions from leading professionals, from the UK and internationally, supported by the wealth of bibliographic references, will give the reader insight, stimulation and, hopefully, support - especially to those librarians facing the pressure of maintaining high quality services in the challenging times ahead.

Throughout my career, like many other children's and schools librarians, I have always believed in the principle of 'getting the right book, to the right child, at the right time' (the children's library service version of Ranganathan's third principle of library science - 'every book its reader'). For librarians trying to deliver innovative and quality services for children and young people, this is the right book, and with all the uncertainty and change that we are currently experiencing, this is very much the right time to read it.

Annie Everall OBE, BA (Hons) Lib, MCLIP



## Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the contributing authors and to all the librarians, children and young people who willingly shared their viewpoints and experiences of both libraries and reading; the ever-helpful staff in the reading room at the British Library in Boston Spa; and our families – thanks, again, for your patience.

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## Introduction and vision for the book

*Carolynn Rankin and Avril Brock*

Libraries are treasure houses of stories, poems, essays, from every country in the world and from all times, and literature shades off into history and magic and mystery and religion, into sociology and anthropology - into nearly every subject you can think of, and it is there for everyone. There for the trouble of finding someone who loves books ready to make suggestions. A public library is the most democratic thing in the world.

(Lessing, in Fraser, 1992, 47)

This book demonstrates how libraries and library services are essential for supporting children and young people's development and celebrates the range of library and information services (LIS) that offer accessible learning opportunities. Throughout the book we reflect upon good practice in both local public libraries and school-based provision, drawing on a range of examples from within the UK and internationally. The importance of books and reading is central to the book, but we also focus on the electronic learning age, which is now very appealing to children and young people.

This is an edited book, with invited contributions from nationally and internationally known practitioners and LIS academics. The book is organized into four parts, each covering key themes. Parts 1 to 3 include an introductory chapter by one or both of the editors, followed by further chapters by invited contributors from the USA, Australia and the UK; these each finish with a case study, to illustrate themes drawn out in the preceding chapters. The chapters develop the vision for the future and discuss opportunities and challenges for children's librarians and policy-makers in the digital age.

This book is timely, and through drawing on current policy and practice it will prepare LIS practitioners for the challenges of learning and reading in an

electronic world; challenges which are pushing the boundaries of library services. We believe this book is an innovative and valuable text for anyone working in the fields of library services, information services and education. It establishes a sound background in various aspects of library provision for five to 18 year olds. It provides professional insight for those who have to strategically plan or deliver library services and programmes at either a local community level or in schools. Our aim is that this book is an accessible, informative and inspiring text, which offers practitioners the knowledge, ideas and confidence to work in partnership with other key professionals in delivering services and programmes. The case studies, scenarios and vignettes, drawn from UK and international sources, show that the key issues have an international dimension, and the similarities and differences in service provision will be of interest to many. The use of vignettes is intended to help focus and give particular insight into a setting, an event or an experience. Innovative initiatives are used to present diverse views of library services across the primary and secondary age groups and include qualitative and quantitative evidence of effective practice. Examples from best practice - what others have tried and what works well - permeate the book.

The book provides an evidence base, which promotes and encourages the development of effective library services for children and young people. This book provides a vision for children's library services for the future and engages with the challenges and opportunities for children's librarians and policy-makers in the digital age. Experienced practitioners share their knowledge about strategies to maximize access to services, and the book considers how children and young people of tomorrow will be provided with relevant and accessible services, resources and programmes.

Part 1 introduces the themes of policy, people and partnerships. The opening chapter, written by the editors - Carolyn Rankin and Avril Brock - sets the scene, by discussing why public libraries are important for children, for society and for families in supporting literacy. The key message is that libraries change children's lives, but they also need to support the needs of digital natives. To compete with other information and entertainment sources, libraries must meet, or even exceed, the high expectations of today's technologically savvy young people when it comes to library services. School libraries are also introduced as powerful agents of learning, and the role of the school library as a place for learning is picked up by Tricia Adams, of the School Library Association, in Chapter 2. Partnerships are a recurring theme throughout the book, and the opening chapter discusses how they add value and the role of this concept in the literacy challenge. Literacy and reading are key themes, and in Chapter 3 Briony Birdi addresses the changing shape of reading as a 21st-century challenge. She provides practical suggestions how both public and school libraries can meet

some of these challenges head-on. The power of collaborative partnerships is demonstrated in the case study by Christine Irving, as she describes the Scottish Information Literacy Project. Cross-sectorial partnership working was essential to the project's success, and influencing policy concerning information literacy was achieved by using the Scottish e-petition system. This is a good example of advocacy in action.

Part 2 of the book takes the theme of connecting, engaging and reaching your audience and, importantly, catching the latest wave (thus acknowledging the role of technology). The editors, supported by Alix Coughlin, develop an overview of libraries, literacy and popular culture in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 discusses the links between social capital and literacy, and the specific skills involved in the reading process are explored in some detail. This chapter also raises the issue of the child's right to information – again, this is a strong theme throughout the book and is discussed in depth later, in Chapter 15. Chapter 6 looks at what's cool to read, considering a range of genres, favourite books, classic tales, and diversity and intercultural material. The chapter concludes by considering e-books and the future of reading. Carol Webb then picks up this issue in Chapter 7, by discussing the creative integration of information technology in the school classroom. The challenge she identifies is the use of professional expertise within specific school cultures to create the library service that each particular school needs. Success is determined by an approach to information literacy that is both teaching- and learning-centred, as opposed to curriculum-centric. Carol was presented with the School Librarian of the Year Award in 2011, by the School Library Association, for her outstanding work.

The seemingly complex world of manga, comics and graphic novels is clearly explained and described by Mel Gibson in Chapter 8. Guidance is provided on how to go about developing, selecting and promoting a collection aimed at teenagers and young people. Mel flags up issues concerning common stereotypes of the medium and suggests resources to draw on, to develop knowledge about the material. There is enormous potential for outreach and partnership, working around manga, comic and graphic novels. Carolyn Bourke's work as Outreach and Marketing Co-ordinator at Fairfield City Library Service in Australia means that she is involved in all aspects of the outreach services for her public library service. In Chapter 9, Carolyn provides suggestions for strategies and approaches to outreach and marketing for children and young people and looks at a number of successful Australian projects as case studies. The message from the southern hemisphere strikes a chord with the UK perspective – namely, that each local community differs in many ways, but the need for partnerships and networks remains a constant. This notion is further developed in the next chapter by Carolyn Rankin, based on the National Year of Reading (NYR). The NYR was



designed as a social marketing campaign, and the case study chapter provides a description of the planning, promotion and delivery of the NYR, in order to present the attempts to reach specific target groups. The discussion focuses on the role of public libraries as key partners in delivering the campaign and comments on findings from a case study in Yorkshire, which used the generic social outcomes' framework to look at the impact of NYR in two public library authorities.

Part 3 focuses on buildings, design and spaces. The introductory chapter by Carolyn Rankin looks at library place and space transformation and the challenge of designing for digital natives. The case for place is made by presenting an overview of the place of the library in the community and taking a brief look at design trends. The importance of good design is stressed, along with emphasis on the importance of consultation. The chapter includes examples of designs for children and teenagers and provides practical guidance. Although there is much written about library design, there is not a great deal of material specifically on the design of libraries for children and young people; this is the specific focus of the next chapter, Chapter 12, by Rachel Van Riel. Rachel introduced the concept of reader development, and the information in this chapter is based on her experiences of designing over 80 library interiors. She argues that radical shifts in thinking and practice are needed, in order to keep UK children's libraries relevant and valued in the 21st century, and that the library of the future should be able to integrate digital and print resources much more successfully than we do at present. In Chapter 13 Sandra Miranda describes The Trove Library in White Plains, New York, which is a successful, multisensory, multimedia space. As the Director, she wanted to recreate the library for a new generation that is used to being entertained, engaged and active, and she and her staff looked at museums, playgrounds and bookstores for ideas on how to achieve this. The result exemplifies an unusual trend in public library design for children – a theatrical space that is more like a bookstore or children's museum than a library. The goal of offering a learning environment layered with opportunity seems to have been helped, by designing with technology.

Part 4 consists of two chapters that focus on professional practice. Evaluating the impact of library services for children and young people is a key aspect of provision – taking the development cycle full circle. Practitioners need to use evidence systematically to inform the development of services. Lucy Gildersleeves – an experienced researcher in impact studies – provides an overview of evaluation, emphasizing that it helps to understand the context within which we operate, to see patterns in performance and to make decisions on priorities; crucially, it enables us to show how our activity makes a difference to our communities. In the final chapter, Chapter 15, a team of colleagues, and a former student from