Hot Topic Handout

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Introduction

Libraries in and of themselves are sustainable beings—reused books, shared electronics—and they often strive to educate their communities on the necessity of environmental consciousness and the threat of climate change. In fact, many newer institutions power their buildings using solar panels or geothermal energy, and they have rooftop gardens to help their local pollinators. Libraries without large budgets perform other positive actions such as sectioned recycling, "green" programming like creating a piece of art out of recycled plastic bags, or even putting together displays on the environment and climate change. All of these efforts are wonderful and truly prove how libraries strive to take action in our climate crisis.

However, there are other ways in which libraries can fail in their greener missions. From the use of cheap, non-recylcable plastic and other materials in programming (like styrofoam!) to the deeper-set issue of where they source their collection materials from, how they dispose of their weeded content, and even the insane power usage that libraries eat—there are steps that libraries still need to take in order to truly embody a sustainable existence. This presentation will explore why being environmentally conscious is so important, some of the ways libraries need to improve, where they have excelled, and where they can go in the future.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the ways your local library is sustainable or not??
2. If you had full control over the reconstruction of a library, what would you do in order to try and make it more sustainable?
3. Do you believe libraries can be sustainable institutions?

- Mathiasson, M. H., & Jochumsen, H. (2022). Libraries, sustainability, and sustainable development: A review of the research literature. Journal of Documentation, 78(6), 1278–1304. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-11-2021-0226

 This article explores 102 research publications focusing on libraries and sustainability through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Its findings paint a picture of the general good. intent and productivity towards sustainable practices, with the hiccup of budgeting. This article is useful for its in-depth analysis, real-world examples, and realistic conclusions.

- Pun, R., & Shaffer, G. L. (Eds.). (2019). The sustainable library's cookbook. Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association.

This article is a fun exploration of ideas for how libraries can become sustainable. Primarily, it is a document geared towards the "where can they go in the future" question. From cultivating a pollinator-friendly indigenous garden to interesting ways to recycle or even re-use weeded materials to something as small as investing in re-usable cups for the break room, this article\ offers a lot of wonderful ideas.

- Tanner, R., Aldrich, R. S., Antonelli, M., & Ho, A. K. (2019). Libraries as sustainability leaders: ALA's special task force. Portal: Libraries and the Academy, 19(3), 365–374. https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2019.0020

 This article walks us through the ALA's 2018 task force for sustainability. Although it was a bit disappointing that one of the leading conclusions they came to was only for libraries to adopt a sustainability core value, which perhaps is a lot, but it doesn't feel that way. This article offers a lot of other valuable information about libraries and their relationships with sustainability.

- Tanner, R., Ho, A. K., Antonelli, M., & Aldrich, R. S. (Eds.) (2022). Libraries and sustainability: programs and practices for community impact. ALA Editions.

This article piggybacks off of the previous one a bit, as they both explore library sustainability. through the ALA, and they are by the same authors. However, this article provides information.

on a broader scale and does not focus only on the ALA task force. Instead, it explores what libraries all over the country are already doing in order to meet their sustainability goals.

- Fedorowicz-Kruszewska, M. (2021). Green libraries and green librarianship: Towards conceptualization. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 53(4), 645–654. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000621992581

 This article goes deep into the reality of ''green libraries'' and whether or not they are simply a pop-culture phenomenon or an actual move towards a more sustainable existence. Particularly, it is delving into the actual roles of a "green librarian" and what those positions look like, along with examples and further ideas. This article is useful for determining the reality of sustainability. in libraries using real-world examples.

- Charney, M., Harri Sahavirta, & Hauke, P. (2018). Going green: implementing sustainable strategies in libraries around the world: buildings, management, programs, and services. De Gruyter Saur.

 This book explores different ways in which libraries can reduce their ecological footprint while also delving into how libraries can help educate their community members on the environment and, subsequently, climate change. It offers case studies from Sweden, Kenya, Germany, Ukraine, China, and Serbia to help highlight challenges and opportunities in implementing sustainable approaches in public libraries. This book will be helpful in understanding the ways in which libraries in other countries have gone about "going green," while also studying how those may translate to libraries in the U.S.

- Mwanzu, A., Bosire-Ogechi, E., & Odero, D. (2022). The Emergence of Green Libraries in Kenya: Insights from Academic Libraries. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 102601. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102601

This article is an interesting exploration of libraries in Kenya that are considered to have gone partially or fully "green." It interviews the head librarians of these institutions and explores how they did it. This article is a great way to see examples of how other libraries managed to zero their ecological footprint (or have it be very close to zero) even if they are from another country. Moreover, it is interesting to see the similarities and differences between the objectives in Kenya and the U.S.

- Fedorowicz-Kruszewska, M. (2023). Green libraries: barriers to concept development. *Library Management*, *0143-5124*. Emerald Insight. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/LM-04-2022-0041/full/html

This article explains the slow implementation of library environmental consciousness in LIS education, research, and literature and some of the reasons this process may be inching forward. It delves into some of the barriers: the ambiguous definition of a "green" library, a lack of guidelines, a lack of evaluation criteria, and a lack of well-developed tools to help libraries implement changes, amongst others. This article is an important read if one was curious as to the glacial movement of environmental studies in LIS, as well as the reality of barriers in the process.

- Demirtas Dogan, H., & Gurpinar, B. (2023). Green Libraries and the User's Perspective: A Case Study in Turkey. *SAGE Open*, *13*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231211432

This article explores a case study centered on two university libraries in Turkey, Kocaeli and Istanbul. Particularly, this article focuses on the students' awareness of the environmental actions their libraries take, whether they know about them, and if they even care. The article found that the lowest level of effort put into making the libraries green was actually education, if you can believe it. While working towards lowering their footprints, they actually put educating their students on environmental issues to the side.This interesting conclusion offers another look at real-world examples of what can go well and what can go wrong as libraries try to turn green.

- Fadhil Sulaiman, M., & Laksmi, L. (2024). The social sustainability improvement strategy for supporting the green library concept at Taman Ismail Marzuki Library *Library Management*, *0143-5124*. Emerald Insight. https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/LM-07-2023-0064/full/html

This article delves into the community engagement and social equality aspects of "green" libraries. Specifically, the study aims to describe and examine the strategy used by the Taman Ismail Marzuki Library to increase its social sustainability capabilities. This article gives an interesting look into how "green" libraries go further than just using solar panels but must also consider community engagement and social equality and how those intertwine with environmental sustainability. While somewhat lacking in meat and length, it is nonetheless an interesting exploration.