SCHOOL LIBRARIES SHARE
INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Oliver V5

CONNECT

DATA

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Introduction

School libraries play an essential role in school-wide success.

The school library is more than a book repository and the professionals that run them do far more than catalogue books.

Library staff provide a welcoming space that engages students. They support learning, teach literacy, digital literacy and research skills, are information specialists, support the entire school and more. ALA, in collaboration with AASL and LMC, have produced a poster, 100 things kids will miss If they don't have a School Librarian in their school, which demonstrates the importance of the school librarian.

School Librarians are also innovators. They often lead the charge in introducing new technology to students, stay informed about current trends, come up with creative ideas to support learning and encourage reading, and find creative ways to stretch their budget further.

In the 2016 Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey respondents were encouraged to share innovative practices they had implemented in their school library.

It was inspiring to read the fantastic ideas that were shared and we are excited to be able to present some of these in this paper.

We hope you enjoy reading through the responses as much as we did.

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Innovative ideas

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Softlink is proud to support school libraries through the annual school library survey, conducted in Australia and New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The survey provides findings on school library funding, staffing, evolving roles, delivery of of digital resources and visions for the future.

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95%

of respondents said that provision of a learning centre and space is an important or very important service that the library provides*

Ideas for the library space

The library space is being reimagined. Librarians are finding creative ways to open their library up, promote the library and the books they have available, and provide an inviting and exciting place for students to visit.

'I built a book nook using a greenhouse frame and old duvets. It is proving popular as a reading space.'

'I like to do really cool interactive library displays.

I set up a Pizza Shop to promote a Pizza Reading Challenge - it won a national display, and really got the kids reading.'

'We are beginning to open the library up to other activities (lego, maths games, etc). This is creating a far more vibrant place.'

'We have recently completely decorated/refurbished our Library. Fiction loans and recreational visits have increased by at least 300%.'

'When we opened our library last term we made a "shelfie" booth. Students had their photo taken with the first book they took out of the library - this became our first display.

It was quick way to get their voice and presence into the space.'

'Students had input in designing the new look library.'

'I have been hosting seminars and workshops for students on coding. I have also been encouraging use of the library space for a range of activities and classes, not all text related.'

'We have a green screen space, and painted the wall so we can use a projector on it.'

'Utilising the library as a K-2 classroom is fantastic for the students.

They are continually surrounded by a wealth of resources - literally at their fingertips!'

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'I promote books, celebrations etc with displays. I try not to put too many books on the displays so that the interest doesn't wane.

I also try and use objects that aren't associated with books, e.g. a book display with a tyre or a car door (from a panelbeaters), to get the interest going. It seems to work well!'

'We removed the computer lab at the start of this year and opened up the area previously used for this as a recreational reading space, with some sections of our genrified high school collection housed here.

This meant we were able to offer a space that was previously underused as a social space and a makerspace.'

'We removed desktop computers and left the tables behind. Students love the large spaces to work on.'

'To encourage students to come to the Library we have a little game happening all the time called 'Library Fun'.

We place a little sticker with the words 'Library Fun' somewhere in the Library and students have to find it. The finder receives a certificate and a book.'

'We partnered with our Design and Technology Department to create a bench seat and high table out of old and discarded books.'

'We have created flexible learning spaces by rearranging our furniture and purchasing new furniture.

Our library is bright and welcoming - a place where you can study individually, in pairs, or in groups.'

'We have our own little garden with seating. Children love sitting out there on nice days to read their books.'

'To encourage students to come to the library I removed all the high bookshelves and released non fiction resources to the faculties, which created a more open environment.

I also built a deck for the senior students complete with a coffee machine, microwave and fridge.'

76%

of respondents said that refurbishing or updating the library or learning centre is important or very important to them*

The online library space

With the increase in 24/7, anywhere, anytime access, the online library space has become as important as the physical library space.

Students are "visiting the library" more. The online library also extends access to parents and the greater school community.

Questions to ask

- **Is your online library interface welcoming and engaging?**
- **Can students find their way around your online library and locate resources quickly and easily?**
- **Have you set up displays, for example book carousels or photos of your physical display?**

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92%

of respondents said that aligning curriculum with existing resources/practices is important or very important to their role*

Ideas to support learning

Collaborating with teachers to support learning and aligning resources with curriculum is an important part of the librarians role. Librarians shared ideas about how they have helped create lesson plans, worked with teachers to teach literacy, research and digital literacy skills and support subject areas school-wide.

'I create lesson plans for teaching staff that support new topics. These are used as a basis for teaching students how to access databases and how to search the internet.' well. '

'The library works cooperatively with teachers in implementing reading programs and aligning library programs with the new English Syllabus.'

'I am involved with lots of team teaching with different subject areas to improve student learning and engagement for various assessment tasks.'

'I have made my own week by week literacy skills programme for every year level (years 1 - 6). This means all the planning is done for the teachers each week.

It includes achievement objectives and learning intentions and follows a logical pattern for learning about the library and how to use it, how to search for books etc.'

'I implemented Guided Inquiry 6 years ago. It is embraced by 2 faculties and continually evolves.

The students who participate are far better equipped in their senior independent research projects.'

'To complement subject disciplines, the new centre transforms and adopts a new theme each month to highlight a focus e.g. space.'

'I'm using the Oliver library system to create resource lists that make it easier for students and staff to locate linked resources in both digital and non digital formats.

This supports teaching programs and aligns resources with the curriculum.'

'I run a library website that provides students and teachers with resources that have been chosen to align with their curriculum needs.'

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'I have 2 classes come to the library for an hour at a time, e.g. 2 year 5 classes. All teaching is cooperative which means the classroom teachers accompany their classes.

Having 3 teachers with 2 classes has enhanced the learning experiences of the students and the results are evident. All lessons form a part of the Geography or History outcomes of the syllabus.

I also take classes for SOLE and, having now provided a TPL session for staff in SOLE, more class teachers are using this in their classroom.

Students' questioning ability has improved 100%, as has their listening skills.'

'I create library displays featuring students current topics/inquiries. Associating fiction/non-fiction books with these displays draws students and staff, identifying the library as a functional research area.'

'We are currently very active in teaching Study Skills throughout the College.

We address parents and whole year groups, and offer individual tuition with students referred by their teachers, parents or themselves.

We also do a one term programme with our year sevens where we teach them about the growth mindset and study techniques.'

'The creation of the our College Research Process was developed with all the year 10s. I ran a few workshops on the steps used to begin research. Using that data, we created a Research Process.

This provided the basis for a school continuum which was collaboratively developed by me and the Curriculum Leaders, using the Victorian Curriculum.'

'We have found that themes are important in engaging students and extending the work of the classroom teacher.

Museum discovery boxes aligned to the HASS curriculum enhance student learning and participation. Developing a program that includes awareness weeks, such as Food Allergy week, has complemented topics in Science and Nutrition.

The library supports and generates activities which foster incidental learning, exploration and discovery. In this way the library remains relevant, current and assistive.'

'I have developed courses on clever web-searching, website evaluation, database searching, academic paper interpretation and referencing (APA, Harvard and footnoting).'

'We have embedded the Yr 7 curriculum into the library and regularly spend time reading and doing reading related activities in the library.'

83%
of respondents said that teaching information literacy is an important or very important service that the library provides*

62%
said that development/ leadership of curriculum is an important or very important service*

Reading Lists in Oliver v5

Creating reading lists in Oliver v5 is a great way to support learning.

In collaboration with teachers, the library can align reading lists with the curriculum, create reading level lists or recommend books to direct reading for pleasure.

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97%

of respondents said that providing recreational/ leisure reading was important or very important to their role*

Ideas to encourage engagement

Engaging students and encouraging reluctant readers has always been a priority and a challenge for school library staff. The following respondents have shared some fantastic ideas that have been successful in improving student engagement and encouraging reading for pleasure.

'We keep our collection of Skinnies - skinny books for reluctant readers and dyslexic readers - separate from the other Fiction, so that students can more easily choose something to read.'

'We have had a dramatic increase in borrowing of physical fiction books in Middle School due to genrification of the collection and implementation of the DEAR programme.'

'We recently did a 'Reading Olympics' with the year 7-9 students which encouraged reading for pleasure.'

'We have done very well with eBooks, partly because I am asking students to borrow while I teach them how to access them, and partly because we are publicising them heavily.

We also bought a big enough collection to make a search worthwhile for the reluctant readers.'

'I do reading advisories for reluctant readers on request from teachers or students that I think need it. They work really well.

I have also been enlarging the Graphic Novel collection for reluctant readers.'

'We launched an initiative I'm calling "Read Heads" (as in I READ this book and loved it).

Secondary students and staff are encouraged to "take a Read Head", a selfie with a book, in front of their faces and send it to library staff.

These will be then uploaded to the school Facebook and/or Instagram page so that students and staff can see that others are enjoying reading for fun.'

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Booktalkers Café

'Replicate café and yes, with food and drink within the library.

We introduce a theme and have an arrangement with a bookseller to provide lovely new books on consignment.

Students work in groups and critically evaluate the books they feel would be a great addition to the library collection.

A bookmark (e.g. chefs hats 1,2,3 or football theme 'out on the full, through for a point, it's a goal!) is placed in the book and based on student ratings the library will purchase the book.

Students feel that they have a say in what is purchased and a sense of ownership in the library.

It also gives a great insight into the level of sophistication, reading level and genres or subject areas they are interested in.

Feedback from students and staff is very positive.'

'We have a large lecture theatre where we invite numerous guest speakers to inspire our students.'

'We have "The Little GGHS Library Loyalty Card". This is working extremely well.

Girls get a stamp for each book they read. After 10 books they get a little reward.'

'I use a replica skeleton - Professor de Bones to engage the kids and have a presence of someone in the library even when I am not in!'

61%

of respondents said that emailing information about interest areas is an important or very important service that the library provides*

Engaging Students with Oliver v5

There are several ways you can use Oliver v5 to engage students.

Book carousels, book reviews (written by staff and students), tiled search results, video links and customisable interfaces can all engage students and encourage a love of research and reading.

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75%

of respondents said that implementing technology to enable eResources is important or very important to their role*

Ideas involving technology

School library staff are constantly looking for ways to use technology to enhance library services and improve learning outcomes.

Some respondents focussed on the benefits of improving the integration of digital resources with the library system, such as Federated Search, embedded videos and eBook lending, while the delivery of Makerspaces, Code Clubs and STEM programs also featured heavily in the responses.

'We are in an exciting time of rebranding and pushing the boundaries of what we offer online.'

'Some of our teachers are starting to use OneNote for their planning. If they share their notebooks with me, I am able to provide access to eResources and detail library resources that are available.

I'd love to become "embedded" in more teacher resources.'

'I have started developing a real world experience based on STEM and driverless cars for Information Literacy in Year 7.'

'I have introduced OverDrive, Clickview Cloud and 24/7 to Clickview Library.'

'I try to lead the way in introducing digital technologies into the curriculum. I help run CodeClub and we have a collection of robots which I also run lessons on.'

'We have a focus on digital services and their promotion, with less reliance on physical resources.

It is just too much hard work managing and maintaining physical resources and keeping them relevant.'

'We have been involved in many digital practices in our library this year including hosting a teacher PD for CodeClubAU and implementing our own CodeClubAU here at school.

We have also been involved in Young ICT Explorers Competitions, LegoMindstorm EV3 building and coding, assisted with Arduino board programming, Little Bits, and mbots.

We have been very busy with digital tech!'

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'As our students are special needs, I quite often use QR codes to give them access to websites or YouTube sites. They find this an easy and fun way to access information.'

'One of the main goals we have achieved this year is the implementation a new LMS which enables federated searching

Staff and students can now search the library collection including the databases, play ClickView videos, and access and borrow eBooks all in the one place.'

'We have led the school in the use of gaming for education purposes, especially use of MINECRAFT.'

'Clickview has a feature that has taken our school by storm. That is, the ability to take a Clickview item and then add a variety of questions that produce excellent analytics.'

'I love Oliver v5's Federated Search!

We have also been creating a new 'digital space' for our library - a library that is accessible 24/7 from anywhere in the world.'

'Introduction of a mini 3D printer has been interesting for our creative students and quite well used. Has had the benefit of gaining library support from technology KLA who are pleased to see us developing a collaborative approach with them.'

'During lunch session, we have restricted TV viewing. Students can watch ABC iview programs like Backyard Science and suitable History programs etc.

I have also introduced StoryBox Online - stories read by Australian personalities.'

61%

of respondents said that IT/computer training is an important or very important service that the library provides*

Digital Leadership

Eric Sheninger's 7 Pillars of Digital Leadership offers a framework for harnessing digital technologies to create transparent, relevant, meaningful and inspiring school cultures.

In 2016, we produced a whiteboard video that looks at how library staff can use Oliver v5 to apply the 7 Pillars Framework and position their school library as the centre of digital excellence.

You can access the video by clicking here, or on our Resources page at softlinkint.com/resources.

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97%

of respondents said that resource and collection management is an important or very important service that the library provides*

Ideas for organising the collection

Resource and collection management remains an important service for school libraries and library staff are exploring new methods that make it easier for students to locate books.

There is a definite trend towards genrefication in school libraries with survey participants discussing the positive responses they have seen in their school communities.

'We recently changed our K-2 collection to a topic based system instead of the traditional "by author's last name".

We also added a non-fiction collection relevant to the early years so that they are all together in one collection.

Students and teachers have found it much easier to find resources.'

'We just changed to genrefication of fiction books. The kids are loving it.'

'We have reorganised our fiction into genre sections. This has been successful in increasing students' reading and use of fiction.

They are much more confident about their choice of reading and being able to find books.'

'We are genrifying our fiction and moving on to 'boutiquing' our non-fiction - making sure the resources we are collecting are not competing with the internet, but complimenting it.

Basically, we are doing away with Dewey.'

'We have genrified all the fiction and non-fiction books. We have up to 30 different genres including 'international' and 'challenging issues'.

The use of spine label icons (many produced in-house) makes searching for certain types of books much easier.'

'We have genrefied our fiction and non-fiction collections and the increase in borrowing and browsing books has been incredible, especially for non-fiction.'

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'I have changed the way resources are presented to students to make it easier for them to find things.

Secondary fiction is shelved in genre. Books suitable for NCEA are labeled as suitable for each level.

Year 7-8 fiction is shelved in genre. I also take some books to the classroom on a 2 week roster.

Lower Primary fiction is shelved firstly in series, then in genre. Some non-fiction is included, if it is age appropriate, because some of our students come from the Military base and won't read anything unless it is real e.g. tanks, heavy machinery etc.

Picture books are shelved in genre. This includes non-fiction picture books as some children don't like fiction - they like books on trucks, or real things.

'I am slowly redesigning our non-fiction and moving away from Dewey. I am still using numbers for labels, but no decimal points or author code.

This is a huge project as I weed and reorganise.'

'We have developed book boxes by subject, i.e. narrative text or persuasive text.

Books are catalogued to these boxes so that when a teacher asks for a book on narrative text, I can direct them to the box rather than search for a particular book.

I have had Specialist and English teams assist with this and it has taken approximately 6 months but teachers are loving it.

We have also done this by popular authors and subject based on curriculum i.e. Healthy Eating, Aboriginal Studies and Biographies for Junior and Senior students.'

'In the refurb we are genrifying fiction and non-fiction according to our students' recommendations.

Our theory is that they are the users, so they should direct how the library is used (student-centred service).'

74%
of children say they would read more if they could find more books that they like[#]

Locating Resources

We love that school libraries are rethinking the way that they catalogue library resources.

Once the big job of genrefying or reorganising the collection is done, how do you simplify the process of physically finding a resource?

Posters and displays are great, another way is to upload a map to Oliver v5.

Maps can be a simple or complex as you like, from a photo, to handrawn or even software produced.

Flashing icons can then pinpoint the exact location of the item in the library, making it quicker and easier for students to find.

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Reading program ideas

Tying in to the earlier theme of student engagement, librarians are looking at formalising and extending "read aloud" activities by adopting models such as the "Drop-Everything-And-Read" (DEAR) program, letting children and other teachers have input in to reading programs and also involving families.

'Even though it is a high school library the junior students enjoy a 10 minute segment where the Teacher Librarian reads to them.

This happens at the beginning of the lesson to settle the students down. We usually read inspirational bibliographies or autobiographies such as "Ugly" by Robert Hoge.'

'We run a great family reading program called our READ TO ME! Club after school each Wednesday night. We share a story and run a hands on activity open for families from ELC - Year 2. We encourage families to borrow books and share these at home.'

'Grades 7-9 have engaged in a reading program which includes silent reading at the start of every class and fortnightly library visits.

Book chats occur during these visits to extend reading.'

'I read a new book to the classes every week when they come to the library and think that reading aloud to students of all ages is vitally important.

I have also implemented the DEAR programme.'

'I have found that a program where older children conduct storytime at lunch is going really well.'

'This year, in our weekly lunchtime Reading Cafe (in which students who love to read have exclusive use of the Library to eat, buy a hot chocolate and read), we introduced The Storyteller - I read aloud from a 'Mystery Book' which may, or may not, lead to discussion.

It aims to push students out of their genre comfort zone and students love it.

The next phase is to invite teachers to be The Storyteller, reading books they choose.'

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Budget ideas

Innovation is often driven by a need to overcome a specific challenge. In the case of school libraries, where 48% of survey respondents feel that their school library is not adequately funded, limited finances have become a source of inspired invention.

'I started an eLibrary consortium between my 2 small schools, and 2 other small schools.

The consortium can be accessed by up to 500 students but we have about 130 between the 4 schools and are able to share the one subscription.

None of our budgets would have covered a subscription for each school.'

'We are the first library in New Zealand to start co-ordinating National Library loans for two other local primary schools.

It is great to pool resources in rural areas.'

'We have a library trust fund, that is promoted throughout the school, as we are a big reading school community.

Parents and children support this by donating to our Library.

I have had upwards of $30,000 to spend on resources in a year when support was high.

Book fairs, Grandparents days and Fetes are all days where the Library benefits from the funds raised.'

'Our library book purchasing is supplemented annually by our wonderful PTA through a book donation drive.'

'We are decile 1(low income area) government school.

I have 2 ePlatforms providing eBooks and I am sharing the eResources with 8 more decile 1 Primary and Intermediate schools around us.

These schools can't afford to have eBooks on their own.'

'We are involved in sharing resources through a network of other school libraries.

I have also started a Library Officer Network in our area, which meet once a term to discuss all areas of " library duties" and new ideas. It has been successful.'

The Shared eBook Library

'I am looking forward to including more digital resources in the library catalogue including eBooks.'

Would you like to incorporate eBooks into your library but are unsure where the money is going to come from?

In 2016, several schools mentioned that they have set up an eBook shared subscription with other local schools.

What a great idea!

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Student wellbeing ideas

School librarians recognise that mental and physical wellbeing has long-term benefits in terms of student performance and social development. In response, they are diversifying the range of activities on offer through the school library to improve the wellbeing of all students, but especially those who need additional support.

'We are considering lunch time yoga - with a push to have the library provide resources that support the idea of a Wellness Centre (mainly for senior years) as the school starts a new push toward student wellbeing.'

'Reading buddies (stuffed toys) have been a recent and extremely popular addition.

I know other schools have them, and I stole the idea from a colleague, but I am still amazed at the calming effect they have (once the original excitement wears off!).'

'Our library is a comfortable, warm, inviting space for children to come and browse, read, play games and complete various activities.'

We have implemented a pastoral reading program to support the mental health of our students.

'We have a communal puzzle that is very popular.

It helps keep some children out of the playground who would otherwise get in trouble, or who are stressed or alone.

The puzzle is done with the librarian so students have someone to chat with and help them feel secure.'

'Our library is open at least 3 days a week at lunchtime and many students come in for a variety of reasons including seeing it as a safe haven.'

'We have brought back an SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) time as a school-wide practice after lunch.

Students realise it is good for calming their brains and bodies into a place where they can be comfortable within themselves and refreshed for more good learning.

We have taught the students that reading a book for 6 minutes can relieve their stress levels by 68%.

This knowledge is something that we used to take for granted but is now a skill that has to be taught.'

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Ideas for using Oliver v5

Are you a current Oliver v5 user? We've included some of the great ways you can use Oliver v5 to engage your school community.

If you are not currently an Oliver v5 user and would like to know more please click here.

Furnish your library with Softlink's range of promotional posters and bookmarks to inspire students to love their library system.

Use Analytical Reporting to provide teachers with visual and engaging statistics on student or class borrowing.

Advertise library and school events and competitions on your Oliver v5 home page.

Set up Reading Lists to help students find resources that are relevant to them and their learning.

Student book reviews with star ratings are a fantastic way to get students engaged with reading.

Help students locate library resources by uploading a map or photo of your library to Oliver v5.

Encourage students and faculty to set up Interests in Oliver v5, which will allow them to receive alerts for their personal reading or research preferences.

Make advanced research and connection to multiple resources easy with Federated Search. Orbit Super Search provides a simplified federated search for Junior and Middle School students.

Enhance your students' search experience by activating Google in Oliver v5. This will provide access to Google Book Previews, Google Book Reviews and Google Cover Images.

Make seasonal events even more fun by encouraging junior students to update their Orbit avatar or background for Christmas, Halloween, Easter, ANZAC Day using the seasonal avatars and backgrounds available, or upload your own for any special event.

Provide even easier access to your eBook collection with eZRead for OverDrive (also available for Wheelers).

Softlink and Oliver v5

Softlink has been providing school library software solutions for over 30 years, adapting and changing to meet the needs of schools globally. Users of Oliver v5 benefit from regular new feature updates, which are developed in direct response to feedback and insights provided by our active user community.

Sources

*From the 2016 Australian and New Zealand School Library Survey

#From the Kids & Family Reading Report, Scholastic Australia, http://www.scholastic.com.au/schools/ReadingLeaders/KFRR/assets/pdf/KFRR_AUS.pdf

Contact us

Would you like to know more about Oliver v5 and find out how Softlink can help your library?

Visit our website softlinkint.com or contact us via email.