



Activity	Presenter-less Workshop – Library Strategies
Aim/ Key learnings	<i>Participants will take part in an open-ended discussion about libraries' mission</i>
Method	<i>A professional development activity to encourage innovative thinking or a playful way of guiding library policy discussions with key stakeholders</i>
Preparation and Materials Required	<i>1 <u>set of worksheets</u> for every FIVE participants, plus spares A3 paper, markers, and any other presentation materials you'd care to provide</i>
Duration	<i>As required</i>

Outline

This activity is based on [Matt Finch's Future Libraries: Towards A Presenterless Workshop](#).

It allows groups to self-organise in discussing library strategy, opportunity, and innovation.

The purpose of the Presenter-less Workshop is to get librarians thinking creatively and strategically about what they might achieve, especially in programming terms - but also to understand that they already have incredible creative talents and problem-solving skills, that organisational rules are guidelines to be interpreted rather than laws to be obeyed or transgressed.

By changing the content of the five provocations on the worksheets, this format can also be used to explore other issues and other professions.

How to Play

Download and print [one set of these worksheets](#) for every five participants.

Set up the venue for group discussion, with tables and chairs that can be moved around.

A warm-up activity is a good idea - something quick and fun that gets people talking and laughing, such as making quick collaborative comics.

You can hand out the sheets 'as is', or put them in envelopes like sealed orders, or even inside a cardboard cube to make [Comic Book Dice](#) as a warm-up.

Give the participants time to form groups after they've received their instructions. If they get very stuck or lost, intervene to help them form groups, and if they struggle to find all the worksheets, you can also give them spares.

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Don't be too quick to intervene. A big part of this workshop is allowing the participants to solve problems for themselves. For example, how do they choose to find people with the other remaining worksheets? Some groups may form and start calling out for the sheets they are missing. People may walk around holding up their fingers to show what number worksheet they need. One group organised itself very well and sent all the people with 1s to one corner, all the 2s to another, etc...

Once the groups settle, they should talk freely among themselves. The topics cover a lot of ground so a minimum of half an hour for discussion is good. Circulate and listen to what they have to say.

Take photos if you spot any examples of really good problem-solving: for example, one group solved the problem of insufficient worksheets by taking photos of the sheets on an iPad which they then shared around. Another, even more practical group, simply went over the water-cooler table and laid all the sheets out so they could huddle and read them together.

Watch out for and note this kind of undirected problem-solving. Also note what order the participants discuss the sheets in: the first sheet is deliberately a heavy-going and rather bureaucratic one. How many participants decide to skip this one or leave it to last? Nowhere in the instructions does it say what order you need to read them in, so who spots the opportunity to attack the tasks in an order which suits the group?

After around half an hour, tell the groups that they are going to have to present their work and they should make notes or illustrations on the A3 sheet provided.



You could invite them to present their work from a stage, but if you have many participants, here's an alternative: Get them to nominate one "curator" to stay with their A3 sheet at the table, while everyone else tours the room to visit the other groups and their curators.

Whatever you decide, give the groups an appropriate length of time to prepare for this task, and then some time to circulate, explore the other groups' work, and report back to their own curator.

A great plenary for this session is for you to report back your observations on how they approached the challenges. Celebrate the problem-solving and creativity you saw. Who approached the worksheets in a strategic order? Who rearranged the layout of the room, or used the devices in their pocket, or found other solutions to facilitate the discussion? If you're really quick, you could even upload photos of these things from the day's event to the projector and show the participants images of themselves finding creative solutions to problems.

Need further information?

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