

UHLS Youth Services Advisory Council

February 4th, 2026

1:00-2:15, Virtual

Attendance (12): Mary Fellows (UHLS), Caroline Purdy (UHLS), Emily Kinney (RENS), Gail Brown (VOOR), Meagan Salisbury (GRAF), Kathy Stempel (BERN), Laurie Buckley (APL), Leah Silecchia (APL), Morgan Hoag (APL), Sarah Bailey (TROY), Sherry Bhatti (MEND), Suzanne Cardinal (NASS)

Slides

UHLS Updates

- [March Manga Madness](#) - consider promoting this in your library!
- Upcoming Workshops & Trainings:
 - [2026 Unearth A Story Programming Ideas for Children Workshop](#) - **Monday, February 9**, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
 - [2026 Unearth A Story Programming Ideas for Teens Workshop](#) - **Wednesday, March 11**, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
 - Presenters needed! Sign up to volunteer [here](#)
 - [Storytime Palooza Book Share](#) - **Thursday, March 19th**, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm

Youth Collections Discussion

Vendors

- Libraries traditionally use wholesalers (e.g., Ingram) for processing, cataloging, and system integration
- Amazon is expanding library options
- Ingram is currently overwhelmed; many libraries seeking alternatives
- A great list of options, with explanations is [here](#)
 - [Follett Content Solutions](#) - Popular with schools, new to serving public libraries
 - NASS - signed up through Titlewave, prices not as good as Mackin, nice to work with, 15%

[Libraria](#) – Oriented to schools. Not much info.

[Mackin](#) – Oriented to schools, but:

- Processing included
- Prebound: <https://home.mackin.com/print/mackinbound/>
- Say they have 4.2 million PK-12 grade titles and 18K publishers
 - NASS - prices good, customer service phenomenal, women-owned, 15%

- Consider what works best for your library - possibly a combination of different services for time being

Comments on above vendors from libraries:

- APL exclusively ordering through Ingram - has existing processing accounts, though errors occur
- VOOR - items are not coming processed through Ingram
- NASS - Ingram has minimum item number, tough for smaller libraries. Looking for alternatives to avoid using Amazon, though they have the best pricing
- Recommended [article](#) on impacts on libraries since Baker and Taylor's closure

Format

- [Wonderbook](#) - from Playaway, 1100 titles, about \$35. Print book with a ready-to-play audiobook inside. Appears to have the most titles available
 - VOOR: circulate often, sturdy and hold up well
- [LaunchPad](#) - also from Playaway, table pre-loaded with content for kids. Have a "Reading Academy" version with 5-level guided reading system.
 - Also circulate well
- [VOX Books](#) - audiobook that lives in print book. Over 800 titles. Around \$60.
 - APL - very low demand/circulation for above items
 - TROY - CDs not circulating, replacing with [Yoto](#) ~\$165 (BETH also has to loan out) cards depend on song/story (~\$15-\$25), intention to circulate, starting with 1-2
 - VOOR - [Tonieboxes](#) ordered, also loanable from BETH. Cost ~\$110 w/preloaded content, characters to add to box ~\$17 (add additional stories and songs) can be checked out as a supplement
- Items like these could also be available to use in the library only
- DVDs/Blu-rays
 - not as much circulation, adult circ at APL is high - children's very low
- On their way out?
 - CDs - gone
 - Videocassettes - gone
 - DVDs - APL: in "family" section with adult DVDs they go out, not in children's department
 - Blu-ray - not much use

- On the horizon?
 - Streaming services available on a loanable stick - EGRN has available, some libraries looking into providing this service

AI Slop

- **Definition:** Low- to mid-quality content – video, images, audio, text or a mix – created with AI tools.
 - See: Baby’s First AI Slop Story & Lulu Goes To Trip
 - [Article on Identifying AI Slop Books](#)
 - Purpose: use AI to come up with titles and book covers that sound interesting, engaging, informative, to grab attention
- **AI slop books are often:**
 - Imitating bestsellers (often sold as “summaries” or using similar titles / author names to trick customers)
 - About current events or figures - things that there is instant demand for more information about, but which would require time to research thoroughly and write well.
 - About high-interest areas,: dinosaurs, motorcycles
 - Common traits: imitation of bestsellers, trendy topics, generic authors, rapid publication, superficial text.
- **Some indicators of AI-slop books are:**
 - Lack of credentials
 - Keyword-heavy titles
 - Poor design
 - Errors
 - Author photo is generic or AI-generated (you can always try reverse image searching or using an AI detector)
 - Author has no social media or website (e.g., they ONLY exist on Amazon)
 - The author has a huge backlog of books – even hundreds of titles – published in a short span of time (and particularly after Nov. 2022, when ChatGPT launched)
 - Generic, superficial, repetitive text (see if Amazon offers a reading sample, or check reviews)
 - Actual AI prompts left in the text itself
 - Fewer photos or visuals than expected for subject (e.g., no photos in a foraging manual)
- If you cannot find an author’s credentials, or if Amazon reviews talk about finding mistakes in the book, you might want to find an alternative.
- Sometimes AI slop books are printed on demand, so they are nonrefundable.

- What we noticed from looking at an AI slop book on Amazon:
 - No designated publisher
 - Atypical author description
 - Has a file size
 - Contains different design styles
 - Contains spelling/syntax errors
 - Lack of reviews
- **What encounters have you had with AI slop in youth books?**
 - 2 libraries reported that local authors asked if they would purchase their books - images were AI generated.
 - How do you catalog books like this? How do you determine if they are fit for your collection or not? At what point should that be noted in the record?
- **Checking reputable reviews and sources**
 - UHLS has a subscription to SLJ - you can sign up to have new issues routed to you
 - Reach out to Caroline to get on the list

E-books/e-content

- If you notice that AI generated content is included in UHLS OverDrive, report to Upper Hudson so it can be removed
 - Note: Book summaries on OverDrive are AI generated at times

Titles and Series

- What's hot?
 - DogMan
 - Magic Treehouse
 - Wings of Fire
 - Dragonmaster
 - Investigators
 - Campground Kids
 - Graphic novels
 - Babysitter's Club
 - Hunger Games
 - High school murder books
 - New romantasy
 - The Inheritance Games

- I Survive series
- D and D books, similar fantasy novels
- ALA [YMAS](#):
 - Caldecott Winner: Fireworks
 - Newbery Winner: All The Blues in The Sky (librarian review: touching, extraordinary)

Cataloging issues and questions

- Some libraries are reconsidering Dewey due to prejudiced/outdated language and structure, looking for other classification systems
 - Some collections genre-fied, labor/time intensive
 - Could having lots of different systems inhibit our teaching of children how to use libraries?
 - Any way to avoid the use of these problematic words in cataloging/headings?
 - Attempts to be sensitive to outdated terms, some websites have more inclusive subject headings for you to pull from (location based on heading can be problematic: i.e. ASD books next to psychopath books). Location can lead to harmful inferences/associations
 - Be mindful of pre-processed books and where they say to be placed vs. your judgement of most appropriate location; issue of optics

Collection marketing ideas

- Awesome card - whenever a patron returns a book and reports their satisfaction of it, librarians scan it under the awesome card barcode, providing a list of patron-recommended and loved books
- Awesome box - same principle, but books are returned into the awesome box, could be easier for libraries, could allow patrons a quick and easy way to give their feedback

Teens marketing to other teens

- Teen librarians asked teens to write down their favorite book with a one-sentence explanation of why they would recommend that book to peers
 - Responses were compiled into a book list, used as main promotional focus during Teen Read Week
 - Featured in social media posts.
 - Sent an email to teen cardholders with a link to the list
 - Results were fantastic - 29 percent increase in circulation for the books on that list during Teen Read Week, increased amount of teens who shared the social media posts about the booklist because they helped to create it
- Read It Forward also uses word of mouth recommendations and teen-teen book discussions

- Book review website - teens can submit their opinions on books they read. Edited with assistance from librarians and given volunteer hours for participation
- As part of summer reading, a prize option for teens could be allowing them to choose a book to add to the collection, could provide them with award winning books + blurbs to give them options/generate interest
- Choose the best book cover of the year program

Resource and Idea Sharing

Take Your Child To The Library Day, 2/07/2026

- VOOR - performances of some kind (animal show this year), give out stickers, candy, partnering with elementary school and PTA for pick a reading partner program. For all of February every program they attend they get a raffle ticket/book checkout, brought back to school to receive a prize
- TROY - Drop-in craft, reading dog will be there

ARCs Available!

<http://reports.uhls.org/cgi-bin/staff/arc.pl>

(These ARCs cannot be added to your collection in any way.

By requesting ARCs, you are agreeing to give them to your kid, tween, or teen readers.)

Next Meeting:

Find More Events, Trainings, & Resources

<https://www.uhls.org/youth-and-family-services/>

Upper Hudson Youth Services

Mary Fellows - 437-9880 x228 – mary.fellows@uhls.org

Caroline Purdy - 437-9880 x231– ys.support@uhls.org