

# **Ten Top Technology Resources for Young Adult Library Services**

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## Introduction

Technology is an integral part of our daily lives, and has given us countless tools and resources to enhance our jobs. In this document, we present ten top emerging, exciting technologies for use in enhancing the library experience for young adult and teen patrons in both public and school libraries. While this list in no way claims to encompass every possibility, these resources represent a balance between learning resources for young adults, acquisition and asset research for youth services librarians, and digital organizational tools for librarians and patrons.

### Learning Express Library

This is a great source for young adults to achieve their vocational and educational goals. There is a wide selection of career and educational resources that can be accessed by way of a desktop, tablet, or smart phone. Practice tests, helpful skill building activities, interactive tutorials, effective learning strategies, and e-books are just some of the advantages this site has to offer. The homepage displays various centers that are based on specific themes such as college prep center, school center, career center, and more. You can click on each center and explore what is available. In order to take a test, read an e-book, or utilize a tutorial, you must register as a new user if it is your first visit to this site. In addition to the St. Louis County Library, some other libraries that utilize Learning Express Library are Iowa Library Services/State Library, the University of Texas Health Science Center, and Indiana University Bloomington Libraries.

<http://www.learningexpresshub.com/affiliate?aspxerrorpath=/>

### The Split Podcast

Hosted by YA authors Bryan Cohen and Robert Scanlon, The Split podcast is a weekly review show of current popular YA literature. Covering one book per episode, Cohen and Scanlon summarize, analyze, and discuss books from the perspective of both a reader and a writer, all in less than 30 minutes. While YA librarians would love to read every new book as it comes out, time is a finite resource, and The Split helps to keep busy librarians abreast of the latest YA releases in an easy, audio format. In addition, The Split can be a great resource to recommend to YA patrons who might not be sure what to read next. The hosts strive to capture the essence of each book while taking care to announce spoilers and discuss the books in such a way that even after listening to a full review the audience is still left with a desire to read the book for themselves.

Anna Dalin (2015) discussed some of the benefits and ways to use podcasts to help build the busy YA librarian's knowledge of current teen materials in a blog post for the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) blog "The Hub" (<http://www.yalsa.ala.org/the-hub/2015/08/26/podcasts-to-help-you-build-your-teen-collection/>). Though there is really no substitute to the experience of reading a book, review podcasts, such as The Split can build up the YA librarian's knowledge base for enhancing reader advisory experiences and other services and informing acquisition decisions.

<http://thesplitbookreviews.com/>

### Cosplay, Comics, and Geek Culture in Libraries

Cosplay, Comics, and Geek Culture in Libraries is a blog created by and for librarians. It discusses ways for librarians to incorporate cosplay, fandom, graphic novels, videogames, LARPing, and Makerspaces into the events and collections the library provides. It encourages patron and librarian interaction, it reaches specific audiences that might not have had many events targeted to them, and it encourages creativity, teamwork, connection, and imagination. Librarians can also write for the site and provide additional resources and ideas.

<http://ccgclibraries.com/>

## Evernote

Evernote is a handy program that allows for information storage, archiving, note taking and saves things that are found online. Evernote is a collaboration between a note taking application and Word. It has web integration and can be used from a Mac, PC, iPhone, iPad, Android, Kindle Fire, and more. There is both a free and a paid version of this program. There is a basic, plus, and premium plan. The basic plan allows for 60 megabytes of usage. Plus allows for one gigabyte and Premium allows for 10 gigabytes. One of the great features includes the ability to share notes and notebooks via e-mail, Facebook, and LinkedIn. According to a recent article, Evernote can help stimulate creativity. Check it out at the following website: <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/evernote-help-develop-creativity/>  
<https://evernote.com/>

## instaGrok

instaGrok is a search engine that uses algorithms to find up-to-date and relevant information that is then presented through concept maps. It is filtered so students cannot access inappropriate content (profanity or sexual content). Students can create concept maps, cite the sources they find, and evaluate the credibility of sources. It costs \$45/year for teachers (for up to 200 students) and \$65/year for librarians (for up to 800 students). instaGrok supports technological and source literacy. Kahn (2013) recommends instaGrok because it helps students discover other related topics before they begin researching. Valenza (2012) finds that instaGrok provides the chance for teachers and librarians “to teach about using and responding to an interface to thoughtfully and powerfully refine results” (para. 13).  
<http://www.instagrok.com/>

## Science Online

Science Online is a free educational resource that offers helpful tools for both educators and students. Students can explore such avenues as citing sources, evaluating online sources, researching topics, writing research papers, and avoiding plagiarism. Science Online offers a great alternative to the traditional science textbook lessons by providing diagrams, a science fair guide, a glossary, e-learning modules, interactive experiments, videos, and animations. Lesson plans are at the disposal of educators who take advantage of this site. Plagiarism prevention, conducting experiments, and the importance of STEM education in the 21st century are other great finds for educators. Science Online can be accessed by way of the St. Louis County Library website. All first time users have to create an account to gain access to this resource.

<http://online.infobase.com/HRC/Browse/Product/8>

## Codecademy

Codecademy.com is an online education website that offers free training in coding in various programming languages from HTML5 to Rails to SQL to the most recently added module on Git Workflows in November 2015. Additionally, Codecademy functions as a platform in which high schools, colleges, and commercial publishers can use to create their own tracks of courses for training (Ma, 2013). The site is useful for both the librarian and the teens they serve – everyone can learn something or brush up on previously learned skills, and Codecademy continues to add additional content.

Many librarians joined the Codecademy train in 2012 when the site’s “Code Year” first launched, sending participants a new programming lesson each week. For every lesson completed successfully, it awarded a digital badge, easily shareable on social media (Phetteplace & Yelton, 2012). The Code Year content is still available as a track on Codecademy, touted as “a tour of important web technologies” by the site, and currently over 15 educational tracks are available in Codecademy’s default content library. Codecademy also participates in the Hour of Code initiative promoting youth learning to code, which has successfully been used in both school library and public library programming, and as of 2014, over 24 million users had completed exercises within Codecademy (Kim, 2015).  
<https://www.codecademy.com/>

## Coursera

Coursera is a platform that provides access to courses taught by professors and organizations. Some of the 1,493 courses are free, and some cost money. Courses range from computer science to personal improvement. Users can pay for certificates of completion to enhance their resumes and marketability. Many libraries provide free internet access and computers to use, so patrons can use the library's resources to access Coursera. In addition, the New York Public Library provides "in-person weekly discussions for a select group of Coursera courses... facilitated by an expert in the field" ("New York City Residents," n.d.).  
<https://www.coursera.org/>

## YALSA Blog

YALSA – the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association – maintains an official blog that updates daily on weekdays, sometimes multiple times a day. It covers a wide range of topics, including YALSA-related news and activities, trends in youth programming and services, case studies and interviews of youth librarians across the country, as well as serving as a central gateway to YALSA's other major content offerings like "The Hub" blog focused on collection development, the YALSA wiki which aggregates the knowledge of youth services librarians all over the country, and YALSA's social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and more.

YALSAblog also welcomes both librarian and teen contributor bloggers, so both can volunteer and reap the benefits of active participation in a national library youth services organization – not to mention getting one's name out in front of the over 14,000 hits a month YALSAblog receives (Braun, 2010)! With robust archives dating back to 2006, YALSAblog is a good first stop for checking out what other librarians are doing, have done, and what the future holds for YA-focused library services.  
<http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/>

## Goodreads

While Goodreads is a familiar site to many in the book-loving world, it is perhaps less well-known for the tools and resources it provides for YA librarians and patrons. Goodreads combines the best parts of a book club in a social media platform that allows users to connect with their friends, track their own reading, peruse summaries and discussions of books they have read or are interested in reading, and connect with others who share their literary interests. The Goodreads user base is widely varied, but within the Goodreads community is a strong base of YA readers, writers, and librarians who are constantly connecting over their shared interest in teen materials. YA librarians can join groups of others in their profession and discuss approaches and recent publications, as well as reading reviews and summaries of books they may not have gotten around to reading yet and providing a platform to keep track of book lists. For YA patrons, Goodreads has plentiful suggestion lists, a robust book recommendation engine, opportunities for social connections with other readers, and a user-friendly platform for recording their readings.

As a profession, librarianship has taken note of the creation of this digital bibliophile's paradise and YA librarians are already discussing what the digital social revolution means for things like reader advisory services (Naik, 2012). Goodreads contains an abundance of possibilities through a number of features, and both librarians and readers continue to discover the many facets of this social media tool. For the YA librarian, Goodreads is a robust, modern way to connect with other librarians and readers, review, recommend, and track books, and much, much more.  
<https://www.goodreads.com/>

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