
The graphic features a purple background on the left with white binary code (0s and 1s) arranged in a grid. The word "TECH" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif letters across the middle of this background. To the right, the words "PUBLIC LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT" are stacked vertically in a large, black, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the text "a moderated panel discussion on future library technology" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom left of the graphic is a simple line drawing of a mountain range. The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin purple border.

**TECH** PUBLIC LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT  
a moderated panel discussion  
on future library technology

 At Rye Public Library

**September 29, 2011**

**sponsored by the  
Rye Public Library Strategic Planning  
Committee**

***Executive Summary***

**Rye Public Library  
581 Washington Road  
Rye, New Hampshire 03870**

# **Rye Public Library Technology Summit Panel Discussion**

## ***Executive Summary***

In recognition of a lack of specific attention paid to the role of technology in the public library during our earlier Visioning Session, The Rye Public Library Strategic Planning Committee proposed the development of a specific event to engage thinking toward the future of public library technology and to generate potential goals for inclusion in the Rye Public Library's Three Year Strategic planning and future technology planning cycles.

This document will summarize the Rye Public Library Technology Summit event, compiling and outlining the main points established during the discussion under each of the conceptual guideline questions. When they illustrate a point succinctly, direct quotations specific to each bullet will appear as bullet points in italics with the following citation key to identify the speaker: Sheila Adams(SA), D. Scott Campbell(DSC), Matthew Craig(MC) and Tim Moynahan (TM), [also: (Audience)].

*A full print transcript of the discussion is available for review at the Rye Public Library along with the original MP3 recording of the event from which the transcription was produced by Judith A. Park Transcription Services.*

The Rye Public Library Technology Summit Panel Discussion took place on Thursday evening September 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. A panel of technology professionals was invited to participate. The Rye Public Library's Technology Librarian position was vacant at the time, so there was no panel participation by RPL staff. The following individuals shared their time and expertise to contribute to a very successful and enlightening discussion.

### **Panelist Roster:**

Sheila Adams SAU 50 Science faculty  
(Moderator)

D. Scott Campbell, Director, Langdon  
Public Library

Matthew Craig, Computer consultant.

Tim Moynahan SAU 50 Technologist  
(former)

We thank the panelists and audience members who contributed to a lively, well-informed discussion and helped create a valuable and educational event. Our panelists volunteered their time to be part of the evening, and everyone who attended braved a true downpour to make their way to the Rye Public Library for the Summit. Audience members included representatives of the Rye Public Library Strategic Planning Committee, RPL Staff and Trustees and regional library professionals as well as the general public. Thanks to all who participated!

As a structural consideration, a series of guiding questions was developed in order to frame the discussion. Our intent was to invite a leap of imagination through conjecture on the state of technology in roughly fifteen years time, from which more contemporary observations could be made, and through further consideration goals devised for current planning purposes. This sweeping view engaged the excitement of the possible, which then could be distilled to reveal

more practical applications and expectations for a more limited time horizon. The conceptual questions posed follow here:

### Conceptual questions and concepts:

- **What will technology look like in 2025?**
- **How will technology serve library patrons in 2025?**
- **How will we prepare our libraries for technology in 2025?**
- **How will we know if we've succeeded?**

Sheila Adams acted as the evening's moderator and invited each panelist to provide a short introduction and review of their personal involvement with technology. After this opening session, the initial discussion began by considering the long view of general technology advancements over the next 15 years. While our panel included only one library professional, based on the nature of the event, members had prepared to discuss technology as it relates to library applications. Accordingly, along with general conjecture, much discussion centered on issues related to the exchange of-- and free access to-- information in the future, key roles for both libraries and communication technologies.

### What will technology look like in 2025?

- Low-cost device development (Raspberry Pi project)
  - Potential book experience where e-reader device is incorporated into the price of the book.
- Proliferation of tablet format devices by 2015.
  - Trend toward increased speed, capacity with lower pricing amongst devices.
  - Future mobile devices will be comparable to today's desktop computers.
- Vendor requirements and digital rights management emerging as impediment to public library's role in free exchange of information.
  - *are we seeing a layer of commercialization on top of the library experience that used to be a public free arena? Are we allowing corporations to be the information gatekeepers and have to abide by their terms – (MC)*
- Emerging models indicate vendors' attempts to restrict access to previously free flow of information on the Web.
  - *then we create a network or a world of information where everything is locked away and you need to abide by either the terms of use of the device or terms of use of the software before you can access this information-(MC)*
  - *All these corporations, for-profit corporations, are providing information to us that we desire, entertainment, whatever. And when they control that, they control the free flow of information. And looking forward to 2025, if it's not, you know, it could be more like 1984, where you're not in control of the access to the information. And maybe the library is the last place in town where you can get it without a log-in ID, without a credit card, without a Terms of Service agreement.—(DSC)*
- School environments tend to embody the adoption of a one device approach by reason of cost effectiveness and network realities.
  - Commitment to existing technology requires acceptance of realities in terms of

- availability and cohesion with vision at the current time.
  - *you talk 4G, well, it's not here. Is it going to be here? You hope so, you know, but will they be looking at 5G at that point, by the time you make your choice—(TM)*
- Cloud based applications can relieve the computing capacity requirements of devices.
  - Key to this is open access and protocols for retrieval of web based material.
  - *it would be nice if there were more standardization because there are some sites that you can't see or certain applications that are used on some sites, for example, Flash on some sites, and you have to have that particular software. It would be nice to see, you know, they're talking HTML 5 kind of bridging that gap so that it doesn't matter what device you have—(TM)*
  - Concerns exist in relation to the security and archival practice around web-based resources.
    - Will libraries be able to offer archival security as in current models?
- Internet (cloud) based information opens channels of access limitation by proprietors.
  - *I have a feeling then you'll end up, when stuff gets so much on the cloud, that that's going to create a demand for information that is locked down and in a silo and available only to certain people in an intranet, for example, or a database that's subscriber only.—(DSC)*

Discussion points relative to the remaining conceptual questions were extracted from the transcript and organized below:

### **How will technology serve library patrons in 2025?**

- Public library as technology experience center. Technology instruction and support.
  - Implement Discovery Desk for tech demos and questions with personal assistance.
- Library role in clarification of copyright implications in downloaded materials.
  - Obfuscation to public exists via copyright free material packaged by vendors as seemingly commercial property.
- RFID Radio Frequency Identification
  - Existing technology capable of offering location and reader advisory components of public library service.
- The library as home for experiences perhaps beyond the scope of what individuals could personally undertake. Resource sharing.
  - *ways for people to pool their money together and get something that they wouldn't necessarily be able to get or that they can get at a much lower cost than individually.—(Audience)*
  - Library as showcase of software and devices otherwise unattainable to most.
  - *I can see virtual- reality rooms and, you know, 3-D movie-screening spaces in libraries in 2025, I can see that.—(DSC)*
- The unique element of library service will continue to be *Librarians* who will help interpret and process a myriad of information.
  - *So librarians are going to be and still are archivists, facilitators, educators, keeping people safe. And one of the things that I really liked*

- *was inspire, to inspire other people-- (SA)*
  - *will the people who work in libraries be the facilitators as well as the distillers or the brokers?—(Audience)*
- Existing battery technology has limited the capabilities of many devices to date.
  - Resonance charging station in Library setting to accommodate variety of devices?
- Libraries can counter the tendency of technology's ability to allow people to interact remotely by offering physical meeting space and opportunities. e.g. tweet-ups.

### **How will we prepare our libraries for technology in 2025?**

- Physical design of library facilities will reflect storage realities offered by technological solutions.
  - *libraries are being built inside-out where they're being built for people, and the content, the books and movies and the media, are around the edges—(DSC)*
- Increased conductivity of network
  - The library should be the model of conductivity in the community
  - *The library should have the fattest pipe in town, and that pipe should be going to the absolute, top-of-the-line machine and so that you're getting something for coming in the building, and that is higher-speed connectivity, more computing power —(DSC)*
- Openness of platforms lends more flexibility in application of a variety of technologies.
  - Proprietary limitations can exert restrictions on improvisation amongst available technologies.
- Negotiate favorable terms with publishers and vendors to improve patron experience as end result.
- Support evolution of the author/publisher relationship with emergence of copyright neutral material with more flexible boundaries.
  - *Smashwords* and *Gluejar* are both stables of authors who are contributing to an open sharing of their material.
  - E-book content from local authors can be hosted locally, and contributed to the State downloadable book catalog as a future strategy in acquisition.
- Provide appropriate training opportunities for staff to remain comfortable with evolving service responses.
  - *"Google can give you 10,000 answers; a librarian can give you the right answer." And it's distilling that information and making a recommendation that is still the brain -- the human brain is still best suited for that if it's trained right.-(DSC)*
- Be conversant and present in emerging technologies—today's touch-points would be social media outlets, downloadables, etc.
  - Maintain relevance in public measure.

### **How will we know if we've succeeded?**

- Design statistical reporting to reflect evolving experience and service responses.

- Co-ordinate with Statewide collection instruments.
- *we're going to need new metrics, new success metrics, to even be able to answer that question in 2025. And my simple, off-the-cuff, you know, flip answer is if we're still around, we're still surviving and relevant and in town and funded at a level that is appropriate, then we're succeeding. I don't know any other way to measure it until we establish those new metrics.—(DSC)*
- Automate statistical collection (technology solution)
  - Continued upswing in usage reports based on redesigned statistical collection.
- Continued upswing in physical visits and programming attendance.
  - Provides indication of providing public space for community
  - *It seems like everything is being privatized. And libraries, and almost to a lesser extent parks, are really the only places that we have that people can congregate and feel comfortable—(MC)*
- Libraries should continue to be a place for imagination
  - *if people in the future continue to see libraries as a place where they can construct new ideas, then I think that's a point of success—(DSC)*
- *another measure of success would be in the social medium and how people are communicating that out to other people.—(SA)*

The Rye Public Library Strategic Planning Committee, with assistance from RPL's newly hired Technology Librarian Lisa Breton-Eaton, will continue to work with the raw material gleaned through this extraordinary discussion and fold the results into future technology planning and our Three-Year Strategic Planning process.