

SOCIAL JUSTICE ROLES FOR LIBRARIES & LIBRARIANS

thank you for coming. I've been asked to speak on more or less this topic which is another way of saying "Just talk about what you talk about normally" I could not be happier to be here.

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE WHILE SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

I'm a librarian who is concerned with the digital divide, social and digital inclusion, and how these issues intersect with the larger world of politics. I work in the US mainly as a technology educator and I do a lot of writing on technology and library topics.

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE BY SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

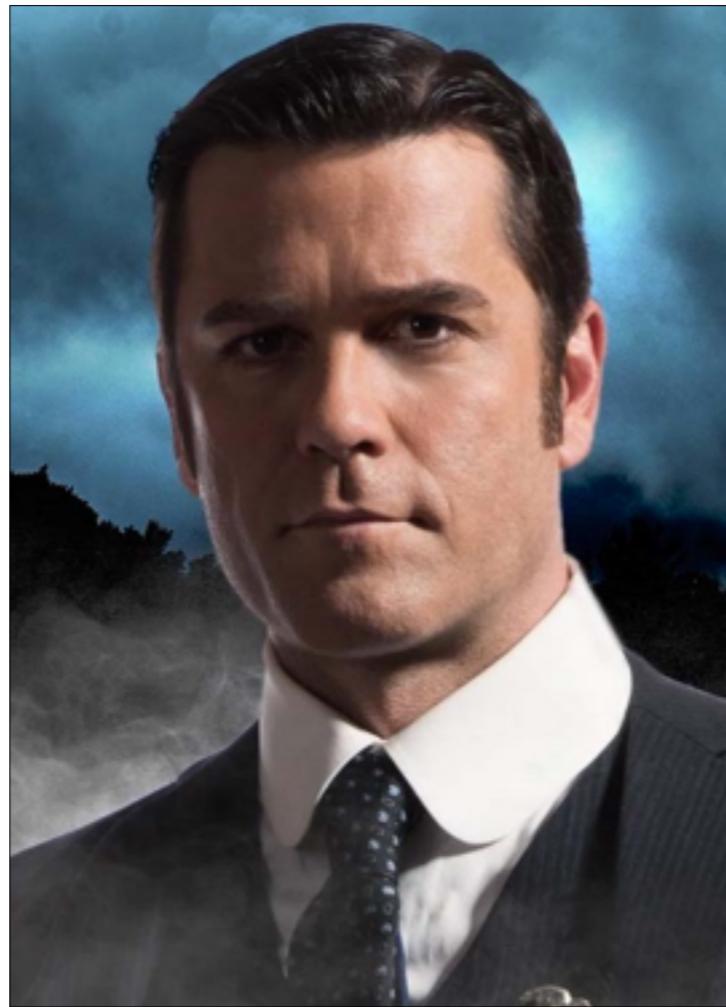
In fact, this is a bit more what I meant to say. The act of being truthful and honest about libraries and their very unique roles in society, is what helps keep people included and involved.

[<librarian.net/talks/tpl17>](http://librarian.net/talks/tpl17)

JESSAMYN WEST

you can find these slides, my notes, and links with more information to the things I am talking about at this address. And that's my name :)

And I want to say that even though the things in the US that are going on RIGHT NOW are horrible and difficult to deal with, this talk is more general than just "What to do right now about this terrible man" and I apologize for that in advance.



1. History
2. Theory
& Ideas
3. Actions

Just an outline for today.... I've been watching Inspector Murdoch, so I warn you, I think I know all about Toronto now. For those of you who watch this show... it's a period piece mystery about Toronto at the turn of the last century, based on books by Maureen Jennings. Now in its 10th season. It's a cop procedural with a lady coroner who, in later seasons is joined by (click)



1. History

2. Theory & Ideas

3. Actions

...this character Rebecca James. Now, there were no lady coroners in 1890s Toronto and certainly no black lady coroners. But Yannick Bisson doesn't solve mysteries in real life either (though I hear he does enjoy bike riding) so while we're making up a world why don't we make up one that looks like what WE want in terms of diversity and inclusion? Representation matters. And it's clearly a problem for people. This week I've been working with #1lib1ref adding cites to Wikipedia and I've been finding, disturbingly, that even really boring tv show Wikipedia pages often have less information for the female characters and the POC characters. This character wasn't even listed as STARRING in the show in the wikipedia page. I fixed that. This will be a theme moving forward.

I'm going to split this up into a few sections that don't all segue neatly into one another so I wanted to tell you how this is going to go. HISTORY, THEORY & IDEAS, AND ACTIONS

1. History



It's been a really difficult set of months in the US as you may know. The good news is, it's a great time for organizing, woodshedding and finding ways to be useful. And we've been given an opportunity to help some people who are concerned, nervous and uncertain, as well as the same old people we've always been helping. For people in service professions the opportunity to serve more and to serve better, to step up in a time of crisis is a challenge we are good at rising to meet. We don't all have the reach of a tech company like AirBnB but we do have the ability to reach more people, more KINDS of people, through our actions.

1. History



It's been a really difficult set of months in the US as you may know. The good news is, it's a great time for organizing, woodshedding and finding ways to be useful. And we've been given an opportunity to help some people who are concerned, nervous and uncertain, as well as the same old people we've always been helping. For people in service professions the opportunity to serve more and to serve better, to step up in a time of crisis is a challenge we are good at rising to meet. We don't all have the reach of a tech company like AirBnB but we do have the ability to reach more people, more KINDS of people, through our actions.

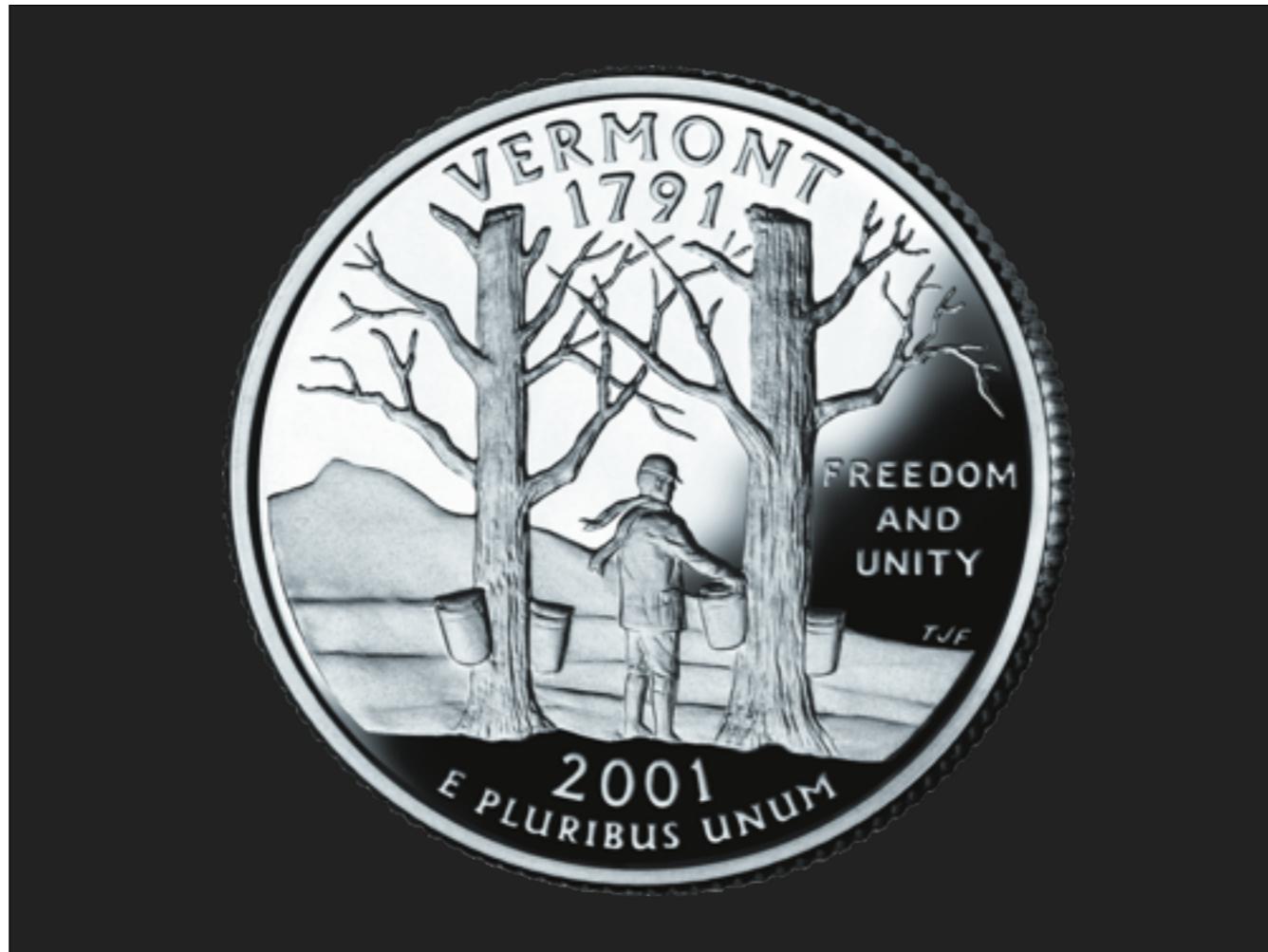


WANTED: UNREASONABLE LIBRARIANS

**SRRT Newsletter #1
May 1969**

I've been involved in library activism since I was in library school. Actually maybe before that. I went to an alternative college. I thought I wanted to go to law school because I wanted to help people. I decided I maybe didn't want a job that required me to dress up and get up early and I sort of fell into library school. Once I got there, I knew it was the place for me. A dedication to intellectual freedom, to the right to read for adults AND children, to diversity and inclusion, to access for people with disabilities, in prison, without homes, all of those were things I could get behind. And the dress code worked for me.

I joined SRRT (social responsibilities round table) of ALA when I was still in library school. This is a screenshot from their first newsletter (also linked on links page) along with the headline of one of the articles. I don't think I am an unreasonable person but I know that to some people demanding rights (or simply refusing the abridgment of rights) can seem... cheeky. And my response when people ask me "Why so political?" is just to say "I wasn't defending my rights before people started trying to take them away"



Sometimes people ask me what libraries have to do with politics.... I settled in Vermont (I am not from there) partly because I agreed with the politics of the place. I've been there for 20 years.

We had local elections recently as well as national elections. Vermont has a new Governor. He's fine. But one of his first acts was to accept the resignations of many people heading up his departments, including our state librarian. This is unusual. Usually people offer letters of resignation to an incoming administration which are politely dismissed. This happened at a national level. Pro forma resignations were accepted from career civil servants who were not expecting this to happen. It's unprecedented. And unpresidential.

I spoke to the president of the Vermont Library Association about what our response would be. She was concerned, saying "I don't really like this political stuff." I get that, or at least I mostly do. My personal feeling is that if there are enough of us to do the political mixing it up, it's fine if it's not for everyone. But I'd like to make an argument that there's at least some parts of this that could be for anyone.



And I think it's necessary to be at least a little political but maybe not in the way people think it's defined. I'll start with an anecdote and broaden it into some critical theory. This part is about technology, but it doesn't have to be. I teach basic technology classes at a local vocational high school. It's a few hours a week, drop-in, and free for anyone who wants to come in. The hardest to serve have always been the hardest to serve and we've tried to remove as many barriers as we can to people getting help.

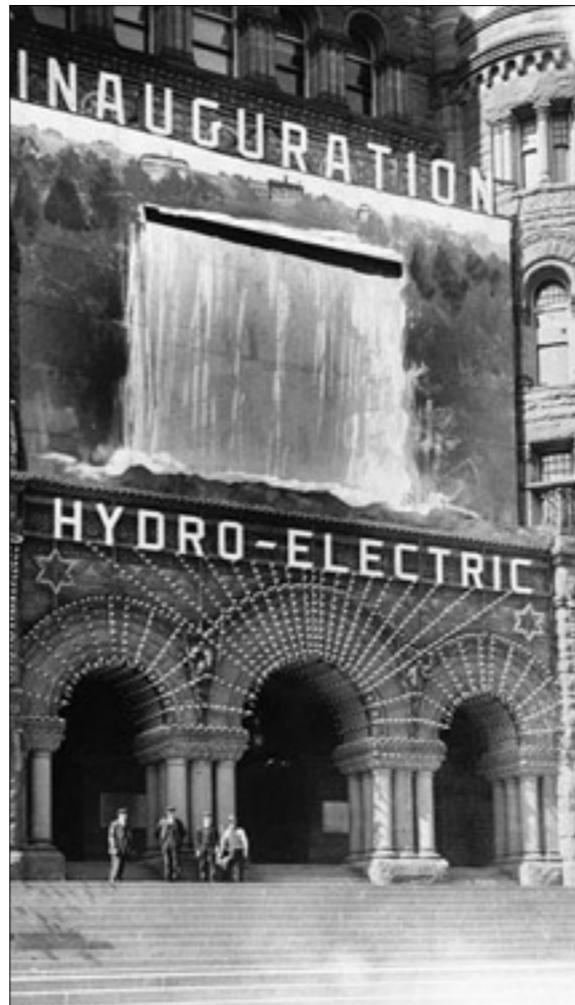
This is Ed, one of my students. He is trying to make sense of facebook. Not because he suddenly wants to start "social networking" but because he met a woman who he would like to get to know better and that is the best, maybe only, way to communicate with her. Ed is struggling a little but we talked him through getting online, using Facebook Messaging and sending a message. He composed a message one week and came back to send it the next week. Ed doesn't have broadband or a computer at home.



**85% OF AMERICANS
HAVE BROADBAND
AT HOME**

(mobile included)

In fact, that's not THAT unusual. (this includes "mobile broadband" by the way even though we could argue that's not the same as "real" broadband) Ed also doesn't have a mobile phone. Many people don't. This can be challenging for them, signing up for websites that want to text you codes etc. When I deleted Uber on Sunday I had a little bit of a time getting Lyft installed (wanting to optimize coupons) and I thought "How does anyone without a cell phone even do this?" I don't think they do. They pay more \$\$\$. Of course there's a larger argument about the gig economy that is very useful to be having simultaneously to this.



**96% OF CANADIANS
COULD HAVE
BROADBAND**

86% of them do

...and this is about the same in Canada. Since more of your population is urban and close together, you're doing a bit better. Well done.



*Ed doesn't just need to understand technology, or technology's role in his world, he needs to understand technology's role in **THE** world*

So what does Ed need? He doesn't need a computer class. He needs his technological question contextualized. It's helpful to him to know WHY facebook operates the way it does, not just how it operates. This helps him understand how to respond.

*...from someone not trying
to **sell** him something.*



(ever notice how all broadband ads look like this?) And this is extra important because, really, most technological interactions people have, whether it's getting an ebook on to their cell phone or sending a message on facebook, are created by companies whose "prime directive" is not to solve your problems, it's to solve theirs. Cash flow problems usually. I don't think this is a conspiracy I think it's just capitalism.

I focus on tech in these talks because with print materials specifically, once you buy a book, the publisher is out of your life. Not so for technology, you get the content for free but what is being "sold" is your attention. And people need to be able to understand this attention economy from someone who is not actively involved in selling it to them. Me. You.

**IN THE BANKING APPROACH,
STUDENTS ARE "EMPTY" UNTIL
DEPOSITS ARE MADE BY THE TEACHER**

Paulo Freire

2. Theory & Ideas

The theoretical underpinning I use a lot is Paulo Freire. He was a Brazilian educator and philosopher and the person who founded the body of work known as Critical Pedagogy Active from the 40s through the 90s. His best known work is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, worth a read. He talked a lot about what is really happening when people learn. His argument is that issues of social justice and democracy itself are not distinct from acts of teaching and learning. And that there is no such thing as "neutral" education.

The model a lot of people like to use in traditional education is the "banking model" as mentioned here.

**THIS STIMULATES OPPRESSIVE
ATTITUDES & PRACTICES EXISTING IN
SOCIETY & INCREASES INEQUALITY**

Paulo Freire

His argument is that when you do this, it just winds up reinforcing dominant models of ... everything. Strong ideas get stronger and aren't critically reflected on. The STRUCTURE of knowledge itself isn't reflected on. If your society has some ... problematic ideas, they just get passed along without regards to whether they're causing trouble, harming people, increasing oppression and inequality.



**"Be aware of
ourselves as
practitioners and as
human beings
to teach in a non-
threatening, anti-
discriminatory way."**

bell hooks

So, if the structure is actually part of what is causing the problem—and this is often true with social problems that have reached institutionalized levels like structural poverty and structural racism—then you don't just learn about them in a "Hey poverty is bad!" way. A normal five year old response to that is "Why does one of the richest nations on earth even HAVE poverty?" To really address issues like poverty and racism, you have to look at the structures that underlie them. You don't have to be like "ergo: THIS SUCKS" but you do need to commit to learning together. So your own role and context as an educator (librarians are educators) is part of this interaction. bell hooks is a critical theorist who writes well on this subject.



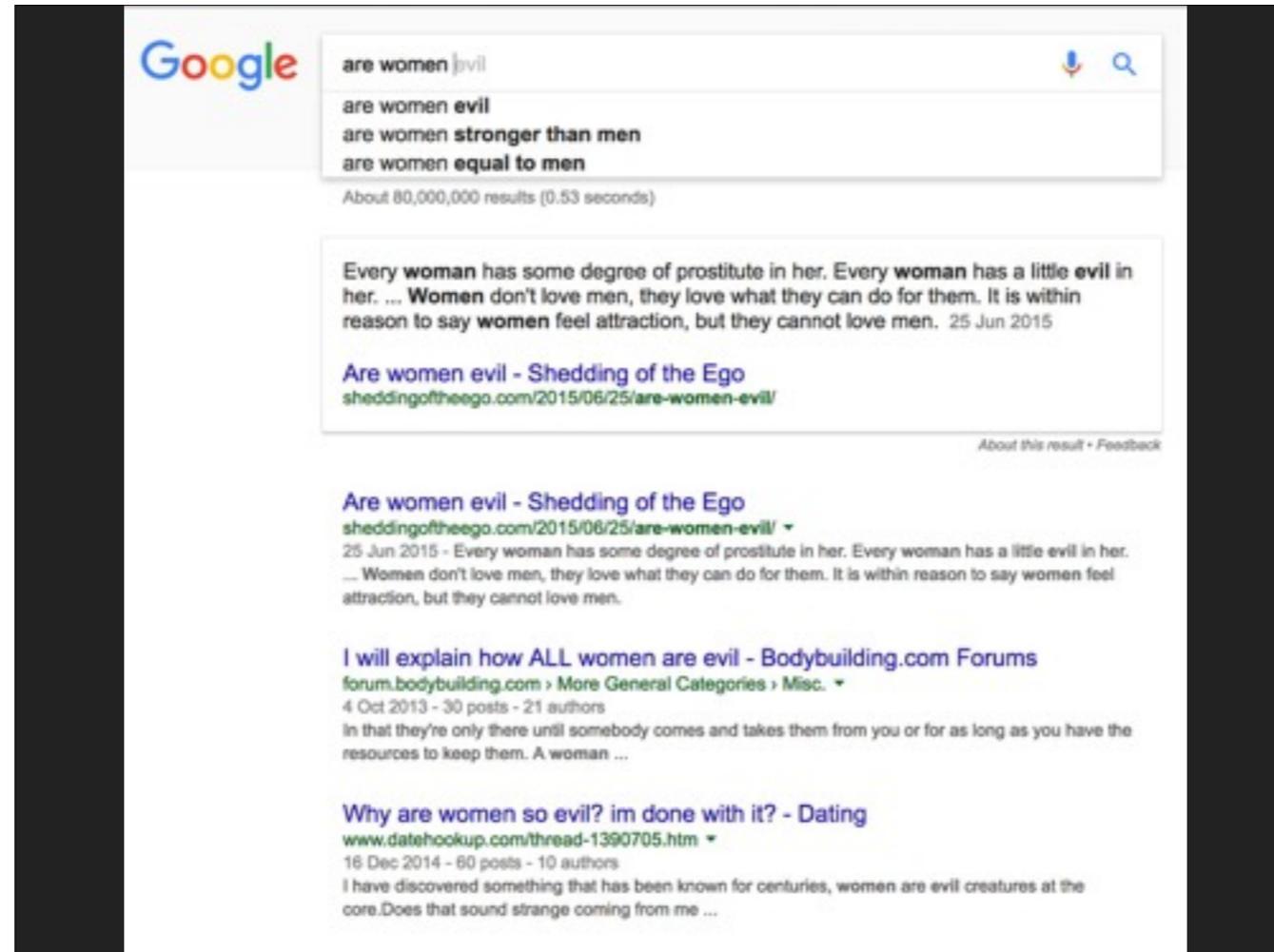
So the operative word is praxis, the idea of "informed actions". Engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas. In library terms this is more like ... how I learned it in library school was ISAR systems. Info storage and retrieval. You built a thing to do a job. Then you tested it to see if it was doing its job. Did it find the things it was supposed to find? Did it not find the things that it wasn't supposed to find? You evaluate how the thing worked critically not just "We were supposed to build a website. This is a website. Therefore we accomplished our goals"

(click) There are many people working on these sorts of topics in librarianship, a lot of their online discourse can be found via the #critlib hashtag, linked on the links page.



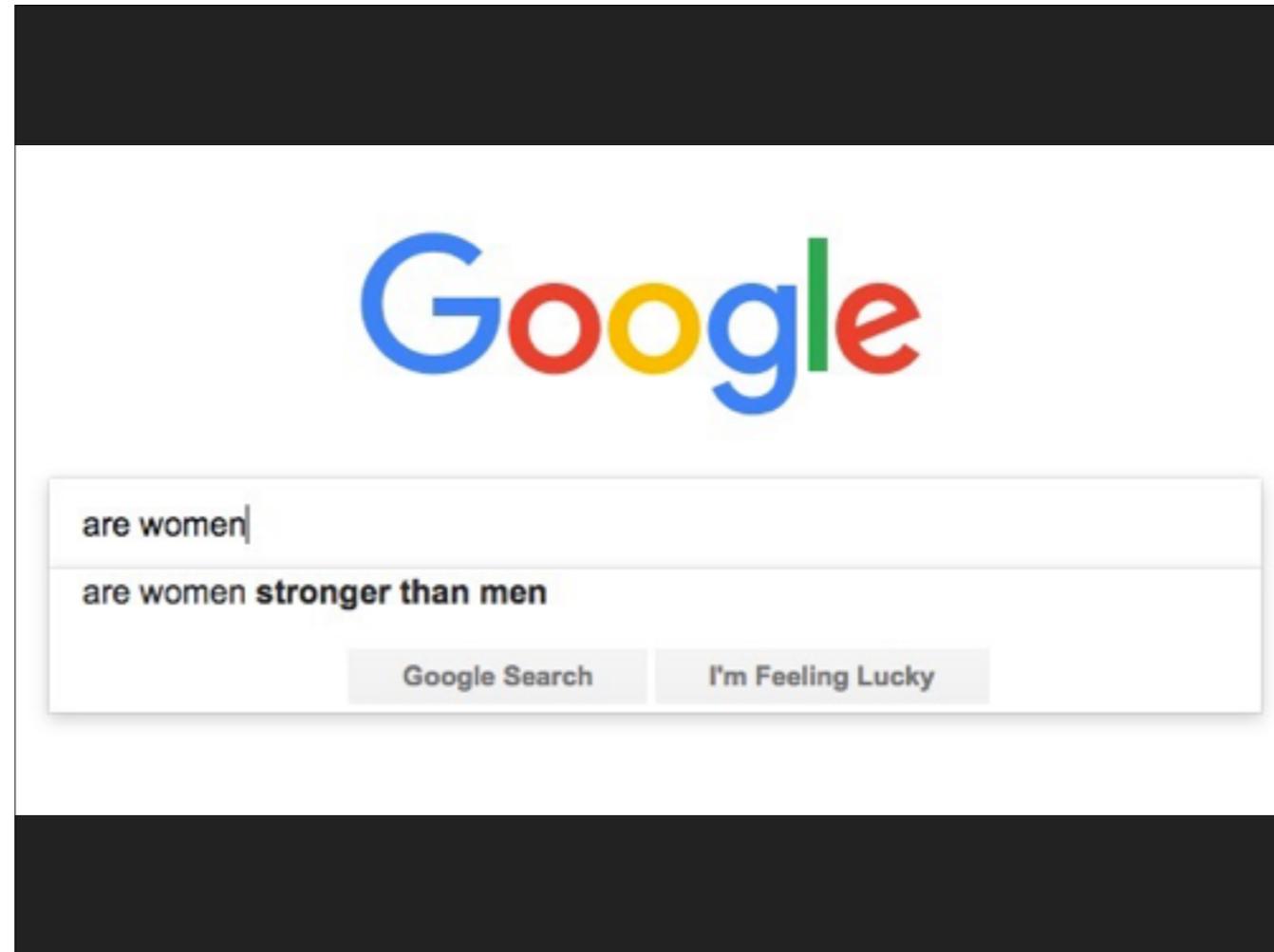
So the operative word is praxis, the idea of "informed actions". Engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas. In library terms this is more like ... how I learned it in library school was ISAR systems. Info storage and retrieval. You built a thing to do a job. Then you tested it to see if it was doing its job. Did it find the things it was supposed to find? Did it not find the things that it wasn't supposed to find? You evaluate how the thing worked critically not just "We were supposed to build a website. This is a website. Therefore we accomplished our goals"

(click) There are many people working on these sorts of topics in librarianship, a lot of their online discourse can be found via the #critlib hashtag, linked on the links page.



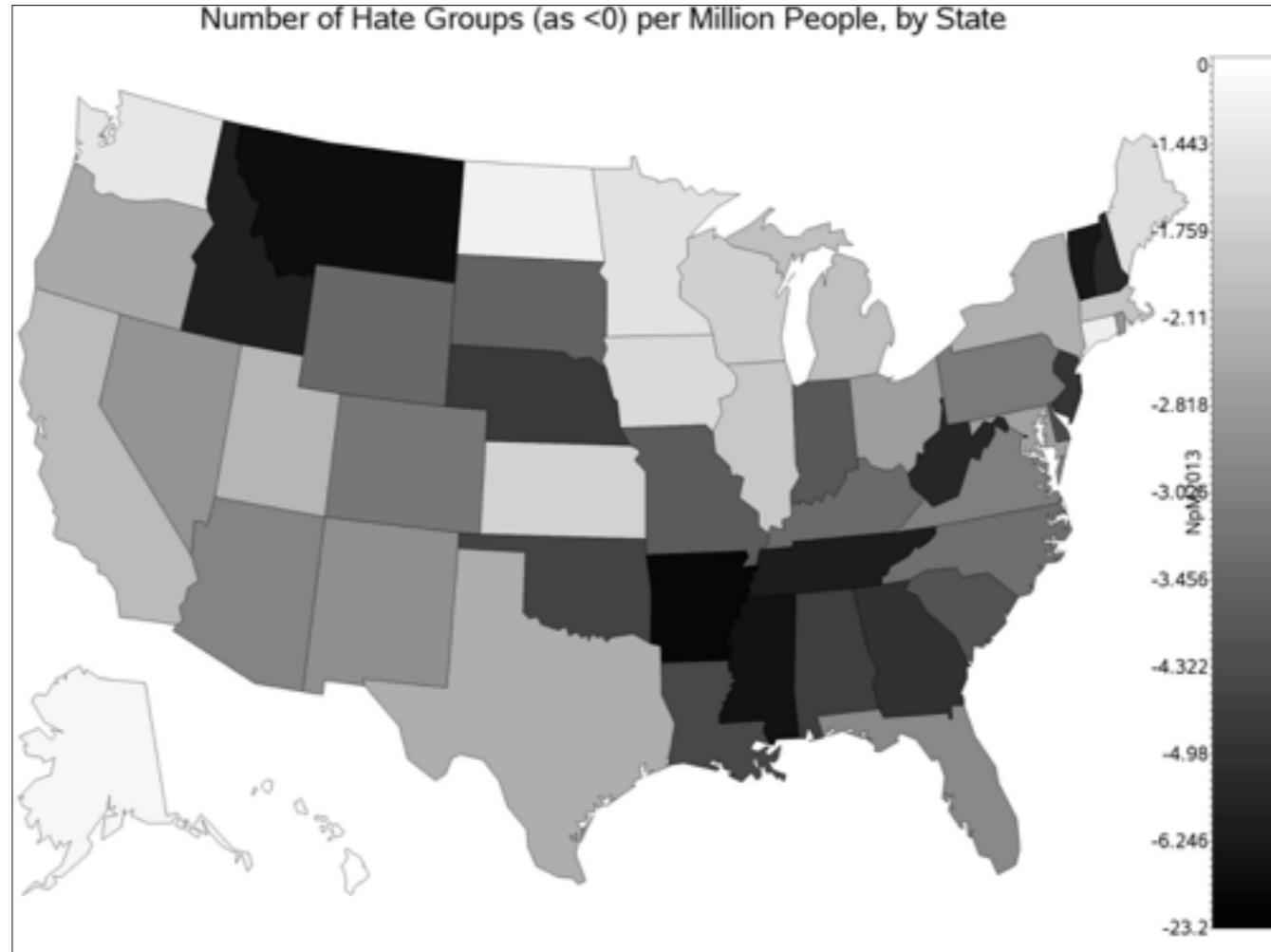
This is more relevant than you might think because SO much of our "learning" nowadays is mediated by search engines, information storage and retrieval systems.

This is one recent gaffe that google has since (click) fixed. And by fixing it they let us know something very important: that these things CAN be fixed. And this isn't just idle search engine goofery, these things have repercussions in the real world



This is more relevant than you might think because SO much of our "learning" nowadays is mediated by search engines, information storage and retrieval systems.

This is one recent gaffe that google has since (click) fixed. And by fixing it they let us know something very important: that these things CAN be fixed. And this isn't just idle search engine goofery, these things have repercussions in the real world



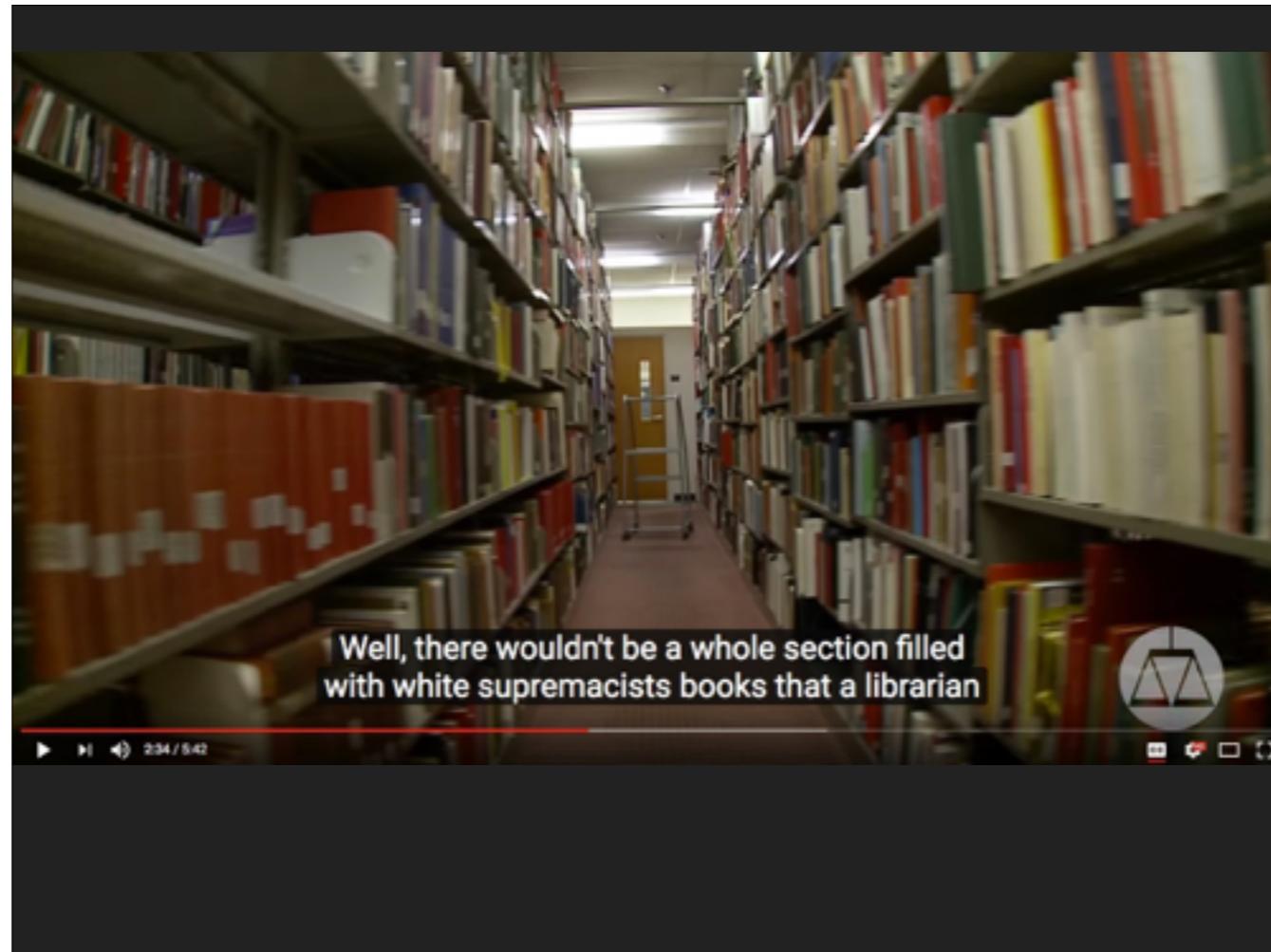
The southern Poverty Law Center was founded in 1971 so it's about as old as I am. They are known in the US as the group that bankrupted the Klan. They keep track of hate groups (Vermont is not doing so well, we've got an active secessionist group who are also racists). One of the things I like about them is that they also place a huge priority on education, to help people learn to not be terrible. They have a whole website Tolerance.org committed to educating children about tolerance but also more complex topics like white privilege, anti-racism, ableism and GLBT rights.



The southern Poverty Law Center was founded in 1971 so it's about as old as I am. They are known in the US as the group that bankrupted the Klan. They keep track of hate groups (Vermont is not doing so well, we've got an active secessionist group who are also racists). One of the things I like about them is that they also place a huge priority on education, to help people learn to not be terrible. They have a whole website Tolerance.org committed to educating children about tolerance but also more complex topics like white privilege, anti-racism, ableism and GLBT rights.



They came out with a video recently (6 min long, it's linked in the resources) talking about Dylann Roof the man who murdered nine people in a black church in South Carolina. He used Google to get information on "black on white crime" which, I can tell you right now, isn't a thing. I mean it happens, but white people get killed by white people more often. Google sent him to white supremacist sites which were using effective SEO (search engine optimization) to reach the top of the results and they offered him "fake news" and bad information that led him to believe that not only was there a lot of black on white crime, but it was going unreported! A library wouldn't do that. It wouldn't even have a White Supremacist section. So when people ask "Why libraries in times of Google?" this is my new go-to story.



They came out with a video recently (6 min long, it's linked in the resources) talking about Dylann Roof the man who murdered nine people in a black church in South Carolina. He used Google to get information on "black on white crime" which, I can tell you right now, isn't a thing. I mean it happens, but white people get killed by white people more often. Google sent him to white supremacist sites which were using effective SEO (search engine optimization) to reach the top of the results and they offered him "fake news" and bad information that led him to believe that not only was there a lot of black on white crime, but it was going unreported! A library wouldn't do that. It wouldn't even have a White Supremacist section. So when people ask "Why libraries in times of Google?" this is my new go-to story.



They came out with a video recently (6 min long, it's linked in the resources) talking about Dylann Roof the man who murdered nine people in a black church in South Carolina. He used Google to get information on "black on white crime" which, I can tell you right now, isn't a thing. I mean it happens, but white people get killed by white people more often. Google sent him to white supremacist sites which were using effective SEO (search engine optimization) to reach the top of the results and they offered him "fake news" and bad information that led him to believe that not only was there a lot of black on white crime, but it was going unreported! A library wouldn't do that. It wouldn't even have a White Supremacist section. So when people ask "Why libraries in times of Google?" this is my new go-to story.



WE LEARN TOGETHER

In summary learning is a thing that takes place between people, not material that is passed from one person to another unchanged.



**UNLEARNING
LEARNING
RELEARNING
REFLECTION
EVALUATION**

and we learn iteratively. We unlearn old ideas and relearn new ones.

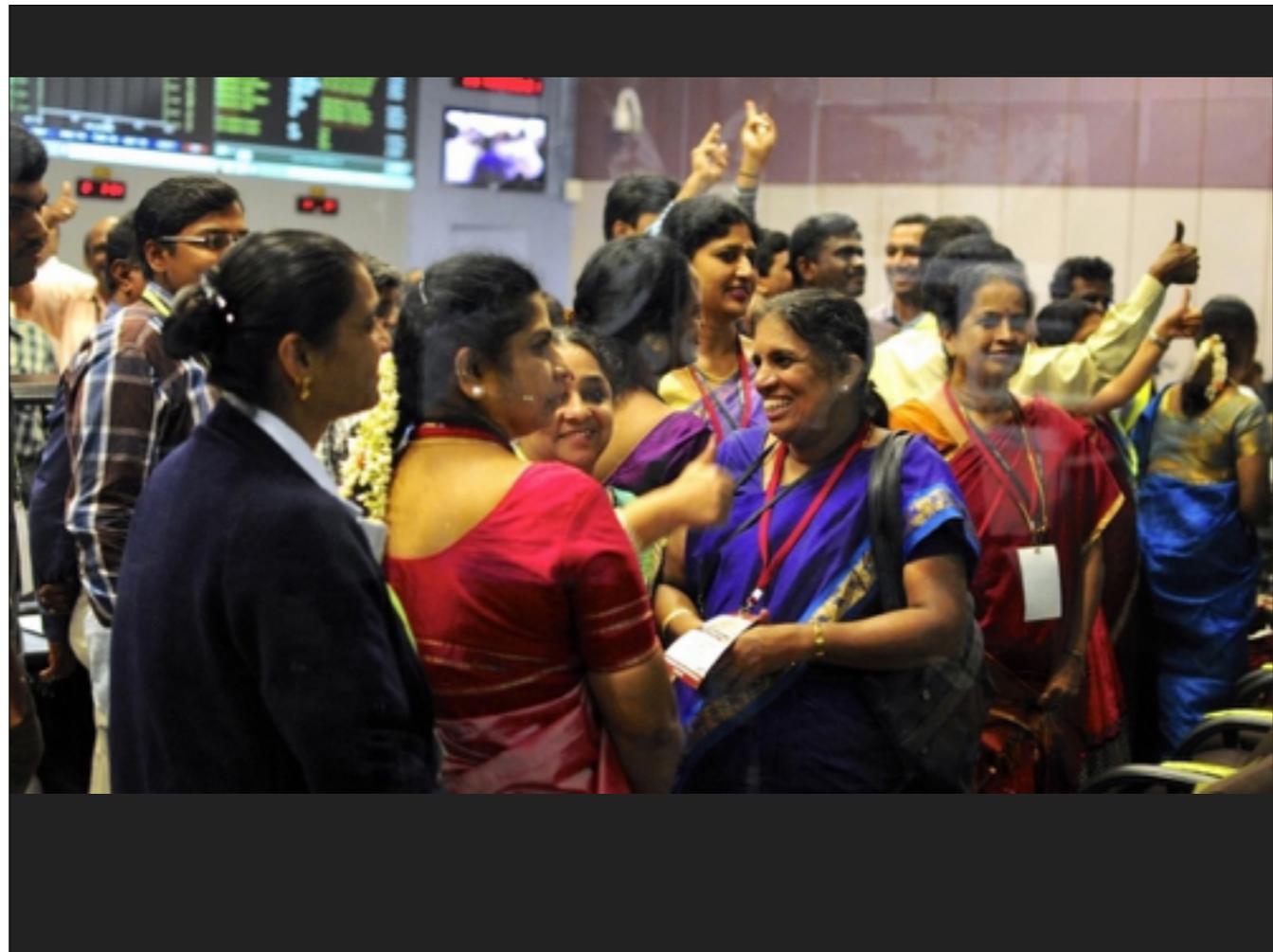


THEORY APPLICATION REFLECTION EVALUATION THEORY

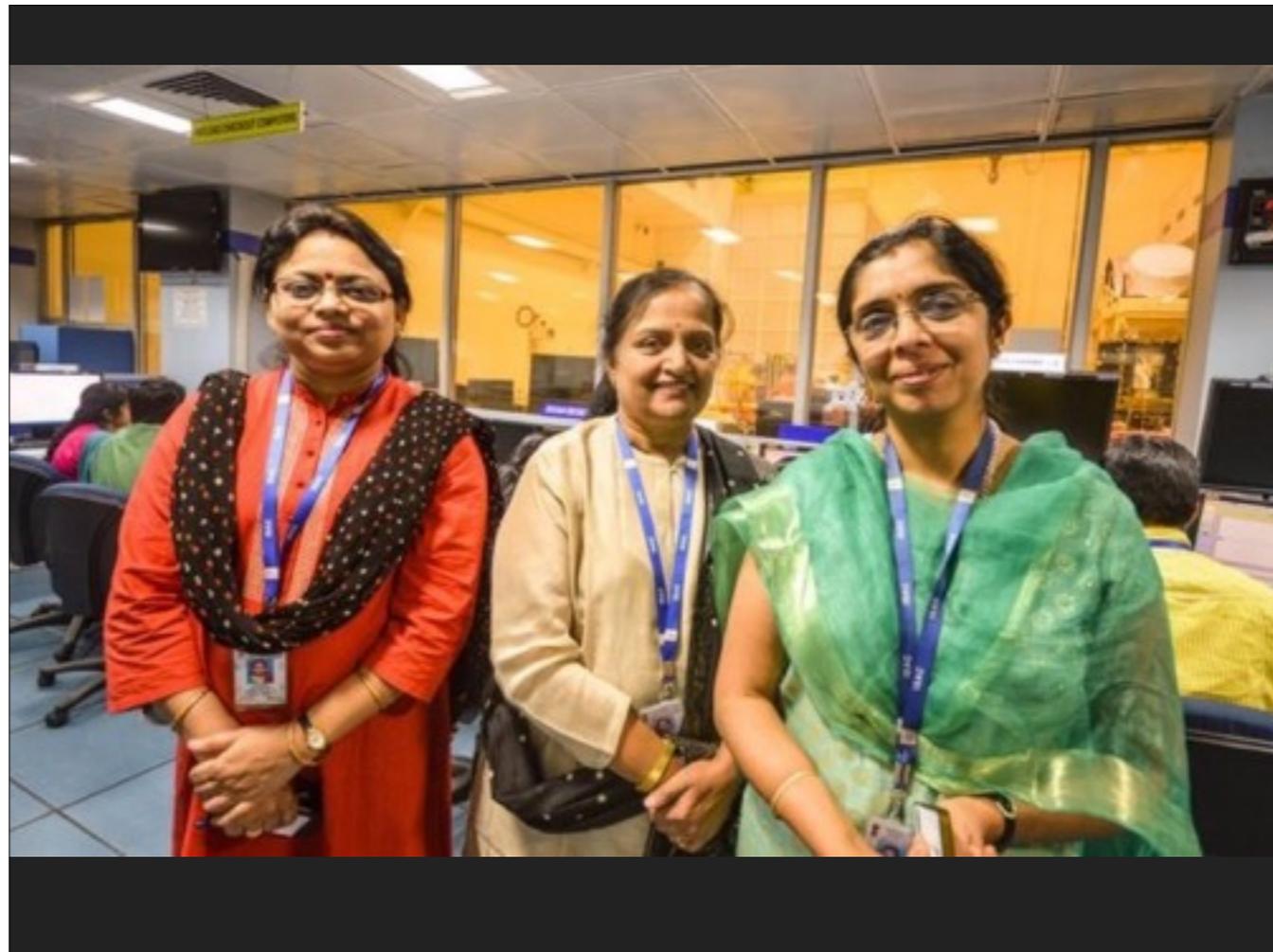
I had used the earlier slide in another, previous, shorter talk. As I went over my slides for this talk I asked myself "Why this white lady over and over?" I mean, I'm a white lady and something about that seemed "natural" to me. But that's something *I* need to unlearn, not something I should make everyone else deal with. This is Kalpana Chawla. She was an astronaut, a victim in the Columbia disaster. Representation matters.



I had used the earlier slide in another, previous, shorter talk. As I went over my slides for this talk I asked myself "Why this white lady over and over?" I mean, I'm a white lady and something about that seemed "natural" to me. But that's something *I* need to unlearn, not something I should make everyone else deal with. This is Kalpana Chawla. She was an astronaut, a victim in the Columbia disaster. Representation matters.



though I should qualify that to say that accurate representation matters. I went to find "that photo of the Indian female scientists" that I had seen when Indian launched their mission to Mars in September 2014. I vaguely remembered this photo, sent around as "scientists rejoice!" Turns out, and with no disrespect, those women are administrative staff for the Mars Mission. THESE woman are (some of) the scientists. Great articles on the links page. But a large portion of the world got the right story but the wrong images. And this is how casual stereotyping can continue to fester.



though I should qualify that to say that accurate representation matters. I went to find "that photo of the Indian female scientists" that I had seen when Indian launched their mission to Mars in September 2014. I vaguely remembered this photo, sent around as "scientists rejoice!" Turns out, and with no disrespect, those women are administrative staff for the Mars Mission. THESE woman are (some of) the scientists. Great articles on the links page. But a large portion of the world got the right story but the wrong images. And this is how casual stereotyping can continue to fester.



And it's a constant process. You're never done. You change. The world changes. Technology changes. Having the right approach generally is part of it. But being open to getting better is also part of it. Which is hard because it means appreciating that we're not there yet, may never be there, and other people are also not there. Everyone has to make their own decisions about the trickier parts of social awareness, social justice and social activism (Nazi punching, yes or no?) and part of avoiding burnout is understanding just how much you can control. And how much you can't.

3. Actions



SOCIAL JUSTICE?

**INCLUSION,
DIVERSITY, RESPECT**

So my response to people asking why I am making things political is often just to restate that I am just trying to help people achieve equity which is not the same as equality. Equality always implies that we are all starting from the same place, so it's fine if we have, from now, equal opportunities. This ignores a great deal of history. But the awkward part is that sometimes getting at this equity can mean rebalancing things from where they are now. Doing this in response to social issues is considered social justice. OK then.

Do I belong?

your potential library patron

As I said before, representation matters. Libraries are, nominally for everyone, but does everyone feel included, does everyone feel like the library is the place for them? My public library specialty is outreach. Basically (at least partly) figuring out who is in your community, subtracting everyone who is coming in to the library and figuring out if there is anything you can do about the ones who don't come in. Maybe not... but probably there are things you can be doing. I'm not going to say it's not tricky...

**Is there going to
be trouble there?**

your library patron

but one of the most important things that helps people feel included is safety. Safety from harassment, safety from judgement.



And in some cases, the world as many people understand it has changed. And this is an opportunity to say "we recognize everyone and want them to be included." and you can try things, work them out, maybe one set of signs doesn't work because it's too cutesy (who is that person?), or too vague (is there a urinal?) and maybe it takes you a while to settle on one option.

...and this isn't just "yay progressives" People may have religious reasons to feel a men-only or women-only bathroom is appropriate, so keeping those options is *also* a way of supporting diversity.



And in some cases, the world as many people understand it has changed. And this is an opportunity to say "we recognize everyone and want them to be included." and you can try things, work them out, maybe one set of signs doesn't work because it's too cutesy (who is that person?), or too vague (is there a urinal?) and maybe it takes you a while to settle on one option.

...and this isn't just "yay progressives" People may have religious reasons to feel a men-only or women-only bathroom is appropriate, so keeping those options is *also* a way of supporting diversity.



ITERATIVE
IN PUBLIC
(IF POSSIBLE)

And in some cases, the world as many people understand it has changed. And this is an opportunity to say "we recognize everyone and want them to be included." and you can try things, work them out, maybe one set of signs doesn't work because it's too cutesy (who is that person?), or too vague (is there a urinal?) and maybe it takes you a while to settle on one option.

...and this isn't just "yay progressives" People may have religious reasons to feel a men-only or women-only bathroom is appropriate, so keeping those options is **also** a way of supporting diversity.



It's important to recognize our power in this. The library doing this is not just another business, it's a representation of people's public efforts and contributions (this pic is from the White House by the way) and when people see THE LIBRARY doing it, it becomes a more normal thing to do. We help set norms by doing things. We help set positive and inclusive norms by doing things in a positive and inclusive way.



It's important to recognize our power in this. The library doing this is not just another business, it's a representation of people's public efforts and contributions (this pic is from the White House by the way) and when people see THE LIBRARY doing it, it becomes a more normal thing to do. We help set norms by doing things. We help set positive and inclusive norms by doing things in a positive and inclusive way.

Everyone is Different. So, What is Normal?

Jill 5'7"
128 lbs, 16 years
For as long as I can remember, I've been into martial arts, reading and basketball. Yogurt for a snack gives me energy to keep going. My favorite foods are pasta and stir-fry.

Taylor 5'8"
172 lbs, 16 years
Look for me in the weight room, on the football field, or waterboarding. I like to cook for my friends or with my dad. I'll eat just about any type of food, as long as it tastes good.

Timira 5'3"
139 lbs, 16 years
I don't like to exercise, but I love dancing and playing games outside with my friends. I also enjoy singing, writing, and art projects. For food, my picks are salads, fruits, crackers and beef jerky.

Tyler 5'0"
97 lbs, 13 years
I play lots of soccer and run track. Reading and playing the trumpet are other things I like to do for fun. I eat all the food! Cheeseburgers and spaghetti are my favorites.

Jose 5'6"
125 lbs, 16 years
Soccer is my sport. I also play basketball, ride my bike and hang out with friends when I'm not watching my little brother. My favorite food? My mom's tamales are the best.

Kaley 5'7"
190 lbs, 17 years
I play the saxophone, and like watching movies. For fun, I'll basketball and like riding. I like fresh vegetables and Asian foods, but I love chocolate ice cream!

Tanner 5'3"
104 lbs, 13 years
Bike riding and walking to my friends houses keep me moving most of the time. My favorite thing to do? Play video games! Chips and salsa are at the top of my favorite foods list.

And I use the word normal carefully. Because there are lots of ways to be normal, most people are normal. Even weird people are normal. But normative, settings norms for how we treat each other, figuring out guidelines so that we can all share space, share society, that's a larger social job.

The Canadian Library Association believes that a diverse and pluralistic society is central to our country's identity. Libraries have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that recognizes diversity and fosters social inclusion.

Libraries strive to deliver inclusive service. Canada's libraries recognize and energetically affirm the dignity of those they serve, regardless of heritage, education, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental capabilities, or income.

Libraries understand that an acceptance of differences can place individual and collective values in conflict. Libraries are committed to tolerance and understanding. Libraries act to ensure that people can enjoy services free from any attempt by others to impose values, customs or beliefs.

See also: [CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom](#)

266 910: CTV 21/06/2017 09:15:00

This is why libraries have so many policies! And the good news about this social justice stuff is that the guiding principles of our library organizations (RIP CLA) state right up front that this is what we are about.

This is the Code of Ethics (June 1976) but you knew that. Canada talks about dignity more than the US does, I like that.

5. It is recognized that Canadian public libraries have a special role to play in the provision of multicultural services to the residents of their communities. They have a unique role to play in not only meeting the needs of a diverse Canadian people, but also in promoting cross-cultural understanding in the interest of a harmonious and integrated society.

6. Libraries must not only be free of physical barriers, they must provide a welcoming environment: attractive listening and special-equipment areas, staff trained to be sensitive to patrons' needs, and access to the library's full range of services.

3. Library goals must state that all facilities and services shall be accessible to everyone. Where physical or other barriers exist, planning strategies must identify the steps required to remove them.

Here are a few more examples. Again I presume you know these things but it's never a bad idea to get a refresher. Quoting policy is useful and has tactical usefulness.

Library Service to Linguistic and Ethnic Minorities (June 1987)

Diversity and Inclusion (May 2008)

Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities (February 1997)

DIVERSE, SENSITIVITY, ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE, it's the law. Or, um, guideline.

HELP ORGANIZATIONS WHO HELP – SOME U.S. EXAMPLES

▶ Report hate (SPLC)

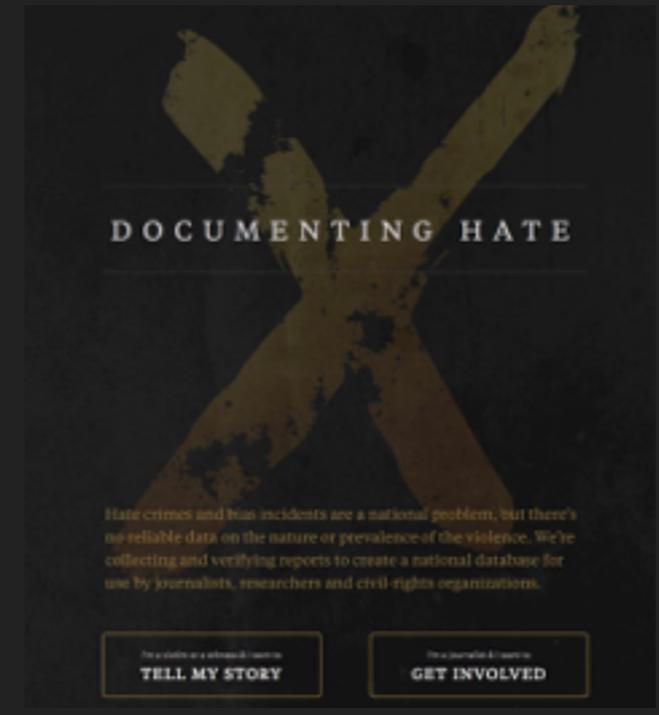


So I've got a few lists coming up here. Links are on the web site, for example things libraries can actually DO. First set is about knowing tools to help people with inclusion and diversity ... friction points. Problems. Know the resources which are out there. You don't have to build everything yourself. These are US examples but there are Canadian examples too.

SPLC - southern poverty law center

HELP ORGANIZATIONS WHO HELP – SOME U.S. EXAMPLES

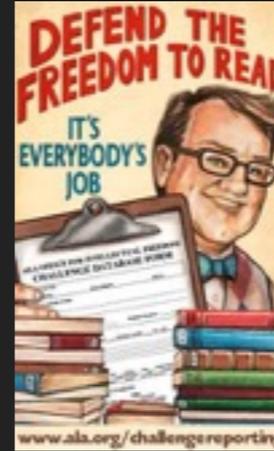
- ▶ Report hate (SPLC)
- ▶ Help people talk about hate crimes (ProPublica)



ProPublica is a non-profit journalism group who counts the things that others can't or won't. They have a website for reporting hate crimes.

HELP ORGANIZATIONS WHO HELP – SOME U.S. EXAMPLES

- ▶ Report hate (SPLC)
- ▶ Help people talk about hate crimes (ProPublica)
- ▶ Report censorship (ALA)



Within your libraries, report challenges to materials and programs. How do you guys do this here? Within your regional associations?

HELP ORGANIZATIONS WHO HELP – SOME U.S. EXAMPLES

- ▶ Report hate (SPLC)
- ▶ Help people talk about hate crimes (ProPublica)
- ▶ Report censorship (ALA)
- ▶ Report police misconduct (CATO)



And report on the people who are supposed to be helping but don't always help. The CATO institute is a libertarian think tank in the US who is tracking police misconduct and compiles a weekly report.

EFFECTIVELY REPRESENT THE WORLD, AND YOUR DREAM WORLD

- ▶ Create, support, and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

As I repeat over and over, representation matters. Look around at your workplace and see if it reflects the population you serve (there is a OLA talk about this) and ask yourself "why not?" if it doesn't



There are many reasons why this sort of thing is important but the biggest one is that diversity makes us smarter. This seems obvious, but isn't always. And when you're serving the entire public, it's important to know things like "No, you don't shake a woman's hand if she's Muslim" as well as more complex things like "Gee everyone using your software isn't going to have the same perfect vision and lack of shaky hands as you do when you're 30" (the average age of employees at Google, Facebook, Microsoft)

EFFECTIVELY REPRESENT THE WORLD, AND YOUR DREAM WORLD

- ▶ Create, support, and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- ▶ Understand when you are coming from a position of power and use that power graciously & for good.

We often don't feel like we are powerful, in libraries, but to the people who use our services, we are the ones in charge, the ones who can levy fines, give out computer time, track down an item, explain a confusing tech interaction. Every time we have a patron interaction that shows grace, that shows that we are human too, we help people feel included, that the library is theirs.



This is one of my favorite photos of the Obama administration. Seeing a person in a position of power saying they are like you (and showing you) has value.

"I want to know if my hair is just like yours," Jacob Philadelphia told Mr. Obama... "You can believe that any position is possible to achieve if you see a black person in it" said his dad

EFFECTIVELY REPRESENT THE WORLD, AND YOUR DREAM WORLD

- ▶ Create, support, and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- ▶ Understand when you are coming from a position of power and use that power graciously & for good.
- ▶ **If you have privilege, don't waste it.**

One of the most difficult parts of all of this is learning about privilege. And the way different kinds of privilege intersect. You may be privileged in one way and not on another. I'm White. I'm Jewish. I'm short. I'm female. Many people, especially people who haven't really spent a lot of time learning about social justice issues, may not be aware of the privilege they have and so they can't use their power for good because they don't feel that they have it (or worse, feel antagonized by others' accomplishments). Learn about what privilege is. Learn to talk to other people about it.

USE YOUR POWER TO AMPLIFY VOICES THAT NEED AMPLIFYING

- ▶ Report hate, block harassment
- ▶ Pay attention to who you follow
- ▶ Retweet strategically
- ▶ Give appropriate credit
- ▶ **Help others do the same**

This is just a list of social media stuff that is more of a reminder than anything else. Social media IS a tool and it COMES with tools to help people use it. And again, it reflects society. A lot of the "dominant" voices are white and male. Doing your part of social justice can mean trying to amplify voices that might not otherwise be heard.



Twitter has this WTF (who to follow) feature that I've always been curious about. it suggests people based on ... well it's not clear what it's based on. Who you follow? What you say? Who follows you? I always feel like I'm doing something right when I'm given people of color to follow and lately it has been all Sikhs. And think about it. Twitter could ACTIVELY be helping people find voices they might not otherwise find instead of telling me over and over "Oh hey you might want to follow Twitter's CEO"

THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

► Beware of unconscious biases

Skin-tone IAT	<i>Skin-tone</i> ('Light Skin - Dark Skin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize light and dark-skinned faces. It often reveals an automatic preference for light-skin relative to dark-skin.
Gender-Science IAT	<i>Gender - Science</i> . This IAT often reveals a relative link between liberal arts and females and between science and males.
Sexuality IAT	<i>Sexuality</i> ('Gay - Straight' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish words and symbols representing gay and straight people. It often reveals an automatic preference for straight relative to gay people.
Presidents IAT	<i>Presidents</i> ('Presidential Popularity' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize photos of Barack Obama and one or more previous presidents.
Native IAT	<i>Native American</i> ('Native - White American' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to recognize White and Native American faces in either classic or modern dress, and the names of places that are either American or Foreign in origin.
Weight IAT	<i>Weight</i> ('Fat - Thin' IAT). This IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of people who are obese and people who are thin. It often reveals an automatic preference for thin people relative to fat people.

And while we're talking about talking, let's really dig in to how we talk. There is science that shows that people hold a lot of unconscious biases. Stuff that you get from sort of society's background radiation. You can take a number of implicit bias tests to check yourself.

THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

- ▶ Beware of unconscious biases
- ▶ Understand microaggressions



Once you realize that these biases exist you can take efforts to not have them creep into your language. There's a lot of casual language people toss around without meaning to hurt but it has the effect of "othering"

THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

- ▶ Beware of unconscious biases
- ▶ Understand microaggressions
- ▶ Stay up-to-date on terminology



Being conscious about your language generally is a good thing to do and something I could do better at. I suggest this newsletter about conscious language (linked on the page) Now being mindful doesn't mean you need to make every language change someone says you should (you hear a LOT of blowback against the idea of "language policing") but that you should think about whether what you're saying is having the desired effect. Speaker intention and listener interaction don't always line up.

THE WORDS WE USE MATTER

- ▶ Beware of unconscious biases
- ▶ Understand microaggressions
- ▶ Stay up-to-date on terminology
- ▶ Know that you will make mistakes
- ▶ **Help others do the same**

Be forgiving to yourself when you make mistakes and help others learn at the same time.

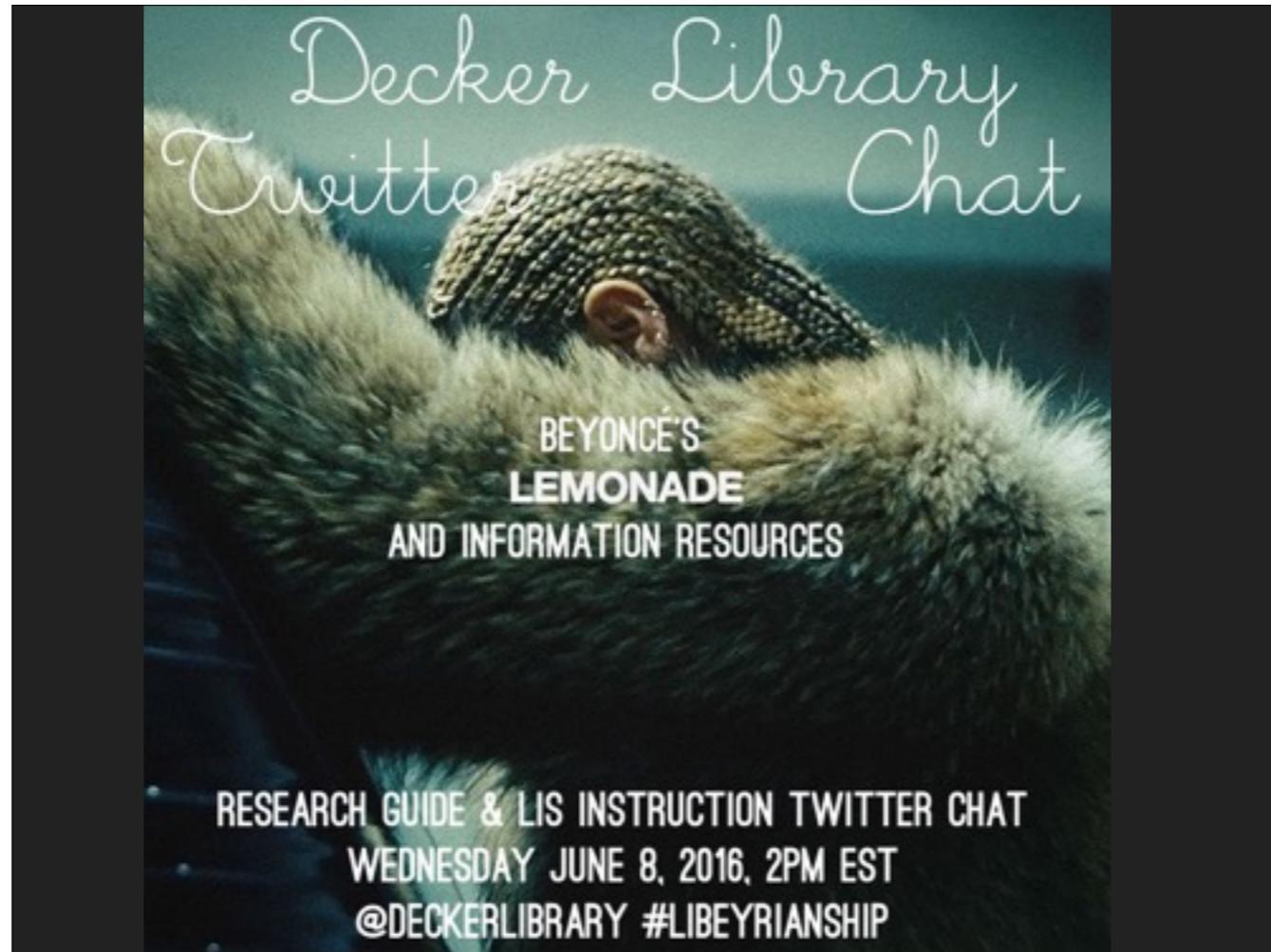
CREATE RESOURCES AND SURFACE HIDDEN INFORMATION

- ▶ Collate and annotate

But most importantly (and finally) USE THE SKILLS YOU HAVE. We don't have to become different sorts of people just because we're trying to be socially conscious. We just can turn that on to different projects. Highlight different voices.



This is an example I love. When Beyonce's lemonade came out (click) this librarian made this excellent LibGuide about the themes and lots of related stuff within it. Good stucc.



This is an example I love. When Beyonce's lemonade came out (click) this librarian made this excellent LibGuide about the themes and lots of related stuff within it. Good stucc.

#LibrariesResist Resource List

#LibrariesResist Resource List

Building a curated list of resources for libraries and library workers in the resistance. Because if Park Rangers can do it, so can we. Work in progress.

Shortlink: bit.ly/LibrariesResist

Twitter: [@LibrariesResist](https://twitter.com/LibrariesResist)

Facebook: [@LibrariesResist](https://facebook.com/LibrariesResist)

Contents:

[Introduction](#)

[Other Resource/Reading Lists, Syllabi, etc.](#)

[Calls to Action](#)

[Privacy, Surveillance, Security](#)

[Free Speech, Protests, Demonstrations](#)

[Fake News, Propaganda, Fact Checking, Media Literacy](#)

[Civil and Human Rights](#)

[Government Contacts and Petitions](#)

[Government Affairs and Advocacy](#)

[Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Libraries](#)

[Preserving Vulnerable Data](#)

[Archiving Resistance History](#)

More recently, like yesterday, there is this. Not only does this document have links to great information (primarily starting from a US perspective but not entirely) but it's a good outline of just what the topics are that need attention (this is not the whole page)

CREATE RESOURCES AND SURFACE HIDDEN INFORMATION

- ▶ Collate and annotate.
- ▶ Create resources and give them away.

The British Library Puts
1,000,000 Images into the
Public Domain, Making
Them Free to Reuse &
Remix

And we have the ability to give the things away that we make. Put free or Creative Commons licensing on things. Scan and share.



The Vermont Library Association went to VT ComicCon and had a table. We had a coloring area. We handed out coloring sheets that were made by another librarian I knew from facebook who had drawn these and just given them away freely (link on sheet) with female superheroes including female superheroes of color.

CREATE RESOURCES AND SURFACE HIDDEN INFORMATION

- ▶ Collate and annotate.
- ▶ Create resources and give them away.
- ▶ Create partnerships with other communities (online and offline) to strengthen each other.

And you don't have to do it all. Sometimes just lending your voice, your authoritative voice to others who are doing useful projects can go a long way.



#1Lib1Ref

1lib1ref.org
@wikilibrary

Wikipedia #1lib1ref

January 15 through February 3, 2017

*Imagine a World where Every Librarian
Added One More Reference to Wikipedia*

The **Wikipedia Library** is hosting the #1Lib1Ref campaign. The object is to get every librarian to add one reference or citation to a Wikipedia article.



jessamyn west
@jessamyn

Who was this black woman working
@librarycongress in the 40s? Jewell Mazique!
No Wikipedia article, so I wrote one.
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewell_Ma...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewell_Mazique)



Jewell Mazique

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

(Redirected from [Jewel Mazique](#))

Jewell R. Mazique (d. September 18, 2007) was an activist who helped found the Capital Transit campaign with [United Federal Workers](#) to integrate Washington D.C.'s bus operators.^{[1] [2]}

Mazique wrote extensively for *The Washington Afro-American* newspaper on topics such as the [United Nations](#) position on African Nations, and how black children were being educated in DC schools.^{[3]:99} She served on the National Council for the [Southern Negro Youth Congress](#) in 1945, a group claimed to be a Communist front organization.^[4]

She was the subject of a U.S. Government [Office Of War Information](#) documentary photo series in 1942 while she was a clerk at the [Library of Congress](#).^[5] The photos, taken by John Collier, were supposedly depicting a day in the life of a typical black Washingtonian but critics argued the photos were "less picturesque and less a credit to freedom's national seat" than a typical day of an average black woman in Washington D.C.^[6]

Jewell Mazique



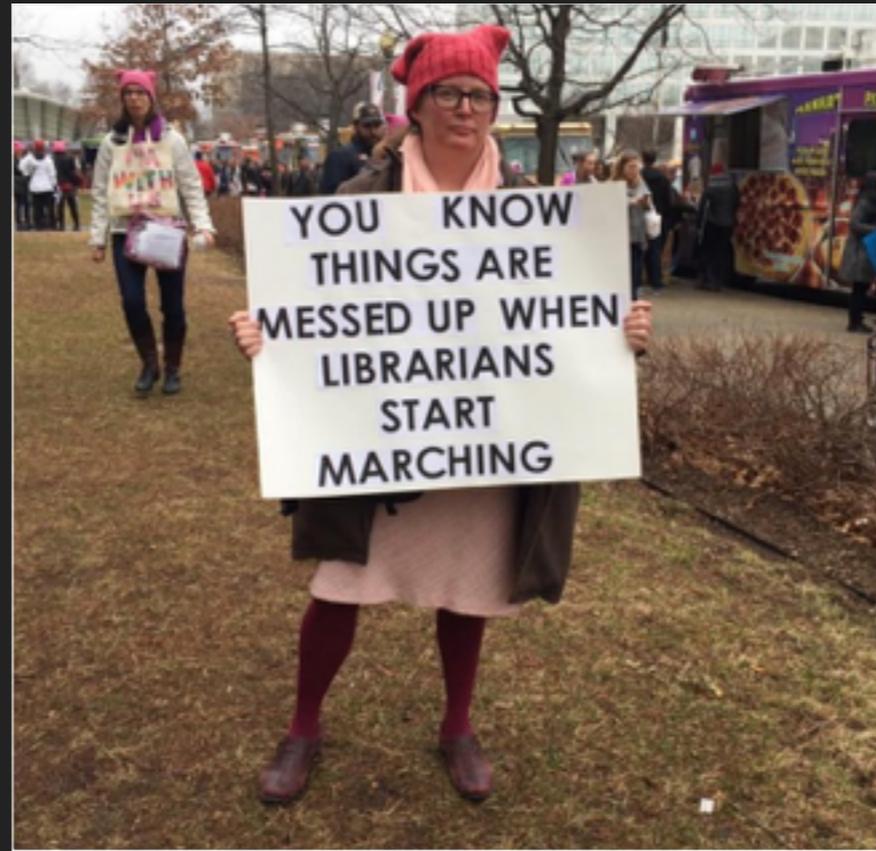
Jewell Mazique waiting for a streetcar on her way home from work.

Born	Jewell Crawford
Died	September 18, 2007 Washington D.C.

CREATE RESOURCES AND SURFACE HIDDEN INFORMATION

- ▶ Collate and annotate.
- ▶ Create resources and give them away.
- ▶ Create partnerships with other communities (online and offline) to strengthen each other.
- ▶ Don't forget to mention: **librarians did this**

But always at least mention, "hey we're the librarians" the good deeds you do promote the entire profession. And even though I think we're pretty cool, we can always use more help with the image thing.



2017

Because even though I look at these signs and say "What? But librarians have ALWAYS been out in front of social issues..." that;'s not how people see us so much. Which means we have more room to move, pushing the envelope, before we're maybe starting to get "out there" this is a good thing.



Because we know, that libraries have transformative properties but we can always use the PR



**LEARNING IS A
PLACE WHERE
PARADISE CAN BE
CREATED.**

This is another bell hooks quotation.



**THE LIBRARY IS
THE CLASSROOM
WHERE WE
LEARN TO BE
HUMAN.**

And this one is mine. The learning that people do at libraries is what helps them to be people.



HUMAN
CITIZENS
PARENTS
NEIGHBORS
COWORKERS
FRIENDS
PEOPLE

and being people together helps us be a better society.

Thank you!

[<librarian.net/talks/tpl17>](http://librarian.net/talks/tpl17)

JESSAMYN WEST

thanks very much for your kind attention.