



NEW TOOLS TO ENGAGE READERS AT SCHOOL

Teacher librarians are perfectly placed to be school leaders, demonstrating by example how digital technology can be harnessed to inspire a love of reading. By being vocal advocates of our own profession, regularly and constantly promoting the value of reading, and by promoting ourselves as experts who initiate programs that connect students with literature, teacher librarians are contributing significantly in guiding students in our schools to become literate, library loving adults.

Daring to be different and thinking outside the square offers teacher librarians the opportunity to share our passion for literature and reading and, in the process, create a buzz that is both captivating and electrifying.

As we explore the raft of new tools being used in classrooms, teacher librarians are also reflecting on past practices and traditional library programs to develop innovative ways to engage and excite students' interest in reading. One example is replacing the traditional book review or oral report with submitting reviews to the school library management system or the school library blog. Harnessing the power of peer to peer support, students can submit their book reviews to online forums such as Inside a Dog (www.insideadog.com.au/) or Spine Out (spineout.com.au). Their interest in reading can be excited by locating new titles on any one of the many online sources such as What Should I Read Next? (whatshouldireadnext.com) Which Book? (www.openingthebook.com/whichbook/),

Any New Books (anynewbooks.com) or, for something very different, The Literature Map (www.literature-map.com). For those students over the age of 13, participation in GoodReads (www.goodreads.com) opens new doors to the world of reading.

Our school students are true digital natives, engaging with the world in new, exciting and vibrant ways. This offers countless opportunities.

Bringing our advocacy skills, passion and lateral thinking to the mix enables teacher librarians to embrace digital technology to transform past methods and practices.

Today, for example, authors can be brought into our libraries in ways we could never have previously imagined. Face to face sessions can be set up via Skype or Twitter and students can connect and familiarise themselves with authors, their writing and their latest books via Facebook.

It's a great idea to visit and like the Facebook pages of organisations such as ALIA, Get Reading, Wheeler Centre, Love2Read, Centre for Youth Literature, State Library of Victoria, What a Difference a Library Makes, and *Good Reading Magazine* for a steady stream of inspiration about literature. These are valuable resources for developing school library programs.

Digital technology can also be embedded into other traditional library programs, such as book clubs, literature circles and literary festivals. The Global Read Aloud (bit.ly/1oaghML) is one exciting way to connect readers across the world. The Global Book Club (bit.ly/1oagnUw), on the other hand, is an example of how the traditional book club can be moved online.

Literary discussions, the focus of literature circles, can quite readily be moved online by having students post discussions on a blog created for each novel. Social media also enables literature circles to exist beyond the boundaries of one school, and it won't be long before a plethora of literary festivals are a real option for our students to attend via these channels. In Australia, the State Library of Queensland is leading the way by enabling students to attend an online literature festival (bwf.org.au/online-literature-festival).

With so many more inspirational digital technologies to explore, including tools like Jigsaw Planet (www.jigsawplanet.com), BookCrossing (www.bookcrossing.com) and QR Codes, not to mention the many ways in which books today are spilling out of their covers into online worlds such as Pottermore (www.pottermore.com) and 'fandoms', this is a very exciting time to be a teacher librarian charged with the responsibility of engaging readers.

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