

# Digital Public Spaces Trend-spotting Report: Vision and Recommendations

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## Executive Summary

The trend-spotting *Vision and Recommendations* report, along with the *Detailed Trends* report, are the result of the first project of the Digital Public Spaces Internship, beginning May 2013. EPL's Strategic Plan for 2014-2018 establishes the strategic goal to "create a digital environment that fuels Edmontonians' experimentation, discovery and wonder" and to "delight and engage our customers with incredible content, and rich, collaboratively-created and nurtured digital public spaces." Working towards this end, the goals of the *Vision and Recommendations* report are fourfold:

- 1) To meaningfully define the term "digital public space" for EPL
- 2) To identify trends in the digital public spaces of libraries or other cultural institutions
- 3) To provide a vision for how EPL could successfully pursue each trend
- 4) To recommend service directions for EPL

The visions for EPL and recommendations in this report are based on the best available information on current and recent digital trends, which is recorded in the *Detailed Trends* report. The investigation included an online review of digital public space projects at urban libraries and cultural institutions as well as interviews performed with representatives from 20 libraries and questionnaires filled out by an additional 3 librarians. It is important to note that, in many cases, the available information about these digital projects is limited by the fact that they were developed outside the structure of evidence-based practice. Moving forward in the absence of concrete documentation is an inevitable risk of providing cutting-edge services.

A key proposal in this report is to develop a local music demonstration project (see Community-Built Digital Collections). The function of this project is to thoroughly document the development of a digital public space in the interest of informing best practices for future projects. The theme of local music was selected because trends suggested that the most successful online collaborative projects appeal to a defined community of practice/interest. Additionally, potential project partners have already expressed interest in pursuing this theme and there are a growing number of public library local music projects to draw on as examples.

With its broad scope and ambitious goals, this report dreams big! It is not practical for EPL to pursue every trend described or follow every recommendation. Instead, this report offers a series of potential directions in which EPL can evolve its digital environment.

### Key Recommendations

**Of the over 50 recommendations in this document, the following 8 are considered the priorities for EPL to immediately proceed with:**

0.0 That the Library Services Leadership Team selects recommendations to provide direction for the evolution of EPL's digital environment

1.1 That EPL develop an online makerspace to showcase and complement physical makerspace activities and technology programming in branches. The online makerspace should

be user-friendly, aesthetically appealing and built on a flexible platform that will allow the Makerspace Team, Marketing and the Digital Public Spaces Librarian to easily embed diverse multimedia, tools and apps as the site and makerspace grow

2.1 That EPL's first digital public space function as a demonstration project through which we can determine the kinds of technical and administrative support required to sustain and grow our digital environment in the long term

2.2 That the demonstration project seeks out, crowdsources, celebrates and hosts local music and is led by a Local Music Project Team, including the Digital Public Spaces Intern, the Director Collections & Technology, the Manager of DLI/Web Services and a representative of Library Services, along with collaborative partners including University of Alberta Libraries. Potential partners include CJSR, iHuman and others

2.4 That the Local Music Project Team plans an unconference that brings members of Edmonton's local music community, including project partners, local musicians, members of the music industry (ex. radio hosts, venue owners, music labels) and other interested groups (ex. music teachers), together with the tech community (ex. UX Edmonton, Rocketfuel Games) in order to facilitate discussion and establish the goals and initial priorities of the project

8.1 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern review open data policies at other libraries and municipal institutions, consult with the City of Edmonton, and develop a set of recommendations for the Executive that will inform the development of EPL's Open Data Policy

9.1 DLI/Web Services investigate options that support the sharing of community information in collaboration with Marketing and the Community Led team

12.2 That the new Digital Public Spaces Librarian be a champion of EPL's digital public spaces, spearheading the demonstration project and offering knowledge of digital trends and tools to teams and staff members as they pilot new online programs

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## Introduction

To work towards defining solid directions for EPL's 2014-2018 Strategic Goal to “*evolve our digital environment*,” the Digital Public Spaces Intern investigated trends in the development of digital public spaces. The investigation included the review of 80 public library websites, 23 interviews with library staff involved in the development of digital projects, and a review of innovative digital projects in a broad range of cultural institutions.

A total of 12 trends were identified and are discussed in this report. Beginning each section of the report, the Trend section briefly defines the trend and examples from other institutions. The Vision for EPL describes what it might look like if EPL pursued the recommendations drawn from research into each trend. The Recommendations constitute the first necessary steps for pursuing the trend or its spirit.

Each trend identified in this report is elaborated upon in a corresponding section in the *Detailed Trends* report, which includes an Investigation Summary, Project Descriptions and Conclusions. Detailed case studies and examples of these trends are presented along with an analysis of their applicability to EPL's stated goals.

## Definitions

**Digital Public Space** – This concept is being actively explored and promoted by the BBC and experimental public/private research and development institute The Creative Exchange. The idea emerges out of a vision of a wholly compatible web through which “anyone, anywhere, anytime can access, explore and create with digital content.”<sup>1</sup>

Building on this definition, EPL’s digital public space fuels Edmontonians’ creative experimentation, discovery and wonder by developing a collaboratively built and continually growing online environment, which provides open access to multimedia resources and a content-creation platform.



Image retrieved from <http://thecreativeexchange.org/activity/reading-digital-public-space>

**Crowdsourcing** – “an online, distributed problem-solving and production model that leverages the collective intelligence of online communities to serve specific organizational goals.”<sup>2</sup>

**Gamification** – “the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service.”<sup>3</sup>

**API** – Acronym that stands for Application Programming Interface. According to *Webopedia*, an API “is a set of routines, protocols, and tools for building software applications.” The most important things to know about APIs are that they are a necessary tool that allows applications to talk to each other and that they “are ubiquitous and essential to the modern cloud-based technology landscape.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Creative Exchange (n.d.). Homepage. *The Creative Exchange*. Retrieved from <http://thecreativeexchange.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Brabham, D. C. (2013). *Crowdsourcing*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. pp. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Gamification. (n.d.). In *Oxford Dictionaries online*. Retrieved from <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/gamification>

<sup>4</sup> Cassano, J. (2013, March 21). Secrets to Building a Dead Simple API Developers Will Love. *Fast Company*. Retrieved from <http://www.fastcolabs.com/3007306/open-company/secrets-building-dead-simple-api-developers-will-love>

## Methodology

Research into digital trends in libraries and advances in digital public spaces more generally was performed in three stages: 1) A review of urban library system websites; 2) A series of interviews with librarians responsible for innovative projects; and 3) A literature review surveying digital projects run by cultural institutions other than libraries. See the *Digital Public Spaces Trend-spotting Report: Research and Appendices* for a detailed description of the research methodology and limitations.

## Findings

### 1. Makerspaces and Digital Media Labs

#### Trend

Developing online spaces that support makerspaces and digital media labs are not a top priority for providers of these services, giving EPL an opportunity to be a leader in this area. Commonly, makerspace sites consist of a single page on a library website that lists upcoming programs or equipment. Some more complex makerspace sites share program and equipment information; images, videos or livestreams of events and activities; and offer online scheduling tools.

A relevant trend is the emergence of online creative tools built by libraries, museums and archives. Institutions such as NYPL Labs, The Rijks Museum and the National Archives of America are building tools into their web experience that facilitate creative experimentation with their public domain digital collections. These projects share a common goal with makerspaces: turning passive observers on the web into creators of digital media.

#### Vision for EPL

The makerspace develops an online presence as soon as possible, while this extended vision for the online makerspace rolls out over time through the collaboration of staff and partners. The goal of the online makerspace is to build a user-friendly and attractive website that takes advantage of the participatory potential of the web to support and enhance the programming of its physical space as well as extend programming resources to other service points. With space on the site available to support each program, at any given time you might find a photography program offering constructive critiques of each other's uploaded content between classes; games created by a coding program being shared and tested; or post-program feedback being collecting through a digital form.

The content of the site responds to the needs of customers using makerspace equipment and attending technology creation classes at branches through regular updates by makerspace staff. The site also provides self-paced learning modules that instruct on the use of makerspace equipment and software, supporting the independent learning of customers and co-learning with staff. Customers can book equipment online and check out fun and creative software to use on their home computers from our software library. Multimedia in the public domain and with Creative Commons licenses are promoted on the site and by makerspace staff as the raw material of creative mashups made with digital media tools.

The site is the first point of contact for the media and customers interested in the space, so the homepage emphasizes our tools and programs and showcases the space's activities, events and creations. The partnerships that grow the makerspace are celebrated on the site alongside information for potential new partners as an extension of the campaign to promote EPL's role as an active member of Edmonton's digital community. A growing collection of customer creations is shared on the site. Staff store customer creations and they are used for promotional material

and to share with board members and the media. This informal archive is recognized as the potential future content of a yet-unimagined innovative digital service.<sup>5</sup>

## Recommendations

1.1 That EPL develop an online makerspace to showcase and complement physical makerspace activities and technology programming in branches. The online makerspace should be user-friendly, aesthetically appealing and built on a flexible platform that will allow the Makerspace Team, Marketing, and the Digital Public Spaces Librarian to easily embed diverse multimedia, tools and apps as the site and makerspace grow

1.2 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern collaborate with DLI/Web Services to determine the technical requirements of the site and establish a development plan and timeline.

1.3 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern join meetings with makerspace programmers and partners to engage in discussions about innovative ways the online space can support and improve programming

1.4 That the campaign to promote and cultivate EPL's emerging role as a digital public space provider and active member of Edmonton's tech/digital community include directing users to the online makerspace, which includes information celebrating our partnerships to facilitate collaboration with new community partners

1.5 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern investigates the possibility of developing a software lending library and cloud-based storage by working with IT to reach out to potential partners, such as Cybera

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<sup>5</sup> This has the potential to combine the following business plan actions:

- Contribute to the provision of tutoring, homework help, digital literacy skills development, employment and other life skills programs. Promote the value of public library services in supporting various literacies, emphasizing staff expertise.
- Further engage with communities to identify strengths, gaps, needs and priorities around EPL services.
- Promote new program pilots to ensure continual innovation.
- Expand homebound service beyond those already served by our existing Library Access Service.
- Develop a plan to curate online community-created content and determine the infrastructure needed.
- Seek out, crowdsource and host open, local, digital content online.
- Promote and cultivate EPL's emerging roles as a digital public space provider and active member of Edmonton's tech/digital community.
- Pilot and evaluate online programming.
- Assess and leverage opportunities to integrate online and in-branch services to offer a rich customer experience and attract new customers.
- Provide online makerspace services that offer user-friendly creative software options and instruction.
- Expand creation technology, services to branches.
- Create sustainable, flexible, virtual and physical learning environments at EPL, for online and in-person courses delivered by EPL experts and/or partners.
- Identify opportunities for growth within existing partnerships and create new partnerships, celebrating and communicating outcomes.

1.6 That makerspace staff are responsible for creating and posting space-specific instructional content that can help customers begin projects on their own and troubleshoot common problems; collecting customer-created multimedia content to share on the website and use in promotional material; and regularly recording and photographing events and programs in the makerspace and for sharing that content online

1.7 That DLI/Web Services consult with EPL's legal support to develop a release form giving EPL permission to store and share customer creations indefinitely

1.8 That makerspace staff support customer digital literacy by promoting the use of personal cloud storage services like Dropbox and Wuala<sup>6</sup> through in-person classes and easy-to-follow instructions on the online makerspace. Makerspace staff also lends external hard drives to customers with large projects

1.9 That the online makerspace promote public domain and Creative Commons multimedia content that makerspace customers can easily access and mash up

1.10 That makerspace programming promote the use of Creative Commons licensing in their interactions with customers

1.11 That discussions between makerspace staff and partners offering programming should address how customer-created content will be stored

1.12 That the Makerspace Team works with Research and Assessment to establish online makerspace success measures and outcomes at the creation of the site and perform an assessment after one year

1.13 That a full-time Digital Public Spaces Librarian and part-time Web Programmer are responsible for supporting the development of all of EPL's innovative participatory online spaces, including the online makerspace, in collaboration with makerspace staff and partners

## 2. Community-Built Digital Collections

### Trend

Over half (57.5%) of the library sites reviewed shared digital collections of local history artifacts. In most cases the collection was made available using OCLC's CONTENTdm software. Of these libraries, only three have built crowdsourcing platforms that collaboratively develop and improve the archive: NYPL Labs, Denver Public Library, and Orange County Library System. However, this trend is much broader than public libraries, with similar projects emerging from the National Archives of America, University of Iowa Libraries, the Citizen Science Alliance and the Open Knowledge Foundation.

Of particular interest is the emerging trend of public library-run digital local music collections. Public libraries in Iowa City, Nashville, Santa Cruz and Sonoma County are supporting their

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<sup>6</sup> Wuala is a secure cloud storage service that offers 5 GB of storage free. Wuala encrypts content uploaded to the cloud to prohibit administrators from having access. This increases the privacy and security of content relative to Dropbox.

local music scene by collecting the work of local musicians and sharing it for free online with library customers. In developing these projects, libraries support local artists and use the web to positively reflect the local music community back at itself.

## Vision for EPL

EPL, along with community partners, provides digital public spaces that nurture diverse forms of collaboration, creation and sharing between Edmontonians of all ages. The spaces are built on flexible platforms allowing them to grow and change over time in whatever direction the community leads them, making them highly valued and relevant to their users. Our technical infrastructure is developed to support the growth and change of these spaces at the speed of online community engagement. EPL has adapted its organizational structure to provide long-term support to its dynamic digital public spaces. The technical and administrative support required to sustain these projects is determined through the development of a well-documented and thoroughly assessed demonstration project.

Recognizing that appealing to definable communities or enthusiast groups has been the most successful strategy for engaging participants in collection-building projects, the initial efforts of the digital public space are directed to a particular group rather than the entire community-at-large. Consistent with EPL's business plan goals, the community/enthusiast group have a significant place in Edmonton's past, present and future,<sup>7</sup> are a new or relatively new community for EPL to serve, and are creators of content that we can share online.<sup>8</sup> Remaining true to our shared value of openness, the community is large and non-exclusive.

Interest in creating a digital public space that supports and promotes Edmonton's local music scene and its history has already been expressed by librarians at the University of Alberta Libraries as well as staff at the Royal Alberta Museum and local radio station CKUA. Additionally, iHuman has expressed interest in collaborating with EPL to increase access their original music archive. **As the local music scene is a community and enthusiast group that satisfies the established criteria, creating a digital public space focused on this theme would make an ideal demonstration project.**

## Vision for the Local Music Demonstration Project

EPL instigates a partnership with the University of Alberta Libraries and organizations like CKUA, iHuman, Grant MacEwan University, Royal Alberta Museum, AFM Edmonton branch, City of Edmonton Archives, Edmonton Pipelines and CJSR. Together this unique and ambitious group of collaborators develop a digital public space that celebrates and promotes the Edmonton music scene and its history, potentially supported by grant funding. An unconference that brings together members of Edmonton's local music scene and tech community lays the groundwork for a digital local music collection that far transcends a typical music catalogue. Agreements with local musicians and record labels allow us to make local music freely available

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<sup>7</sup> This is consistent with business plan action to "establish partnerships with local historical, archival and cultural organizations to showcase Edmonton's past, present and future."

<sup>8</sup> This is consistent with business plan action to "seek out, crowdsource and host open, local, digital content online."

online for download or streaming. Fun and user-friendly tools are developed from existing open source code to crowdsource a digital archive of the local music scene: customers can upload, annotate, transcribe and map image, audio and video files related to local music. Though the options for participation are vast, customer contributions are encouraged, guided and rewarded through gamification strategies like missions, contests and progress-tracking. Customers might be encouraged to transcribe the lyrics from a song that means something to them, fill in a map of music venues that don't exist anymore or compete to share the awesomest concert photo, all while building an archive Edmontonians can be proud of. These tools are used by learners of all ages, inside and outside of classrooms, to improve their reading, writing and digital literacy.

The launch of the space is celebrated with performances by local musicians and attended by the great diversity of Edmonton communities invested in our local music scene. The performances are livestreamed and made available on the site in the weeks after the event for customers unable to attend. Access to the collection's metadata is made available to the hacker community through an API, and EPL's makerspace hosts local music themed digitization events, edit-a-thons and app-fests. Musicians using the makerspace audio equipment are encouraged to share their creations online. The space promotes and celebrates the iHuman music archive. The growing collection of digital information about Edmonton's music history continues to inspire the creation of digital tools, such as apps and games, as well as programming and events by both EPL and the community at large.<sup>9</sup>

## Recommendations

2.1 That EPL's first digital public space function as a demonstration project through which we can determine the kinds of technical and administrative support required to sustain and grow our digital environment in the long term

2.2 That the demonstration project seeks out, crowdsources, celebrates and hosts local music and is led by a Local Music Project Team, including the Digital Public Spaces Intern, the Manager of DLI/Web Services, the Manager of CMA, representatives from branches who have affiliations with or interests in music, and the Director, Collections & Technology, along with

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<sup>9</sup> This has the potential to combine the following business plan actions:

- Develop a plan to curate online community-created content and determine the infrastructure needed.
- Host a major event to engage Edmontonians in developing digital public spaces and inspire demonstration projects
- Seek out, crowdsource and host open, local, digital content online
- Seek out innovative partners for online content and services and get EPL's online content into new spaces.
- Increase our e-collections, taking risks with new initiatives and partnering to develop new collections and access models.
- Assess and leverage opportunities to integrate online and in-branch services to offer a rich customer experience and attract new customers.
- Provide online makerspace services that offer user-friendly creative software options and instruction.
- Establish partnerships with local historical, archival and cultural organizations to showcase Edmonton's past, present and future.
- Identify opportunities for growth within existing partnerships and create new partnerships, celebrating and communicating outcomes.

collaborative partners including University of Alberta Libraries. Potential partners include CJSR, iHuman and others

2.3 That the Local Music Project Team establish partnerships with interested institutions by meeting with potential partners, such as University of Alberta Libraries, CKUA, iHuman, GMU, Royal Alberta Museum, AFM Edmonton branch, City of Edmonton Archives and CJSR and others

2.4 That the Local Music Project Team plans an unconference that brings members of Edmonton's local music community, including project partners, local musicians, members of the music industry (ex. radio hosts, venue owners, music labels) and other interested groups (ex. music teachers), together with the tech community (ex. UX Edmonton, Rocketfuel Games, Code4Lib) in order to facilitate discussion and establish the goals and initial priorities of the project

2.5 That the Web Services team investigates the technical infrastructure needed to support the project in order to inform grant proposals and staffing requirements

2.6 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern work with Fund Development to investigate grants likely to support a large-scale, collaborative local music scene digital public space project

2.7 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern work with local partners to create a project proposal that establishes the responsibilities of each partner and can be adapted for grant applications by the end of April 2014

2.8 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern document all aspects of the demonstration project, including community consultation strategies, partnership development processes, and staffing and technical infrastructure requirements in order to establish best practices for future digital public spaces initiatives

2.9 That the Local Music Project Team work with Research and Assessment to develop outcomes and measures for the project and perform and assessment after an agreed upon amount of time

### 3. Livestreaming Events

#### Trend

Livestreaming and providing access to livestreamed events is an emerging digital trend picked up by few libraries including Lexington Public Library, Pikes Peak Library System, Sacramento Public Library and New York Public Library. These libraries livestream local events on behalf of community organizations or run their own panel discussions on timely topics, among other things. Additionally, livestreaming has been enthusiastically embraced by the BBC in their first attempt to manifest their theorization of a digital public space: The Space.

#### Vision for EPL

EPL livestreams our programs, such as Music at the Library, and events put on with community partners, with the help of the Digital Communications Specialist. Our livestreaming priorities are established in consultation with programming staff, homebound customers and customers who

primarily access the library online. Public discussions with authors and other interesting persons happen in person and online. Our high quality recordings are shared on our YouTube channel. Google Hangouts are creatively integrated into programming and services, such as book clubs and the makerspace, reducing barriers to EPL services for homebound and busy customers. When a viable web TV service emerges, EPL will be ready with quality content to share in our customers' living rooms.<sup>10</sup>

## Recommendations

3.1 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern collaborate with the Digital Communications Specialist to investigate high quality, cost-effective livestreaming services or tools, including those offered by vendors, such as Bibliocommons' new Remote Author Talks tool

3.2 That the Adult Services and Youth Services Teams develop livestreaming pilot projects within the program development framework and in consultation with the Digital Public Spaces Intern, Marketing and customers

3.3 That based on the pilot projects, the Digital Public Spaces Librarian work with Marketing in 2015 to establish production standards and training to teach EPL programmers how to run their own livestreaming events

3.4 That DLI/Web Services encourages staff to experiment with Google Hangouts on Air, within the program development framework, and propose programming that utilizes the tool for different audiences

3.5 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern collaborates with Research and Assessment to establish livestreaming success measures at the initiation of the project and perform an assessment after one year

## 4. Online Book Discussions

### Trend

Of the websites reviewed, 23% offered online book discussions to their customers. Ten of these discussion groups were offered through vendors. Of the remaining eight libraries, five offered book discussions on their own platform and three used free online services. Though the turn to the web as a site for engaging customers about books is common, approaches to online book discussions are quite varied. How to consistently engage customers with books online has not been firmly established, and we are in an exciting period of experimentation.

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<sup>10</sup> This has the potential to contribute to the following business plan actions:

- Promote new program pilots to ensure continual innovation.
- Seek out innovative partners for online content and services and get EPL's online content into new spaces.
- Pilot and evaluate online programming.
- Assess and leverage opportunities to integrate online and in-branch services to offer a rich customer experience and attract new customers.

## Vision for EPL

EPL offers an online adult book club that reduces barriers to participation for homebound customers, customers with disabilities and customers unable to make scheduled in-library events. The books selected are easily available and provoke engaging debates that keep customers returning to the club. Both the online book club and in-person discussion groups are supported and enhanced by vibrant online spaces that provide regularly updated information about objects of discussion, as well as supplemental information including lectures, book reviews and blogs related to discussion topics. These online spaces form the foundation for increased experimental integration of technology into discussion groups. These could include book clubs whose discussions are built into a “social book” application; youth and children’s book clubs that bring their knowledge of and enthusiasm for books into the makerspace to create book trailers or to podcast reviews; book or film clubs that connect with authors or filmmakers online through Google Hangouts and discussion boards.<sup>11</sup>

## Recommendations

4.1 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern review findings with the Ad hoc Book Club Team, and work with the Adult Services Team and customers to determine the interest in an online component to existing book clubs

4.2 That the Adult Services Team define and assign a project to consult with homebound users and users who primarily access the library online to determine the interest in and structural preferences for an online-only book club prior to planning the required technical infrastructure

4.3 That an ad hoc team bringing together the Adult Services Team with IT and Web Services determine the technical infrastructure required for supporting online book discussions.

4.4 That the Digital Public Spaces Librarian work with Marketing to define best practices for teams to use to maintain meaningful and regularly updated content on web pages supporting in-person programs, such as book clubs

4.5 That the Adult Services Team collaborates with Research and Assessment to establish online book club success measures at the initiation of the project with the intention of performing an assessment after one year

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<sup>11</sup> This has the potential to contribute to the following business plan actions:

- Promote new program pilots to ensure continual innovation.
- Expand homebound service beyond those already served by our existing Library Access Service.
- Pilot and evaluate online programming.
- Assess and leverage opportunities to integrate online and in-branch services to offer a rich customer experience and attract new customers.
- Create sustainable, flexible, virtual and physical learning environments at EPL, for online and in-person courses delivered by EPL experts and/or partners.
- Increase adult programs that are fun, intellectually stimulating and provocative.

## 5. Kids Spaces

### Trend

Of the 80 library websites reviewed, 32.5% had pages designed specifically for children and two of those provided tools for online participation embedded in the site: Toronto Public Library's Kids Space and the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's my StoryMaker.

### Vision for EPL

EPL builds a digital public space that supports literacy learning in classrooms around the city and province. City of Learners partners and related University programs such as Education and Technology or Humanities Computing along with EPL are funded by a grant and work collaboratively on the project. The tool has a local character, perhaps including local scenery or local history. It is available for both PCs and touch screen devices. The tool is built to specifically address gaps and needs in early learning and literacy identified by City of Learners partners. EPL shares stories created by our children customers on screens in the Children's Section of branches and in Shelley Milner Library, as well as on the Kids page of our site. Using the tool is integrated into Summer Reading Club (SRC) activities and promoted through contests and programming. Children are able to print their stories using the makerspace's Espresso Book Machine.<sup>12</sup>

### Recommendations

5.1 That the Youth Services Team develop youth literacy pilot projects, within the program development framework, using my StoryMaker and Tell-a-Story on children's computers or laptop kits

5.2 That the Digital Public Spaces Librarian explore the possibility of adapting open source code in support of creating a literacy learning tool for children and build a business case for pursuing this project

5.3 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern consult with the Youth Services Team, Community Librarians, public schools and/or City of Learners partners to identify gaps and needs in local

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<sup>12</sup> This has the potential to combine the following business plan actions:

- Contribute to the provision of tutoring, homework help, digital literacy skill development, employment and other life skills programs. Promote the value of public library services in supporting various literacies, emphasizing staff expertise.
- Expand literacy programs to better meet demand and seek opportunities to partner with other organizations.
- Further engage with communities to identify strengths, gaps, needs and priorities around EPL services.
- Partner with schools to embed EPL services into kindergarten to Grade 12 learning.
- Create sustainable, flexible, virtual and physical learning environments at EPL, for online and in-person courses delivered by EPL experts and/or partners.
- Facilitate the implementation of the City of Learners strategic plan.
- Identify opportunities for growth within existing partnerships and create new partnerships, celebrating and communicating outcomes.

literacy education in order to determine the audience that would be best served by an online literacy learning tool

## 6. Teen Spaces

### Trend

A full 50% of reviewed library websites attempt to engage teens with a web space designed with their age group in mind. A majority of these share teen-created content online, including book reviews, book lists, poetry, art, videos and creative writing. Despite the popularity of providing teen services online, interviews with teen sites that appeared to have the most active participation revealed that getting teens to participate was consistently a challenge.

Online Summer Reading Clubs are a definite trend, with 31% of libraries reviewed offering them. Winnipeg and Calgary noted that their teen sites received the most active participation during this time. Specifically, offering prizes for submissions in different media successfully encouraged teens to contribute their creations.

### Vision for EPL

EPL staff creatively integrates online tools and spaces into teen programs and services in response to demands from teens. See the Vision for EPL from [Makerspace and Digital Media Lab](#), [Community-Built Digital Collections](#), [Livestreaming Events](#), [Online Book Discussions](#), [Hacker Events & Open Data](#) and [Unique Ideas](#) sections for related ideas.

### Recommendations

6.1 That EPL does not develop a participatory digital public space just for teens

6.2 That the SRC Team further investigates the Bibliocommons SRC tool and how it could be integrated into SRC programming for teens

## 7. Local History Apps

### Trend

Mobile apps that celebrate and promote local history constitute five of the nine mobile apps created by reviewed libraries, these include: Virginia Beach Public Library's TagWhat project, San José Public Library's Scan José, Tulsa Public Library's Tulsa Then-and-Now and the Beryl-o-Gram, Cleveland Public Library's Cleveland Historical and Sacramento Public Library's SacQR. Additionally, 12 reviewed libraries shared digitized local history collections using the social media site History Pin.

### Vision for EPL

EPL staff know about and understand the potential of augmented reality apps and social media history sites and integrate them into programs and services when the opportunity and/or need arises. For example, the Makerspace Team pilots a class on digitizing family photos and

teaches customers how to share their content through HistoryPin.<sup>13</sup> Later on EPL hosts a hackathon and encourages customers to experiment with the Edmonton content on the HistoryPin API. EPL's digital public spaces, created in collaboration with community partners, develop creative mobile components that allow customers to engage with Edmonton, EPL content and each other in new ways.

## Recommendations

7.1 The Makerspace Team develops pilot programming that teaches customers to digitize their family photos and how to share their content through HistoryPin. This pilot would determine customer interest in this type of online community building which could inform the development of EPL's digital public spaces

## 8. Hacker Events and Open Data

### Trend

Of the 20 libraries interviewed, nine shared library data with local open data portals. Four libraries were actively cultivating their relationship with the local hacker community by hosting hackathons and other events. An additional four libraries expressed interest in reaching out to that community in the future.

### Vision for EPL

EPL partners with the City of Edmonton to host Open Data Day 2014, promoting and cultivating EPL's emerging role as a member of Edmonton's tech/digital community. We host introductions to open data, coding camps, hackathons and app-fests in collaboration with organizations like Ladies Learning Code, Startup Edmonton, Digital Alberta and the City of Edmonton. These events promote EPL and support the existing and emerging tech communities by encouraging the creation of apps and innovative solutions to civic issues with open data. They also support the digital literacy of customers by opening up and making legible the vast world of data through programming.

EPL has up-to-the minute data on EPL's catalogue, programming and services available in multiple formats through the Open Edmonton portal. The data is widely integrated into apps that provide simplified access to city services, artistic and informative visualizations, and engaging interactive maps, all created by local hackers and artists. The feedback of our community is inspiring: with the help of these creations, EPL is able to enhance customer service, increase access to our collection in new online spaces, reach new communities and increase the efficiency of our workflows.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> As per business plan action to "promote new program pilots to ensure continual innovation."

<sup>14</sup> This has the potential to contribute to the following business plan actions:

- Promote new program pilots to ensure continual innovation.
- Develop an Open Data policy that includes how we will use and share our own data, participate in Edmonton's Open Data community and support data literacy initiatives.
- Promote and cultivate EPL's emerging roles as a digital public space provider and active member of Edmonton's tech/digital community.

## Recommendations

8.1 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern review open data policies at other libraries and municipal institutions, consult with the City of Edmonton, and develop a set of recommendations for the Executive that will inform the development of EPL's Open Data Policy

8.2 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern determines with the Data Team what EPL information is available, options for sharing it from epl.ca and also contact the City of Edmonton to determine which library data to share in which formats via the City of Edmonton Open Data Catalogue

8.3 That the Digital Public Spaces Intern investigates the best way for EPL to celebrate and host Open Data Day 2014 by working with DLI/Web Services, and consulting with the City of Edmonton, and by researching the structure of past events

8.4 That the Makerspace Team pilots programs that teach coding and explain open data

## 9. Community Information Sites

### Trend

The term *community information sites* is meant to refer to the diverse websites that aggregate information about local services, events, and groups. There are many different organizations that provide services like this, including municipalities (e.g. Cambridgeshire.net) and non-profits (e.g. LocalWiki). This trend is mostly emerging outside of public libraries, but Polaris Community Profiles tool is an example of a cross over.

### Vision for EPL

EPL has a service that allows community organizations to promote their events and information by sharing digital images with EPL which are displayed on our in-branch digital signage. This satisfies the business plan action to investigate options for providing online space and services that promote local community events and information.

### Recommendations

9.1 DLI/Web Services investigate options that support the sharing of community information in collaboration with Marketing and the Community Led team

9.2 That DLI/Web Services consider working with Bibliocommons to discuss possibilities for displaying community information through our catalogue and/or website

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- Seek out innovative partners for online content and services and get EPL's online content into new spaces.
  - Establish relationships with governmental and educational organizations to promote and support services.

## 10. Digital Community Consultation

### Trend

The web provides new opportunities for engaging community feedback taken up by libraries and municipalities across the US, Britain and Canada. Tulsa's Library Engage and Cambridgeshire's Shape Your Place are models of ongoing efforts to garner and respond to customer/citizen feedback; Open Planning and the local engagement game Community Planit are examples of experimental approaches to community consultation; and Ottawa's Online Ideas project and London's Little Gems competition are short term consultations with clear objectives.

### Vision for EPL

EPL's community consultation for building design takes full advantage of the multimedia, participatory potential of the Internet, using online forums and interactive visualizations to inform, engage and excite the community about the growth of the library. EPL's integrated and efficient feedback service respectfully engages customers by offering timely responses, but it is not a public forum.<sup>15</sup>

### Recommendations

10.1 That EPL's Executive team considers integrating online consultation into EPL's new community consultation process for building design, using the given examples as potential inspiration

10.2 That EPL's customer feedback service not be built as an online public forum

## 11. Unique Ideas

### Trend

Throughout this research many creative ideas for digital programs or services emerged, though they could not rightly be described as large-scale trends. The regular occurrence of digital trends that could be interestingly integrated into library services is itself a trend and worth paying attention to. The given vision and recommendations come from the Internet Archive's Tumblr Residency project. See the *Detailed Trends* report for additional unique ideas.

### Vision for EPL

Well-known Edmontonians and EPL partners guest host our collection and share their favourite content, programs and services in features on our website and in articles in local media.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This vision relates directly to the following business plan actions:

- Develop a community consultation process for building design.
- Implement an integrated and more efficient customer feedback service.

<sup>16</sup> This is consistent with the business plan action to "promote new program pilots to ensure continual innovation."

## Recommendations

11.1 That the Discovery Team and Marketing department consider developing a “guest host” promotion project in which well-known Edmontonians or EPL partners promote our collection and share their favourite EPL content, programs or services on our site and in the local media.

## 12. Organizational Structure

### Trend

As libraries come to adopt and create digital trends, they begin also to see the necessity of developing an organizational structure that supports an increased online presence. No libraries were contacted specifically to discuss organizational structure, but examples of projects struggling from lack of support, interesting new job descriptions and department restructuring came up regularly in interviews. Trends that emerged included the need for a champion of the move to digital programs and services who provides support to staff and motivation to customers and a need to consistently stay on top of digital trends.

### Vision for EPL

Working within DLI/Web Services, the full-time Digital Public Spaces Librarian position marks a new emphasis on customer services in EPL’s online space management. The position is a central point of contact for the local music demonstration project, maintains activity on the local music space once the project is underway and is responsible for liaising between library departments to assure that there is a unified and directed effort to enhance EPL’s website with participatory digital public spaces. This position will be an essential resource for EPL staff working to integrate online and in-branch programs and services (particularly with regards to the online makerspace); will anticipate customer needs by staying on top of digital trends; keep EPL staff up to date on those trends; and support the work of teams offering programming for/with the tech/digital community in Edmonton. This position is responsible for documenting the local music demonstration project, supporting its assessment and making recommendations for best practices in the maintenance and expansion of EPL’s role as a digital public space provider. The new web programmer assists in the practical creation of easy-to-use and attractive online tools that support library programming and provides technical support to the local music demonstration project.<sup>17</sup>

## Recommendations

12.1 That the new Digital Public Spaces Librarian be a champion of EPL’s digital public spaces, spearheading the demonstration project and offering knowledge of digital trends and tools to teams and staff members as they pilot new online programs

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<sup>17</sup> This vision directly relates to the following business plan actions:

- Attract, develop, and retain staff who embrace co-learning and are passionate about discovering, creating and delivering great customer service.
- Review technology needs to provide services and implement strategies to meet them.

12.2 That the Digital Public Spaces Librarian position require excellent oral and written communication skills, interest in and knowledge of emerging digital trends, knowledge of web infrastructure and basic programming languages (HTML, CSS) and a passion for service and serving Edmontonians

12.3 That the skills required of the web programmer are influenced by the approved recommendations from this report

12.4 That DLI/Web Services consider selecting a platform or a complementary platform for EPL's new website that is both easy for staff with varying skill levels to edit and flexible enough to support a diversity of participatory tools, in the interest of supporting new online program pilots and integrating online and in-branch services and programs