



On August 19, 2025, Annie Gaines and Deana Brown from the Idaho Commission for Libraries led 25 state library staff through a two-hour futures thinking experience at the annual CE Forum Conference. Teams learned about foresight and futures thinking, then used that knowledge to imagine and prototype library services, programs, or borrowable items that libraries might offer sometime in the future.

Sustainable Gumball Machine.....2

Storylab3

Potato Powered Vehicle4

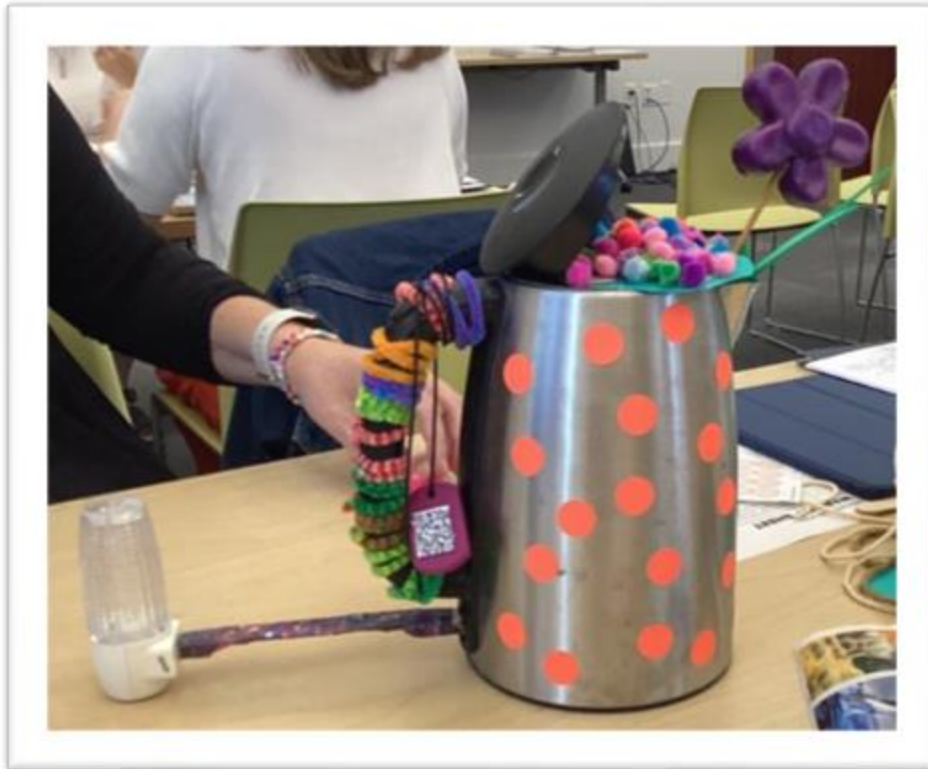
Wearable AI Wellness5

Post-Climate Event Programs.....6

Moon Mobile and Apple Translator7

Sustainable Gumball Machine

In a PLAYFUL future, the library provides a SUSTAINABILITY STORE relating to THE ENVIRONMENT that makes people feel proud.



This is not your ordinary gumball machine. This gumball machine can be out in the blazing sun, because our gumballs are sustainable. Instead of kids swallowing it and it living in their stomachs for seven years, kids and adults are throwing their gum on the ground and depending on the flavor of gumball, you could plant vegetables, trees, or flowers. And start your gumball garden.

The tags on the gumball machine are instructional, and a QR code will help you upload photos or information about your gumball garden.

This product was designed by a playful patron from the sustainability store that didn't need a kettle anymore. Instead, they saw a need and wanted to share it at the library so other patrons can check it out.

This thing from a future library was imagined, designed, and prototyped by Scottie, Ada, Sarah, and Meg.

Storylab

In a RESILIENT future, the library provides a BORROWABLE ITEM relating to EDUCATION that makes people feel NOSTALGIC.



Storylab is a multimedia recording toolkit that provides prompts and opportunities to capture history, stories, and memories.

This thing from a future library was imagined, designed, and prototyped by Cindy Church, Andrea Vernola, Lauren Upchurch, and Brittany Whitfield.

Potato Powered Vehicle

In an EFFICIENT future, the library provides a PROGRAM relating to TRAVEL that makes people feel DELIGHT.



This library program demonstrates how to retrofit a vehicle to a potato-powered one for easier and faster travel for all ages efficiently, bringing delight for all.

This thing from a future library was imagined, designed, and prototyped by Gina Martin, Jared Leadbetter, Tor Loney, and Barry Trott.

Wearable AI Wellness

In a JOYOUS future, the library provides a SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE and BORROWABLE ITEM relating to AI that improves people's wellbeing.



Our library subscribes to an AI wellness service. There is a wearable wellness necklace with four mood options (more moods available for higher subscription tiers) and a control panel to select positive moods. For in-library use, there is a two hour checkout.

This thing from a future library was imagined, designed, and prototyped by Joy Worland, Lauri Thompson, Sarah Patterson, Paige Harkins, and the Farmer's Ghost.

Post-Climate Event Programs

In a HAUNTED future, the library provides a PROGRAM relating to FORESTS (AFTER A CLIMATE EVENT) that makes people feel CALM.



This program has three stations:

1. Interpretive dance: showing the event and the impact of the event on the people and animals in the area. A QR code at this station directs users to a dance program.
2. Time for reflection and processing: fountain attendees are invited to sit and reflect on what the space could be or could look like in the future, such as reforestation, or re-"nature" initiatives. A QR code at this station directs users to library resources on processing grief and change.
3. Partner with forestry service: providing native plant seeds or saplings in alignment with the advice from the forestry service and other experts. QR codes at this station direct users to native plant information or to educational resources on the risks of wildfires, invasive species, or sustainability practices for interacting with the land.

This thing from a future library was imagined, designed, and prototyped by Nini Beegan, Terry McQuown, Jaclyn Hale, and Rachel Lenahan.

Moon Mobile and Apple Translator

In a PLAYFUL future, the library provides a SERVICE relating to THE MOON that makes people feel WEIRDNESS.



The Earth Public Library “Moon Mobile” is an outreach vehicle. It is a solar and electric vehicle designed to “walk” on the moon to provide library services to the remote multi-galactic colony. The Moon Mobile brings materials, multi-galactic ILLs, holo-technology, etc., to support the library outpost on the moon. It also supports programs provided by moon-based library staff, like UEL (Universal Earth Language) classes for “multi-galactics,” including earth-based Apple i-translators to help facilitate communication between Earthers and multi-galactics (a la Language Line Solutions).

This thing from a future library was imagined, designed, and prototyped by Nicolette Baffoni, Paige Bredenkamp, Emily Goodman, Holly Kuhlmann, and Danielle Todd.