
Reader's Advisory Beyond

📅 Sat, 4/3 11:21AM ⌚ 14:24

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

library, books, advisory, readers, displays, readers advisory, talk, picture, booktube, lists, creating, share, public library, place, passive, encourage, librarian, festivals, include, moxie

SPEAKERS

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Hello again, I'm Kimberly Hirsh. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Information and library science, and also a former school librarian. And now we're going to go beyond the reader's advisory interview and talk about some other ways to do readers advisory. Here's our agenda for this lecture. First, we'll talk about virtual readers advisory. And then we'll talk about passive readers advisory and I'll explain more about why I call it passive readers advisory when we get to it. So first, virtual readers advisory, as you might expect, involves digitally mediated readers advisory possibilities. So a common one that many libraries do is form-based readers advisory. This is the form based readers advisory from my public library. It has a place for you to put your name and your email address and your library card number. And then essentially a box that serves as the rest of a reader's advisory interview where you talk about books you've enjoyed, or books you didn't enjoy, and why you want to be sure to avoid books like that in the future. This is a fairly straightforward way of providing readers advisory and not all that different from doing a reader's advisory interview. Then we have social media, and I'm going in order from most recent to most old, oldest, I guess, here. So I'm going to start with BookTok. BookTok, as you might guess, is when people talk about books on TikTok. This is just a screengrab from the #BookTok hashtag page. I've included in the resource web page that I am sending Dr. Threats links to a few different articles about BookTok. What's really interesting about BookTok is that it appears to be driving sales of books in a way that no other social media has. And some people have suggested that this is because there's sort of a more immediate emotional connection. When someone talks about a book on BookTok, it's not a still image, it is not just a picture, it's either them revealing their emotions related to the book, or sometimes creating sort of

a moving mood board for a book. So they might take a book like Tracy Deonn's Legendborn, which I'll reference again later, which is one of my favorite books of the year. Last year. That was set on UNC campus and is also about Arthurian legend and magic and they might have a picture of Wilson Library at UNC and then a picture of a young black woman doing some magic, and then a picture of a sword that looks like Excalibur all set to music that is very moody and appropriate for the story or perhaps music that is really popular on TikTok, because music is one of the ways people find different videos on TikTok. So using music that is popular on the app can be a good way to draw attention to your post. I have not seen a lot of libraries using TikTok yet though I believe some are. But there's definitely room here for innovation with library readers advisory. Next is Bookstagram. This one I feel like is pretty big and pretty well established. It's a community and it's often individuals sharing about books. But also as you can see here, again, from my local public library, libraries can use it as well. So here, my library featured this Women's History Month list. Timely lists, display, and posts are all really a good thing that you can pull in readers advisory for. I would encourage you to be sort of culturally responsive about this. When I was hunting for some different images, I sometimes would find things that felt a little bit like food and festivals culture-wise, which is a fairly limited view of any given culture. So I would encourage you to go beyond food and festivals when you are creating a display for something like Chinese New Year or American Indian History month or black history month or Hispanic Heritage Month or any, you know, culturally based celebration. I would definitely encourage you to take a look at a diverse representation of books for that. And I'll give you some resources for that on the webpage as well. And also to remember to go beyond just food and festivals. So Bookstagram is fairly straightforward. You can do a picture like this, you can do something called a flat lay. Which if you Google you'll find a lot of different advice for but it's basically an overhead shot of some artfully arranged items with a book. And of course Bookstagram can also take advantage of Instagram's features besides still photos such as stories and reels. So this is a place where libraries are really, I think getting more involved than they have done yet with others, a good place to find community as well. In my experience, it's very easy to connect with other people via Bookstagram. Because a lot of times asking questions is really common. So someone will, you know, share a picture of what they read over the weekend and then say, what did you read this weekend? Or what's your favorite Gothic novel? Or what's your plan for what you're going to read next? and that's an easy way to engage with other people. And thus, also an easy way to engage with potential patrons by sharing something that's sort of more typical Bookstagram posts from your personal or library account. And then asking questions that patrons and others can answer to interact with you. Booktube is I think even more established than Bookstagram. BookTube is a big community of a lot of people who talk about books. A book haul is a very frequent type of post on BookTube, where you might get a bunch of books in an order from the mail or pick up from the library and share them. A librarian could do a book haul video of new books that have just come into the library to share, that kind of thing. This is a screen grab of a librarian called Mr. Jim at the Fayetteville Public Library in Fayetteville, Arkansas. And he does these videos where he does a short book talk, which is a fairly common format on BookTube, to introduce books to

readers, and so here he is doing one for Aru Shah and the End of Time. And he actually made this one sound so interesting that my four year old who normally is not that into a middle grade book, really wanted to try it out. Other things you can do on Booktube are things like a book trailer, which you can do, from really basic, you know, transitioning between photos with music to a full on filmed, mini-movie. And then you can also engage in conversations on booktube as well, because it does have a place for comments on YouTube. And so you can ask questions of other people and see how they participate, interact with you. So there are a lot of possibilities there. For all of these social media possibilities, I think you'll find a lot more hobbyists than librarians engaging them. And I would encourage you as a future library professional to instead seek out those ideas that hobbyists are using and think about ways that you can use them professionally as well. And then Twitter, which has been around for the longest and is a fairly straightforward way to go ahead and do some readers advisory online. I have highlighted here a tweet that mentions Legendborn, as I said, and it uses the hashtag, #AskALibrarian. This is a hashtag Twitter chat event that takes place on Thursday mornings, I believe, from noon to one Eastern. And it was started by I think Penguin Random House and Library Journal, and maybe another publication. And so just every Thursday, a bunch of librarians will log on and answer people's questions, including readers advisory questions about what to read next. You can see here that the original tweeter asked this question of the DC Public Library specifically. So you can not only use the hashtag, but also make sure that tweet is directed at a particular library. And so if you are working at a library, you can promote this Ask a Librarian event with your library's Twitter handle so that people can direct their questions to you on Twitter. So now I'd like you to take a little time, pause this video or make a note to yourself that after you finish this video, you're going to do this and pick your favorite social media platform and explore the world of books and libraries there. I have included on the web page I created some links to different articles about how to get started in some of these spaces. So if you're completely unfamiliar with them, there should be some introductory material there that can help you out. Okay, you're either back or you're just going to go on and do your exploration later. But now we'll talk about passive readers advisory and I call this passive readers advisory because it's like passive income in that you've set it up. And then it just works for you without you having to maintain it too much. So one example of passive readers advisory is something libraries can draw from bookstores, and that is staff recommendations on the shelf. So I'll talk in a minute about creating lists to share but you can also just catch people's eye as they're browsing the shelves. And you can create a simple form and just have different staff members write the title of the book and their own name and why they recommended the book. You can always include like, great for fans of, and then some recommendations of other authors or titles that people might recognize and then be like, Oh, I liked that book. Maybe I like this book too. And then book lists. As I mentioned earlier, you can do some really timely readers advisory and this is an example of a couple of those. So Larry McMurtry died recently. And my public library created a list of his works. And then Moxie is a novel that was turned into, I think it was a Netflix original movie. And so here is a list with that book. And then other books that people who enjoyed Moxie might also enjoy. These are grabbed from the library website. So that's

another way to do virtual readers advisory. But it's also something you can do on paper. When I was a school librarian, I had a few lists that I would set up in little plastic display stands near popular books that were often checked out so that if people came in, they were like, "Oh, I want to get Twilight." And they couldn't figure out where to get the Twilight books, because they were all checked out that would direct them over to PC Cast, and other similar vampire-related stories. So that's something that you can do either online or in the physical library space. And then what I sort of think of as the most common form of passive readers advisory, displays. So here, we've got a summer reading display. And it was while I was looking for displays that I had a really hard time finding good images that weren't that sort of food and festivals approach to multiculturalism and diversity. And you can see here that Sarah Dessen is featured prominently here. I feel like Sarah Dessen is a pretty famous author. A lot of times people will in displays put authors who are considered, you know, famous in the genre are significant for doing that work. And I would recommend that as you create your displays, you consider perhaps some under the radar things to boost because people are going to find the books that they've already heard about and the books they already know about. So you might put maybe one familiar book there so that people are like, oh, okay, this is the kind of thing I'm getting. But I would really encourage you to branch out beyond texts that are familiar to a lot of readers, and try to find some more novel things to share with them. That was an unintentional pun. And you may hear my kid in the background here. So now I'd like you again, to just take a few minutes to practice doing some planning for a passive readers advisory not to actually pull anything together. But to just think about it and do a quick storyboard. Maybe jot down some notes to yourself or think through it in your head. What theme are you going to pick? What are some titles you already know about that you might include? And remember to try and include something more unique and less expected if possible. And then where would you go to find more because maybe all you know are the popular titles and you need more ideas. So think about some of the options we've discussed already for places where you can go to find more ideas. Alright, so to review, there are many ways to provide readers advisory beyond interviews. Virtual readers advisory can take place on the library website. You can find librarians, other book people, and thus opportunities and examples for readers advisory on just about any social media platform. I have not heard of anyone doing it on Clubhouse yet. But that doesn't mean they aren't. I also don't have an Apple device. So I can't try Clubhouse out to see if I can find somebody doing it. But I guarantee you we will be hearing about it soon if we haven't already. The physical library space can be used for readers advisory as well in the form of displays and staff recommendations. And you can also post those lists like I mentioned or put them on bookmarks or something similar to that. That is all I have for you. Thank you so much for having me as your guest lecturer. Have a great week.