

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Thank you so much for taking the time out to meet with me this evening. Just to start out, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Speaker 2 ([00:09](#)):

I grew up in Boston, Massachusetts. I lived with my mom in Boston and my dad lived in Cambridge, so I was in Cambridge on the weekends. I attended high school out in the suburbs and in 2020 I graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I studied public health sciences and Chinese.

Speaker 1 ([00:28](#)):

And can you tell us about your current role and how long you've been in this role?

Speaker 2 ([00:34](#)):

So right now I'm a technology resource specialist at the Brooklyn Public Library Library. I've been in this role for over a year now. I actually decided to transition to the library over a year ago because I've always loved libraries. It's always been something that I've always engaged in in my life. In Boston, we actually have a historic library, Boston Public Library. It was one of the first in the United States and the world to give books to people for free and have an actual institution. So it's always been something that I've been intrigued in. I never thought I'd work in a library, but I'm grateful to be there right now.

Speaker 1 ([01:08](#)):

What are some of your personal experiences that inspired you to become a technology resource specialist?

Speaker 2 ([01:15](#)):

I wanted an opportunity to have a role in technology and also an opportunity to help people. I have a background in special education while I was an undergrad and a year or two after I graduated, I worked at Perkins School for the Blind as a teaching assistant. In this role, I advocated for students with multiple disabilities. Between the ages of 13 to 22, I promoted independence, self-confidence and developmental social organizational behavior in order to set them up for success in the real world.

Speaker 1 ([01:49](#)):

And can you tell me how you landed at Perkins?

Speaker 2 ([01:54](#)):

Basically, I had a close friend who had a sister who was a student at Perkins. ~~So I was close with a family.~~ It was a family friend and they recommended to me, but I do have family members and siblings that are on the spectrum, so I have a familiar background with people who are on spectrum and people who have disabilities. So it was something that I was pretty much aware of and equipped with the skills to help. So that's why I actually applied to Perkins and it worked out with my public health background and undergrad degree.

Speaker 1 ([02:23](#)):

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

And your skills at Perkins and your skills as a technology resource specialist, how do they align or contrast? What do you see as similar between those?

Speaker 2 ([02:34](#)):

I would say the similarities is the technology aspect and using it to improve the lives of patrons at the library and at Perkins, the lives for students at Perkins, I maintain updated iPad applications and assistive technology for students that were visually impaired or had complete blindness. They used this type of technology to communicate with staff, the world and each other. Some of the things that they used was a braille book, a braille note taker, and a switch. And at the library as a technology research specialist, I teach patrons how to use technology from simply just typing all the way to how to do research and how to utilize research platforms and using keywords.

Speaker 1 ([03:16](#)):

Can you talk about the technology support you provided at Perkins? You mentioned the switch. Can you say more about that? The technology setup? What worked really well with that technology? What challenges you had?

Speaker 2 ([03:31](#)):

Yeah, so with Perkins, the technology that we give to each student is based on their IEP, their individualized educational plan. So this is a plan that staff, doctors, therapists, parents, and sometimes even students come together and we go through their history and different diagnoses to assist them with technology that'll improve their lives. So working with the Switch and the braille note reader, this was something that not all students have, but if they did have it, one staff would have to understand all the troubleshooting processes, the history and how to maintain this device just in case the student is unable to utilize it in class or out in public. So just making sure you have the knowledge, making sure it's charged and making sure the student is safe with this device.

Speaker 1 ([04:24](#)):

And what skills must people or should people come in with to provide technology support to others?

Speaker 2 ([04:31](#)):

Definitely patience. Patience, facing patience because it could be tough working with anyone who's able bodied or disabled. You have to realize that not everyone's easy. Is there easy. You have to make sure you are approaching a situation with empathy and caution. At Perkins, there was a lot of vulnerable students who needed a lot of staff support and the technology was their voice most of the time. So you have to make sure that these devices are functioning well and you're communicating with your peers and the students to make sure that they're being heard. And it's similar at the library. Most of the patients that come there are able-bodied and communicate the way we are communicating right now. But I still bring that same patience and empathy into the role because no matter what you're going to do with technology, technology doesn't have that same patience and empathy that humans have. So we have to remember that we are people first and this technology is just adding to our lives to improve hopefully the future.

Speaker 1 ([05:32](#)):

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

And can you describe the community you serve at the library now?

Speaker 2 ([05:37](#)):

Yeah. The community I serve in the library is a predominantly African-American community based on the New York city.gov website, this is a low-income neighborhood. 30% of the people in this community live below the poverty line. One in five adults don't have a college degree and over a quarter have not completed high school. 14% are unemployed and 56% are rent burden. So I'd like to give some of the stats so people can recognize that this is a very vulnerable low-income neighborhood. So approaching the work, you have to be very prepared. You can't just go in there blind and expect to be able to help everyone. You have to be prepared and patient, like I said earlier.

Speaker 1 ([06:19](#)):

What kind of support does your community come in needing when they reach out?

Speaker 2 ([06:25](#)):

It depends on the age. I would say younger patrons, like eight years old to 17, they're just there to play video games on the computer, maybe check out a few books, which I like when they check out the books. A lot of kids now don't like to read anymore, but it's okay. But I would say older adults from late fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties even really come there looking for technology support. And a lot of them are applying to jobs. People typically would be retired, are coming to libraries trying to get a resume. They said they haven't had a resume in 20 plus years and they need a job because of X, Y and Z. And that could be tough to see Your senior citizens are in dire need of a job and it's my job to help them get that first step, maybe making that resume for them and helping them do their job shirts and setting up an interview. So my job in that situation is to walk them through all those steps and that requires a lot of technology and a lot of tech savvy skills that a lot of them may not have.

Speaker 1 ([07:23](#)):

And what kind of work are the seniors seeking?

Speaker 2 ([07:28](#)):

They're typically looking for bus driving jobs, delivery jobs. A lot of Amazon, Amazon has taken over everyone. Some of them even look for work in the libraries. Some are looking for nanny. And we have a really large immigrant and migrant population coming to New York City right now. So we're incorporating translators to also help them find jobs based on their ID and papers and documents. So it's different work. It's mostly gig work essentially.

Speaker 1 ([08:03](#)):

And can you describe the process for applying to those jobs? How is technology the requirement in applying to, you mentioned nannies, you mentioned working at the library. Where does technology come in there

Speaker 2 ([08:18](#)):

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

For some reason now everything is online and when you apply to these jobs, applications are all online. Every platform is different. So when they are applying for these jobs, if they're applying through indeed LinkedIn or whatever different website, you have to have a profile. And since many of these patients aren't so familiar with different technology and email, they don't have an email set up. And if they don't have an email set up, we have to make an email for them. And then once we make the email for them, they have to make another profile for this Indeed website. And if they want to link the two, there's data that you have to sign off on. You have to agree to the terms and you have to have a resume. So it's multiple steps of things that people who are familiar with tech and who have worked in corporate jobs and have gone through school understand that that's how things are now. But people who grew up in a more traditional society where you apply for a job maybe in person or you send an application via mail, everything now is on email and online. So it's really my job and their job to make sure they have all those steps. Having an email account, having a cloud that they trust where they can save their things because many of them don't have their own personal computers and storage at home and making sure that once they apply to these jobs how to follow up.

Speaker 1 ([09:36](#)):

I was actually just thinking about the follow up. So once you have an email account, there's an expectation that you're going to check it. Does that mean for the patrons that they have to come to the library to check the email? Or do they have smartphones that would enable them to check their email from home?

Speaker 2 ([09:57](#)):

It depends. Many of the patients do have smartphones and their own computers. So if they do have that after I show them how to navigate their email and their inboxes, they can check that at home. But patients who may not have these devices, they will have to come to a library or some other type of institution that has free computers that they can access this information.

Speaker 1 ([10:19](#)):

So in terms of bridging the digital divide, what stakeholders do you see in this role who are everyday bridgers of the digital divide? Who might be those reminding people to check their emails if they're not used to it?

Speaker 2 ([10:33](#)):

Honestly, I think it's people who have grown up in these type of communities or people who are just well versed and educated and have been around enough people from these communities to understand and comprehend what they're going through. Because working in these low income communities, it could be easy to write these people off and say negative things, but there's actually a lot of hardworking people there who don't have the same access or encouragement that they can seek these activities and opportunities. So I think the stakeholders are individuals who are from that community and may have found success or have found resources to lead them in a better path and they can bring others with them.

Speaker 1 ([11:14](#)):

And can you talk about what roles libraries play in supporting communities in their role in bridging the digital divide broadly?

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Speaker 2 ([11:21](#)):

I think traditionally libraries more and more institutions that accumulate knowledge and acquire different things and decimated them to different populations. But I think modern libraries now are more cultural centers and they provide a lot more technology and facilities that you would not have a guest many years ago. Right now our libraries have kiosk machines, we have 3D printers, we have VR headsets, we have video game consoles. We have a lot more, lot more. So I think libraries now are trying to be high tech, but not just to be fancy, have all the bells and whistles, but to reflect the society that we are in and the future that we are heading in.

Speaker 1 ([12:04](#)):

And just curious, are people using the VR headsets? Do you find that people are checking out those devices?

Speaker 2 ([12:11](#)):

Yeah, people love them. Most of the kids and the parents are secretly playing with them themselves. Yeah, it's good. It's great to see that people still check out a lot of things and utilize their local library.

Speaker 1 ([12:21](#)):

So how might your library compare to other libraries?

Speaker 2 ([12:25](#)):

At the end of the day, we are a library that holds books. We have many lovely books. We have research opportunities, we have staff, we have part-time staff. We're not too different from other libraries, but we do have a lot of community centers that I don't think many other libraries have. And especially working as a public library, we do get some state funding and with that state funding, we have to allocate a certain way. And we're also community centers for homeless shelters and students. So we are cooling centers and heating centers in the winter. So we provide a safe environment for all.

Speaker 1 ([13:00](#)):

And how would you describe, I guess the relationship between your patrons and technology and also the community centers? I guess I never thought about libraries in that way. What is that relationship like?

Speaker 2 ([13:15](#)):

It depends upon the age of the patrons. I would say my younger patrons that are eight to 17 years old, they're very tech savvy. They don't really need much assistance in technology. They're teaching me sometimes I'm like, oh, okay, I didn't realize what that was because a lot of them love playing this game called roblox. Roblox is a online game platform that was created in 2006 and it allows programmers to create games and these games are played by other users on the platform and it's free to download and free to join. So it's really popular right now and a lot of patrons that come, they don't make their own games. So me and my colleague are actually thinking about perhaps starting a program where we can actually encourage them and even teach them how to make some games on there. But I would say our adults 18 to 35, they're the ones who are typically a little bit more advanced in technology, but sometimes they still need a walkthrough, maybe one or two verbal walkthroughs, and then they can utilize all those stuff like printing, using the kiosk, researching online, applying for jobs. They don't need

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

that one-on-one direct help. But like I mentioned earlier, it's really our senior staff that require the most support in all aspects of technology from typing, creating an email, navigating email, and maintaining an inbox.

Speaker 1 ([14:30](#)):

Can you say more about the kiosks? You've mentioned these a couple times and I think maybe I had envisioned one thing, but they might mean something else. Can you help us understand what the kiosks

Speaker 2 ([14:39](#)):

Are? Yeah, so we have a chaos, it's called bibliotheca. It's a company that works with many libraries in the United States and it issues guest passes. Patrons also can use it to add money on their library card. They can donate, they can renew books, check all books. It's essentially a librarian or circulation desk person, but in robot form. So it's like the first phase of maybe moving some staff out or reshifting the work perhaps. But they're very handy at times when it gets very busy, but sometimes they're a little annoying, I will say that.

Speaker 1 ([15:18](#)):

Can you maybe walk us through what a typical day looks like for you? You kind of talked about the support you provide to patrons. What is your typical day?

Speaker 2 ([15:29](#)):

Typically, when I open the branch as technology resource specialist, I'm responsible for all the technology in the branch. So I'll go to all the public PCs and make sure everything's operating fine, make sure the wifi is connected and make sure all the staff computers operating. The phones are turned on pretty much just maintenance in the morning, printers, refilling paper if I need to and ink. But I also host programs each day and I also host one-on-ones if they need more support. But some of the programs I do host is Computer Basics, Excel training, teen tech time. Teen tech time is the most popular one. It's typically video games, video game development and video game theory. We have Jeopardy. Sometimes a lot of the kids come and playing the games and arguing and debating different things. It's quite fun. We also have a robotics league. We use Spike Legos. Our competitions actually in two weeks. And I'm also cross-trained in librarian work because I do work at a library, so I do work with shelving, circulation, cataloging, outreach, stuff like that.

Speaker 1 ([16:34](#)):

And can you say more about the programming? How do you decide what type of programming to have?

Speaker 2 ([16:39](#)):

I try to get a poll from the patrons because I don't want to just put my own bias in there and be like, oh, we have to do teen tech time every day and this is how we have to do, I like to see what they want it to because it is their space as a public servant, I'm serving them, so I want to make sure I'm giving them what they're asking for. So a lot of patrons are coming in. For a while I was only doing resume and job searching specifically, but a lot of patrons wanted more direct computer support and internet browsing support. So I switched to computer basics on Mondays where I can sit with patrons and talk about how to use a computer and how to navigate safely on the internet.

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Speaker 1 ([17:21](#)):

What has been the most desired program from patrons

Speaker 2 ([17:27](#)):

Excluding teen tech time? Who doesn't want to play video games often? I would say the most desired is just the computer basics. I feel like in Excel especially because patrons realize that that is the future of being computer literate and using platforms like Excel, Microsoft Office in general just leads to a successful career. It's incorporated everything, especially if you're doing corporate work, even if you're doing certain, I hate saying the word low-skill jobs. There is some type of data entry in these type of positions and they want to know how to do it.

Speaker 1 ([18:01](#)):

So you also touched on outreach. Can you tell us how people learn that the library is a place that they can go when they are experiencing these challenges?

Speaker 2 ([18:12](#)):

Typically from the outreach, we'll go to senior centers, we'll go to high schools, charter schools, and we'll do tabling at parks and outside the branch too. Our branch is surrounded by housing projects, so sometimes it kind of is hidden because it's also like a brick building, but it's like a very historic library. So we try to get outside sometime and be in the community so they know that we're there. We like to bring a little free things, free pencils, some free books, some free wallets, who doesn't like free stuff, and we like to get out there and make sure that we are encouraging patrons and just citizens in general, that the library is there to help and we can provide them with the right resources.

Speaker 1 ([18:52](#)):

How does the library consider broader aspects of technology like facial recognition or surveillance? Have there been efforts to talk to communities about the impacts of these? I'd say more advanced technologies.

Speaker 2 ([19:05](#)):

I haven't heard much updates, at least at the library I work at regarding this issue, but this is something that I'm familiar with. Ironically, I just finished a book by Sarah Lamp called Data Cartels. She's a law professor and librarian at Kuni Law School, and she was talking about how facial recognition has a lot of issues and it often has falsely accused black men and there's a lot of data behind it, but they don't really update the data. I even read it in one of your papers recently, the photo voice. So this is something that's being done and research is being done, but I haven't heard libraries really speak on it recently, but it would definitely be something that I would like to hear and would like to be changed.

Speaker 1 ([19:52](#)):

Yeah, I mean I think this goes back to the question of programming. I think it's great that there's a democratic side of programming and asking what people want to attend. What would be the library's role in informing the public about up and coming technologies that maybe people don't know about yet or are less likely to know about? Is that something that the library would do or how does this happen? How do we inform the public about new technologies?

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Speaker 2 ([20:24](#)):

We have many things going on in our marketing team. We have a website that we can post different technologies on there. And also in that outreach, if it's something that the staff are aware of and familiar with, we can also bring it with us in our outreach program. I know the library is often looking for new technology and innovation, so I definitely think this is something that they would be interested in bringing to. And if we were to share this, we would definitely do it within our outreach program.

Speaker 1 ([20:53](#)):

Is there any engagement with universities or researchers or partnerships?

Speaker 2 ([20:58](#)):

Yes and no. It's different departments work with different universities. The Department of Education and the library do cross paths quite frequently, but it's usually not with universities. It's usually K through 12 for the most part.

Speaker 1 ([21:12](#)):

Our research team has been thinking about questions related to potential harms or harms of technologies, facial recognition, algorithmic bias, and also questions of anticipation and ways we might better anticipate the harms of technology. What role, if any, do you see libraries playing here in being more proactive about anticipating what might go wrong?

Speaker 2 ([21:40](#)):

Yeah, I think in some of the program that we have program, we can have a program or a speech and invite people to speak on the dangers of technology and how there are a lot of flaws in the surveillance system. We do host a lot of speakers from all over in one of our departments, and I feel like that would be a great opportunity. I feel like the library would definitely be interested in having someone come and speak and teaching the staff, having a training where staff can learn on their own and we can all trickle down to patrons and start encouraging patrons to learn more about this as well.

Speaker 1 ([22:15](#)):

And would you say in the programming there'd be opportunities for dialogue with patrons to share their insights? This is something else we're thinking in our research is how might we begin bringing in the voices of everyday people into how technologies are developed in this conversation with you? I'm wondering, might libraries play a central role in this dialogue, and if so, how?

Speaker 2 ([22:47](#)):

Yeah, patrons often love giving feedback. The branch I work at, we actually have a nonprofit that's attached to it and they have a lot of neighborhood community meetings and sometimes I do join the meetings and patrons do share a lot of feedback of things that are happening in the community. And I haven't really heard many of them talk about policing and surveillance and facial recognition. So it'd be great to have someone knowledgeable to bring that up in these meetings and maybe start encouraging more dialogue and how we can combat that.

Speaker 1 ([23:17](#)):



This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Another thing that we've been thinking about is how can we promote the pedagogy? What works well at the library? You mentioned patience is important. What have you all learned works well for the community in terms of technology programs and initiatives?

Speaker 2 ([23:36](#)):

I think being specific, making sure it's not too broad and it's not too disorganized because patrons already have a lot going on outside of the library and usually when they're coming to a library, they're seeking knowledge, they're seeking comfort even. So if you're going to have technology or some type of program, it should be organized and you should have a solid plan of how you're going to facilitate the whole entire meeting. So when it comes to teaching, I'm making sure I have all my staff prepared, all my materials lined up. Like when I'm teaching my computer basics class, I'll have a laptop there, I'll have a keyboard, I'll have a mouse, and I'll literally walk through the very basics and then we'll start to move on to more advanced things on how to actually apply troubleshoot even if you need to. So I think education is important in everything and especially at libraries, we're always trying to make sure we're teaching people, but we're not making it like a school. We're making it like a volunteer coming to place to learn and relax at the same time where it's still formal but it's not as strict as a school.

Speaker 1 ([24:42](#)):

And how long are the programs

Speaker 2 ([24:45](#)):

Typically an hour. Sometimes we'll give more time, and if they want a one-on-one, then that could be hour or two hours, but we try to keep it within two hours.

Speaker 1 ([24:55](#)):

And if resources weren't an issue, what programs or services would you have to support bridging the digital divide?

Speaker 2 ([25:03](#)):

I would have a lot of staff who can really sit down and teach multiple classes of computer basics all the way to graduate computer basics course, like a certificate even. Because like I said, a lot of these people are very intrigued and have a lot of skill, but they don't always have the opportunity or they're not really motivated sometimes because they like to say age or situation. So if we can provide multiple staff to encourage these people to keep coming and teaching them how to essentially be computer literate over a few weeks, I feel like that would be ideal.

Speaker 1 ([25:41](#)):

Can you speak more to the certificates?

Speaker 2 ([25:43](#)):

Yeah, like a certificate program, perhaps we can make a library patron certificate program where someone who didn't know how to type and didn't know how to use an email and apply for a job, now they know how to do all of that and they can teach others, and that could be some of the stakeholders that can go into the community and further develop this.

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

Speaker 1 ([26:02](#)):

What communication do you have, if any, with local employers?

Speaker 2 ([26:08](#)):

We have a career in business center at the library. I actually just did a training with them a couple of weeks ago on resume training that I have a part two coming up. I'll definitely ask them who they talk to for local employers, but I know that we do have a certain list of companies that patrons do apply for, but from my position at the library, I don't have a full list like the career and business center would have, they would have mostly all the resources of who patrons can talk to directly, and they have a lot of great resources. Going to that training recently was amazing. I had discovered this thing called upwardly Global where immigrants who come to the United States who have degrees in other countries, they can find jobs much easier through this upwardly global organization. I thought that was really amazing. It was a patron recently who was like, Hey, I'm from India. I have PhD, but I can't get a job here. I don't know what to do. And literally sent him that link a couple days ago and he said he's interviewing already. So there's a lot of great things there, upwardly global.

Speaker 1 ([27:12](#)):

I'll definitely keep that in mind for our work too, and hopefully the listeners out there can keep it in mind and share this information. So you talked about partnerships and collaborations to an extent because you have kind of the career side of things. They might be talking to businesses and some interactions I guess with schools. What other partnerships or collaborations have been formed to address the digital divide or even employment in your area, and how have they benefited the community?

Speaker 2 ([27:43](#)):

Recently we've been going to the senior center a couple blocks away from the library, and that's been quite fun working with our senior citizens, teaching them technology support because sometimes they can't always come to the library. It's just not always possible. So it's nice to be able to bring materials with us and to bring it to them. I think being mobile is really important, especially right now in this world. Not everyone can get around. Thankfully New York is pretty easy to get around via subway and public transportation in general, but if you live in certain neighborhoods, it's not always safe to get around. So it's great to have alternatives and staff and even library support to make that commute.

Speaker 1 ([28:25](#)):

In your opinion, what can be done at the community or policy level to further reduce the digital divide in lower resource areas?

Speaker 2 ([28:34](#)):

I think in the community, we community members who live there, I think they should probably team up more, communicate with each other, maybe forget some of the rivalry and work together. I think if you're helping your neighbor with fixing something in the house, I feel like that can go a long way rather than running to a different organization or running onto YouTube. I feel like speaking with each other and working a problem out together is always going to be more beneficial to a society.

Speaker 1 ([29:03](#)):

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

That's great. And I'm just thinking about the number of times I've gone to YouTube to figure out how to do something and it's like, oh, I could at least share what I learned. What advice do you have for other libraries or organizations looking to address digital divide challenges in their communities?

Speaker 2 ([29:22](#)):

I definitely think they should focus on the research that's coming out. We have access to many journals for free through the library, so making sure that we're utilizing those journals that we have access to and making sure we can teach our patrons who may not be familiar how to read a research paper or how to break it down, make the information a little bit more accessible. I think as library workers, it is important to give information out to people and making sure it's accessible and approachable because sometimes not everyone knows how to read a research paper and even know what a peer reviewed article is. So making sure that we can make that divide as library worker and making sure everyone is understanding what this digital divide is.

Speaker 1 ([30:05](#)):

Thank you for your extra efforts. I know we as researchers could do a better job. Thank you for helping us with that. The next set of questions, just a couple more questions. It's about artificial intelligence. Can you tell us how artificial intelligence has come to play in your role, if at all?

Speaker 2 ([30:25](#)):

It hasn't really affected my position right now, however, I definitely think it's something I should start getting into just because I met a teacher a couple of weeks ago, he works for the New York public and he was saying that it's actually blocked in public schools, but private schools, they allow it. And at first I was like, oh, I think that's a good thing that it's blocked. I think students who have opportunity to focus on traditional research and traditional thinking, critical thinking, he's like, oh, I actually think the opposite. I think they're at a disadvantage because kids at this private school, they'll be well versed in AI and may also have that critical thinking skills. I thought that was a really great perspective and I didn't even think that way before. So I definitely think AI is definitely here to stay, and I feel like if you are going to utilize it, we definitely have to have a balance and making sure you're not focusing too much on what the AI produces. We have to make sure we do have our own critical thinking and our own traditional research skills to also add to it.

Speaker 1 ([31:26](#)):

Is it blocked at your libraries or people can access chat gt, for example?

Speaker 2 ([31:30](#)):

It's probably not blocked at the library, but I know at New York Public School it is blocked at schools. I'm not sure if it's all schools, but he's a public school teacher, so it probably is all the public schools, it's blocked.

Speaker 1 ([31:42](#)):

And what role do you see AI in the digital divide, if at all?

Speaker 2 ([31:47](#)):

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

I see it widening the divide, but also making it smaller. I think widening because like I said earlier, I feel like if you focus too much on ai, you may lose some of that critical thinking skills if you're just focusing on an AI to give you all the answers and the feedback. But at the same time, I think AI will also create more creativity when people are utilizing it for different research projects and different ideas. I have a friend who's a really smart software engineer and he uses chat GBT for almost everything. He doesn't even use Google anymore. He says chat GBT has given him all the answers he needs. And I'm like, that's so interesting. So yeah, I think there's a lot to come from it.

Speaker 1 ([32:26](#)):

You mentioned blocked in public, allowed in private, that policy in itself could further widen the divide in ways that I just never considered because I never considered how these policies can differ across regions, city, state, world. And how might you anticipate challenges, if any challenges that AI might present to patrons or colleagues?

Speaker 2 ([32:56](#)):

I think it's trust. I think people are still learning what AI is. I don't think patrons staff either myself have a lot of trust in it yet we're not really sure who's behind this. What is being said, is this information correct and where's this data going? I think that's something that most people are thinking about right now. If we are going to use this in the future, we want to know why is it working this way and we want to know if this information is relevant.

Speaker 1 ([33:25](#)):

Final questions. Can you share any upcoming projects or initiatives related to technology and digital inclusion that your library is excited about or that you're excited about?

Speaker 2 ([33:35](#)):

Yes. So we have an incubator program at the Brooklyn Public Library where staff pitch ideas of an incubator that they want to have. And I actually just went to the incubator pitch speech a couple weeks ago and one of them won. It's called Dev Lit Developing Literacy and Technology. It's a hands-on technology learning and training loan program. So it's going to be hosted at two branches in Brooklyn. And through the workshop, patrons will explore physical computing concepts to explore themes of hardware, software, game design and accessibility while fabricating a full-size arcade console for use by library patrons. So yes, very exciting. It's mostly going to be probably teenagers to young adults who are going to be in the program, but it's all free and it's really great and it's going to inspire kids to become engineers, computer scientists working in technology altogether.

Speaker 1 ([34:33](#)):

And this incubator program. Can you say more like how old is the program? How did you all come up with that idea? Who's sponsoring? Is it once every year?

Speaker 2 ([34:43](#)):

It's an every year thing. I'm not sure how long it's been around, I want to say at least for the last six years. And people pitch, most people win the pitches, which is really nice. When I went to the pitch, one of my other favorites was a podcast that was documenting the history of each library in Brooklyn. And I

This transcript was exported on Feb 02, 2024 - view latest version [here](#).

thought that was lovely because the focus is mostly for people who are visually impaired to giving them a full visual audio tour of the library. And it's going to be about the history, and it's going to be about like, oh, when you walk into the library, you're going to see this on the right and this on the left. And this was placed there because a lot of the libraries are actually Carnegie buildings, so they have a lot of historic pieces in there. And I think that's a beautiful way to showcase art history and technology all in one. So really excited about that one.

Speaker 1 ([35:33](#)):

That's awesome. It makes me want to raise money for an incubator program.

Speaker 2 ([35:37](#)):

Yeah, it's cool. And it's like staff that pitch them and some other programs come in. It's not just staff, people in Brooklyn come as well and pitch different things. But yeah, I think it's a lovely opportunity.

Speaker 1 ([35:50](#)):

Anything you want to leave the listeners with? Yeah,

Speaker 2 ([35:54](#)):

I think maybe because I have this type of job, but I always like to tell people, remember to be patient with ourselves and our technology because technology in a way was forced upon us in a way, and it's not going away anytime soon. So we have to be patient with the technology and ourselves. And we're seeing that a lot of the systemic things that we deal with as humans is getting incorporated in our technology with surveillance and with policing. So we have to make sure that we are being kind to ourselves and the people around us, and that will also start to trickle into our technology and we'll have a much safer digital world.

Speaker 1 ([36:33](#)):

Thank you on that. No, I agree. Hopefully we'll see that soon.

Speaker 2 ([36:38](#)):

Thank

Speaker 1 ([36:38](#)):

You so much, Justin.

Speaker 2 ([36:40](#)):

Thank.