“Beyond #OKBoomer”
Understanding today’s intergenerational workplace cultures in the library

Raymond Pun, Eboni Henry, Sara Dallas and Jahala Simuel

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Introductions

Sara Dallas  Eboni Henry  Jahala Simuel  Raymond Pun
The Session in Three Points

- Considerations
- Panel Discussion
- Q&A

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When you think millennials, what words come to mind?

Short Answer Poll
When you think of millennials, what words come to mind?

- cool
- innovative
- entitled
- avocado
- connection
- self
- toast
- lazy
- fun
- talkative
- smart
- responsible
- indecisive
- absorbed
- techie
- creative
- social
- hardworking
- uncertain
- privileged

Poll is full and no longer accepting responses.
When you think of gen X, what words come to mind?

Short Answer Poll
When you think of baby boomers, what words come to mind?

Short Answer Poll
When you think of baby boomer, what words come to mind?

- Experienced
- Traditional
- Slow
- White
- Resistant
- Absorbed
- Experienced
- Sometimes difficult
- Challenged
- Entitled
- Seasoned
- Motherly
- Retirement
- Experience
- Emotionally
- New
- Long
- Middle
- Cranky
- Fragile
- Tech
- Old
- Self
- Change
- Technology
- Security
- Wisdom
- Responsible
- Fatherly
- Grandparents
- Family
- Reliable
- Voters
- Things
- Immature
- Greedy
### Table 1: Overview of Characteristics for Each Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Trait</th>
<th>Traditionalists</th>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broad Traits</strong></td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Immediacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifice, loyalty,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eclecticism, self-reliance, free</td>
<td>Community service, cyberliteracy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discipline, respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agents, work/life balance, independence</td>
<td>tolerance, diversity, confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>for authority</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Influential</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Watergate, women's rights, JFK</td>
<td>Internet, social media, 9/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Events</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>assassination, civil rights and Martin</td>
<td>terrorist attack, deaths of Princess</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Luther King Jr., Vietnam War, man</td>
<td>Diana and Mother Teresa</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>walks on the moon</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Defining</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>MTV, AIDS, Gulf</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Invention</strong></td>
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<td>War, 1987 stock market crash, fall of</td>
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<td>communism/Berlin Wall, Challenger</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>shuttle explodes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax machine, radio</td>
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<td>Personal computer,</td>
<td>Mobile phone, Walkman, computer</td>
<td>Internet, smart phones (text messaging), social media, instant messaging</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>television</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional, nuclear</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disintegrating</td>
<td>Latchkey kids, high divorce rate</td>
<td>Blended families</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A dream</td>
<td></td>
<td>A birthright</td>
<td>A way to get there</td>
<td>An incredible expense</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Money</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Put it away, pay</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buy now, pay later</td>
<td>Cautious, conservative, save, save</td>
<td>Earn to spend</td>
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<tr>
<td>cash</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Generation Z

## Generation Z / Digital Natives (born after 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>At Work</th>
<th>Historic Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Also known as Generation M, Net Generation, Internet Generation  
• Grown up with world, wide, web. (Became available after 1991)  
• Born during minor fertility boom around US Global Financial Crisis  
• The children of Generation X | • 23 million and growing | • Highly connected to the use of communications  
• Like Instant Gratification  
• Thrive on acceleration and next, next, next  
• Independent people, lacking a community-oriented nature due to social media  
• Are very open book with little concern to privacy and personal information. Except for when it comes to money  
• Thrive on small bits of information. Think in terms of status’s and Twitter language  
• Under a lot of pressure to succeed | • Very collaborative and creative  
• Will have to solve the worst environmental, social and economic problems in history  
• Will not be team players  
• Will be more self-directed  
• Will process information at lightning speed  
• Will be smarter | • 9/11 attacks - 2011  
• Great Recession - 2008 to present  
• Terrorism - these individuals do not remember a time without war  
• Swine Flu outbreak - 2009  
• Hurricane Katrina - 2005  
• iPod - 2001  
• Facebook – 2004 |

“Incivility studies also reveal generational differences” p. 41

“Generational attitudes towards technology is witnessed in library users” (as cited, p. 33).
Panel Discussion Time

Sara Dallas  Eboni Henry  Jahala Simuel  Raymond Pun
The modern library contains ppl across 5 generations, creating a wonderful new opportunity for library leaders:

How might we leverage generational diversity across the Gen Z/Boomer spectrum to create a culture of learning/mentoring/collaboration in preparation for 2030?
Question 1: How might we leverage generational diversity across gen z/baby boomer spectrum to create a culture of learning/mentoring/collaboration in preparation for 2030?
Question 2: How do you diffuse intergenerational disagreements and support effective communications? What about cultural factors?
Question 3: What are best practices/ideas that libraries can do to support inter-generational workplace community?
THANKS!

Questions? Thoughts?

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