Checked Out! Episode 1 Transcript

Kathy Ray: Hello, everybody. This is Kathy Ray with the University of Nevada, Reno Libraries and Teaching and Learning Technologies. How are you? How are you doing during this time of "staying home" for Nevada? It's hard, right? It's an adjustment. Well, all of us here in the Libraries and TLT hope that you and your families are staying safe and taking things as they come, finding joy in the small things of everyday life.
In the past few weeks, as we're all adjusting to the new abnormal, the people who work in the Libraries and TLT have been finding really creative and innovative ways to provide resources, support, hands-on assistance to our University community despite not being on campus and despite being in the midst of this global health crisis. And you know what? It's working. It's working surprisingly well. Each of our departments has shown up in extraordinary and unexpected ways. We decided we wanted to share these accomplishments and stories with all of you. So, we started this show: "Checked Out." It's a new podcast from the University Libraries and TLT. It's our attempt to highlight the great work that's happening collectively, even if it's happening remotely. So, until we're able to see you on campus again, we're going to broadcast from here, and I hope you'll listen in. I'm excited to introduce our hosts: Sasha Soleta from Access Services and Sean Busey from Electronic Resources Acquisitions and Serials, and I want to thank them for doing this. Take it away, Sasha and Sean.

Sasha Soleta: Thank you, Kathy, for that rousing introduction of this podcast. [Laughs] I don't why I "Shatner-ed" it right there, but anyway, my name is Sasha, and I work in the Access Services Department at the Knowledge Center, and with me I have. . .

Sean Busey: Um, my name is Sean. I work in the Electronic Resources and Acquisition Services. Uh, also, also known as one of the departments that makes up the, the much feared, you know, it's, it's the Mount Doom of, of the Knowledge Center: Technical Services.

Sasha: Yes, it is the back part that nobody - people rarely get to see if you're not in the know. Um. . .

Sean: Yes.

Sasha: It's actually, cause people always wonder, 'cause our building is huge right? So people are all like, "Where's the rest of this space?" Well, we have MARS, and then, sitting on top of MARS, we have your guys' department. [Laughs]

Sean: Yeah.

Sasha: So,

Sean: Yeah, one does not simply walk into Technical Services.

Sasha: No, like I tried to, to water their plants, and it just…

Sean: [Laughs]

Sasha: There was a bouncer, and it just didn't work out for me, so I'm…

Sean: Yeah, yeah he's this really big Estonian guy.

Sasha: Uh-huh

Sean: Uh, can't, don't know his name.

Sasha: Just…

Sean: Doesn't matter.

Sasha: Just keeps the riff-raff outta Tech Services, apparently.

Sean: [Laughs] Uh, so, what we're doing with this, uh, this podcast I guess, is just to kinda bring a little positivity, talk about what the Library and affiliated folks are doing to have a good impact while the world does its best to, to fall to pieces.

Sasha: So, our first interview in this series is actually from somebody who has been making PPE masks which. . .

Sean: Mhm.

Sasha: . . . protect people in hospitals and stuff. They're the ones . . .

Sean: Yeah.

Sasha: . . . that are kinda like, I'm gonna go with salad bar shield, for the face. [Laughs]

Sean: [Laughs] It's, uh, it's uh, a portable sneeze guard.

Sasha: Yeah, portable sneeze guard.

Sean: Um, for medical personnel. Yeah. So, uh, with that, uh, let's, let's uh, get to this interview. We'd like to, uh, introduce, uh, Nick Crowl. He's the Makerspace manager at the University's DeLaMare Library. And then, uh, joining us for possible contributions, is uh, Tara. How do you pronounce your last name? I don't think I've ever heard it out loud.

Tara Radniecki: Oh, right. Radniecki.

Sean: Radniecki, okay. Uh, the head of DeLaMare Library. Uh, Sasha do you wanna go first since I did that?

Sasha: Oh, okay. I see how this is. Um…

[Laughter]

Sean: We trade!

Sasha: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, so. So, Nick, uh, what have you been working on during this, uh, time period?

Nick Crowl: Well, um, for at least the last couple of weeks now, we have been focusing our efforts on 3D-printing and, uh, making protective visors for medical personnel around, uh, Reno and in the rural hospitals around the state.

Sean: What, what specific equipment are you making? Just visors? Or anything in addition to that? Or?

Nick: For me and what our library can do, it's pretty much just the visors. I can 3D-print these headbands, um, two every hour and a half or so, and so, the library was generous enough to let me borrow the 3D printer and bring it home. And so, it's been running for about sixteen to eighteen hours a day every day since we all got sent home.
Sean: Nice.

Sasha: So, you have been doing this all from home and not at DeLaMare in person?

Nick: You know, there was there was one day early on where I got to spend some time at DeLaMare using the laser cutter to actually cut out that plastic visor part you see here.

Sasha: Yeah.

Nick: Um, but with the new set of restrictions, we've actually just been doing those with a single-hole punch and a pair of scissors.

Sean:That easy.Cool, very nice. Uh, so, what is - what is the impact of these, and who, who has it been impacting? You said rural hospitals?

Nick: Yeah. So, our initial goal was to be able to provide at least a hundred of these to the Nevada Rural Hospital Partner Association, and we met that need, um, early last week. And so, now, there's actually a very large community group, um, all kind of organized on Slack.

Sean: Mhm.

Nick: And we've been pooling our resources along with theirs. Uh, I believe the last count I saw was more than 2,000 of the face shields had been distributed, um, to various groups around Reno.

Sean: That's great. That's really great. And, how did - how did you get in touch with that specific organization?

Nick: Uh, this is where Tara may need to check me, but I believe a conversation started, um, with some of the Engineering faculty contacting her initially, and then, once I was sort of brought into the loop, there were a couple of different ideas being thrown around at first. And, um, I was introduced to, at the time, a very small group on Slack, where we were trying to organize efforts. And then, um, since then, it's just

kinda gone from there. We have now almost 100 members on the Slack channel.

Sean: That's really cool.

Sasha: So, you're one of, like, a larger group that are manufacturing these then? I would take it? There's more, there's other companies and places and on, in Reno.

Nick: Yes! So we have probably about a half-dozen, um, faculty members from the University also making these. Um, and then, like I was saying, we've kinda started, for logistics reasons, pooling our resources together with the community. Um, there's, uh, of course the Reno Collective has thrown their expertise and their resources at this. Um, Griffin Co. Gaming - it's a local gaming store in Reno - they have, I believe, between twelve and sixteen 3D printers that they have made available for this sort of thing. So really, we are part of it, but um, the local community has really been spearheading the effort.

Sean: That's - that's really cool. Um, and then is this part of like a national or even an international thing? Is this happening in other places, not just here?

Nick: Yeah, so the design that we actually picked to use, um, started out as a Swedish design. Um, the, I'm not sure when the guy actually started working on it, but he got it approved by, um, Sweden's health industry. And then, after that, with a couple of other designs, they became kind of wildly popular across all of the makerspace and 3D-printing websites out there. And so, this is, it's affecting, you know, more than just Reno. It's the whole country, and then many other countries have jumped onto this.

Sean: Right. That's great.

Sasha: Do you see, as this, like, moves forward, having 3D-printed anything else? Or could anything else be 3D-printed in, like, conjunction to what we're going though right now? Or?

Nick: Yeah! So, along with these face shields, I know Kostas Alexis here at UNR is working on, uh, printing some, uh, face masks that actually take N95 filters. He's having to do that out of an antimicrobial filament. And then, in other areas around Reno, we've been printing off, uh, splitters for ventilators, so one ventilator can actually power multiple different, I guess, people. It sounds weird to say it that way.

Sean: [Laughs]

Nick: It's terrible.

Sasha: [Laughing] Just a little bit.

Nick: But yeah, so, uh, besides just printing these face visors, uh, there's quite a few different applications. Another one that I've seen recently is kind of, uh, a band that goes around the back of somebody's

head so that they can adjust the ear-looping parts on a face mask to better fit an individual and take strain off of their ears.

Sean: Mhm

Nick: Just because they're having to wear them all day every day now.

Sean: Yeah. Uh, so, what are, what are the challenges involved in this?

Nick: The challenges have been…

[Laughter]

Nick: There have been quite a few challenges so far. Um, you know, when you've got this many people in one place that all really wanna do the right thing, um, getting everyone on the same page, onto one design, onto, getting the logistics set up, that was all very challenging in the first few days. Um, there were a lot of conversations between Tara and I where we would set our idea of what needed to happen, and then an hour later completely pivot on that because we found new information. Somebody else had joined and was able to make their resources available. So, luckily, most of that, the logistics issues, have been solved, and now we're just facing questions about getting supplies and, you know, how long this gonna go on, and what is it gonna take to sustain this effort to get us through.

Sean: Right. How, how long, um, how much does it cost, I guess, to produce like one of these face shields?

Nick: It costs about 75 cents . . .

Sean: Okay.

Nick: . . . per face shield, and the price is actually going down. We've been able to- the clear plastic part on the front of it- um, were supplies that I borrowed from the @One's, uh, poster printing operation. Um, we've since contacted the company that provides the @One with that stuff and found a thinner material that'll work just as well. Um, so that's lowered the cost individually.

Sean: Nice.

Nick: Uh,

Sasha: And these are like single use, right? Or are they reusable? Are we . . .

Nick: The headbands are definitely reusable, and the face shields are likely reusable, um, as long as they don't get too damaged. They can be, uh, separated and then sanitized after, you know, the end of each use. So, that was one of the factors in going into choosing this design, is keeping it around. We didn't want it to just be a single use and then throw it in the garbage.

Sean: Right. So is, you mentioned like the logistics and getting the materials for this. Is it as bad as everyone trying to buy T.P. at Costco right now? Like how much - is there a shortage, or…?

Nick: Yeah, it has definitely been difficult. You know, all of my usual, comfortable suppliers got bought out of things very quickly. Um, Amazon halted priority shipping on 3D-printing materials and things like that. Um, adding in the difficulties of just getting things shipped and delivered. We've got a couple-day lag time in between when I call a company and they say, "Yes, we can get you these supplies," before they actually know if they can fulfill that order. So, that's been a real challenge.

Sean: Yeah. Probably running down pretty short on a list of potential vendors then.

Nick: Yeah, you know, two weeks ago I called up, uh, MyBinding, the company that provides the plastic shields, and asked them what I thought was a crazy question of, "Can I order 5,000 of these today?" And, on that day, they said, "Oh, yeah. That would be easy." Well, we put in our order a day or two later, and they were completely out.

Sean: Wow.

Nick: Right? So, yeah. Getting supplies and keeping it all going has - is the current challenge. But, luckily, the Reno Community Group just secured, uh, 5,000 sheets.

Sean: That's great.

Nick: And Reno Type, a local company, has offered to do all of the punching of the holes for 'em. So, that means we can easily have thousands more face shields ready and available to anyone that needs them very quickly now.

Sasha: I imagine punching them by hand was not fun for you.

[Laughter]

Nick: No! Um, depending on what you're using, it's sometimes a little easier or more difficult. Uh, the @One likes to buy nice, really high-quality stuff. Which, as it turns out, is enough to break hole-punches after doing twenty to thirty of 'em.

[Laughter]

Nick: Um, we had some of the other faculty in Engineering go around their departments and find old transparency sheets from back when we used to use those, and, uh, those you can actually do two or three at a time. It's nice, sitting there, doing some professional development work and just kinda punching out the holes and listening to the LinkedIn videos.

[Laughter]

Sean: Hey, it works. You know? Pass the time.

[Laughter]⊤á

Nick: Yeah.

Sasha: So, going forward, do you think there's gonna be any more changes to how we interact with the community. I mean, I feel like this is a big community effort for you guys. And do you think, going forward, this has really opened the doors for more community projects like this? Even looking past the pandemic?

Nick: Um, yes! I think so. You know, UNR's always kind of seen as an island by itself, but . . .

Sasha: Mhm.

Nick: . . .we've been working really hard to try to communicate with all the other big and small people here in town that are interested in helping out, and so, if something like this were to ever happen again, our group of makers and helpers has already been established. And even outside of the group that I'm in right now, there's a huge one for sewing efforts to make gowns and face masks. And so, we have a lot of new connections. I've digitally met a ton of different educators, librarians, uh, people that saw the problem, realized they had the equipment and the resources to make a difference, and then just wanted to jump in.

Sean: That's great.

Tara: I'll add something to that. You know, just today one of the Computer Science, uh, and Engineering faculty members emailed me, uh, and some others about like a new NSF grant - The National Science Foundation -, and it's a Community-University Collaboration grant, where we would be asked to work with our communities to identify, uh, needed, innovative priorities, and then we would partner with researchers, as the community would partner with researchers at the University to help facilitate solutions to those priorities. So, because this sort of stuff is happening all over the country, all over the world, like, and we're recognizing that we are best when both these resources come together: the community and business expertise along with the researching expertise at the University.

Sean: Right.

Tara: And we can kind of meet these big challenges. So, to me it was really exciting to see these big, um, uh, funding organizations starting to prioritize this sort of collaborative work too.

Sean: Yeah,I mean it sounds fantastic. It's, it's really great.

Sasha: I know it was always hard in the past to connect the University with the community, and it seems like this bringing everybody together a little bit.

Sean: [Laughs]

Sasha: On many different levels. [Laughs]

Tara: Right, I mean this is a land-grant University for, for sure. You know?

Sasha: Yeah.

Tara: And I, and I think, um, people can forget that, but what happens at a land-grant University should directly benefit the people of that land. The people of that state, you know? And so I think this is an excellent example of the University getting to use its resources directly to benefit the people in the state of Nevada.

Sean: It just took the world almost ending for everyone to realize it.

[Laughter, indistinct comments]

Sean: Not a, not a big push.

Tara: No. No, right?

Sean: Do you guys have anything else you wanna, wanna add on?

Nick: I don't think so, other than maybe just, you know, a reminder that there is still a need, and that, like I was saying, you can make some of these things with a hole-punch and a pair of scissors at home. So, if anyone is finding themselves without enough to do, or just wants a break, you know, they can still help out. Anyone with a sewing machine, fabric, things like that. There's a lot of different ways that, uh, people can join in helping right now. And if they are interested, they can just go ahead and send me an email, and I'll get 'em hooked up with whichever group, uh, kind of best fits what they can work on.

Sean: Nice.

Tara: Yeah, and I would encourage everybody to find ways that they feel like they can help, because it can really ease some of that powerlessness I think that we feel in these types of situations. I don't know how many times Nick and I have talked to each other and been like, "I'm so grateful we can do something about this." You don't just have to sit in your room. But, even today, you know, I was reading some articles online, and there's like lots of digital volunteer opportunities, right? In thirty hours you can be trained to man crisis lines, and you can write elderly, um, people stuck in isolation, letters. And that, there's just a lot of things that we can do, um, that I think can, can remind you what you're capable of, even in these types of circumstances. So, I would encourage everybody to find, find ways that they can help. And they can be big or small and they all contribute.

Sean: Fantastic. That's great points to make.

Sasha: Yeah, so thank you guys for being our test subjects, basically. [Laughs]

Sean: Yeah.

Nick: Awesome, you bet.

Tara: You bet!

Sean: Alright! So, that was a first interview you all just heard.

Sasha: Do you remember when 3D-printing was like, first a thing? Like . . .

Sean: Yeah, yeah.

Sasha: . . . when we were like, ten years ago it was so crazy, and now we have people like, just making stuff. Sure, it's still takes like twelve hours [Laughs], but…

Sean: Yeah, it takes a while. What blows my mind is like online when I see, "Oh, I 3D-printing Iron Man's suit."

Sasha: [Laughs]

Sean: Just like, how? How?

Sasha: Yeah, I can't believe it's gone that far.

Sean: Yeah, it's, it's cool. It's cool. And it's great to see, see it used for such a good cause, like a really good purpose.

Sasha: Yeah.

Sean: It's amazing stuff.

Sasha: I mean, 3D-printed Iron Man suits, I think is a good purpose.

Sean: Let me put it this way, If superheros were real. . .

Sasha: [Laughs]

Sean: . . . I would put the Iron Man suit first. Let's, let's be honest here.

Sasha: Okay, yeah. I mean, fair.

Sean: But, that is fantasy, and we do have a very real pandemic, so I'm gonna have to go with the medical supplies, at least by default.

Sasha: One day I will make my 3D-printed Iron Man suit.

Sean: [Laughs]

Sasha: But like with a, like a beer belly like, plate, I can add.

[Laughter]

Sasha: I can do it all, Sean!

Sasha: So our credits today: You have your wonderful hosts, Sasha and Sean.

Sean: Yeah!

Sasha: And a special thanks to our guests today, Nick Crowl from the DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library. He is the Makerspace and Dataworks manager. And Tara Radniecki, head of the DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library.⊤á

Sean: Thank you to the Libraries podcast team: Maggie Ressel, Michelle Rebaleati, Luka Starmer, Jill Stockton, Drew Willis.⊤á

Sasha: And a special thank you to the Dean of Libraries, Kathy Ray. The music this episode was provided by "Better Days" by Lewen Wikstrom, courtesy of Universal Production Music.

Sean: And, until next time, this is "Checked Out," checking out.