3 TECH-SAVVY WAYS LAW LIBRARIANS CAN SHAKE UP THE STATUS QUO

How law librarians can use technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness in their day-to-day responsibilities.

BY ELLYSSA KROSKI

Today's new technology enables librarians to stay organized, plan intriguing events, and even develop their own applications without any specialized knowledge or previous technology experience. By taking advantage of everything that web-based software and apps have to offer, tech-savvy librarians can *wow* colleagues while increasing their efficiency and effectiveness in their day-to-day work lives. Below are three ways that librarians can become cutting-edge and shake up the status quo.

1. Gather Your Thoughts

There are many free apps available to help you organize your thoughts, brainstorm effectively, and communicate your ideas with others. Lucidchart is an online diagramming application that allows you to create flowcharts, organizational charts, process maps, network diagrams, and more, using templates. Its templates and diagramming tools are excellent for designing large events, creating a website directory of all pages, or visualizing a workflow.

Both Coggle and MindMeister offer free accounts for creating detailed mind maps that will let you express an idea from start to finish, and they can even be used collaboratively. Mind maps are especially useful in project meetings to record all shared ideas and tangential discussions for later analysis.

PBworks is an online and easy-to-use wiki software program that allows users to set up both public and private wiki spaces for free. These can be used for personal brainstorming and to keep track of your ideas, or as a group workspace or DIY (do it yourself) intranet for the library staff. We use one at The New York Law Institute (NYLI) as our staff intranet, I've taught classes and workshops using them, and I use one daily to record useful URLs, book and article concepts, and even vacation days used.

Storyboard That is a marvelous, free application that allows you to easily drag and drop background settings, characters, shapes, and more into a storyboard that can be used for planning, instruction, or communication of ideas. Use these storyboards to plan videos as visual aids for instructional screencasts, or even to plan events.

Furthermore, to organize your thoughts, why not automate some of your personal tasks using the IFTTT (If This Then That) app? This app allows you to get uber-organized by setting up applets (absolutely no programming knowledge necessary!) that

tell the computer "if this happens, then do that." For example, you can automatically retweet any tweets based on a Twitter search for "law firm libraries" by turning on an applet, or automatically log and track all of your work hours in a Google Calendar based on your cell phone's GPS location. You can automatically archive all of your tweets to a Google spreadsheet or save all tweets on a specific subject area to a spreadsheet, and much more. There are 100,000 of these processes already set up for you to choose from, plus they are all free.

2. Host a Cutting-Edge Event
Not everything needs to be 100 percent serious with regard to the library. Why not mix it up a little and host an unorthodox event based on new technology or a fun new trend to engage patrons? The New York Law Institute used the free Aurasma application to set up and host an augmented-reality rare books exhibit, which was a big hit with members. The Institute welcomed members to an array of our special collection holdings, such as General George Washington's copy of

Storyboard That can be used for planning, instruction, or communication of ideas using characters, shapes, and more.

Augmented reality layers appear over rare books using the Aurasma app.

bibliographic records into their own catalogs, essentially adding an instant 160,000 ebooks to their collection with the flip of a switch. The app/module is free and available to any of our members.

The Future of Technology

What's the best way to stay on top of technology news and ensure you find out about new apps that might make your life easier? Keep an eye on blogs such as TechCrunch, Mashable, and Gizmodo, as well as the Tech sections of HuffPost, Business Insider, and American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) daily newsletter KnowItAALL, and follow the hashtags #technology and #tech on Twitter. You could also join the AALL Computing Services Special Interest Section to stay up-to-date on the latest technology for law libraries. Before you know it, you'll be shaking up the status quo at your own library. ■

AALL2go EXTRA
Watch the 2017 AALL Annual Meeting program "The Law Library as Technology Laboratory," at bit.ly/AM17Techlab.

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Ellyssa Kroski is the director of information technology at the New York Law Institute, as well as an award-winning editor and author of 36 books, including *Law Librarianship in the Digital Age,* for which she won AALL's 2014 Joseph L. Andrews Legal Literature Award. Her 10-book technology series, *The Tech Set,* won ALA's Best Book in Library Literature Award in 2011. She is a librarian, an adjunct faculty member at Drexel and San Jose State University, and an international conference speaker. She has just been named the winner of the 2017 Library Hi Tech Award from ALA/LITA for her long-term contributions in the area of library and information science technology and its application.

Corbin's *Le Code Louis XIII, The Law Register* of Alexander Hamilton, John Jay's copy of *The Present Practice of the High Court of Chancery*, and more. As visitors held their devices over these rare treasures, images, text, and videos appeared explaining each in more detail. After seeing just one of these augmented reality layers come to life, visitors couldn't wait to see more. We found that this was a very engaging way to get our members involved with our collections through a traditional library exhibit married with cutting-edge technology.

The Institute also hosted a Library "Peeps" contest and luncheon this past year where members cleverly placed Peeps candy into judicial scenes with entertaining captions. In spring 2018, we planned and designed an Alexander Hamilton-themed Escape Room, which involved solving riddles and puzzles related to the Founding Father in order to solve the room.

Other ideas for events might include creating a virtual tour of the library using a 360-degree camera, or you could take patrons on a virtual tour of the space using Google Cardboard virtual reality viewers. The sky's (not) the limit with today's new technology!

3. Build Your Own Apps

Want to create your own app? By using services such as AppyPie or AppMakr, you can create a mobile website or a native Android or iOS app to provide patrons with reference tips and library resources. Choose your theme, add pages, photos, videos, and social media to your app by dragging and dropping elements and following a series of helpful wizards.

You can also modify an already existing and trusted application; the folks at Law Library Management have tweaked the Intuit QuickBase platform into a complete library management system called HOLMES, which they make available to libraries along with their library-specific project management application, PM4Libraries, which provides timelines, task management, and robust reporting capabilities. At NYLI, we worked with the EOSWeb platform to create our Seamless Catalog, which is a one-way union catalog that enables libraries to integrate all of our

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QUICK LINKS
Useful Apps
- Coggle
bit.ly/JA18Coggle
- IFTTT (If This Then That)
bit.ly/JA18IFTTT
  - Lucidchart
bit.ly/JA18Lucid
  - MindMeister
bit.ly/JA18Mind
  - PBWorks
bit.ly/JA18PBworks
- Storyboard That
bit.ly/JA18Story