Thanks for having me. I'm jessamyn west and I've been teaching "my first email" classes since I started library school about fifteen years ago. It's what I do and I like it. I have to admit, though, that I figured at some point I could no longer have a job teaching people email because at some point they would all *have* email. This hasn't come true yet, and it may never. People have a lot of misunderstandings about technology and especially technology penetration and uptake in the US. As librarians, this is becoming our issue, and it didn't used to be. I'll explain why and talk a little bit about what we can do. Slides for my talk are at .... I talk quickly and I mention a lot of things... I also love technology, I use it all the time, it solves problems for me, but this isn't true for everyone. ###
where we are

Let's look a little bit at what the current situation is as far as technology and libraries in the US. ###
specific to general

a. **Everyone** has got an anecdote.

b. **Most** people know their local library.

c. **Some** people understand how state funding for libraries works.

d. **Some** people understand what IMLS does and what ARRA did.

e. **Few** people understand the National Broadband Plan or what the roadmap is like.

People have differing levels of knowledge about the whole landscape. As librarians we know our communities well but may not have as much understanding about the greater landscape in which telecommunications systems exist. Telecom people understand infrastructure but not the social safety net....###
Getting data about these people is a little confusing. The national broadband map came out in February. I was waiting for it. Hoping to be able to point to it and say “see?!?” Sadly, it is ridiculous. Here is my town. I live in a town of about 4500 people. We have broadband on the main streets. If I check here.... And we have to ask, who benefits from this portrayal? ###
This is a more realistic assessment from recovery.vermont.gov. This was created to get stimulus money for the state. They have a vested interest in looking podunk to get more stimulus money. The light areas are where 0 to 10% of the population have broadband. And what did we do with our stimulus money...? ###
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here in Texas

**Figure 1: Texas Technology Adoption Summary**

- Use broadband from home: 62%
- Use dial-up from home: 9%
- Use the Internet someplace other than home: 10%
- Do not use the Internet: 13%
- Don’t know if home Internet service is dial-up or broadband: 6%

Things are not so different here in Texas. 38% of people don’t have broadband at home. 10% of Texans don’t have the broadband option. ###
How about you guys? Green means “fixed wireless broadband” available. Blue means “mobile broadband available” Tan means unserved. "This map is not a guarantee of coverage, contains areas with no service and generally predicts were outdoor coverage is available"
Fixed broadband at download speeds of 768 Kbps or above was available to approximately 7.14 million households, or 96.63% of all Texan households. This implies that 3.37% [approximately a quarter million Texan households] remain unserved by terrestrial, fixed broadband.
digi\textit{tally} divided

- 34% of Americans have no broadband at home.
- 21% have no internet at all
- People who don't have broadband often don't \textit{want} broadband at this point
- Whose job is it to make them want to learn?

"one-in-10 non-users say they would like to start using the internet in the future."
why not?

Main reasons why the 34% of non-adopting Americans don’t have broadband

• Cost

• Lack of digital literacy

• Broadband “not sufficiently relevant for them”

source: FCC’s National Broadband Plan Consumer Survey Broadband Adoption and Use in America

And what would you need to do to get that to happen? ###
sufficiently advanced tech, indistinguishable from magic” The problem, to my mind is summed up in one basic idea. People learn through media and from other people that computers can do magic and do not understand why they do some sorts of magic and not others. They feel resentful that they are denied access to the magic machine and at the same time aren’t getting the “this is just a complicated tool” message. There’s a lot of magical thinking and not all of it good. ###
People who don't use the internet learn about it from other places, such as mainstream media. They get conflicting messages. The "magic" message but also the "dangerous" message. ###
why libraries?
The library is a public space with computers, broadband access and staff.

Four things really. There are 9214 public libraries, serving ninety-seven percent of the population of the United States. Now that still means there are a lot of underserved folks but other than the post office it’s what we have for public, egalitarian, wired and staffed. “Unfunded mandate” A few more numbers. ###
71% of libraries report that they are the only source of free access to computers and the internet in their communities. The updated report should be coming out again in a few weeks. Now, of course, consider the source, and still... We have these numbers because we decided that they were important to count. ###
NYC 2008 as part of their Broadband Landscape and Recommendations report and identified 310 public access points. Of these, 212 were library locations. Ninety of these are run by one organization: New York Public Library. So if NYPL makes a policy decision about public internet access, it affects 30% of the public internet in New York City. NYPL surveyed PAC users, 67% of the ones without broadband at home reported that they were using the services at the library “...because they cannot access the internet anywhere else.”
We even have special status with FEMA as of January of this year as an "essential community organization" which means we get money for rebuilding and reopening after emergencies. This is a photo of the Cedar Rapids library, the flood in **** was the impetus for this legal change, though I’m sure the flood in Katrina had something to do with that. ###
I’d like to talk a little bit about the things that people think about the digital divide that don’t seem to be true based on my research. There are links to these things on the list of links, feel free to check my work. ###
"The older generation will die and then we'll be set."

Besides being unkind, this is untrue, to a point. Where I am, it’s a little more true actually. The younger generation is going to American schools and technology build out is happening. However we’re not seeing this same thing happening in tech-rich urban areas with large immigrant populations. ###
Here’s a slide from the Broadband Landscape and Recommendations report I mentioned earlier. This data is a few years old. The chart is a little confusing...
"The kids today, they're all born digital."

I hear this all the time. I live sort of near Harvard where John Palfrey [head of Harvard’s law library] wrote the book Born Digital. No big deal, he lives in a different world than I do. The argument is that “kids today with their beep beep beep” ###
This is another fancy chart from a Pew report on teens and mobile phone usage and again it’s a little confusing but let’s look at the data in the pulsing pink area. Teens text. A lot. Over half text daily. 33% send over 100 texts a day. OK. But what about this yellow area? The kids without cell phones. Not only are they not part of the beep beep beep generation, but all those other super chatty kids aren’t chatting with them. It’s like MT Anderson’s Feed. ###
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"Old statistics are out of date, change is rapid."

But whatever, that was last year and technological change is SO RAPID everyone’s got a cell phone now, right? ###
The numbers, the 34% with no broadband at home and 21% no internet at all? In 1.5 years, that had changed 1% Remember what we learned earlier, the people who aren’t online are the die-hards, the people who really don’t want to get online. [guy without a car] ###
"As cell phones and smartphones become ubiquitous, people will learn technology."

Cell phones are the bridge, they tell us. ###
But remember the 25% of teens who don’t have cell phones? Let’s look a little further and see who has smart phones. Other things to keep in mind with smart phones: bandwidth caps, lack of net neutrality, expensive plans. I tried to figure out just how much a smartphone costs ... ###
"People don't want to learn technology. Why is it our problem?"

And at some level, whose problem is this? I didn’t make Windows difficult. I didn’t make Macs expensive. I didn’t make people afraid of technology. I don’t really care if you’re on twitter or not. ###
Six in ten non-internet users would need assistance getting online

*Based on adult non-internet users*

- Would not want to start using the internet (Vol.) 14%
- Don't know 4%
- Know enough to go online on my own 21%
- Would need someone to help me 61%


Now I know this sort of conflicts with some of the earlier data, this is from Pew, again. When asked “Okay ***** ###
Well the government for one. Obama would really like you to pay your taxes online. The government saves $2.50 every time someone files online instead of by paper. But they can't MAKE you. People who are still offline in 2011 are offline for a reason. We need to address those reasons. ###
who cares?

Please get online, thank you.

Well the government for one. Obama would really like you to pay your taxes online. The government saves $2.50 every time someone files online instead of by paper. But they can't MAKE you. People who are still offline in 2011 are offline for a reason. We need to address those reasons. ###
If you know this

Percent of all Texas residents who own a computer

81%

So you know many people don’t have computers. ###
and this

Percent of all Texas residents who use a computer

88%

and some of the ones who own them don’t even use them [this stat breaks my heart] ###
and especially this

Percent of all Texas residents who access the Internet from home or some other place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest education level attained</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
<th>Less than high school diploma</th>
<th>High school diploma</th>
<th>Some College</th>
<th>College degree</th>
<th>Advanced or professional degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And you realize that the people in these groups aren’t evenly distributed, they’re often poor, older, disabled, non-English speaking, otherwise disenfranchised... ###
You want to help
A quick side note about how to get people to want to do things. One of the reasons I’m into librarianship is because I really think that libraries change lives... Our slogan used to be “the best books for the most people at the least cost”
To change one's life...

William James has written a lot on how to change minds, how do you get people to do something they might not otherwise consider? How to make it a Genuine Option? "... start immediately. Do it flamboyantly." "A genuine option is: Live, forced, momentous"
Two populations

We have to be mindful that making technology a genuine option can be important for our staff as well as our patrons. You can't pass on positive messages if you don't feel they're true yourself. ###
some good news

There are a lot of people doing things well. I’ve put links to some places to go looking in the links page but here are a few screen shots and some talk about what I think is helpful here.

###
Local is often fundable

The local things we have are often our best most unique asset. Add to this our local populations who like to ... see themselves and we often have projects we can do [or better yet, manage] that are fun, fundable and replicable. ###
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We've all seen the read posters with the famous people, and the read poster makers you can buy from ALA, but hey everyone reads.
We've all seen the read posters with the famous people, and the read poster makers you can buy from ALA, but hey everyone reads. ###
Here's an example of something I think is really lovely and solves a problem. ###
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GMLC does a lot of things, but what it doesn't do is get any state or federal funding... Smaller often means more agile for this sort of thing. ###
The Vermont Library Association had a static web site where everyone who wanted to make a change had to email the webmaster. No fun for them, no fun for the webmaster. I mentioned that maybe we could change this, make people contributors not just emailers ... ###
My town library is doing a strategic plan. Now we’re not the most technologically advanced library around but the staff understand how to solve problems and technology gives them another tool to do that. You know how people write on big sheets of paper during strategic planning processes...? Well instead of having some hapless volunteer transcribing them, they took photos with a digital camera and uploaded them to a (free) blog and invited public commentary. Neat. But the most important thing is this... ###
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final words

There are many more examples. Leading the way taking simple [not easy] steps and making technology and technology understanding a genuine option. ###
I used to say that the Gates Foundation was the best and worst thing to happen to Vermont's libraries... we all have computers now and we might not have gotten them otherwise. But there's a downside to philanthropy that takes some of your choices away. We have to re-learn how to make our own tech choices. ###
Jakob Neilsen who I quoted earlier says the digital divide is really an oversimplification of a few other issues. Now that we know that the digital divide isn't (entirely) about access to computers, and it's not (entirely) about access to broadband, what do we do to help people with their real problems? ###
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1. economic divide
2. usability divide
3. empowerment divide

Jakob Nielsen who I quoted earlier says the digital divide is really an oversimplification of a few other issues. Now that we know that the digital divide isn't (entirely) about access to computers, and it's not (entirely) about access to broadband, what do we do to help people with their real problems? ###
Seeing what other people accomplish is only so useful. We move forward doing what we do, trying our best. But in order to bring people along with us, we have to mind the metamessages. Say "This can be done" say "I'll help you" say "we're trying something" say "we did this." Give people a genuine option for wanting to learn, culturally and personally.###
thank you

<librarian.net/talks/txla11>