Our Stories, Our Connections
Hello, and thank you for being interested in Our Stories, Our Connections.

Every person has a story, and every institution has a story. This interactive e-book is an attempt to bring those stories to light and find ways we are all connected.

Technology is a significant part of the story of any person or institution.

Technology…

plays a role within each story,

is the tool for documenting each story,

and

is the way each story is shared.

But technology is not the story.

As a reflection of this, I have created several pages of this e-book by hand. On the hand-drawn pages, click or tap the images to access their related resources.

Chuck Koontz
December 4, 2019
Part 1: The story of our USERS
We exist for our users.

To go back to the foundations of modern librarianship, “Books are for **use**. Every **reader** his/her book.”[emphasis mine]

When I started my degree program, I felt that the thing that the library profession had to offer the world was an **enlightened method** for discovering the resources that were out there. If every (broken) user simply learned how to be a junior librarian, they would have the best resources available. I hadn’t thought through the implication – the user is then a burden that librarians have to carry through the changes in the information environment.

The articles by Pewhairangi, Schneider, and Kenney were instrumental in changing my understanding that the user isn’t broken; they don’t lack the necessary training to properly utilize the library. The role of the librarian is to know the user (and their story – Pewhairangi’s MVPs), know the resources, and be the go-between that the user needs (“Save the time of the reader”).

Zulkey’s article about the before/after-hour library access blew my mind. The amount of trust that decision required was unfathomable to me. But as I thought through it, I realized that feeling was a rooted in bad priorities. If we are here for the users and it’s possible to offer that flexibility without sacrificing services, then it is the right decision. Make stories connected with the archivist in me. We now have the opportunity to document, preserve, and share our stories like never before. Libraries should be at the forefront of making that happen!

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2 Ibid.
MVPs

- Pewhairangi

- Schindler

(Still)

- Kenney

THE USER IS NOT BROKEN

- Boekesteijn

Make stories

AUTOMATIC for the PEOPLE

- Zulkey
Part 2: The story of our Services
If we exist for our users, then our role is to serve. We are guardians of our resources only to the extent that it serves our users.

Schneider and Kenney, in writing about the library as a service and not a format, as well as the OPAC not being the sun, gave me foundational and concrete examples of proper priorities in the information professions.

The stories and thoughts about user experience, shared by Aaron Schmidt, did the same. I was especially struck by his illustration that asking users to design library services is like asking me to design a new banking system. Instead, we as the information professionals need to know our users and provide the services that best meet their needs. Mathews’ *Cultivating Complexity* article, with its heavy emphasis on situational analysis, provided a very potent lesson in management and the need for organizational awareness.

In the middle of all of these illustrations, and supporting all of them from behind, are kindness and empathy. Michael Stephens’ articles, his manner in lecture and interactions, and the clear heart throughout the semester have provided more than ample evidence that our services will always fall short without kindness and empathy.

Without empathy we can’t know our users as they should be known, nor will they know us as anything but gatekeepers to their resources. Without kindness, our users won’t feel that the library is their place.

With empathy and kindness, our users will feel and know that they are valued, their story is valued, and that they have a special place in the story of the library.