Librarians and Technology: Things to Consider

Readers are interacting with digital formats via cell phones, computers, and digital readers. Schools have seen an increase in these different technologies due to the widespread availability of mobile computing devices. The constant pace of change does create opportunities and challenges for schools and libraries. Opportunities can be seen by the readers’ experiences with books via more interactive content.

Libraries are books. Technology is defining and creating a different notion of books. Librarians and teachers must consider the popularity of e-readers such as Kindle and iBooks for Apple devices. These new forms change the way students produce, access, and process information. Theories will change related to literacy, reading, and learning.

As librarians and teachers have a shared vision and collaborate related to literacy, reading, student learning, and technology, here are things to consider:

**Librarians are Tech Leaders**

Librarians do more than stock shelves with books. Helping teachers and students use technology to conduct research is what librarians are trained and able to do. Some teachers may need help to infuse technology into their curriculum. Librarians help usher in the technological changes that schools must address, along with the technology administrators. School libraries use ebooks, databases, social applications, planning tools, and multimedia. Librarians readily adopt these digital tools. See the 2013 *School Library Journal*’s School Technology Survey’s infographic for further data. 1
Impact of E-books on the Literacy Skills of Young Children

More research studies may be needed to learn what the impact of the various technology options is and what impact this will have on children’s literacy skills. A recent study has been published related to this question. The study stated the different digital tools used provided a positive result when keeping children’s attention to reading. The specific tools examined were iPad, iPod, and a tabletop touchscreen computer. Audio features on all three types may provide the same results as past language comprehension theories as related to listening skills acquired. 2

Technology Divide

The answer is yes and librarians and teachers must learn how to manage instruction for both the students with devices and those without. Most people assume everyone has a computer/laptop, cell phone, or digital reader. Educators and librarians know some students do not own these devices or know how to use them effectively. The challenge is to keep students engaged in learning when not having the resources. According to a recent article, only fifty-four percent of teachers say students have sufficient access to the digital tools they need to do assignments. 3

Children’s books: Print vs. E-books

E-books being purchased by readers have grown in popularity but data show that the majority of children’s books are bought as print copies. The buyers are still going to book stores to purchase. As e-books sales and readership have risen in recent years, discussions have assumed that e-
books would replace print copies. Studies do show e-books are part of people’s lives, due to convenience, but e-books are not yet positioned to replace print books. 4

The meaning of the word “book” has changed as digital formats have grown more available in recent years. While librarians and teachers love print books and worry about the change to e-formats, the fact remains this change is happening. Readers will use both print and e-books. Educators and librarians must be prepared to guide children with their book selections. In fact, according to many state standards, children need to experience all kinds of genres and formats and to have a variety of reading experiences. Teaching children how to make book selections of all types and formats is important.