

From the [Future Ready 365](http://futureready365.sla.org/11/20/collaborative-librarianship/) Are You Ready Today? Blog

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Collaborative Librarianship

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Howdy from the beautiful Rocky Mountains! The Rocky Mountain chapter of SLA is thrilled to contribute this week's FutureReady365 posts. We are a small, diverse community of 150+ members spread across a four-state region (Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and South Dakota). We have a medley of posts from public school, government, higher education and independent professionals that we hope will prompt conversations, comments and thoughts on being future ready. Happy reading!

by Joseph Kraus, Rocky Mountain Chapter, Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics and Science-Technology Divisions

Collaboration has been a big buzzword in the library literature lately. Well, maybe I see that buzzword just because I have been training myself to see that concept in library articles, blog posts and reports. I am one of three editors for the blog, *Collaborative Librarianship News* at <http://collaborativelibrarianship.wordpress.com/>. This blog provides news and links to information concerning collaboration and cooperation in libraries of all types. Valerie Horton, Robin Hastings and I have been doing this since the journal *Collaborative Librarianship* opened its doors in January of 2009.

When it comes to collaboration, I agree with Stephen Abram when he noted that “cooperation is simple; collaboration is hard since it hits so many of those human hot buttons that generate emotional intensity—territorialism, ego, identity, sharing, power, etc.” (<http://collaborativelibrarianship.org/index.php/iocl/article/view/50>). True collaboration means that the staff of a library may need to give up some control of an aspect of their work. Collaboration with other types of organizations and people in other fields will require the staff to trust that the other organization or group will support a service that is no longer offered by library employees. Or, the collaboration may provide enhanced services that the library couldn't have done without collaboration. In the end, some aspect of the work could have formal contracts between the library and the other organization so that the services and tasks are spelled out.

Some examples of collaboration could include:

- Public library collaboration with a middle school
- Academic library collaboration with the Anthropology Department to develop museum displays
- Corporate library collaboration with the R&D Department
- Library/vendor collaboration
- Government information center collaboration with the IT Office on a specific project

What does this have to do with being future ready? As libraries and information centers continue their transformations, collaboration of all types and flavors will be even more important for the sustainability of the organization. The skill we all should have learned in kindergarten, “plays well with others,” continues to be a crucial skill.

Joseph Kraus is currently the Science & Engineering Librarian at the University of Denver (DU) [Penrose Library](#). DU is a medium sized private university in Denver, Colorado. He is active in the Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics and the Sci-Tech Divisions of the Special Libraries Association (SLA). He has written numerous articles and has presented on topics from Library2.0 resources, unconfereces and collection development.



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