

**WVLS Post-Conference Report  
U-W Madison School of Library and Information Science  
Back in Circulation Virtual Conference 2020**

2020 has been a difficult year, but there have been a few interesting perks that have come along with the chaos. One of these is the ability to go to virtual conferences that may have been out of my reach in terms of time and money before. While the in person experience is superior, I have greatly enjoyed the online conferences as well. I appreciate the scholarship from WVLS that gave me the chance to attend U-W Madison's Back in Circulation Conference.

There were three sessions I particularly enjoyed. The first is Avoiding Part Time Pitfalls, presented by Ashley McHose, library services lead at the Lakeshore Technical College in Cleveland, WI. An important takeaway from the presentation was to not forget about providing education for part time workers.

The second presentation was How to be a Leader for Digital Inclusion in your Community, given by Heather Petro, circulation manager for Johnson County Public Library in Indiana. Much of the presentation centered on creating and circulating a collection of WiFi hotspots.

The third outstanding session was Customer Service for Underserved Populations presented by Tamara Jones, circulation supervisor of the Enoch Free Pratt Library in Baltimore, Maryland. She led us in a conversation about identifying an underserved population, effect of personal biases and environment and dealing with challenging behaviors.

Both the beginning and ending keynote sessions were really interesting as well. The keynote, given by Kristin Pekoll, of the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, shared information about censorship beyond books and shared her story of working in the midst of a drawn out challenge at the West Bend Community Memorial Library. The challenge began over a list of books on the library's website.

The closing keynote, given by WVLS's Jamie Matczak, was on having difficult conversations at work. Jamie gave us tips on preparing for and having difficult conversations with co-workers, supervisors and others. I liked her thoughts on preparing with a list of talking points and even practicing before the conversation.

It is hard to say what I might immediately implement as a result of the conference. We are currently stranded in unusual times but still hoping to return to something close to past normalcy. There are certainly more difficult conversations happening and so I will probably use some of Jamie's suggestions in the near future, but that is a personal rather than institutional implementation.

I am very much interested in the idea of starting a WiFi hotspot collection for check out. This is a big investment for the library so I can't say it would be implemented within a few months, but the first step towards implementation would be to research how libraries similar to Owen have set up their programs, how they've paid for the program, what policies they have in place and so on. I will definitely reach out to fellow directors and/or WVLS staff if I need any help.

Finally, the session on part-time employees reminded me that I need to make sure my assistant Katie gets the benefit of continuing education. Katie makes a big difference at our library and is worth investing in. I would really like for her to get some training in cataloging. Technology is her joy and her strength, so I will be watching for more workshops and classes on tech topics to sign her up for. I will be watching WVLS updates for some likely opportunities for Katie.

The conference was well worth attending. I think I may have been more likely to interact with other participants if I didn't have to sign up for a slack account to do so. I chose not to sign up because I doubt I would even use the account after the conference. After attending Tech Days, ARSL and Back in Circulation this fall, I feel well educated and ready to take on the library world again.

Submitted by Lorelee Petersen, Owen Public Library  
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