the reading agency

Libraries and Digital:

Research into the use of digital media in libraries to develop audiences for reading

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY

Reading in the UK is changing dramatically. New digital platforms are transforming the ways in which people discover and read their books, while new websites and services are changing their engagement with fellow readers. For those involved in writing, publishing, selling and lending books, these are tumultuous but exciting times, full of both threats and opportunities.

The Reading Agency is working with libraries and 40 leading publishers to find ways to build new audiences for reading in a digital environment, and share resources and intelligence. The Reading Partners library/publisher consortium has been revolutionising the way libraries and publishers work together, and has the potential to help libraries develop their digital offer and to create new and engaged readers for everyone.

The Reading Agency leads the Reading Partners scheme, and as part of its work has organised a major digital marketing event in spring 2011 from which a shared action plan will be created. To inform this event and plan, and to sharpen the thinking around digital reader development, The Reading Agency undertook a survey of the public library service in the UK. In January 2011 we invited all public library authorities in England, Scotland and Wales to participate in an online survey. Full responses were received from 113 authorities—a completion rate of 52.6%. At a difficult time for the sector, this is an encouraging response that indicates the importance of digital and social reading issues.

The survey's findings are available to download from www.readingagency.org.uk . It covers areas relevant to digital reader development and is intended to add to a range of other useful intelligence about the developing digital scene, including data from CIPFA that indicates that the public's use of library's websites has risen by 50% over the last year; and research by MLA that outlines the growing number of authorities offering ebooks for loan.

Reading Partners' digital survey, event and action plan coincide with The Reading Agency's launch of a new online reading group initiative —Reading Groups for Everyone. Libraries will be at the heart of this, and it will be developed in partnership with The Society of Chief Librarians. The initiative aims to encourage the formation of many new and different kinds of reading groups, and to enrich the lives of members by connecting them up to a range of partners and offers. The first stage in this project is a demonstration website with a new national database and data from trailblazing library authorities.

Reading Groups for Everyone is the sort of experimentation that The Reading Agency's survey shows to be needed and wanted in libraries. This report reveals that libraries are already widely active in digital services and social media, and that there is a strong enthusiasm among staff to do more to promote reading and develop new audiences for reading online. There are plenty of issues to be overcome—in strategic planning, staff confidence and councils' IT infrastructure among others. But the message from public libraries is clear: that the sector must continue to develop its digital services around reading and be prepared to be bold.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 CURRENT DIGITAL PROVISION

Libraries incorporate lots of different digital media into their reading activities.
Two thirds (65.5%) use digital photographs, a third (32.7%) use Twitter and a fifth use videos (20.4%) and blogs (18.6%).

Two thirds (66.7%) of authorities incorporate digital into their marketing campaigns.
Facebook and Twitter are the most popular platforms.

Two in five (40.4%) authorities now use social media to engage young people.
But only one in eight (13.1%) has a separate website for young people, and provision of other digital resources for them is patchy.

Similar numbers (38.6%) incorporate games into reading activities.
Console games are most widely used, but puzzles and traditional games remain popular.

Wi-fi internet access is spreading.
Three in five (59.6%) authorities now provide it.

Online library catalogues are the gateway to users' digital engagement.
Libraries and the public are using them in increasingly sophisticated ways, but facilities vary widely from service to service.

Users lack awareness of what libraries can offer them digitally.
On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), they rate users' awareness of their digital reading offer as just 1.9.

Very few library authorities have digital strategies in place.
The vast majority (98.2%) do not currently have a digital media or reading strategy.

2 LIBRARY STAFF AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Half (50.5%) of library authorities have staff designated to work around digital and social media.
The other half (49.5%) have no such designated staff.

Many library staff lack digital knowledge and confidence.
On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), authorities rate frontline staff's knowledge of and their confidence in handling digital and social media at 2.2 each.

Provision of training to improve staff confidence with digital media is patchy. Some follow structured or occasional training programmes, but most do not.

3 FUTURE DIGITAL PROVISION

Library authorities want to expand their digital offers.
They have plans to launch or increase e-book lending, revamp websites and make greater use of social media.

4 BARRIERS TO A DIGITAL OFFER

Funding is the biggest issue for libraries wanting to offer more digitally.
With budgets cut or uncertain, many authorities feel they cannot commit to new services.

A lack of staff skills and time is a major barrier to engaging users online.
Insufficient expertise and confidence is a particularly big problem in connecting with children and young people.

Councils are restricting libraries' digital activities.
Firewalls, filters and other IT restrictions make it hard for staff and users to access social media sites in particular. Libraries need help to change corporate attitudes to digital and social media.

Poor public awareness and problems with computer access are slowing take-up of digital services.
A lack of strong and engaging digital content is limiting interest from young people.

5 HELP FOR LIBRARIES

Libraries would like to work more closely with publishers and would appreciate access to their digital content and marketing.
Four fifths (79.6%) of authorities would like access to these things. Also widely welcome would be help with running online reading groups (75.2%), reading guides (67.3%) and book trailers for websites or screens (65.5%).

There is interest in a nationally driven digital library offer for children.
Libraries would value greater sharing of successful digital engagement between authorities.

Libraries would welcome advice, guidance and resources from The Reading Agency.
Two thirds (64.6%) of authorities would like this. The next most popular forms of support would be an online platform for young people to engage with creative reading and writing (60.2%), opportunities to be involved with creative reading or writing projects (56.6%) and online training (53.1%).

1 CURRENT DIGITAL PROVISION

1.1 Libraries' digital strategies

Very few (1.8%) library authorities say they have a digital media or reading strategy in place. The vast majority (98.2%) do not. The rare examples of digital media or reading strategies encompass libraries' work with adults, young people, children and adults with low literacy levels.

1.2 User awareness

With some exceptions, users' awareness of their libraries' digital reading offer is quite low. On a scale of 1 to 5—where 1 is low and 5 is high—libraries' average rating of their users' awareness is 1.9. Clearly more needs to be done to tell users about the digital reading opportunities available to them.

1.3 Use of online library catalogues

Library catalogues are an important gateway to digital engagement, and people are using them in increasingly sophisticated ways. But the provision of facilities varies substantially from service to service. Just under half (47.8%) of authorities can show users via the catalogue the books that they have previously loaned, while just under a third allow them to review books (31.9%) or create their own book lists (31.0%).

Other catalogue facilities include links to related websites (provided by 29.2%); access to other people's book reviews (27.4%); space to rate books (26.5%); and recommendations from the library management system (22.1%). One authority in ten (10.6%) offers related reading group guides, and only a single service provides author videos online.

Among library authorities that do not offer these facilities, there is an appetite to improve online access to catalogues. Nine in ten (90.9%) of these authorities say they are looking at ways to make their catalogues more open.

1.4 Approaches to digital reading

Taking digital photographs is by some distance the most popular way for libraries to incorporate digital media into their reading activities. Twitter, videos and blogs are the next most common ways of using digital media.

Table—Libraries' ways of incorporating digital media into reading activities
(Figure in brackets refers to % of all respondents who use that medium)

1 Digital photographs (65.5%)
2 Twitter (32.7%)
3 Making videos (20.4%)
4 Blogs (18.6%)
5 Gaming activities (8.0%)
6 Podcasts (8.0%)
7 Virtual reading groups (5.3%)
8 Wikis (5.3%)
9 Live event video streaming (1.8%)

Other examples of incorporating digital media mentioned by libraries include audio recordings of author events, a Virtual Learning Environment and a Vintage reading group with links to the publisher's website.

1.5 Digital provision for children

Barely one in eight (13.1%) library authorities has a separate website for young people. But many more—two in five (40.4%)—now use social media to engage young people. Among these, Facebook (used by 81.5% of those who use social media) and Twitter (used by 71.1%) are the most common platforms. MySpace is much less popular (used by 5.3%). GroupThing, Vimeo, YouTube and SMS alerts were also cited as useful platforms to engage young people.

There is currently patchy access via libraries to creative reading opportunities and book recommendation websites. Three in five (59.3%) library authorities say they have no specific children's digital reading resources but promote the Summer Reading Challenge. Smaller numbers have their own local authority children's resources pages (23.9%); a subscription to Stories From the Web (16.8%) or a free or subscription-based equivalent (8.8%); or their own blog for children (4.4%).

Among those who have their own resources or subscribe to another service, a third (35.5%) have a moderated message or interactive element. Among library authorities running Chatterbooks reading groups, very few (3.3%) say they use an external site to support their activities.

Among authorities with PCs in children's areas of their libraries, one in eight (12.1%) has a homepage that is child-friendly and specific to their own service. The rest (87.9%) default to the same homepage as is used on terminals in adult areas of libraries.

1.6 Games and reading

Around two in five (38.6%) library authorities incorporate digital or traditional games into their reading activities.

Libraries that use games employ a mix of new and old media. Console games are the most commonly used type, but they are followed in popularity by puzzles and traditional and board games. Beyond these, a wide range of gaming activities are used by libraries to stimulate reading.

Table—The most popular types of games used in libraries' reading activities
(Figure in brackets refers to % of respondents using games who use that game)

1 Console games (48.7%)
2 Puzzles (43.6%)
3 Traditional games (41.0%)
4 Other board games (38.5%)
5 PC / online games (35.9%)
6 Wargaming (30.8%)
7 Card games (25.6%)
8 Printed text relating to games (23.1%)
9 Roleplaying (17.9%)
10 Handheld games (2.6%)

1.7 Wi-fi access in libraries

Three in five (59.6%) authorities now offer wi-fi access in their libraries.

1.8 Digital marketing

Two thirds (66.7%) of library authorities incorporate digital into their marketing campaigns. The most popular platforms for digital marketing are Facebook and Twitter, which are currently being used by just under half of all library authorities. Blogs, Flickr and YouTube are used by smaller numbers.

Table—Libraries' most popular digital marketing platforms
(Figure in brackets refers to % of all respondents who use that platform)

1 Facebook (44.2%)
2 Twitter (42.5%)
3 Blogs (16.8%)
4 Flickr (13.3%)
5 YouTube (10.6%)
6 Social bookmarking like Digg (3.5%)

In addition to these, Vimeo, Ning and event ticketing sites like Eventbrite were used by one library authority apiece, while one is about to start using Second Life. Several local websites were also mentioned as useful platforms for libraries.

For some examples of libraries' digital marketing projects, see the Appendix.

2 LIBRARY STAFF AND DIGITAL MEDIA

2.1 Digital knowledge and confidence

Although some library staff can now be considered experts in digital media, many others lack knowledge and confidence. On a scale of 1 to 5—where 1 is low and 5 is high— the average rating of their confidence in handling social and digital media use is the same: 2.2.

2.2 Staff responsibility for digital media

Half (50.5%) of library authorities have staff with a designated responsibility for delivering their work around digital and social media. The other half (49.5%) have no such designated staff.

The job titles of staff designated for digital and social media work vary considerably. A small number have dedicated digital, web or e-service officers, while others give the work to library, information, outreach, access or audience development officers. Many say responsibility is shared among a number of staff across the service.

2.3 Training provision

The provision of training to improve confidence with digital media is patchy. Many authorities report that they have had very little instruction in digital technology beyond what is included in basic frontline training, with budget or time constraints the main reasons. Others say training in social media is restricted to small numbers of local authority staff, often based in marketing or communications departments.

Elsewhere, some authorities report staff following structured or ad hoc programmes, often cascading what they have learned down to colleagues. Several follow a training path towards a recognised qualifications, while others follow Cambridge University's '23 Things' programme that gives librarians training in Web 2.0 and new technology. There is also evidence of dedicated training workshops and summits, often run in-house by staff with expertise in digital or social media.

But despite strong provision in some areas, there is no widespread, systematic training in place for libraries' use of digital media. There is, though, an appetite for more training, and some librarians suggest either a nationally coordinated programme or online help, targeted at staff with the responsibility and aptitude for digital work. See Sections 4 and 5 for more on ways to improve staff skills.

For libraries' comments on training in digital media, see the Appendix.

3 FUTURE DIGITAL PROVISION

3.1 Libraries' digital ambitions
Library authorities want to expand their digital offer. Asked how they see their digital services developing in the next two to three years, many indicate either that they will offer e-books and audio downloads this year or next, or that they plan to further investigate models for provision.

Many authorities plan to revamp and make better use of their websites. Several want to develop the reference resources that are available to users online, and there is a particularly strong movement towards offering more web resources for reading groups. Book reviews, forums, enquiry services and digitised collections of local interest material were all also mentioned as things that could form part of an improved web offer from libraries. Authorities are similarly eager to make greater use of social networking media like Facebook and Twitter to promote their services.

For libraries' comments on the likely development of their digital offer over the next two to three years, see the Appendix.

4 BARRIERS TO A DIGITAL OFFER

4.1 Issues around developing digital reading
There are plenty of issues standing between libraries and the development of a more substantial digital offer. Asked to name the three most significant issues, the biggest of them is clear—funding. With budgets either cut or uncertain, many authorities feel they do not have the money to commit to developing a digital offer.

The next most significant issue is the time needed to build digital strategies. Again, with budgets squeezed, finding the staff to dedicate to digital projects is clearly difficult, and there is also the problem of insufficient expertise. The third biggest issue is IT resources and capacity. Many authorities point out that their local authority's web infrastructure is not strong or sophisticated enough to host libraries' digital offer. Firewalls, filters and other IT restrictions, plus a lack of support or interest from local authorities' IT teams, put major restrictions on libraries.

Beyond these three big concerns lie several more important issues. The problem of developing an audience is one—perhaps because libraries consider users are not yet ready for digital reading, or because they do not feel able to communicate and promote their digital offer. Another is the problem of fragmentation and compatibility in e-books—libraries find it difficult to develop an offer when there is no standard platform for digital reading, and find it challenging to keep up with changing habits. Authorities also report concerns over copyright and restrictions on e-book lending placed on them by publishers, and have problems with identifying and securing stock and public access, especially in rural areas with poor broadband supply.

***Table—Libraries' top five issues around developing digital reading*[1]**
1 Funding
2 Lack of staff skills and time
3 IT infrastructure
4 Audience development
5 Lack of standard e-platform

4.2 Barriers to online engagement of users

Similar barriers prevent libraries from engaging their users with their reading offer online. But here it is a lack of staff skills and knowledge rather than funding that is the most commonly cited problem—further evidence that libraries need substantial help in engaging with users. The next most cited problem is a lack of awareness among library users, indicating that more marketing and publicity work is required to tell the public what is available. IT and functionality issues are also common, as are problems with council restrictions on what libraries can and cannot do digitally. Authorities' IT infrastructures are clearly limiting their online engagement with users.

Other barriers include a lack of public access to computers and internet connections and a lack of user interest. Related to this is the suggestion from some libraries that commercial providers already offer the public all they could want from reading online. Funding ranks lower than it does on the list of barriers to the development of digital reading, because engagement of existing users costs less.

***Table—Libraries' top five barriers to online engagement of users with their reading offer*[1]**
1 Lack of staff skills and time
2 Lack of public awareness
3 IT infrastructure
4 Council restrictions on activities
5 Access problems

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[1] These and following rankings in this section are based on libraries' open comments about key issues, and so required interpretation of opinions. Issues are listed in order of frequency of citation, with weighting given to ranking by survey respondents.

4.3 Barriers to digital engagement of young people

When it comes to engaging young people digitally, a lack of staff expertise and time is by far the biggest barrier for libraries. Many authorities feel they do not have sufficient knowledge and abilities among their teams to properly engage young people. Libraries' next biggest barrier, again by some distance, is restrictions placed on them by corporate council teams. The blocking of websites, especially social ones, is particularly problematic when libraries are trying to connect to young people.

Other significant barriers include the problem of access to digital equipment, both for staff and users; the difficulty of developing content that will appeal to young people; and funding. Some library authorities also expressed anxiety about child protection and age-appropriate issues, while others suggested there was insufficient interest among young people in a digital offer from libraries.

Table—Libraries' top five barriers to digital engagement with young people

1 Lack of staff skills and time
2 Council restrictions on activities
3 Access problems
4 Lack of appropriate and engaging content
5 Funding

4.4 Barriers to using the internet and social media

Libraries have particular barriers to overcome if they want to expand their use of the internet and social media. Filters and firewalls are the most common obstacle to libraries' work, cited by just over half (53.1% and 51.3% respectively) of all authorities. The blocking of social media websites is an obstacle for just under half (46.0%). Broadband width is a problem for one in six (16.8%) authorities.

Asked for ideas to overcome all these barriers, many libraries pointed to a need to change their council's policy on social media. In particular, librarians want restrictions on their access to social media eased so they can make better use of it. Both the management and the IT departments of councils will need to be won over if this change is to be achieved. Several librarians suggest that this will require greater advocacy and perhaps case studies demonstrating the link between social media and library usage. A nationally coordinated initiative would also provide the impetus for greater use of social media in libraries.

5 HELP FOR LIBRARIES

5.1 Tools and resources

Asked about specific tools and resources that could help with their online reading offer, libraries' most common choice is access to publishers' digital content and marketing. The majority of libraries would also welcome help with running online reading groups, while slightly lower numbers would welcome reading guides and book trailers that could be accessed via libraries' websites or plasma screens. Website widgets and access to a national database of online reading groups are less popular forms of support.

Table—Libraries' preferred tools to help with online reading
(Figure in brackets refers to % of respondents who would like that tool)

1 Access to publishers' digital content and marketing (79.6%)
2 Guidance to run online reading groups (75.2%)
3 Reading guides (67.3%)
4 Book trailers for website / screens (65.5%)
5 Online live author talk on website / screens (56.6%)
6 Guidance to run books blogs (54.0%)
7 Widgets for website (53.1%)
8 National online reading group database (50.4%)

5.2 Help with engaging children and young people

Asked what support they need to engage children digitally, it is not surprising to find many libraries requesting more resources—of funding and of staff time and expertise. There is some demand for training, but also for help in other forms—with building better websites for children; with providing them with more stimulating digital resources; with presenting and communicating those resources to them in the best way; and with legal issues around child protection.

As has been seen, librarians want far more support from their council teams, and in particular their IT departments. Easing the blocks on the websites staff and users can access would be a good first step. Some also suggest that a nationally driven digital offer for children would be helpful—perhaps using the popular resources of the Summer Reading Challenge as a springboard. So, too, would more sharing of examples of successful digital engagement between authorities.

The priorities are much the same for engaging young people. Here, several library authorities suggest it would be useful to have staff dedicated to the job. There is also keen interest in more and better resources with which to attract young people, perhaps coordinated at a national level. Other libraries point out that it is important to involve young people themselves in the choice and development of content.

Asked about possible support from The Reading Agency to improve their digital offer to young people, the priorities are advice, guidance and resources—requested by nearly two thirds (64.6%). The next most popular forms of support are a platform for young people to engage with creative reading and writing online (60.2%); opportunities to be involved with creative reading or writing projects that include digital (56.6%); online training (53.1%); offline training (38.1%); and community space to engage with issues and get advice (27.4%).

For libraries' comments on the support they want to engage children and young people digitally, see the Appendix.

APPENDIX—OPEN COMMENTS

These are selected and edited answers to questions asking for free comments.

Examples of libraries' digital marketing

We use Facebook, Twitter, website and online catalogue to promote events and activities in the library.

Have produced bookmarks, screen adverts and a webpage ad for Overdrive e-books.

Online raffle to win an iPod for people who borrowed items from the e-library.

Promotion coming up of e-audio books to commuters at local railway stations. Emails to members notifying of new services and events.

Email newsletter and website publicity and information.

The Virtual Library is our online marketing 'shop window'. We are also in the process of introducing e-newsletters.

At Christmas we advertised that the Digital Library was open 24/7 and we put this message on our RFID receipts.

We use our blog to promote a wide range of events and activities.

Recently ran a Foursquare Day.

Library campaigns now include reference to e-library and on-line content. Recent promotion of the PLUS Survey included an e-book reader as a prize for one lucky participant (linked with information about our e-library).

Through a blog from the Learning Manager. Interestingly items often get picked up on this and appear in the local press, while traditional attempts to get into the local paper haven't worked.

Online web stories, online voting.

We use Twitter to promote events and all events are also listed on our library website pages and on plasma screens in the libraries.

Comments about training in digital and social media

Awareness raising at present. Restrictions to what can be accessed causes issues.

Attending regional training and cascading.

Select staff have attended social media training courses. In-house training by staff who are confident users.

Workshop held and idiot's guide produced to Facebook and Twitter

We are planning a programme of training in social media.

Training sessions planned for spring on blogs, community websites etc.

Recent programme of 7 training sessions on introduction to social media attended by 75 staff. This was delivered in-house by a member of staff.

Ongoing NVQ programme for staff with few IT skills. Just signed up to Overdrive who will be training key staff on e-resources.

Staff have a weekly training hour—I arranged for all staff to have training about the digital library.

Have offered awareness sessions on use of Facebook. Circulate info about training courses in the region.

Internal training by E-Services Manager.

Key staff have been on training days but as yet we are not in position to involve rest of staff.

We have held staff summits on using social media and encourage staff to learn by doing.

Most staff have received some training in how to use Twitter. We are in the process of introducing Facebook so training will take place once it has been set up.

Several frontline staff have completed Advanced Diploma in Applications of ICT in Libraries.

Training for this should be freely available online.

Training has to come but our corporate approach to IT matters is a barrier to responding quickly to IT developments.

Training will have to be in-house for the most part, as there are no resources to buy in external training.

We are very much at the beginning of this but would want to utilise as much as possible within budget and visionary constraints.

Training needs to be targeted to people who are able to act upon it—ie those with authority/responsibility for social media. It is important to remember that we are representing the Council and are still a public service so need to be accessible and non-discriminatory etc. Therefore responsibility for social media needs to be given to those who understand this.

We are really keen to be able to do a lot of the things we know our neighbouring authorities are able to, but as yet, it's been difficult for us to convince our security staff of the benefits and we are hampered by the costs of upgrading our systems to be able to cope with the activities we'd like to try.

Keeping pace with what works and what doesn't is difficult, as trends change so quickly. Some kind of national support for this would be good—the ability to share hints and tips.

Developing skills in this area is linked to aptitude and an individual's lifestyle choice—if you use it in your personal life you will be happier to use it for work. If you don't it's very difficult to gain this skill and interest through training.

The reality is that most local authorities will either stop their library service using social media completely or insist that it is tightly controlled.

Comments about ways libraries' digital offer to readers will develop over the next two to three years

I think there is likely to be an increased focus on digital over the coming years.

We are launching a new digital cultural learning resources website next month which has focused on creating interactive digital resources for secondary schools and community groups. We hope to use this to allow us to develop digital reader development promotions, working with formal learning groups and the general public.

More online reviews, online reading groups, much more use of social networking.

Increasing use of digital media to provide services for readers and to allow for interaction between readers.

We plan to move into providing e-books and music later this year.

I think it may be very slow in the current financial climate.

Greater use of Web 2.0 technology for the communication and dissemination of information.

It is difficult to say as it is unclear at the moment what our level of spend will be.

We will be providing more resources online and also offering a wide range of downloadable e-books and audio books.

Developing an e-books lending service; use of social networking for promotion, marketing and customer feedback.

Expecting to launch an e-book service.

We lend e-books but I don't think we will be doing much more in the next few years.

We are moving to social media to promote events and activities, and also planning to set up an online reading group, and develop our website to include more interactive content. Looking to develop e-books service.

We will offer more but will be constrained by lack of resources.

We are working on the development of web-based, interactive reader development offer.

This is a key element in our service plan for the next 1-2 years.

I think that more and more of our resources, especially reference resources, will be delivered digitally, and more work will be done with our events to record them and make them available. We will seek to build an audience and then consider expanding our digital offer.

Extra emphasis on provision of e-library. Move away from a physical reference library to an online service.

We want to develop a new website to allow for interaction between readers through book reviews, online reading groups etc, but this is dependent on funding being available.

Plans are in place for audio downloads (to launch shortly). Over the next year we will be looking at plans to take e-books.

Much greater emphasis on e-books and e-spoken word, on-line discussion forums and reading groups, greater online interactivity between users.

We need to develop a digital offer that supports our reading strategy and raises awareness of the library service.

We would hope to move into e-book downloads and audio downloads. We also hope to develop social networking, though I always feel this is best done collaboratively, not just authority by authority.

Dependent on funding—impossible to estimate!

Comments about support to digitally engage children

Partnership working with schools. E-safety information for parents.

Need more online content to appeal to children (pictures, colours, video, interactive activities etc). If this was in place there would be a high take-up from our users.

Funding and national initiative drive.

Time and resources to develop links

More capacity and awareness in library and corporate website teams.

Training for staff.

More attractive website.

The Summer Reading Scheme resources are excellent. More akin to this would be useful in establishing a children's area on the library computers, distinct from the adult resources.

All library authorities need to know where they stand legally on the issue of child protection and the web. We need support in engaging parents to support digital reading offers to their children. A website designed specifically for children which is protected and private.

A child-friendly, exciting interface for our web presence. Use of social media.

Staff awareness to stay ahead. Children are always on to the next thing way ahead of us.

Staff capacity, knowledgeable IT support, reduction in corporate IT blockages that minimise the ability of staff to be creative and develop new channels of engagement.

More awareness of child-friendly sites.

Focus group data, time to review opportunities, recognition of opportunities.

Need to free up access to social networking in libraries. Need more staff able and willing to engage with this area of work.

Need to create children's spaces online.

A better understanding of the language to use when working with children: too often, services targeted at children attempt to be cool and fail miserably. A clear and consistent style guide for communicating with children would help.

Providing support for children is important, plus guidance on how to be safe in the digital environment. This information is also very useful for parents and guardians.

Just as with adult users one cannot assume that all children are at the same level of engagement with IT. Schools and other places offering services to children need to be aware of the digital offer from the service. However this needs to be approached with caution to take

into account conditions in contracts for online reference services and what the School library service have to offer.

Guides, tips, recommended sites, information shared between authorities etc.

Digital content that will captivate children's attention - we need something exciting that children will want to access.

Information on what is working well in other authorities.

More interesting web pages aimed to them. Possibly looking at using teenagers to create a social media presence.

A dedicated ICT library co-ordinator.

A Senior Children's Librarian to work at a strategic and operational level.

Advertising to alert young people to our Facebook and Twitter accounts and staff time to post items that are interesting to this age group.

Combined (possibly national) platforms we can link into rather than duplicating that of other services.

I think we need more direct consultation with the ICT Security Officers - we don't get anywhere so perhaps it would be useful for there to be advocacy on behalf of library staff to the officers who directly deal with firewalls, web networks etc.

National policy on social media that can be put forward to corporate management team.

National standards/ training kit.

National direction from DCMS etc.

Need more creative approaches to engage young people, with social media access.

Needs a group of young people to tell us what is relevant for them and give them a role in developing content

As much off the peg, attractive content as possible that will generate repeat visits and engage children in reading, particularly building on the success of the Summer Reading Challenge.

Training, ready-made resources to use, training regarding reaching young people in the first instance.

We're really failing to engage with young people digitally and this is a huge concern. At the moment, it's difficult to see a way forward.

Children and young people should be closely involved in designing the services provided for them. That digital content can be helpfully split up by age range and material that is inappropriate for under-5s is separated from that for teenage.

There is a huge market out there to tap into given the facilities and the opportunity.

We are well behind in terms of our use of and awareness of new media compared to young people and I'm not sure we will ever be able to engage with them in a way that is relevant and interesting. The single biggest thing we could do is unblock social networking sites in libraries.