

SCHOOL LIBRARIES SHARE



SCHOOL LIBRARY STAFF – MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING WORLD

Responses to the annual Softlink School Library Surveys reveal that school library staff are innovators, change managers, and technology leaders.

They are acutely aware of the impact technology has on education, and the need to prepare students for a growing online world, arming them with the skills to use this technology and, more importantly, to be able to sift through online content critically. They are also aware of how quickly things can change and responses reveal an enthusiasm to meet these changes head on.

While it is true that advances in technology present a constantly changing and growing environment, in modern times there has perhaps been no more rapid a change than the sudden closure of schools in response to COVID-19.

In May 2020, we released a survey to learn how COVID-19 and school shutdowns have impacted school libraries. Responses to the survey are truly representative of school library staff as technology leaders and innovators in a rapidly changing world, whether that is the unexpected sudden change that school shutdowns presented, or the ever-changing digital world we now live in.

In this feature document, we share a selection of comments around these themes.

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SCHOOL LIBRARIES SHARE THE IMPACT COVID-19 SCHOOL SHUTDOWNS HAVE HAD ON THEIR LIBRARY

'What it has done has highlighted our profile as a 24/7 library. I have never worked harder! I have curated guides for all 7-12 English courses and many other KLAs, promoted eBooks and audio books and provided expertise on digital tools for the classroom. As a TL, I have been a leader at a most unusual time.' **APAC**

'We are supporting online learning and continuing primary library lessons online through video recordings, Zoom classes, and downloadable lesson resources. Our staff are contactable during the day and we continue to respond to requests for assistance with our online resources, including databases, ClickView, etc.' **APAC**

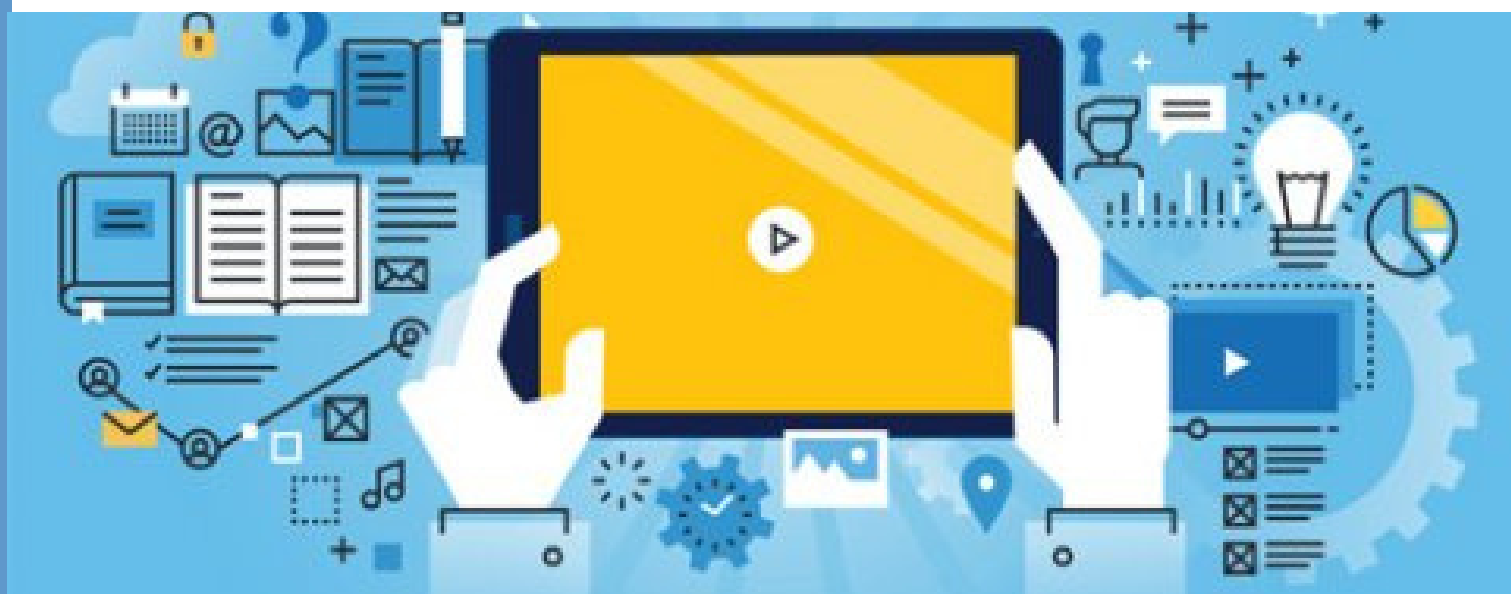
'We have no students in our library at the moment, which makes it a dull and boring place! The students are the life of our library. I am being challenged to think of new and interesting ways to maintain connections and engagement with the library and its collection. The time I would normally spend with students is now being spent on research, ideas-generation, and learning.' **APAC**

'The school has been closed since the middle of March and we have been delivering lessons and support through Google Classroom. This has involved a huge effort from teaching staff and myself to upskill to use this tool to its full potential.' **EMEA**

'The library staff are working from home planning future lessons and displays, creating and adding resources to the school VLE, and reading JF/YA books!' **EMEA**

'There has been an increased demand for assistance with locating and accessing online reference materials and eBooks.' **APAC**

'The situation has made me rethink how the library will be used on return to work. The librarian is working from home and has also had to rethink the role and how we encourage reading remotely.' **EMEA**



SCHOOL LIBRARIES SHARE THE IMPACT COVID-19 SCHOOL SHUTDOWNS HAVE HAD ON THEIR LIBRARY (CONT.)

'For the most part, the changes to education brought on by the pandemic have meant several opportunities for us to showcase our skills in digital spaces. We have also been able to showcase the breadth of our collections, which were already well on the way to being well fleshed out in the digital sphere. The library techs have had some time seconded to a College-wide parent contact program (well outside their comfort zone but acquitted very well), and devised and implemented a new digital library space on the College learning management system, to support student engagement and wellbeing. The Tls have created and delivered several videos for teachers to use in their digital spaces (picture book readings and resource access informative videos, for the most part), and have taken up multiple collaborative opportunities that have arisen.'

APAC

'COVID-19 has impacted our school library in a massive way. We created "Library - How to" Guides, using links to explain How to borrow e-books, How to use Clickview, How to use the School's databases, How to search the Library Catalogue, and What resources are available free for the COVID-19 duration.'

APAC



'Our school has moved to remote teaching, with no staff on-site. This meant that we needed to provide library services remotely. Luckily for us, we have remote access to our Oliver v5 library catalog and we also have LearnPath to enable us to create visually appealing subject guides to assist students with their learning. They can access these through our library 'News' page. We also managed to get access to Overdrive ebooks (with the assistance of Softlink) so our school community has access to eBooks and audio books whilst the physical library is closed.

LearnPath has been a fantastic resource during this time and I have spent most of my time working remotely creating LearnPath guides for teachers to share with their students. I have also created an extensive 'Online Resources' LearnPath guide where I have collated all the fantastic free online resources that are available at this time. Everything from free manga and webcomics, to virtual tours and live cams, digital escape rooms and digital volunteering opportunities.'

APAC

TIPS/INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET CHALLENGES

'Facebook groups for librarians have been supportive and fantastic. I have learned much, and gathered much – seek advice and resources from there.'

APAC

'Add information to the library's management system homepage and direct students to this page for their information, and to enhance the library's presence.

Continue to offer reading challenges, (book/audio book/author, etc.) via your school's learning platforms.

Contribute to virtual assemblies if possible.' **EMEA**

'Always keep on top of new innovations – you never know when they will become your primary and normal method of working!' **EMEA**

'Deliver every message across a range of media platforms using a variety of ICT tools (e.g. both video and documents).' **APAC**

'Vendors have been good about providing additional access to services. Make the time to spend on examining new resources.' **APAC**

'Promote easy-to-use curriculum-related online resources and a central LMS to organise the resources and online lessons.' **APAC**

'When setting up digital platforms, assume that remote access will be needed and have it built in.'

APAC

Create a library website to share with teachers and students and advocate for the library in newsletters & social media if possible.' **APAC**

'Think creatively! You have a budget for books that's possibly going to waste at the moment, so think about ways you can use it to help your students, such as: investing in video or audio equipment to create resources for teachers and students; buying extra copies of popular eBooks; prizes for online reading or writing competitions; booking an online author workshop... the list is endless!' **APAC**

'With the Department's Connect program I have been sending photos of the displays in the Library (yes, I am still putting them up) and sharing any new books that I have read and recommend. I am also using it to keep in touch with the students and the community, which has been great. Of course, if you are able to, get your LMS hosted and in the cloud!' **APAC**

'Setting up a library Google classroom has been extremely useful – I share the code with students regularly to remind them. I use the school's main website to highlight information and point students to the Google classroom for more detail. I am also taking advantage of many offers of free access to online services, and also author online events including literary festivals.' **EMEA**

TIPS/INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MEET CHALLENGES(CONT.)

'Set up a web platform that you can share with all the online resources available.' **APAC**

'I have found working from home a great opportunity to research websites, make resources for the library, complete online courses and attend webinars, keep in touch with other librarians via Twitter and library forums, and to look at how I can improve the facilities of our library when we return.' **EMEA**

'Keep being innovative. Plug into professional bodies and OZTLNET for ideas and support. Continue to collaborate with staff as they develop their units of work. In a workplace that is constantly changing... be the source of positivity and support. Maintain staff relationships and a good sense of humour.' **APAC**

'Our cluster of teacher/librarians have joined together online with lessons and ideas. This has been a fantastic innovation.' **APAC**

'I have used this opportunity to further promote Oliver functionality such as Reviewing, Reading Lists, and Baskets'. **EMEA**

'Subscribe to an eBook provider.' **EMEA**

'We have set up a library blog and are sending out weekly bulletins to students with reading suggestions on our D.E.A.R. mornings. We have also continued to run our bookclub via a chat forum on Teams and Zoom.' **EMEA**

'Using Microsoft Teams has been a good way to keep contact with students.' **EMEA**

'Make sure you have access to the school library program from anywhere - easy with Oliver. Stay in contact with staff using whatever tool works best for you and your team - Google meets, Messenger, Whatsapp etc.' **APAC**

'We have launched the OverDrive Secondary ebook platform to enable students access to a wide selection of eBooks. I have also made much more use of the library Twitter account to promote reading in as many ways as possible.' **EMEA**

We have found our instagram a good way to grab student's attention and promote things to them. Students are overwhelmed at the moment - image based messages with only a little text cuts through more effectively.' **APAC**

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'Use this time to research and catalogue wonderful websites and create online info packs. All staff can be involved with this. Explore online resources now as many wonderful sites are offering free trials. This is a perfect time to trial them.' **APAC**

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

We have a number of School Library Survey reports and feature documents available on our website (softlinkint.com/edu/resources) including:

The 2021 School Library Survey Report - New Zealand

From the Principal's desk - reflections on the school library - 2021

In this feature post, we share comments made by school principal's in response to questions in the Annual Softlink School Library Surveys.

What's trending #SchoolLibraries 2019-2020

What were the trending topics in school libraries in 2019 and 2020? In this global feature, we share responses to the 2019 Softlink School Library Surveys and the 2020 Softlink COVID-19 Survey.

School Libraries Share Ideas for Promoting the Library - 2019

Based on responses to the question "What practices are in place or what ideas do you have to promote the library, the services it provides, or the role and skills of the school library staff in your school?" in the 2018 School Library Surveys.

School Libraries Share Ideas for Collaboration - 2018

Based on responses to the question "How do you currently collaborate, or what ideas do you have for greater collaboration between the library and the rest of the school?" in the 2017 School Library Surveys.

[For even more ideas and resources visit our blog: softlinkint.com/blog](https://softlinkint.com/blog)

ABOUT SOFTLINK

Softlink has been providing school library software for over 30 years, offering solutions to meet the ongoing needs of schools globally.

Users of [Oliver v5](#) benefit from regular new feature updates, which are developed in direct response to feedback and insights gained from our active user community.

[LearnPath](#) users can create, publish, and share rich learning guides and content. They also have access to over 300 ready-made guides produced by teacher librarians.

CONTACT US

Would you like to find out more about how Softlink and Oliver v5 can support your school library? Visit our website softlinkint.com/edu or contact us via email communications@softlinkint.com.