BookTube, Bookstagram, and BookTok, Oh My: Understanding The Online “Bookaverse” As A Tool for Professional Development

Dr. Tara Gold – Riverside High School – Durham, NC
Overview

01 Who I Am/Who Are You?
02 Professional Development Goals
03 What is the Bookaverse?
04 Modes of Participation
05 Documenting and Communicating
06 Questions
01

Who I Am/Who Are You?

Tara Gold, PhD, MLIS

Who I Am

Librarian
MLIS from UNC-Greensboro

Teacher
Riverside High School, Durham, NC
1800 Students
Diverse Population (40/30/30)

Academic
PhD in Education from UNC-Chapel Hill
Dissertation topic: BookTube

Book “Influencer”
Blogs
BookTube
Bookstagram
Booklr
BookTok
Follow Me On The Bookaverse!

http://bit.ly/goldBOOKTOK  TikTok: @literallytara
http://bit.ly/goldBOOKSTAGRAM  Instagram: @literallytara
http://bit.ly/rhsINSTAGRAM  Instagram: @RHSPiratesLibrary
# My Research

**Dissertation**

A Book Club for the 21st Century: An Ethnographic Exploration of BookTube

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**The Study**

- Teens 13-18
- 30 Channels
- 4 Focal Participants (Interviews)
- Community Survey
- 400 videos
- I made over 100 videos!

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**Findings**

BookTube is a significant site of informal learning for young people, particularly in regard to deepening their engagement with reading and learning technology skills at the point of need.
Poll: Which platform is your primary online platform?

- TikTok: Short-form video
- Instagram: Images and video
- YouTube: Mid-to-long form video
- Twitter/X/Threads: Text/Microblogging
- Other: Blog, Tumblr, Facebook, Snapchat, ????
Poll: Which platform are you most interested in learning more about?

- **TikTok**: Short-form video
- **YouTube**: Mid-to-long form video
- **Instagram**: Images and video
- **Twitter/X/Threads**: Text/Microblogging
- **Other**: Blog, Tumblr, Facebook, Snapchat, ??????
02

Professional Development Goals

Setting the stage – we will come back to this!

Goals/Modes of Participation

→ Bookaverse as an information source
  ◆ Consuming Content

→ Bookaverse as a platform
  ◆ Creating Content
Bookaverse as an Information Source

➔ Following accounts
  ◆ Authors, libraries, publishers
  ◆ Educational content
  ◆ Inspiration from content

➔ Researching using a hashtag

➔ Researching using the search feature
Bookaverse as a Platform

➔ Creating a personal or professional account
➔ Managing a library account
➔ Learning by creating
➔ Learning by interacting
Different Types of Goals

Formal/Official Goals
Directly fulfills professional goals on evaluation instruments and PDPs

Process Goals
Helps fulfill goals/One possible route to fulfill a goal

Informal/Personal Goals
Always improving your skillset!
What is the Bookaverse?

BookTube and BookTok and Bookstagram -- Oh My!

What is The Bookaverse?

➔ Anywhere on the Internet where people gather to create content and talk about books.
➔ Basically, take any social media site and cram the word “book” onto the name and you have a book community!
  ◦ Book Blogs (Wordpress, Blogger, etc)
  ◦ Bookstagram (Instagram)
  ◦ BookTube (YouTube)
  ◦ Booklr (Tumblr)
  ◦ Book Twitter/Book Threads
  ◦ BookTok
➔ To a lesser extent, this also includes Goodreads, Storygraph, etc.
Other Features

→ No formal borders
→ All about webs of connections
→ Connected by follows/friending/subscribing, hashtags, and “The Algorithm”
→ Many communities contain sub-communities or parallel/overlapping communities
  - Subcommunities: SpicyTok, SciFi Twitter
  - Parallel communities: NaNoWriMo, Publishers/Authors, Fandoms
Let’s do a quick comparison of platforms

Because they aren’t all the same!!!
BookTube/YouTube

→ Long-form videos
  ◆ Horizontal videos, no time limit?
→ NEW: Shorts (comments are ROUGH)
  ◆ Vertical video, 60 seconds max
→ Users generally actively click on content or watch channels they follow
→ Robust comment section
→ Well-established (10+ years)
→ Creation process:
  ◆ Film (phone or camera)
  ◆ Edit (time consuming)
  ◆ Upload
  ◆ Add metadata information
Bookstagram/Instagram

- Posts, Reels, and Stories
  - Posts: One or more still images
  - Reels: Short-form vertical videos
  - Stories: Temporary videos and images
- Very focused on the “aesthetic”
- Posts often accompanied by blog-like captions
- Harder than it looks!
- Users generally see content they have followed on feed
- LOTS of hashtags
BookTok/TikTok

→ Short-form video (up to 10 min.)
→ Users see random content on the For You Page or random content from accounts they follow on the Following page
→ Comments very limited in length
→ Still fairly new
→ 3-7 hashtags
Our new comfort station in the library!

Review: *Forget Me Not* by Alyson Derrick
04

Modes and Genres of Participation

So many ways to engage!

## Two Modes of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Creation</th>
<th>Content Consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating original content on a platform</td>
<td>Following accounts/hashtags to learn new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Pros:</strong> contributing to a community</td>
<td><strong>Potential Pros:</strong> Quick, “fun,” flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Cons:</strong> time consuming, curating a message/brand, fear of trolls, learning curve</td>
<td><strong>Potential Cons:</strong> Tons of content to sift through (may not all be useful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by doing and sharing, learning at the point of need.</td>
<td>Learning from others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four Common Genres of Participation in the Bookaverse

- **Library**: The account represents your library as a business.
- **Librarian**: The account represents you as a librarian.
- **Reader**: The account represents you as a reader or book influencer.
- **Author**: The account is about writing and publishing.
### Library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>To advertise library services and information to the community served; to advocate for libraries in general; to connect with other libraries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks Like</td>
<td>Recommended reading lists, tutorials, memes, information, event coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentials</td>
<td>Multiple people can run the account,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitfalls</td>
<td>Account represents the library as a whole, so content must fit the organization’s vision/standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags</td>
<td>#library, #libraries, #librarytiktok, #librariansoftiktok, #librariesoftiktok, topical hashtags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TikTok Accounts</td>
<td>@gvhslibrary (Kelsey Bogan), @comsewogue.library, @fowlervillelibrary, @rcsjcclibrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>(May overlap with library), advocating for the profession, networking with other librarians, having fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks Like</td>
<td>Memes, day-in-the-life, Q&amp;As, discussions, reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentials</td>
<td>Not tied to a particular institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitfalls</td>
<td>Tied to your professional identity, niche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags</td>
<td>#librariansoftiktok, #librariansofinstagram, #librarian, #librarianlife, #schoollibrarian, #librarianproblems, #bibliophile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TikTok Accounts</td>
<td>@TheContouredLibrarian, @managerine, @MedicalLibrarian, @between_the_stacks, @TeachInATadis, @TheSnarkyLibrarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reader</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To make friends; to build community; to find book recommendations; to share favorite books; to have fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looks Like</strong></td>
<td>Memes, book reviews, “transition” videos, wrap-ups, hauls, discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potentials</strong></td>
<td>Free books and partnerships with publishers/authors; community; reading more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pitfalls</strong></td>
<td>Burnout, slow growth, turning a hobby into work, “drama”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hashtags</strong></td>
<td>#booktok, #bookstagram, #books, #booktuber, #bookcommunity, #bibliophile, #lifeofareader, #tbr, #wrapup, #bookreview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TikTok Accounts</strong></td>
<td>@mynameismarines, @baker.reads, @baskinsuns, @books.with.lee, @schizophrenicreads, @pawneepubliclibrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To gain readers for books, to sell books, to be in community with other authors/writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks Like</td>
<td>Writing updates, cover reveals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potentials</td>
<td>Going viral and selling lots of books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitfalls</td>
<td>Alienating readers, creating content vs. writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags</td>
<td>#author, #authortok, #writertok, #amwriting, #writer, #WIP,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#authorsofinstagram, #authorlife, #indieauthor, #writingcommunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TikTok Accounts</td>
<td>@LucindaBerryAuthor, @alysonandrachel, @nataliahernandezauthor,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>@xiranjayzhao, @aidenschmaiden, @sabaatahirauthor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documenting and Communicating

Creating Your Goals

General Tips

➔ Observe and research before you jump in
➔ Start small
➔ Train the algorithm!
➔ Like, follow, comment
➔ There is a huge learning curve!
➔ Virality is random
➔ Cite your sources (give credit!) (Example “IC: @literallytara”)
➔ Remember, the Bookaverse is NOT peer reviewed, but it is hyper-current
➔ Screenshot, download, save in folders
Formal/Official Goals
Directly fulfills professional goals on evaluation instruments and Professional Development Plans

Process Goals
Helps fulfill goals/One possible route to fulfill a goal

Informal/Personal Goals
Always improving your skill set!
Evaluation Standards (NC)

School Library Media Coordinators establish a learning environment that facilitates access to resources and addresses the learning needs of all members of the school community.

School Library Media Coordinators:
- Establish a learning environment that promotes global awareness and cultural understanding.
- Promote and facilitate open, equitable access and appropriate use of all information and technology resources.
- Respect and meet the needs of a diverse school community.
- Provide accessible and flexible physical and virtual learning spaces to foster 21st century skills.

Evidence for Evaluation -- Dynamic Shelving
- Videos and blog posts from Kelsey Bogan
- Videos from other libraries under #dynamicshelving
- Images from our Instagram documenting our process
- TikToks sharing our process with others
My Professional Bookaverse-Related Goals

→ Post at least 3 times a week to my library’s Instagram
  ◆ For 2022-2023: Practice using Stories and Reels to engage followers
  ◆ For 2023-2024: Increase followers from 446 → 600
→ Brainstorm new programming and display ideas
→ Stay on top of current book and publishing trends using BookTok and Bookstagram

Formal/Official Goals
● On my PDP

Process Goals
● Help me reach other goals

Personal goals
● For me!
Think About: Your Goals!

As a starting point, what are some professional goals you might want to achieve using the Bookaverse?

- Bookaverse as an information source (Consuming)
- Bookaverse as a platform (Creating)

Formal/Official Goals
  - On my PDP/Evaluation

Process Goals
  - Help me reach other goals

Personal goals
  - For me!
Questions?

Q&A / AMA

Questions I’ve Been Asked/FAQ

Do you use a calendar to plan posts?

How do you interact with publisher and authors?

Are there copyright issues with songs and sounds?

How do you handle comments or turning off comments?

How important are hashtags?

How can I trust that these are good reviews?

If you are new, what is the best place to start?

How do you pick titles to highlight?
Questions I’ve Been Asked/FAQ

How do you get followers?
How do you come up with ideas for content?
What do you use to make posts look professional? (IG)
What guidelines do you recommend for interacting with patrons/followers?
What is the next big social media platform?
How can I market my library on social media?
How do keep up with BookTok books without having BookTok?
Thank You!

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