

## Le Bibliothécaire Solo: Success in the Diverse World of Solo Art Librarianship

The world of solo librarianship is perhaps the most diverse subset of librarianship yet at the same time often overlooked. In 2015, the Solo Art Librarians Special Interest Group was resurrected because ARLIS/NA members expressed a need for more professional support and conference content geared towards solo librarianship. In one short year the SIG has attracted close to 100 members. This 90-minute panel of lightning round presentations will scale-down topics for solo librarians. Topics range from job training to strategic planning and everything in between—totally encompassing the diversity of solo librarianship. Further, presenters represent many different types of institutions: academic, museums, public and private, but are inclusive to solo librarianship. These lightning talks will help any art librarian that wears many hats achieve success without adequate personnel support or bottomless budgets.

1. Barbara Opar, Librarian for Architecture, Syracuse University Libraries

### *The Embedded Librarian- Engagement is Key*

The successful embedded librarian must be truly engaged in both the discipline and the department(s) served. But what does “**embedded**” mean? It is different at different institutions. I will briefly address what embedded means in terms of my role as Architecture Librarian at Syracuse where I am a **solo librarian** overseeing a reserve book unit, providing reference help, and developing the collection for both the ARR and the Libraries in general. Events like the student book club and our *Materials Focus* sessions are key to showing engagement. So what are the benefits for all parties in terms of being embedded? Is there a down side? This brief overview of my role at Syracuse will include thoughts about the pluses- mostly- and a few negatives.

2. Gabriella Karl-Johnson, Architecture Librarian, School of Architecture, Princeton University

### *Job Training for the Solo Librarian*

As a librarian entering a solo position, it can be difficult to know where to begin. How do you learn to do what you do, when you’re the only one doing it? If documentation is minimal, as can be the case at many institutions, reliance on internal and external colleagues can be essential for success. This talk will present real-world examples of techniques for developing job knowledge, including strategies for knowledge gathering from supervisors, support staff, and colleagues in similar roles.

3. Traci Timmons – Seattle Art Museum – [TraciT@SeattleArtMuseum.org](mailto:TraciT@SeattleArtMuseum.org)

### *Advocacy for the Solo Librarian*

For most libraries, advocacy is important. Art libraries are typically not cost-centers or direct drivers of revenue for our institutions. Because of this, effective advocacy can be the thing that keeps us alive in times of trouble. Being a self-advocate or encouraging others to be advocates for our libraries and/or staff positions can be challenging and require some of us to act outside of personal comfort zones. This brief presentation will address several advocacy strategies that have had positive effects on a medium-sized museum library with a solo librarian.

4. Jasmine Burns – Indiana University Bloomington – burnsjas@indiana.edu  
*Advocating for Branch Libraries*  
This presentation approaches the topic of Advocating for Branch Libraries through a discussion of the ways in which a solo librarian can transform their patrons, departments, and communities into advocates for their library. Examples will be given of how these goals can ultimately be reached through the creation of a variety of outreach initiatives (in departments, through the larger library system, and campus-wide), their implementation, and the measurement of their impact.
5. Anna Elam – Seattle Art Museum – AnnaE@seattleartmuseum.org  
*Space Planning as a Solo Librarian*  
Anna Elam, Librarian/Educator for the Ann P. Wyckoff Teacher Resource Center at the Seattle Art Museum, will share tips and tricks for solo librarians to track their current space situations and plan for a move into a space that already exists. The session audience will walk away with real world examples and lessons from the trenches of a current library move.
6. Jane Devine Mejia – Vancouver Art Gallery – jdevine@vanartgallery.bc.ca  
*Working with Volunteers and Students*  
How does a solo librarian recruit, train, motivate and develop volunteer and student workers? What are the key factors in running a library without regular paid staff? This talk will use the Vancouver Art Gallery Library & Archives as a case study in working with placement students and gallery volunteers to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
7. Caroline Dechert – Librarian and Archivist, Museum of International Folk Art – Caroline.Dechert@state.nm.us  
*Creative IT Partnerships for the Solo Librarian*  
IT solutions – library systems, digital asset management systems, and their kin - are typically built to be efficient and affordable at scale. How can a solo librarian with little or no dedicated IT support or budget keep up? This presentation takes a swift look at two cases where a combination of open source software and an open mind about unusual partnerships created opportunities. Case 1: Two solo librarians team up to form a mini-consortium, sharing a hosted open source Koha ILS. Case 2: By agreeing to act a test case, a solo librarian gets her own implementation of an open source software digital asset management system.
8. Lucy Campbell – NewSchool of Architecture and Design – lcampbell@newschoolarch.edu  
*Solo Strategic Planning*  
How can you be sure you are making the best decisions for your institution? When there are no colleagues to discuss pros and cons with or bounce ideas off, making major strategic plans can be paralyzing. This presentation will outline some approaches to strategic planning solo, and offer methods to ensure you can have confidence in the success of your library.

9. Jessica Shaykett – American Craft Council – [jshaykett@craftcouncil.org](mailto:jshaykett@craftcouncil.org)

*Professional Development for Solo Professionals*

Taking advantage of professional development opportunities can help alleviate the sense of isolation that accompanies working as a solo librarian. However, support and funding for conference and workshop attendance within a small organization can often be difficult to come by. Jessica Shaykett, librarian at the American Craft Council, will discuss the challenges solo staff face when it comes to professional development, as well as share tips for garnering institutional support.

10. Cathryn Copper – Woodbury University School of Architecture –

[Cathryn.copper@woodbury.edu](mailto:Cathryn.copper@woodbury.edu)

*Leadership for the Solo Librarian: How to Grow When there is Nowhere Up to Go*

A scaled-down version of Harvard's Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians that applies concepts for solo librarians. How does a solo librarian increase their leadership and management capacity when there is nowhere up to go? The expectations of library leaders are changing and solo librarians need to remain competitive. This lightening talk will provide tools to assess leadership strengths and weaknesses and highlight examples of implementation for librarians without the luxury of a support staff.