

UNBUSYING THE BUSY



Librarians collaborating “in the cloud” for professional development

2017 HLA/HASL Joint Conference
Sustainability: More than the Environment
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UNBUSYING THE BUSY

- ▶ Agenda

- ▶ *The Librarians' Inquiry Forum (LINQ)*

- ▶ pilot study

- ▶ research question, goals

- ▶ inquiry-based design

- ▶ LINQ+HSPLS

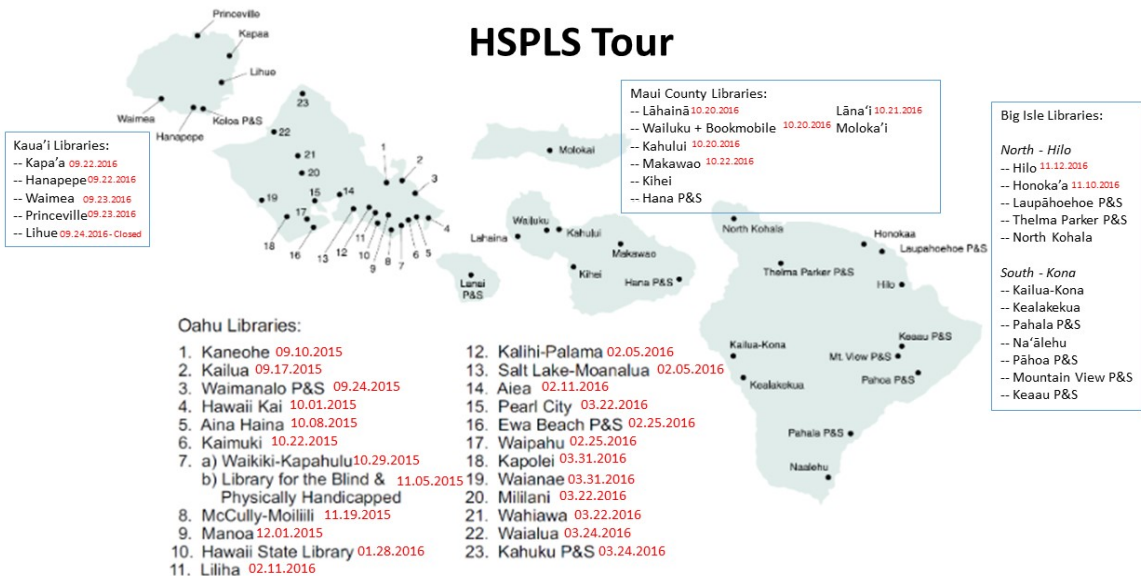
- ▶ Data

- ▶ Outcomes

- ▶ Implications

- ▶ Discussion / Q&A: “Unbusyng the Busy”

LINQ Pilot Study: Sep 2015 – Nov 2016



Public Librarians are BUSY

- Administrative duties
 - “a lot of daily email”
 - “attend many meetings”
 - “deal with outside agencies”
 - interpreting and applying institutional policy
- Collection development
 - Ordering materials
- Staff concerns
 - “almost all day at the reference desk”
- Programming
- Facilities issues
- Security problems



“People get to the point where they don't even remember what they know.” – LINQ+HSPLS Librarian, “Yasmin”, 4 November 2016.

90% Library paperwork
90% Professional deadlines
80% Patron needs
10% Personal reading

Public Librarians are CONCERNED

- Identity/Agency
 - “not being able to evolve”
 - “it’s hard to keep up with change”
 - “feel professionally lonely at times”
- Geography
 - “we are separated by the ocean”
 - “we are all paddling our own canoes”
 - “we are isolated beacons”
 - “there’s not enough interaction between us”
- Busy
 - “so busy and so understaffed”
 - “being so busy to not have time to look for opportunities”
 - “I want to [use social media to] learn what other public librarians are doing, but I’m so busy that I don’t have time to look.”
 - “I don’t have time to implement ideas I learned at conferences.”



*“How can I engage
in professional
development despite
feeling too busy
to do so?”*

*– LINQ+HSPLS Librarian,
“Adele,” 10.20.2017.*

How do I “unbusy the busy”?



“It’s great that patrons feel okay to approach me at the desk, but it’s not too conducive for deep thought, or sometimes any thought ... to do reflective work. The way our positions are laid out, there’s a perception that [reflective praxis] takes away from our real work. But if we can consider reflective time and activity as “real work”, that will allow us to bring more to the services we give the public.”

*– LINQ+HSPLS Librarian, “Olivia,”
10.26.2016.*

LINQ: The Librarian's Inquiry Forum



- ask **questions** from practice
inquiry
- use practice to inform **colleagues**
research
- **interface** with group for feedback
social learning network
- gather data from group resources
collective knowledge
- reflect & implement "better" praxis
inquiry
- communal professional self-care
sustainability

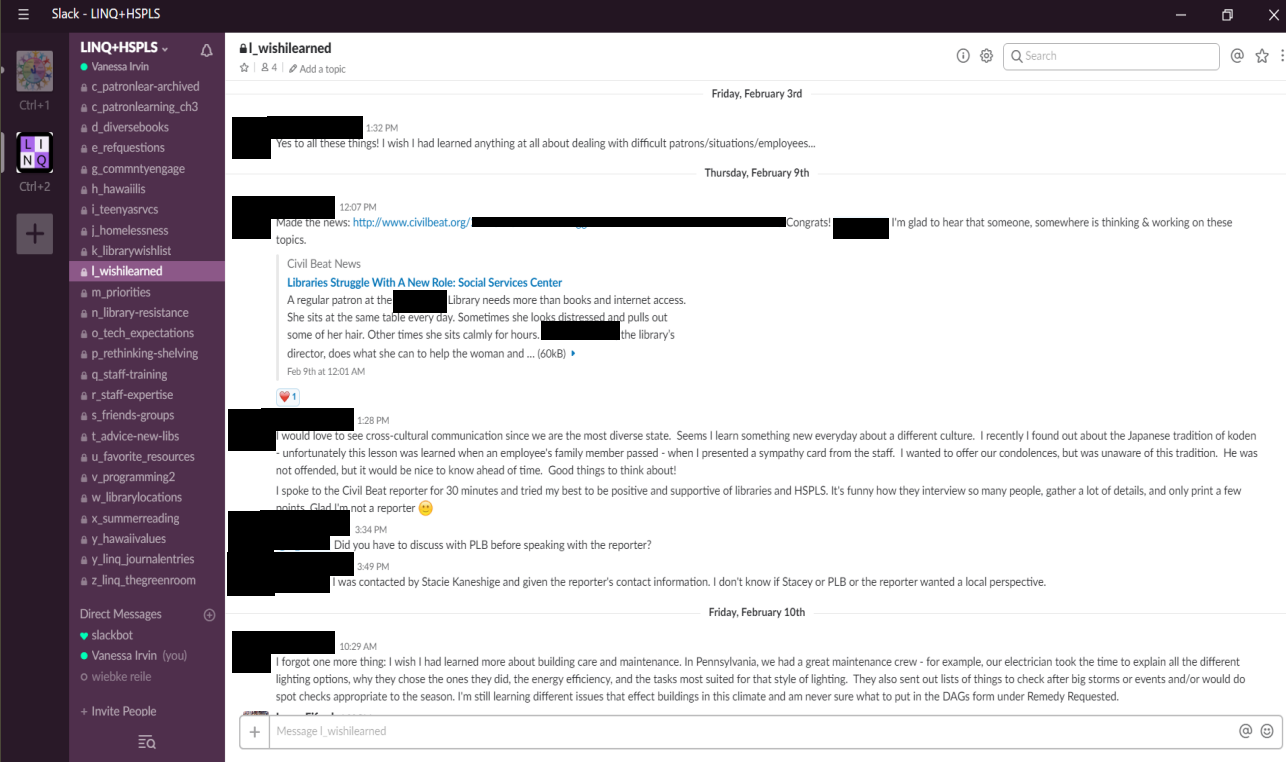
Professional Practice IS Research

The Librarians' Inquiry Forum (LINQ)



- **Librarian community-of-practice**
 - HSPLS Branch Managers (n=15)
 - October 2016 – July 2017
- **Online at work (and beyond)**
 - *Slack*: cloud-based collaboration platform
 - Online, private, at work, in real time
 - Inquiry Question/Topics as “Channels”
 - Accessible across devices, 24/7
- **Practitioner inquiry approach**
 - Critical questioning-based approach to study own professional practice
 - Negotiating roles of inquiry
 - Communal ↔ Collaborative
 - Reflective ↔ Responsive

linq+hspls topics/channels



Question: Do you feel that Slack provided a sustainable way to collaborate, share, and/or learn from fellow librarians?

58% said, "Yes."

"The sharing was awesome."

"I do feel that [Slack] was a good way to collaborate, share and learn from other librarians."

– LINQ+HSPLS Librarians,
Exit survey,
30 June 2017.

linq+hspls topics/channels



LINQ+Team Generated

- #bigidea
- #programming1
- #patronlearning
- #diversebooks
- #refquestions
- #HLA2016
- #cmtyengmnt
- #teenyasvcs
- #homelessness
- #librarylocations
- #summerreading
- #hawaiivalues
- #journalentries
- #busybusy

LINQ+HSPLS Generated

- @librarywishlist
- @wishilearned
- @priorities
- @library-resistance
- @tech_expectations
- @rethinking-shelving
- @staff-training
- @staff-expertise
- @friends-groups
- @collectiondev
- @advice-new-libs
- @favorite_resources
- @programming2

“I found the process very useful for generating new ideas and brainstorming about long-term issues, as well as providing perspective, since it is hard to find out what is going on at other branches.

... I appreciated the chance to step back and think about librarianship.”

– LINQ+HSPLS Librarian, “Dina,”
exit survey,
27 July 2017.

ling+hspls:
#data

Ctrl+1

Ctrl+2

Channels

- # a_bigidea
- aa_friendsgroups
- ab_collectiondev
- ac_busybusy**
- b_programming_ch2
- c_patronlear-archived
- c_patronlearning_ch3
- d_diversebooks
- e_refquestions
- g_commntyengage
- h_hawaiiis
- i_teenyasrvcs
- j_homelessness
- k_librarywishlist
- l_wishilearned
- m_priorities
- n_library-resistance
- o_tech_expectations
- p_rethinking-shelving
- q_staff-training
- r_staff-expertise
- s_friends-groups
- t_advice-new-libs
- u_favorite_resources
- v_programming2
- w_librarylocations

🔍

ac_busybusy

You created this private channel on June 21st. This is the very beginning of the ac_busybusy have a question that's emerging from the data we're all sharing in this group. QUESTION: In what does it mean to be "too busy" for professional development and networking? (edit)

+ Add an app Invite others to this private channel

Wednesday, June 21st

Vanessa Irvin 9:49 AM
joined ac_busybusy along with 16 others.

Vanessa Irvin 9:52 AM
uploaded and commented on this image: [Busy Busy](#)



Hi everyone; I have a question that's emerging from the data we're all sharing in this group. QUESTION: In what does it mean to be "too busy"?

Thursday, June 22nd

[Redacted] 12:52 PM
Some days 2-3 people will ask me questions while I am working on answers to the people who have asked the original one, and start working on the next, but I get more questions before I complete any of the previous ones. At once, that's "too busy." Other days, I would prefer to have uninterrupted time to work on deeper issues but get interrupted by valid and urgent issues (like security concerns). Then, at times, it is very quiet in the library, but it is tricky to predict.



+ Message ac_busybusy

Outcomes: linq+hspls channels

#bigidea

- Dina: "Regarding the compilation of training materials, we are all so busy and this project is probably back-burnered (sic) a lot, but I am in the process of trying to do it here just so I can do my job properly."

#librarylocations

- Dina: who went to fill in for an understaffed neighboring library for a while: "Even though it has been quiet at this library, I had so much [home branch] work to do that I have been super busy."

#priorities

- Ariel: "I have only been here 11 months but it seems to be busy all the time."

#programming

- Jill: "Our storytime numbers at Punchbowl fluctuates a lot, and sometimes it's really hard to guess if it will be a busy or slow day."



Outcomes: ling+hspls channels

#busybusy

- Adele: "I feel too busy when I am alone in the building, like when my co-worker is on his hour-long meal break and there are visitors applying for library cards while others need assistance with the computer or checking out."
- Olivia: "I feel busy with administrative details, like submitting paperwork for facilities maintenance, personnel, reports, etc."
 - "When several events (library programs, class visits, etc.) are scheduled in the same week, I feel too busy because I have to prepare for and then engage with groups of people (which often drains my energy)."
- John (who went to fill in for an understaffed neighboring library for a few weeks): "Even though it has been quiet at this library, I had so much [home branch] work to do that I have been super busy."



Outcomes: ling+hspls channels

➤ #journalentries

- Adele: Is anyone else journaling about their job?
- Bev: Honestly, the BM [branch managers] have been really busy.
- Olivia: "Some days 2-3 people will ask me questions while I am working on answers to the people who have just asked questions. Then I'll answer the original one, and start working on the next, but I get more questions before I complete any of the pending queries. When it gets to be 4-5 questions at once, that's "too busy." Other days, I would prefer to have uninterrupted time to work on deeper decisions- like hiring or personnel decisions, but get interrupted by valid and urgent issues (like security concerns)."



Outcomes: ling+hspls Librarian journals

Journal entries (print):

- Maggie: "I can almost guarantee that if I open my email, which I know I will do first, all thoughts of the forum will leave me. There are (sic) always things to tend to. And in general, for the rest of the day, my attention will be taken up by various priorities and other issues which always pop up."
- Bonnie: "I probably should have been on LINQ more often, but it's hard to remember to go on when things are pretty busy."



Outcomes: linq+hspls exit surveys

Exit surveys

- Star: I think I'm so busy with day-to-day work it's hard to prioritize a group forum. The sharing was awesome but it was difficult to find time to sit down and participate.
- Wanda: Somehow, I just find that dealing with the day-to-day happenings that come up occupies most of my time. The remainder is spent on the more long-term things which I try to squeeze in, in order to meet the deadlines.
- John: We've been understaffed for quite some time.
- Olivia: Staff shortage (even with the help of substitutes), results in librarians needing to cover Janitorial and Circulation duties daily or weekly.
- Bonnie: If you are going to participate in LINQ (like I agreed to do) but then find yourself with commitments that became too much (like I did-SRP, Projects and Project reports, year end spending, etc.) at what point can you jump in and out of a conversation stream and not feel like an interloper?



Implications




Lingering Questions

- Is “busy” synonymous with “work” therefore “I am”?
- Is “busy” a way of feeling relevant in librarianship?
- Is it “busy” to take a few moments - to connect?
 - to ask?
 - to learn?
- Is “busy” a synonym for resistance to growth? resistance to change?

Discussion: “unbusy the busy”

bus·y

/ˈbɪzē/ 

adjective

1. having a great deal to do.

"he had been too busy to enjoy himself"

synonyms: [occupied](#), [engaged](#), [involved](#), employed, [working](#), hard at work; rushed off one's feet, [hard-pressed](#), swamped, up to one's neck; on the job, [absorbed](#), [engrossed](#), immersed, preoccupied; *informal* (as) busy as a bee, on the go, hard at it
"the campaign volunteers have been busy"

verb

1. keep occupied.

"she **busied herself with** her new home"

synonyms: [occupy](#), [involve](#), [engage](#), [concern](#), [absorb](#), [engross](#), [immerse](#), [preoccupy](#); [distract](#), [divert](#)
"he busied himself with paperwork"

Translate busy to

No Hawaiian translation found.

Q&A





MAHALO!

If interested in reference list,
or further information, contact:

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