Archive of the June 5 2018 #critlib chat on "public libraries and #critlib redux," moderated by @abigailleigh & @izag. For more info about #critlib, including past and future chats, visit http://critlib.org

Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

Please join @izag and I as we co-moderate tonight's #critlib chat focusing on public libraries. Excited to hear what everything one is thinking! Times: 6 pm Pacific / 7 pm Mountain / 8 pm Central / 9 pm Eastern
critlib.org/public-librari...

3:55 PM - Jun 5, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets

Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

Almost time for tonight's #critlib with me and @izag where we'll dig into public libraries and librarianship!! If you would like to join anonymously, you can share your tweets here: critlib.org/anon/.

12:50 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets
Hi #critlib ! @izag and I will be moderating tonight's chat focusing on public libraries. Thank you for joining! Let's get started with introductions before we jump into questions. My name is Abby Phillips and I'm a Postdoctoral Fellow at Utah State University.

and a former public librarian! #critlib

Hi #critlib! I am Izabel Gronski and I am the young adult librarian serving high school students in a mid-size public library in a suburb of Chicago.

Q1 Public librarians engage in critical librarianship all the time, even if it's not called #critlib. What does that look like in the public library? Where does it happen (in person and online)? #critlib
Iza @izag

A1 For me, this happens in a number of places. Primarily in the workroom when my coworkers and I work through an issue or topic. At conferences (not every sessions, but there’s usually one that fits the bill) whether state or PLA or YALSA #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

A1 Recently, I’ve thought of this while I’m instructing MLIS interested in public librarianship. I began reflecting on my own background as a librarians, my practices, and how those have shifted since I became a researcher. #critlib

Iza @izag · Jun 6, 2018

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Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

I’ve been thinking about @yalsa too. Especially when you think about the Futures report and other documents they’ve produced. #Critlib plays a huge role in the creation and implementation of those reports.

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets
Iza @izag · Jun 6, 2018
A1 For me, this happens in a number of places. Primarily in the workroom when my coworkers and I work through an issue or topic. At conferences (not every session, but there's usually one that fits the bill) whether state or PLA or YALSA #critlib

Iza @izag
A1 cont'd it happens online in fb groups or twitter threads. If theory is involved, I would call it #critlib at heart, even if it's not formally called that. As a colleague mentioned, she doesn't just promote reading because it's fun (although it is).

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh
A1 I've seen it in discussion board posts and other submissions by MLIS students who are thinking deeply about the profession they are about to join. #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018
Replying to @izag
I've been thinking about @yalsa too. Especially when you think about the Futures report and other documents they've produced. #Critlib plays a huge role in the creation and implementation of those reports.

Iza @izag
Exactly, we have supporting documents and research and professional development that makes us think about WHY we do what we do instead of just assuming it's part of our job #critlib
I wonder why/if some of these documents and resources are overlooked when talking about #critlib. Maybe regarded as something strictly "practitioner" without the theory or reflective thinking that is really there.

1:20 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets

Exactly, we have supporting documents and research and professional development that makes us think about WHY we do what we do instead of just assuming it's part of our job #critlib

1:20 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets

A1 new to this discussion & concept of #critlib. I was reading through the ACRL Framework for Info Literacy which talked about authority being constructed. So in public libraries, I think about collection development and how we critically engage with materials we’re selecting

1:20 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Kristin Lanz's other Tweets

Q2. What topics of critical librarianship are public librarians discussing? #critlib

1:20 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets
Iza @izag

Yes! And our management meetings are no longer just trouble shooting and HR problems. We are thinking more critically about the broader picture. Esp as we have newer librarians pushing people beyond "well we always did it this way" (hardcore relevant at my library) #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

A1 I've seen it in discussion board posts and other submissions by MLIS students who are thinking deeply about the profession they are about to join. #critlib

Kristin Lanz @WitBeyndMehsure

A1 new to this discussion & concept of #critlib. I was reading through the ACRL Framework for Info Literacy which talked about authority being constructed. So in public libraries, I think about collection development and how we critically engage with materials we're selecting

A1 cont. and think about what voices are being privileged, what narratives are being centered, and how we can find ways to diversify our collections in addition to promote those materials for reading to patrons. #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

That's a really terrific example and something I think more and more librarians are thinking about whether in academic or public. #critlib
Especially as we are starting to question more and more of what is "classic" or how to select & promote inclusively - seeing this conversation happening a lot in YA #critlib

It's really inspiring for me! I urge them to keep pushing and questioning, but I know how the library management/higher ups (just like other professions) can try to press down that wonder. #critlib
Iza @izag

We are very lucky (in our dept) to have a supportive manager. Granted, they are juggling a management team that's not 100% on board with progress. So tell them there are places out there that will support them - and also that they will be management someday ;)
#critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018

Replying to @izag

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Kristin Lanz @WitBeyndMehsure

#critlib A1 I also think it's in the programming that happens in public libraries. I recently saw a Think Tank post about a Library Director who was against non-book related programming. What does that say about the type of knowledge that's valued?

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018

I wonder if this is one reason why there is a growing interest from MLIS student and programs for dedicated courses on collection development. It's a more complex area than can be covered quickly in an intro to YA or children's services course. #critlib.
Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018
Replied to @izag @WitBeyndMehsure
I wonder if this is one reason why there is a growing interest from MLIS student and programs for dedicated courses on collection development. It's a more complex area than can be covered quickly in an intro to YA or children's services course. #critlib

Iza @izag

I didn't have a dedicated course. YA specific was within Youth Services, some covered under Reference. And that was not very helpful as I was already doing collection development. No idea how helpful that was to someone coming in without prior experience #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

A2 I think we're already hitting on some of the #critlib topics among public librarians. Among them Inclusivity, theoretically engaged professional resources, library neutrality (see ALA MW panel).

Iza @izag

A2 For YA, we are talking a lot about serving teens with diverse backgrounds and preparing them for life after HS - what are they (not) learning in HS, how can the library augment. We have to be aware of current ed standards on top of public library standards #critlib
Iza @izag · Jun 6, 2018
Replying to @abigailleigh @WitBeyndMehsure
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Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

I didn't have one either. I learned on the job but I feel that there's so much more I could have done as a young librarian. I think either more formal education or prof development would help demonstrate how involved and engaged collection dev is. #critlib

Iza
@izag

A2 More generally, what is the roll of the public library in helping people experiencing homelessness or part of the opioid crisis. At my library we are trying to be prepared, but that's not always met with enthusiasm... #critlib

Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

That's a very interesting shift in teen services. Digging into what is missing from library services to teens and how K-12 education isn"t meeting all their needs. #critlib
Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

Q3 How can other (public, academic, school) librarians encourage public librarians/library staff to participate in the #critlib conversation? What might be some barriers for participation?

1:36 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018

Replying to @izag
That's a very interesting shift in teen services. Digging into what is missing from library services to teens and how K-12 education isn't meeting all their needs. #critlib

Iza @izag

Yeah, the shift in the @YALSA Futures Report is a huge change for a lot of people #critlib

1 1:36 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Iza's other Tweets

Abigail Phillips

A1 My gut response is that one barrier is a lack of knowledge (actual or perceived) regarding theory, critical thinking, etc. It's intimidating to come to a conversation where you feel lacking. #critlib

1:39 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Abigail Phillips's other Tweets

Iza @izag

A3 At last year's @YALSA symposium, we were talking about membership and how do we get the word out about the amazing resources, etc. It seems like a no-brainer when you're involved, but you can't assume everyone knows about a thing and wonder why they're not there #critlib

2 1:40 AM - Jun 6, 2018

See Iza's other Tweets
Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh
A1 But really maybe public librarians already have all these insights and are doing #critlib work without recognizing it as such.

Dr Marc Forster
@MarcForster18
Highlights: #critlib from Lee Webster/Helen Gunter 'How power relations affect the distribution of authority'. 'Flipping the classroom for information literacy instruction' Jing Shen. A newly popular method but not widely discussed in the context of #infolit as far as I'm aware. twitter.com/JInfoLit/status…

JIL @JInfoLit
It's here! New issue of the Journal of Information Literacy - ojs.lboro.ac.uk/JIL/

Iza @izag
A3 cont'd I only know about #critlib bc I met a bunch of Chicago librarians who happen to be academics at a tumblr meetup. Also, it's scary to join something when you're not sure you're welcome.
Hi #critlib, public librarian in Brooklyn here. Catching up on the tweets...

@InfAgit

Q3 I think the barriers are pretty evident by the fact that no one seems to be discussing this. I don't know what participation other chats get, but.... #critlib

@critlib_anon

Q3 cont. I think public librarians aren't often encouraged to view their work through a critlib lens, even if they're engaging in it. #critlib

@critlib_anon

A3: I think one thing that makes #critlib in PLs a challenge is that, unlike in a school or university, we don't work with a cohort of students over time in an educational setting. We're educators, but in a very on-the-spot situational way.
Iza @izag

That's a good point. I think a lot of public librarians also do not consider themselves educators, but even if you show someone how to use the catalog, you are teaching! #critlib

Melissa Morrone @InfAgit · Jun 6, 2018

A3: I think one thing that makes #critlib in PLs a challenge is that, unlike in a school or university, we don't work with a cohort of students over time in an educational setting. We're educators, but in a very on-the-spot situational way.

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

Very true! Maybe it doesn't seem to be critical or even needed as part of the everyday library work. #critlib

Melissa Morrone @InfAgit · Jun 6, 2018

Of course, there's more time to plan programming, and collection development (as has been noted here) is a whole other issue, but with regard to reference and instruction, having a "#critlib" sort of frame seems like a luxury of time and effort. Does that make sense? Hm.
Iza @izag · Jun 6, 2018
That's a good point. I think a lot of public librarians also do not consider themselves educators, but even if you show someone how to use the catalog, you are teaching! #critlib

Melissa Morrone @InfAgit
Exactly! #critlib

Melissa Morrone @InfAgit · Jun 6, 2018
A3: I think one thing that makes #critlib in PLs a challenge is that, unlike in a school or university, we don't work with a cohort of students over time in an educational setting. We're educators, but in a very on-the-spot situational way.

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh
I honestly didn't think of myself as an educator until I had been in librarianship for awhile. I received so little support and guidance as an educator. I also felt that I didn't have the background to call myself an "educator" or "teacher". #critlib

Melissa Morrone @InfAgit · Jun 6, 2018
Of course, there's more time to plan programming, and collection development (as has been noted here) is a whole other issue, but with regard to reference and instruction, having a "#critlib" sort of frame seems like a luxury of time and effort. Does that make sense? Hm.

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh
Oh definitely! It doesn't seem (or is encouraged) like it's necessary to the job so why bother. #critlib
Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

Q4. How can #critlib become a more all encompassing LIS conversation to include all types of librarianship (academic, law, school, public, etc)?

1:51 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Iza
@izag

But I think public librarians are already doing #critlib, just not calling it by that label. Especially when we do professional development and then figure out how to implement it in our libraries.

1:52 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018

Replying to @InfAgit
Oh definitely! It doesn't seem (or is encouraged) like it's necessary to the job so why bother. #critlib

1:52 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Melissa Morrone
@InfAgit

Also, I work for a very large and comparatively well-resourced system, and it's still a challenge to get coverage (much less reimbursement) to go to workshops and conferences. It seems academic librarians are in much more of a culture of continuing ed. #critlib

1:52 AM - Jun 6, 2018
Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh
A4 Well.... this chat is a solid example. There are four of us here? #critlib

1 1:52 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Iza @izag
That's true, it can be very difficult to get PD - but there are resources that are available without time/location requirements (twitter and #critlib). The Futures Report is free and it just takes the time to read it and act on it (sorry for continually using it as my example!)

2 1:54 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Melissa Morrone @InfAgit · Jun 6, 2018
Replying to @abigailleigh
Also, I work for a very large and comparatively well-resourced system, and it's still a challenge to get coverage (much less reimbursement) to go to workshops and conferences. It seems academic librarians are in much more of a culture of continuing ed. #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh
It's a great example! I use it all the time. :) #critlib

1 1:55 AM - Jun 6, 2018
Melissa Morrone
@InfAgit

Sorta A4 but sorta general: Given that the "about" says #critlib is "a movement of library workers dedicated to bringing social justice principles into our work," then, yeah, I think it happens all the time in PLs! There are just fewer eggheads there. :) critlib.org/about/

Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

A4 I wonder (a lot apparently) if part of the responsibility to share this discussion is on LIS educators like me. To incorporate it into MLIS courses, especially those with a public library focus. I'll be teaching one this Fall so I have plans :) #critlib

Iza
@izag

Yeah, but we were all encouraged to join Twitter and engage in conversation there and it just doesn't always happen. I think people need to be more aware it's happening, and most importantly feel welcome and invited #critlib
A4 unpopular opinion probably, but #critlib doesn't always feel welcoming to newcomers and especially non academic folks. Not sure how this can get better.

Q4 I would bet that a large percentage of public librarians don't know this conversation is happening. Which still doesn't mean they're not engaging in #critlib

Yeah, but we were all encouraged to join Twitter and engage in conversation there and it just doesn't always happen. I think people need to be more aware it's happening, and most importantly feel welcome and invited #critlib

It's the welcomed and invited part that gets me. Sometimes it's there on certain social media platforms and sometimes you have to find it in an entirely different place. #critlib
Iza @izag

Yep, there are so many times that I do not comment on FB or twitter because of the group or people involved, despite wanting to join in! #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh · Jun 6, 2018

It's the welcomed and invited part that gets me. Sometimes it's there on certain social media platforms and sometimes you have to find it in an entirely different place. #critlib

Iza @izag

A4 unpopular opinion probably, but #critlib doesn't always feel welcoming to newcomers and especially non academic folks. Not sure how this can get better.

Iza @izag

I'm gonna copy/paste a private response to this: "I completely 100% agree with this. It's also not the job of the missing voice to somehow find the conversation and be heard. The missing voice may not even know it's missing. If that makes sense." #critlib

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

Well, that's a wrap for tonight's #critlib chat! Thank you to everyone who joined us! please continue the conversation. I know I will! There's so much more to digest and think about. Please let me or @izag know if you have questions or comments.
What I think would be useful for PLians isn't necessarily tweeting #critlib or reading theory per se (lord knows I don't) but e.g. going deeper than self-congratulatory "librarians combat 'fake news'!" and looking at @datasociety's & other work on how much more complicated it is.

See e.g. datasociety.net/research/media...#critlib

Media Manipulation

The Media Manipulation Initiative (MMI) examines how different groups use the participatory culture of the internet datasociety.net
Iza @izag

Thanks #critlib, it's been real. If you wanna talk public libraries, YA, astrology or cute puppies, hit me up.

2:07 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Abigail Phillips @abigailleigh

Thank you everyone who joined our discussion (or lurked! You're awesome too)! #critlib

2:08 AM - Jun 6, 2018

Iza @izag · Jun 6, 2018

A4 unpopular opinion probably, but #critlib doesn't always feel welcoming to newcomers and especially non academic folks. Not sure how this can get better.

Andrea Snyder @alsnyder02

The few times I participated in #critlib to try to bring a public perspective, it was not the best experience. For me, there are other places where I can have these convos & walk away with practical, useful tools and info. It's hard to find the balance of work, life & prof dev!

2:26 AM - Jun 6, 2018

kelly @klthoreson

A3. There is no time or resources. Research and publishing are not built into most public libs jobs. We do not have institutional subscriptions to journals. Most public libs core focus is on how to keep the library open and running. #critlib

11:30 AM - Jun 6, 2018
I only heard about #critlib through my MLIS, from an instructor who was previously a public librarian.

A4: I wonder (a lot apparently) if part of the responsibility to share this discussion is on LIS educators like me. To incorporate it into MLIS courses, especially those with a public library focus. I'll be teaching one this Fall so I have plans :) #critlib

I find most of the chats are focused specifically on an academic library topic. I join in when it’s broad. I joined in late (the next morning) for this one because public librarians also work nights! #critlib

#critlib public library austerity cuts have been huge in the UK, with frankly not enough criticism from the academic lis community, how can #critlib counteract class divides and enact solidarity?

I would also like to push back against this notion that public librarians aren’t aware of #critlib. Maybe people don’t call it that, but we are on the front lines of delivering services that critlib talks about.
So we might not have time built into our everyday work to engage in literature, but we are definitely looking when it comes to developing new programs or services. We need more research on public libraries! We often can’t do it ourselves. #critlib

AND research that is open and available without a subscription / paywall. #critlib

Weniger als eine Woche bis zum #bibtag18. Ich habe gehört, da soll es ein super Projectlab zum Thema #critlib geben.
Abigail Phillips
@abigailleigh

I think I heard about it from tweets during a conference (?). Definitely not something I remember from my MLIS program or practice. #critlib

Chelsea Sims
@Ms_ChelseaSims

School Librarian here- had never heard of this group/chat until I just read an article (from 2015) that mentioned it.

Ean Henninger
@rhymewithzinger

A1. I think it looks like making #critlib an everyday thing that informs your interactions with patrons and coworkers. Conferences are also good, and there’s still some stuff happening every so often on tumblr.

A2. (when we discuss it,) there’s a strong focus on social justice, especially diversity, equity, and inclusion re: marginalized groups. #critlib

A3. I would counter your question with another question...what are the benefits of being involved in #critlib conversations for public library workers? do they outweigh the time pressures felt on the job? the work of engaging off the job?
A4. I’m not sure this is possible short of drastic changes in how time is allotted to public and school library workers and what is seen as their goals (I suspect this holds for special library workers as well). #critlib