

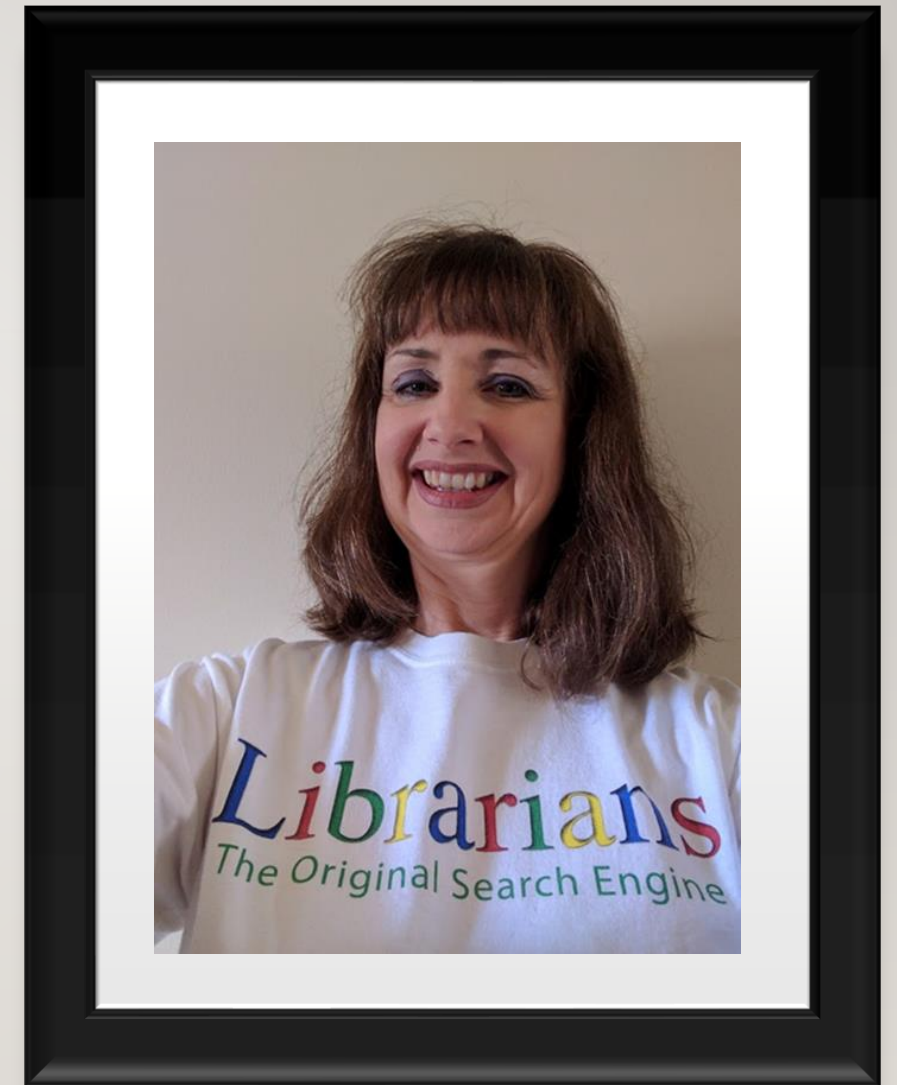
HOW (AND WHY) TO DO A SIMPLE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

SPEAKER: KATHY DEMPSEY OF LIBRARIES ARE ESSENTIAL
WEBINAR 1 OF 3 IN A MARKETING SERIES



HI, I'M KATHY DEMPSEY

Thanks for being here today!



WHAT IS AN "EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT"?

Merriam Webster defines an audit as

"a methodical examination and review."

Don't worry—this "methodical examination" will be more enlightening than frightening.

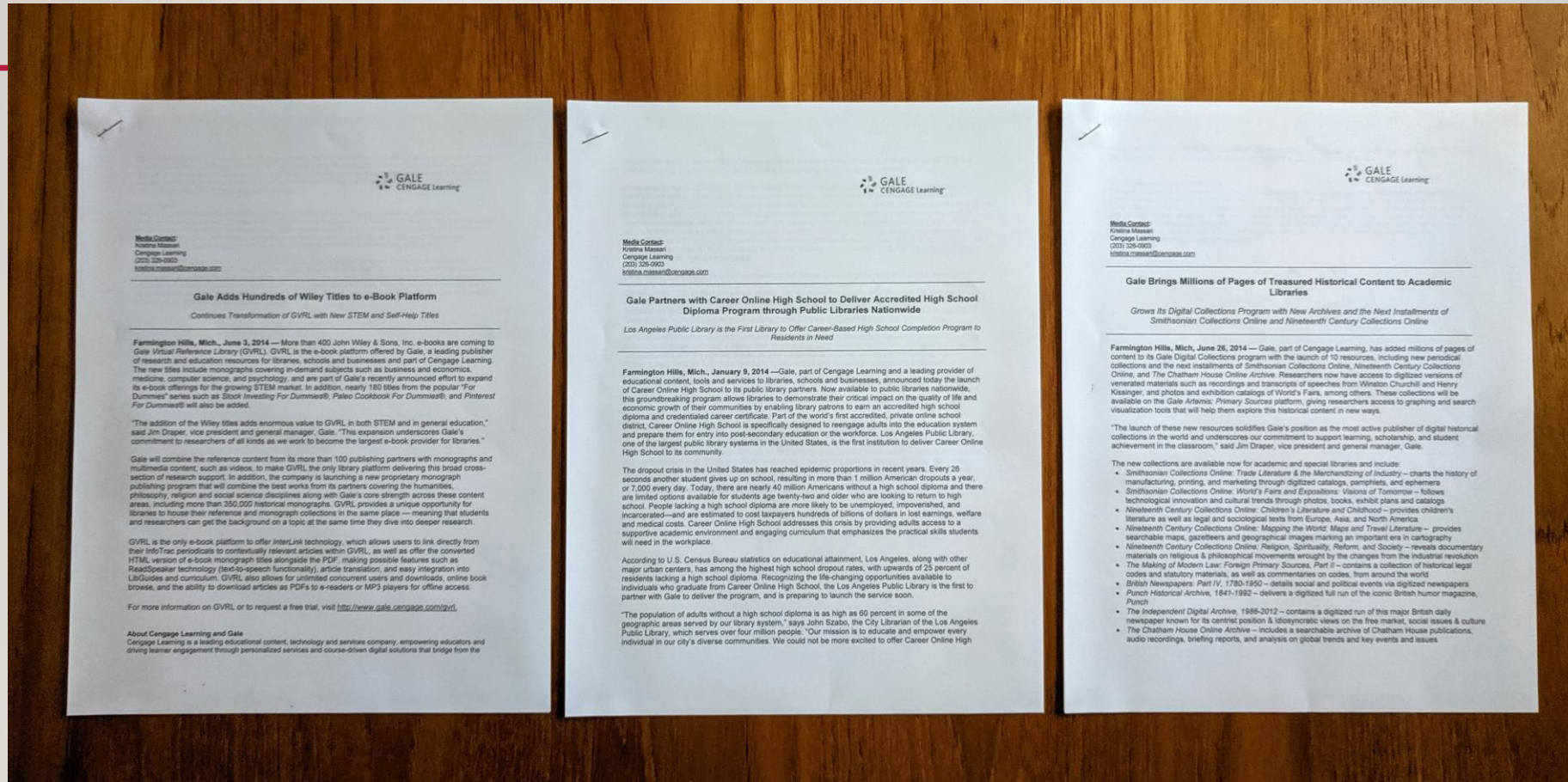


I. AUDITING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS' BRANDING AND CONSISTENCY



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-ND](#)

PLACE ITEMS SIDE BY SIDE TO EVALUATE DETAILS



PRINT MATERIALS TO LOOK AT

Takeaway Materials

- fliers
- rack cards
- brochures
- bookmarks
- event calendars
- promo giveaways

Business Materials

- letterhead
- business cards
- notices (holds, fines, etc.)
- invitations
- annual reports



PRINT MATERIALS TO LOOK AT

Publicity Materials

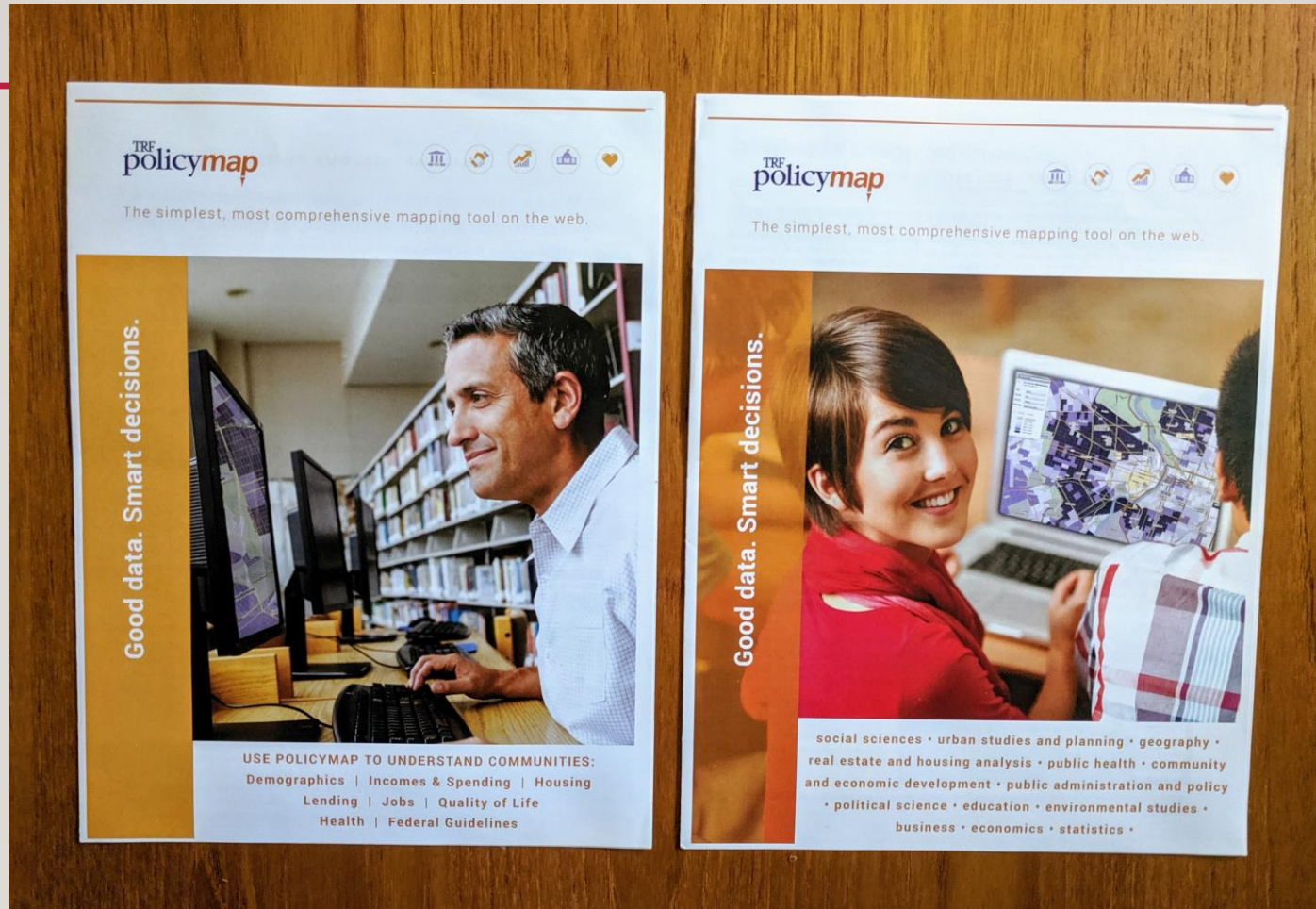
- press releases
- newsletters
- posters
- advertisements

Signage

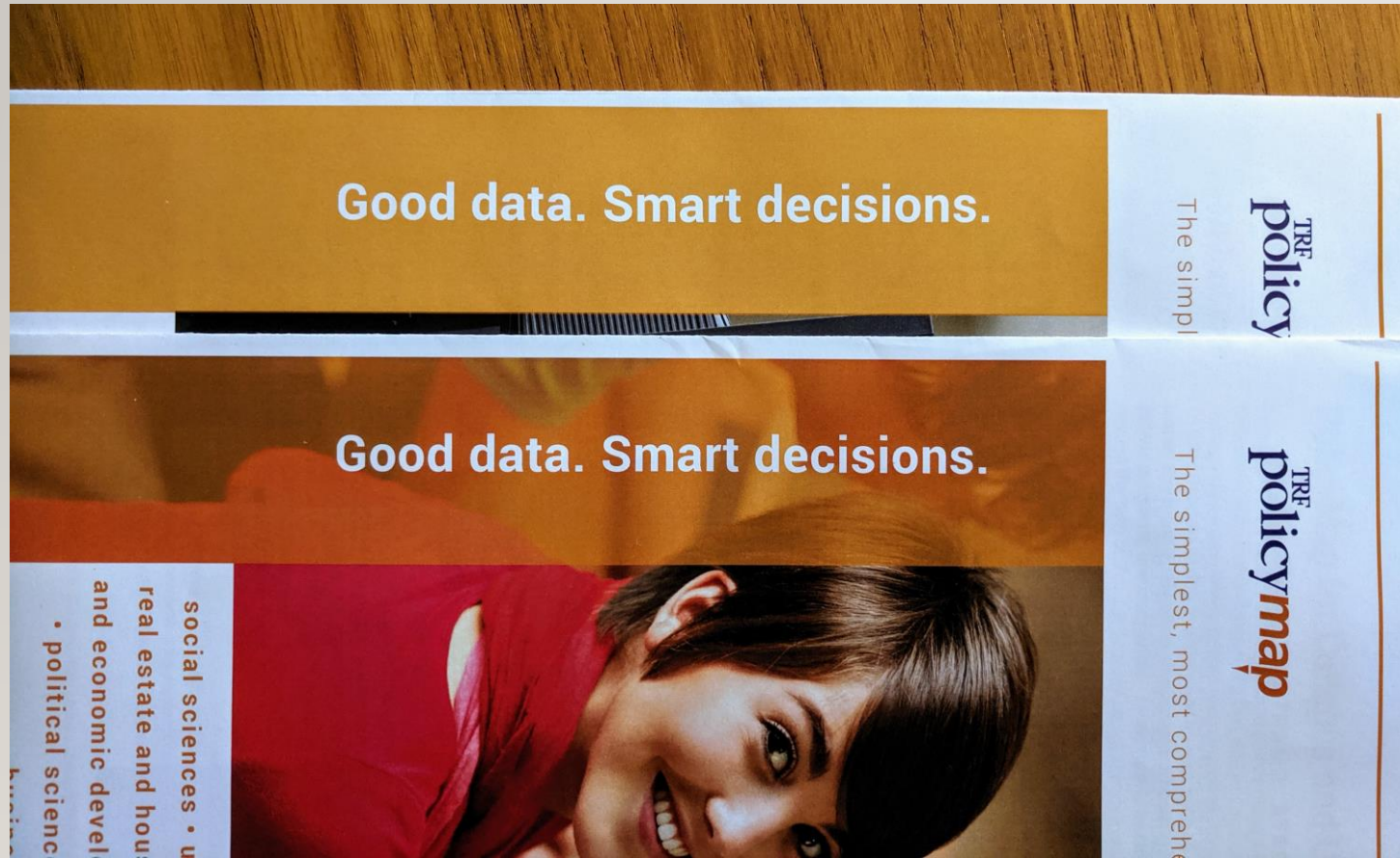
- outdoor
- wayfinding
- shelving / endcaps
- shelf talkers
- signs posted on doors



PLACE ITEMS SIDE BY SIDE TO EVALUATE DETAILS



PLACE ITEMS SIDE BY SIDE TO EVALUATE DETAILS



CHECKLIST FOR CONSISTENCY: PRINT ITEMS

- ✓ proper, complete library name
- ✓ date style
- ✓ fonts
- ✓ type sizes
- ✓ brand colors
- ✓ grammar / writing style
- ✓ name / logo / wordmark in same place
- ✓ URL style (with / without "www" etc.)
- ✓ hashtags
- ✓ tone of message (friendly vs. official, do's vs. don'ts)
- ✓ POV of message ("we invite you to renew" vs. "the library invites you" vs. "the staff invites you" vs. "Smith Library invites you")
- ✓ hierarchy of lists

ELECTRONIC MATERIALS TO LOOK AT

- email set-ups
- email blast set-ups
- web pages
- social media set-ups
- About Us sections
- contact info formatting

CHECKLIST FOR CONSISTENCY: EMAIL ITEMS

- ✓ fonts
- ✓ "from" line setup
- ✓ signatures: color or black, name & title, phone & email, branch, full address, logo, URL?
- ✓ signature links live or not?
- ✓ personal additions (pronouns, favorite quotes, taglines, etc.)
- ✓ email blast set-up

~Kathy Dempsey

[Libraries Are Essential consultancy.](#)

Advice and consulting on library marketing, programming, etc.
Medford, New Jersey, USA

Author of [The Accidental Library Marketer](#)

[Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [The 'M' Word blog](#)

Kathy [at] LibrariesAreEssential.com

CHECKLIST FOR CONSISTENCY: WEB PAGES

- ✓ brand colors
- ✓ fonts
- ✓ footers
- ✓ tagline
- ✓ grammar
- ✓ images: in boxes or not? resolution?
- ✓ links live?
- ✓ URL style (with/without "www" etc.)
- ✓ hashtags
- ✓ names of services (Ask Here vs. Reference vs. Help desk vs. Help Desk)
- ✓ names of sections / rooms in the building (Smith wing vs. Betty Smith wing)
- ✓ forms (contact us, send questions, etc.)
- ✓ lists (of staff members, locations, etc.)
- ✓ contact info (emails, addresses, phone #s, URLs, etc.)

CHECKLIST FOR CONSISTENCY: SOCIAL MEDIA

- ✓ proper, complete library name
- ✓ date style
- ✓ fonts
- ✓ type sizes
- ✓ brand colors
- ✓ grammar / writing style
- ✓ URL style (with / without "www" etc.)
- ✓ hashtags
- ✓ tone of message (friendly vs. official, do's vs. don'ts)
- ✓ POV of message ("we invite you to renew" vs. "the library invites you" vs. "the staff invites you" vs. "Smith Library invites you")
- ✓ contact info (emails, addresses, phone #s, URLs, etc.)



TIPS FOR STAYING CONSISTENT

- Create a Writing Style Guide.
- Create a Brand Guide.
- Create a folder of templates.
- Create a folder of sanctioned local photographs.
- Assign one or two people to be the official editors.
- Have all these resources officially sanctioned.
- Hold a few brief training sessions.



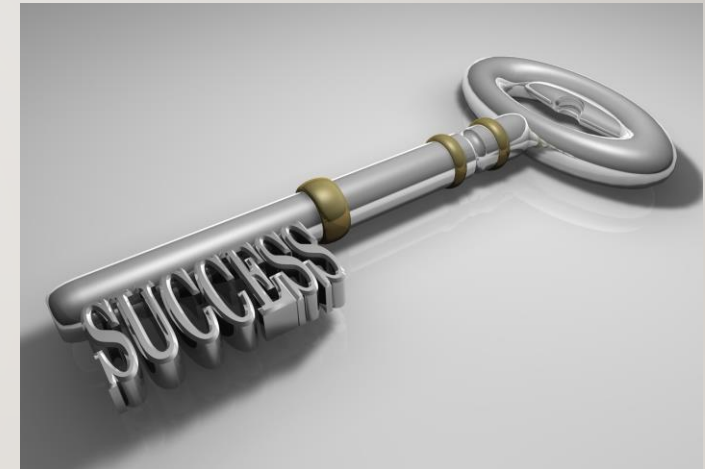
[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

QUESTIONS ON CONSISTENCY??



GENERAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Have an external proofreader or auditor who's not used to seeing the items.
- Keep your info up-to-date everywhere. (Having a responsive website helps.)
- Lingo must go!
- Make sure printouts look fresh, not dated.
- Everything should reflect your Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)

Do-It-Yourself Communications Audit

Complete this form for each of your communications channels (e.g. website, newsletter, press releases, Facebook, event marketing, etc.). You can include both qualitative and quantitative judgments (whatever works best for you). Getting input from others - especially your audiences - via surveys or focus groups will improve the usefulness of the audit. Then look at your communications as a whole, and answer these questions:

- Do our communications present a unified brand to our supporters across channels?
- Do our communications present consistent messages and calls to action to our supporters across channels?
- What needs to change in the short-term (next three months) and in the long-term (within a year)?

Channel or Tactic	Primary Audiences	Primary Uses	Frequency	Content Mix (Variety, User-Focused, Messages, Calls to Action, Etc.)	Writing Style and Tone (Voice, Personality, Approach, Etc.)	Writing Mechanics (Grammar, Length, Etc.)
	Microcontent (Headlines, Subject Lines, Links, Captions, Etc.)	Design (Layout, Colors, Typography, Etc.)	Visuals (Photos, Charts, Etc.)	Branding and Integration (Consistency, Connected, Etc.)	Ease of Use (for Readers and for Staff)	Other Considerations (Channel-specific, or What's Working and Not)

Sample of a chart to track a Communications Audit

From marketing consultant Kivi Leroux Miller

<https://www.slideshare.net/kivilm/diy-communications-audit-chart/>

2. AUDITING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS' EFFECTIVENESS



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-ND](#)

ASK THESE QUESTIONS OF MEMBERS OF YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- **Is it findable?**
- **Is it picked up / clicked on?**
- **Is it clear and easy to understand?**
- **Do people remember / discuss / repeat it?**

Remember that you cannot answer these yourself. Anyone involved with creating the promotion already understands what it's about. The point is to create messages and designs that will appeal to, and be understood by, members of the target audience.

However, staffers stationed near the promo items can share patron reactions.



DESIGN WITH THE AUDIENCE IN MIND



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

QUESTIONS ON EFFECTIVENESS? OR ON ANYTHING ELSE?



www.LibrariesAreEssential.com

KATHY DEMPSEY

Email: Kathy@LibrariesAreEssential.com

Facebook: Facebook.com/LibrariesAreEssential

Author: *The Accidental Library Marketer*
www.LibrariesAreEssential.com

Editor: *Marketing Library Services* newsletter
www.infotoday.com/MLS

Blogger: *The M Word: Marketing Libraries*
www.themwordblog.blogspot.com

