



School of Law  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Prepare.  
Connect.  
Lead.

## Digital Commons @ University of Georgia School of Law

---

Articles, Chapters and Online Publications

Alexander Campbell King Law Library

---

6-1-2014

### Beyond the E-Reader: Alternative Uses for the iPad in Libraries

Rachel Evans

University of Georgia School of Law Library, [rsevans@uga.edu](mailto:rsevans@uga.edu)

---

#### Repository Citation

Evans, Rachel, "Beyond the E-Reader: Alternative Uses for the iPad in Libraries" (2014). *Articles, Chapters and Online Publications*. 31.

[https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/law\\_lib\\_artchop/31](https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/law_lib_artchop/31)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alexander Campbell King Law Library at Digital Commons @ University of Georgia School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles, Chapters and Online Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of Georgia School of Law. [Please share how you have benefited from this access](#) For more information, please contact [tstriepe@uga.edu](mailto:tstriepe@uga.edu).



COMPLETE COVERAGE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

# COMPUTERS LIBRARIES

MOBILE AND  
MOBILIZED

Volume 34, Number 5  
ISSN 1041-7915, USPS 738-510

JUNE 2014

## ADAPTIVE and RESPONSIVE

Half a Dozen  
(Other) Ways  
to Use iPads

page 5

**WILD**  
About Drupal

page 12

**LibGuides  
Remakes**

page 18

**BACK IT UP!**

page 29



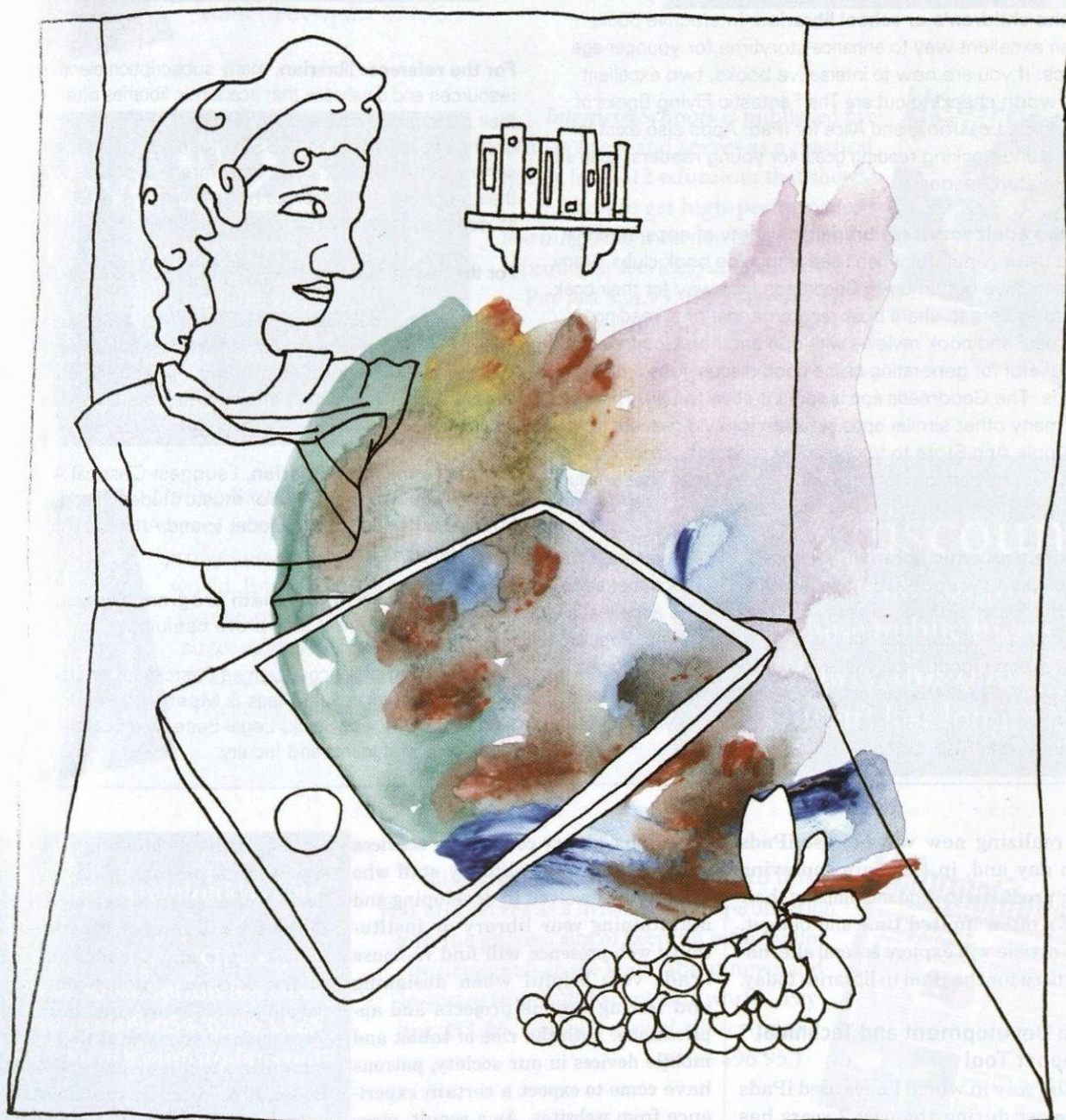


# Beyond the E-Reader:

## Alternative Uses for the iPad in Libraries

By Rachel Evans

**M**ore libraries than ever before are offering access to ebooks and e-readers for checkout to their patrons, but the usefulness of tablet devices such as the iPad extends beyond the e-reader. There are countless other uses for tablets in libraries. Libraries and their computing and technology staff around the world



Since it was introduced to the world in 2010, Apple's iPad has quickly become such a fixture of modern-day life that it already blends into our culture. However, we have not even scratched the surface of how such devices can be deployed in the 21st-century library.



# All in the Apps

## Preload Your iPads With Subject Apps

Tablet-style devices such as the iPad give users an experience somewhere between a smartphone and a laptop computer, bridging the gap between mobile device portability and traditional computer capability. While the navigation may be all in the wrist, performance is all in the apps. Of the 475,000 apps available for iPads, let's look at a few that librarians might want to preload on the devices they lend.

**For the children's or school librarian,** interactive books are an excellent way to enhance storytime for younger age groups. If you are new to interactive books, two excellent apps worth checking out are *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore* and *Alice* for iPad. Apps also exist for setting and tracking reading goals for young readers, such as *Accelerated Reader*.

**For the adult services librarian,** a variety of apps exist that could be very helpful when used alongside book clubs. Many libraries have begun using Goodreads as a way for their book club members to share book recommendations, reading progress, and book reviews with one another. Goodreads is also useful for generating online book discussions among groups. The Goodreads app is very intuitive to use. There are also many other similar apps available for avid readers from the Apple App Store to track reading progress, share book reviews, and catalog personal book collections. These include Libib, ReadMore, and The Reading Room.

**For the academic librarian,** you may find great success in preloading your devices for checkout with apps that are specific to certain programs of study, as well as apps that are generally useful to students in a classroom setting. Popular general apps for college students include Evernote; Pages; Pear Note; Study Buddy; gFlashPro—Flashcards & Tests; Thomson Reuters RefScan; ReferenceME; EasyBib, for iPad; Dropbox; and Blackboard Mobile Learn.



**For the reference librarian,** many subscription electronic resources and databases that academic libraries often offer to their patrons also have apps available for the iPad, including ebrary, WestlawNext, and EBSCOhost. For the specialty librarian serving certain subject areas, an awareness of useful apps for their programs of study could make a world of difference to students and faculty who frequently use iPads.

**For the history librarian,** The World HD could be a helpful resource.

**For the science librarian,** The Elements: A Visual Exploration could assist chemistry students, while Star Walk and Solar Walk might be useful to astronomy students. Science Glossary would be a great app for students taking any science-related courses.

**For the humanities librarian,** I suggest Classical Archives, Tenuto, and The Orchestra for music students; and Musée de Louvre, Adobe Ideas, Art Model 1, and Art History Interactive for art students.

**For librarians serving as math program liaisons,** Math and Math Cheat Sheet may prove useful.

**For law librarians,** apps such as Fastcase, LawLibe, OpenRegs, Auditorium Class & Meeting Notes, Barron's Law Dictionary, LawStack, Legal-Ease, and CourtLink are ideal for law students and faculty.

are realizing new ways to use iPads each day and, in turn, are improving their productivity and maximizing their staff's often limited time and budget. This article will explore several alternative uses for the iPad in libraries today.

### Web Development and Technical Support Tool

The way in which I have used iPads the most during the past 2 years has been as a web development tool. Information technology librarians, web

librarians, library computing services staff, and any other library staff who are largely involved in developing and maintaining your library or institution's web presence will find in-house iPads very helpful when designing and testing various projects and applications. With the rise of tablet and mobile devices in our society, patrons have come to expect a certain experience from websites. As a result, more libraries are designing or redesigning their websites, blogs, and even library

catalogs to be mobile-first and responsive, so that patrons using any type of device other than a standard desktop computer will have an experience that makes sense and not one that results in frustration. Up-and-coming web developers who are used to using devices such as the iPad as their primary computing tool may find apps such as Koder, Procoding, Gusto, Paper, iMockups for iPad, Palettes Pro, and JSpad very useful, especially if there is a need for working from home or on-the-go.



iPads can also assist in making the development of some web-based features easier and more affordable; this can be the case with virtual tours. The former go-to method of delivering quality virtual tours on websites used to be Flash; however, iPads and iPhones do not support Flash, which has quickly made the format obsolete when it comes to mobile-first web design. Web developers and digital media specialists who have access to an iPad can create mobile-device-accessible virtual tours, using free apps such as iSphere and Twister without any 360-degree photography training. A few cons of using iPads as a solution for 360-degree tours include a lack of image quality when viewed on larger computer screens, and, depending on the app, there may be a great deal of time and patience involved in order to get your 360-degree tour perfect and looking seamless. Purchasing an app such as Cycloramic may cost a few dollars more, but it gives you the ability to edit your finished 360-degree tour from within the app. If you also have access to an iPhone, you could take advantage of the hands-free feature Cycloramic offers. This feature uses the device's built-in vibration abilities to automate a slow spin of the iPhone on a flat surface, allowing for a pretty seamless 360-degree tour. A pro that may outweigh some of the cons of this approach for your library is that the end result is available to you as a link, which means you do not have to host your resulting 360-degree tour on another server; the 360-degree players are HTML5 and ready to be viewed on the widest variety of devices possible.

And lest we forget, libraries are often a source of technology advice and instruction for all types of patrons. Therefore, it is helpful for library staff to have devices such as the iPad available, so that they can better assist patrons who may have device specific questions.

### Video Capture and Videoconferencing Tool

Many of Apple's products have the ability to capture surprisingly high-quality images and video. iPads are capable of recording from 720p to 1080p



*iPads are not just passive devices but can be put to work as interactive communication tools.*

high-definition (HD) video. This feature has been used by professionals of all occupations; libraries are no exception, as they continue to take on the role of technology support for their respective communities. One example of the usefulness of video capture on iPads is to capture library or related organization events. Small libraries with little funding that have an iPad could capture high-quality, HD video with little to no technology or videography experience required. That video could then easily be transferred to a computer for editing or immediate upload, or the video could be shared directly from the iPad.

Libraries are also using iPads as a videoconferencing solution. An example of this comes from the University of Georgia School of Law's Alexander Campbell King Law Library, which has been using iPads and FaceTime to allow for law school classes and clinics to host off-campus guest speakers who do not have access to other videoconferencing technology. In a pinch, if the off-campus guest speaker has an iPad, videoconferencing has never been easier. On the school's end, the technology librarian simply uses the library's iPad and an adapter to project the image of the guest speaker on to a classroom projection screen. With the iPad situated at the front of the classroom, the speaker can view the entire class through the iPad on his end. If your classroom is equipped for audio, it is also just as simple to connect the iPad's audio to your classroom or auditorium's system,

usually using a one-eighth' audio cable. For those unfamiliar with iPads, FaceTime is an app that comes preinstalled on the device.

However, there are some cons to using iPads in this way. One con that may make this solution less than ideal is if the presenter has PowerPoint or other presentation materials, you cannot project a presentation at the same time as the video feed. A workaround may be to have the presenter send the librarian or other technology staff his presentation in advance to project it using a separate screen and have someone switch between the video feed and the presentation, as well as click through



*Don't just tell them—show them on your iPad.*



the presentation for the presenter. Another concern may be battery life, especially if the speaker has a lengthy presentation planned. Know exactly how long your library iPad's battery life is, ensure that it is fully charged, and, if possible, have a charger on hand in case the device needs to charge while in use.

### Presentation or Exhibition Tool?

Librarians, library staff, and their patrons may also find iPads to be a very helpful tool for presentations. As stated previously, iPads can be connected to other computers and projection screens using a simple adapter. Presentation solutions such as Prezi or PowerPoint can be even easier to navigate through on an iPad, especially if the presenter is familiar with that device. If your instructional presentation is about technology or is specifically about the iPad itself, it would impress your audience all the more while giving you an ideal demonstration tool on hand to use the iPad as a part of your presentation's setup. Many libraries are also using iPads as an exhibition tool for more interactive library displays, self-guided library orientations, and even as a digital picture frame component for more traditional library displays. If you are thinking of using iPads or similar devices as an exhibition tool in your library, keep in mind the value of the device; make sure you also have a solution for keeping the device secure and stationary in your exhibition environment, so that patrons are not tempted to wander off with the device.

### Roving Reference Tool

Another alternative use for iPads in libraries is as a roving reference tool. Whether you are a librarian working in a small and likely understaffed library or an academic librarian seeking to engage students who seem to be having trouble locating something in the stacks, an iPad can help untether you and the patron from standard computer stations and reference desks. This might allow you to locate items and resources more quickly, be they physical or electronic. A responsive library catalog interface and pre-

loading the device with apps that are available for your library's electronic resources can help you to be even more successful when using the iPad for roving reference. A warning to librarians who are not technology-savvy: Make sure you know the device well enough before attempting to use it as a primary tool in front of your patrons. You do not want to lengthen or complicate their search due to your own frustration with a device; instead, your goal is to add ease and speed to the search process for your patrons. Depending on your library and area, it may even be possible to enable GPS for assisting in navigating more quickly to specific locations or items in a building.

### Classroom Clicker Solution

Libraries supporting school or college classrooms and teachers are very familiar with clicker technologies. iPads, as well as other mobile devices, are now being used by some institutions in place of traditional clicker devices. Via Response provides one such solution with the concept of any-device clickers. The software works across all standard mobile devices, including laptops, smartphones, and tablets. One pro with this type of solution is that the students supply their own devices rather than the library or school purchasing enough clickers for multiple classrooms. Cons with this solution include the obvious issue with certain students potentially not owning any of the supported devices; however, that con could easily be countered by the library or institution having a certain number of devices on reserve for regular patron checkout to help offset the issue.

### Self-Checkout Solution

I cannot even begin to count the number of small businesses I have visited in the past few years that are using iPads instead of a cash register for their money exchange solutions. It has also become commonplace to expect self-checkout kiosks at larger grocery and department stores. Many libraries have begun opting for self-checkout kiosks as a way to free up

librarians or library staff from circulation desks, giving employees more time for other tasks. This may be an ideal solution for small libraries with less funding to make the most of their limited number of staff. Many libraries have already released apps that allow their patrons to check out their own materials using their own devices to scan an item's bar code. It is not hard to imagine more and more libraries using devices such as the iPad as a self-checkout solution or even in place of their traditional checkout setups, as other industries have.

### Conclusion

While iPads cannot serve as the perfect solution to all issues in all libraries, there are specific alternative uses that certain types of libraries can benefit from. Depending on your library's individual needs, investing in one or a handful of iPads could act as a shared solution to multiple problems. Since libraries are often an important resource for their community's technology questions and needs, librarians and library staff everywhere should not be reluctant in embracing this technology sooner rather than later. Focus on the options that might benefit your patrons and staff the most, and always weigh the pros and cons of your potential iPad investment before diving in. There is no doubt that librarians will continue to find new and exciting uses for the device for years to come.

### About the Author and Illustrator

*Rachel Evans is a web coordinator and digital media specialist at Alexander Campbell King Law Library at the University of Georgia School of Law. She received her M.L.I.S. from Florida State University and holds a B.A. in art and music. She has worked in both academic and public libraries since 2008 and is interested in the intersecting relationships of librarianship, digital media, technology, and web design.*

*Illustrations by Grant Evans. He is a freelance artist, designer, and photographer working in Athens, Ga. He holds degrees in art and digital media.*