**Type of Contribution: WORKSHOP**

**Beyond Fake News: Facilitated conversation as a path to building community information literacy**

**Kelly Mcelroy**, Oregon State University, United States, kelly.mcelroy@oregonstate.edu

Keywords: Community engagement; facilitation; information literacy; fake news

# Introduction

Information literacy learning often occurs in formal instructional environments, in a classroom or workshop. However, much of the public is not enrolled in a program of study and may not self-select into explicitly didactic public programming in a library. In this workshop, we will focus on a form of community engagement through conversation at public events, and explore its potential for civic engagement in information literacy topics.

# Background and purpose

In the United States, concern about “fake news” has skyrocketed through the 2016 presidential campaign and election of Donald Trump. On top of existing information and media literacy education, librarians have explored other ways to support public awareness and skill-building. In this workshop, I will model and debrief a form of community conversation that librarians can use to engage the public in current topics related to information literacy.

In Fall 2017, I began facilitating public conversations about news literacy at events around the state of Oregon, as part of the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project. Many of these events occur at public libraries, often in rural communities with relatively little public support for ongoing education. At each conversation, people share their concerns, articulate often sophisticated approaches to dealing with questionable news, and passionately express the importance of current and trustworthy information. In short, these conversations create a space for peer-led information literacy. The librarian serves as a facilitator, rather than a content expert, creating space for participants to make connections and share their own knowledge. Given the information inequities in rural communities in the United States, this serves to strengthen social bonds and pool resources. In this workshop, I will use my own experience to model this method, and engage participants in considering how they might also use this approach in their own communities.

**Topics**

Within the model conversation we will discuss:

* How we know when information is true
* The role of news
* How news in a community has changed over time

In the debrief, we will cover:

* Effective facilitation techniques
* Steps to developing effective discussion prompts
* Approaches to inclusivity in conversation

In the overview of the Conversation Project, I will focus on:

* The mission and function of the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project
* How communities schedule conversations, and the steps to collaboration

**Goals and learning objectives**

The learning objectives for this workshop are as follows. Participants will:

* Engage in a facilitated dialogue in order to describe the affordances of this approach to community engagement in information literacy topics.
* Describe the outcomes of the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project in order to reflect on how this type of facilitated conversation could fit into their own work.

**Format and method**

The workshop will be broken into two main parts. In the first half, participants will participate in a facilitated conversation. Activities include paired discussion, analysis of a document, and large group discussion. Afterward, we will analyze the affordances of this approach to community engagement in information literacy issues. I will end with an overview of the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project and the events I have facilitated. Workshop participants will not need computers, but I would like to project a few slides in the final portion of the workshop. The program will end with time for participants to reflect on how they might use this approach in their community.

**The target audience**

The target audience is library and archives professionals from all sectors, as well as researchers engaged in community or civic engagement. A group between 10-25 participants would be ideal, although up to 40 could be accommodated.

**Duration**

The workshop will last approximately 90 minutes. The first 45 minutes will be the active session, followed by 20-25 minutes of debrief, and the final 20-25 minutes for the overview of the Conversation Project, ending with a structured reflective activity for participants to consider how they might use this approach in their own community.

# REFERENCES

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author thanks the staff of Oregon Humanities, as well as all the participants in her Conversation Project so far.