



# DIGITAL

## COMMUNICATION *for* CURATION WITH YOUR COLLECTION

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## Introduction

A common responsibility for school librarians is to locate, evaluate, and organize library materials (Woolls and Coatney 2018). Collection management is a continuous charge for librarians in any setting. For those in school libraries the emphasis on student representation and community is crucial. Students must see themselves in their school library collection.

The *AASL Standards Integrated Framework* (2018) consists of six Shared Foundations and four Domains. Among those six Shared Foundations is Curate, which notes that a school librarian has a responsibility to “serve as a resource for others in the school community” (AASL 2018, 97). Collection development management falls directly into the area of curation for the school librarian in the AASL Standards.

When selecting and curating the school library collection, whether books, technology, or digital resources, the school librarian should gather feedback and ideas from their learning community. Gathering information and feedback ensures that the school library and its collection reflects the learning community. It also ensures that the library collection and school librarian instruction align with peer educator subject areas. Due to the wealth of digital resources and communication tools now available, gathering input on a collection from students, parents, peer educators, and administrators can be easy.

## Digital Communication

When looking at digital communication it is important to think about how information is transferred and delivered. Research on information dissemination theory—specifically information dispersal—dates back to the 1920s. When looking at the

delivery of information four major components should be considered:

- the audience or user,
- the delivery source,
- the information content, and
- the media type being used to circulate the information (Garner et al. 2006).

When using an online tool to gather or deliver information remember to think about your audience (students, faculty, parents), where the information is coming from (typically you, the school librarian), what you are telling your audience, and what kind of technology, app, or tool you might be using to deliver the information.

Remember to think about how your community can access your delivered information; in other words, not everyone might have the same app, device, tool, or connectivity as you. Think also about your message; one delivered solely to students should read differently than a message directed specifically to parents or peer educators. Gathering and delivering information takes a bit of thought before you can begin communicating with your community using some of the following useful tools.

## Useful Digital Tools

**Google Forms** <<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>>: Google Forms offers a free, simple platform to create easy-to-use surveys. It enables users to get answers fast, whether you're determining how to spend a grant or monies from your administrator, are trying to decide where to focus your budget for the year, or are trying to choose where to pursue funding for your annual collection budget. Once you create an account, you simply sign into Google Forms, decide what question format you wish to ask (open-ended, multiple choice,

etc.), and enter your questions. Once your survey/questionnaire is complete, you can send the link to faculty, administrators, parents, and/or students. All responses are recorded on a spreadsheet for your own information purposes. Google Forms is a great tool for curating ideas, wish lists, book ideas, curricula, and lesson plans for the year.

**Yo Teach** <<https://yoteachapp.com/>>: For all those who remember or miss Today's Meet, now you have a new, cost-free option in Yo Teach. This is a back channel, like Twitter, without the sign-up or account. Simply create a room, share the code, and users can log into Yo Teach, enter the code, and offer feedback. Yo Teach is an excellent tool for instant feedback, conversation, ideas, and information. Having a workshop or professional development day? Keep the conversation going with this communication tool. For collection management this platform could be a great tool to use to gather titles, genres, authors, and wish lists from students and faculty. Users can see the conversation thread, which can further feed ideas. Yo Teach is a quick and easy tool to use for instant feedback.

**Flipgrid** <<https://flipgrid.com/>>: If you're looking for a useful way to gather information quickly Flipgrid is a wonderful, free digital tool and app. Winner of both the AASL Best Website and Best App recognitions, Flipgrid can help you gather feedback, information, and ideas via video. It is not the only video response tool out there, but it is by far the most intuitive. As the manager, you can create a poll or ask a question, then send out the link/Flip Code and users can respond to your query. Looking for feedback on the latest Manga series in the library? Wondering if a makerspace might be a good idea for your community?

Interested in Zines and not sure if they are right for your students? Flipgrid is a great place to float an idea or question to gather reaction.

**Canva** <<https://www.canva.com/>>: Communication involves receiving and sending information. With AASL Best Website winner Canva, users can create flyers, infographics, brochures, invitations, and so much more. It is a free publishing tool with amazing possibilities. Canva is easy to use, and the final products are gorgeous. Tell your students about the new nonfiction sports series with a flyer. Share the top check-outs and circulation statistics with your faculty, administrators, and parents through a monthly digital newsletter. With Canva, you can print items or send them electronically and know they are going to look good. (Disclaimer: While Canva is free, you can pay for Canva stock photos if you choose.)

**Piktochart** <<https://piktochart.com/>>: There is a wide range of free online and app-based infographic tools to choose from. Piktochart is one among many, but it is a personal favorite. It's a simple tool that allows a user to tell stories with their data and information. An online tool to create great infographics, flyers, and charts, Piktochart offers a platform to share information with your learning community. Tell your faculty and administrators how library budgets are being spent with a monthly or quarterly report. Piktochart makes creating an info-

graphic user-friendly and easy to read. Share library statistics, great reads, and new books with students and parents with a monthly write-up. Piktochart is a strong communication tool that will help any librarian share the message from their library while putting the spotlight on the needs of the learners.

**Edublogs** <<https://edublogs.org/>>: Have you ever thought about creating a blog? Blogging is not new, but it is a great writing exercise to keep school librarians accountable, as well as advocate for the library by communicating activities, reports, and collections in the library. It's easy to embed a blog into the school library's webpage, and your learning community can follow what is happening in your learning space. The one downside to blogs is feedback. There are typically comment sections at the end of a blog post, but if you are looking for a feedback or a polling tool, blogging is not the best vehicle. Comments and feedback typically arrive at the end of a blog post, and conversations are rarely in real time. Blogging is good for information delivery.

### Final Thoughts

The collection in a school library should reflect the community it serves. When curating information and ideas for new books and materials in the school library, the school librarian should communicate with students, faculty, parents, and

administration through a variety of digital tools and resources. Input from your school community is crucial when seeking representation in book collections, digital resources, and so much more in the school library. If you haven't already, try out a site/app or two from this article. See how they change your communication and curation.



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