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Creative Conferences for Librarians Round-Up

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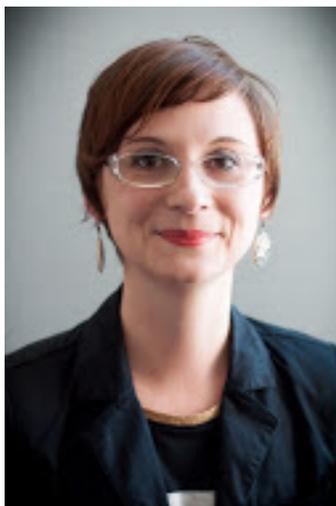
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Amanda Meeks is currently part of the reference, instruction, and outreach teams at two academic libraries in Chicago, IL. She serves as the volunteer Outreach Coordinator at Chicago's Read/Write Library. She is also a visual artist, educator, and crafter. Her passion for library outreach, professional development, community, and creativity drives her pursuits and keeps her very busy.

To say that librarianship is a non-creative field is utterly untrue; librarians are some of the most creative people I have ever met and anyone who has attended at least one library conference will know as such. It is safe to say that creativity does not happen in a bubble, we absorb ideas and experiences and then let them transform us and our libraries. We, as library professionals, inspire each other but we also find inspiration in some unlikely places when we step outside of the norm. Naturally, we have interests outside of our day job. We explore subject areas, technology, music, the world of organizational psychology, visual resources, etc., to hone those varied interests, learn from professionals outside of our field, to relate better to the patrons we serve, and to find new ways to engage users with our collections.

Conferences allow us to openly share ideas so that others may adapt, expand, and combine them with other concepts and tools at hand to reach new, interesting outcomes. Almost any library-specific conference you attend will offer programming with creativity and innovation in mind, as those are certainly hot-ticket topics in librarianship right now.

While there are countless library conferences (and unconferences) to take advantage of locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, the following events have more to offer in terms of creative, participatory programming and conceptual engagement. Many of these events focus on specific types of librarianship, such as zines and fashion, while others focus on emerging technologies and innovation more generally. They also range in size, price, location, intended audience, and some are grassroots operations while others are offered by well-established professional organizations.

Mark your calendars and next time you have professional development funds to spare consider one of these amazing conferences—even if it falls outside of your typical job responsibilities!

In Order of Occurance:

Fashion: Now and Then Conference

Time: October 23–25, 2014

Place: New York, NY

Website: <http://lim.ent.sirsi.net/client/fnt>

Summary: The Fashion: Now and Then Conference explores past, present, and future uses of information and technology in fashion. Participants and attendees range



from the professionals in the fashion industry, libraries, archives, academic institutions, publishers, collectors, and museums. This year's conference will focus on the evolution of fashion information and technology with a broad spectrum of topics and ideas presented. Whether you have collections of materials, textiles, ephemera, or rare books dealing with fashion this may be a niche conference worth attending.

International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA) Conference

Time: November 5–8, 2014

Place: Toledo, OH (in a different location each year)

Website: <http://www.vislit.org/welcome/>

Summary: Hosted by the International Visual Literacy Association, this conference brings in researchers, university and K-12 educators, designers, media specialists, and artists dedicated to the study and practice of visual literacy. IVLA defines visual literacy as “the ability to derive meaning from images of everything that we see—to read and write visual language.” This year's theme for the three day conference will be *The Art of Seeing: From Ordinary to Extraordinary*. If you work with images of any kind, artists, or are at all interested in learning about visual literacy, this would be an incredibly useful conference.

OpenEd2014: Open Education Conference

Time: November 19–21, 2014

Place: Washington, DC (in a different location each year)

Summary: If you want to get creative with educational resources, including creating, adapting, and sharing, then this is a unique opportunity to join the global movement around open education. This year's conference program includes several educators, librarians, and institutions who are using open educational resources to drive and support their curriculum. Ultimately, open education (which includes MOOCs, open textbooks, learning tools, and more) provides ample opportunities for lifelong learning and many academic and school librarians are already immersed in this topic.

College Book Art Association (CBAA) Annual Conference

Time: January 9–10, 2015

Place: Claremont, CA (in a different location each year)

Website: <http://www.collegebookart.org/>

Summary: CBAA is the organization that supports and promotes academic education in book arts through developing pedagogy, practices, teaching, scholarship, and criticism of the genre. This year's conference will focus on the history of book arts and artists' books through programming and presentations, small-group discussions and break-out groups, exhibits, tours, and committee work. This conference would open up ideas for anyone working with artists' books in any library or museum setting by providing ideas for programs and events. It is also a great opportunity to think about collection development in this area if it is appropriate for your institution.



i2c2: Innovation, Inspiration, and Creativity Conference

Time: Early March, 2015

Place: Manchester, UK

Website: <http://i2c2conference.org/>

Summary: The tagline of i2c2 is “using positive disruption to improve libraries”, which sounds a lot like creative problem solving and innovative organizational change. Their blog states, “Overall, the insights we took from the conference were to seek out opportunities for collaboration, to consider any and all ideas, even if only for a second (before asking yourself, really?), and to be open to change and innovation. If/when this conference takes place again, it really is worth attending.” Based on this statement, I would recommend keeping an eye on their website to find out if the conference will be offered in 2015.

Visual Resources Association (VRA) Annual Conference

Time: March 11–14, 2015

Place: Denver, CO (in a different location each year)

Website: http://vraweb.org/conferences_page/

Summary: VRA is a multidisciplinary, creative (yet very scholarly) organization dedicated to furthering research and education in the field of image management within the educational, cultural heritage, and commercial environments. The conference offers a great deal of programming dedicated to image collections, digital media, and collection curatorial duties. With several breakout sessions, formal and informal meetings, presentations on topics ranging from social media to copyright, and networking opportunities, this seems like a great place to find future collaborators and ideas for that collection of under utilized images at your library.

SXSW: South by Southwest

Time: March 13–22, 2015

Place: Austin, TX

Website: <http://sxsw.com/>

Summary: Music, film, and interactive technology—this conference is not only on the cutting edge of all things related to those topics, but it is also exceptionally engaging and fun for attendees. Every community has music, film, and technology audiences and therefore, a need for these things in the library. This conference may garner new ideas for your community, regardless of size, location, and type of library. Registration is split (or you can register to have access to all three events), to help with the high cost of attendance.



Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) Annual Conference

Time: March 19–23, 2015

Place: Fort Worth, TX

Website: <https://www.arlisna.org/news/conferences/49-2015-conference>

Summary: ARLIS/NA is a professional organization dedicated to fostering collegial relationships and excellence in art and design librarianship and image management in North America. Conferences offer ample opportunities for networking, touring local art and library collections, programming that explores ideas such as visual literacy, rare books, artist and librarian collaborations, and issues facing art libraries and repositories. Art librarians and non-art librarians will have many take-aways from this conference. There are several scholarships available through regional chapters and the ARLIS/NA organization to help offset the cost of attendance.

Radical Archives Conference

Time: Early April, 2015

Place: TBD, institutions invited to host in a different location each year

Website: <http://www.radicalarchives.net/ra/>

Summary: This small conference was organized by a few individuals and presented by NYU's Asian/Pacific/American Institute as part of their 2013–2014 residency at A/P/A. According to the website the conference plays on the notion of “archiving as a radical practice, by which means: archives of radical politics and practices; archives that are radical in form or function; moments or contexts in which archiving in itself becomes a radical act; and considerations of how archives can be active in the present, as well as documents of the past and scripts for the future.” The organizers are hoping that another group of individuals and a host institution will emerge in order for this conference to continue in the future. If you are interested in organizing or being a part, please reach out through their website.

Annual Conference for the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)

Time: April 23–25, 2015

Place: Philadelphia, PA (in a different location each year)

Website: <http://www.siop.org/conferences/15con/>

Summary: Are you interested in the scientific study of the workplace? This would be an excellent conference for anyone interested in leadership and management in libraries. From a business perspective, this conference and organization explores topics such as talent management, coaching, assessment, selection, training, organizational development, performance, and work-life balance. Many librarians struggle in leadership positions due to a lack of training and mentorship in this area, but this conference could provide new insight that would alleviate this struggle.



Zine Librarian (Un)Conference (ZL(u)C)

Time: Mid-July, 2015

Place: TBD, institutions invited to host in a different location each year

Website: <http://zinelibraries.info/>

Summary: This is the conference for those interested in learning how to establish and cultivate a zine library. Topics range from starting a library, cataloging collections, programming and outreach activities, and collection policies or procedures. Zines are a newer realm for many traditional libraries, yet more and more zine collections are popping up. They present a host of unique issues as well as endless opportunities for public programming and engagement. The ZL(u)C is affordable, fun, and a hands-on opportunity to learn about the genre and how zines could enhance your collection or programming.

NEXT Library Conference

Time: September 12–15, 2015

Place: Aarhus, Denmark

Website: <http://www.nextlibrary.net/page/next-library-2015>

Summary: This annual conference will offer programming around the topics of library buildings, space design, civic media, social innovation, service design, play/gamification, the dark side of the internet, data, incubators for creativity & learning, and opposites attract, according to their website. Previous program schedules outline engaging events, discussions, and participatory workshops that focus on making the library a more interactive environment, new technology, and user-experience.

THATcamp

Time: Year-round

Place: International

Website: <http://thatcamp.org/>

Summary: “THATCamp stands for ‘The Humanities and Technology Camp.’ It is an unconference: an open, inexpensive meeting where humanists and technologists of all skill levels learn and build together in sessions proposed on the spot in an informal and participatory way.” These conferences are held all over and take place year-round. It is an inexpensive or free, open, productive, and usually one-day meeting. There are subject-specific camps (language, religion and theology, digital frontiers, etc.) as well as more general meetings hosted by several academic institutions. There is literally something for everyone with THATCamp, but if it does not exist, you can build it!

