

# Surprise Date with a Book

Your library's path to inclusivity and patron engagement



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From the Heart of the Library: Stories of  
Engagement, Innovation, and Leadership

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# What is Surprise Date with a Book?



- Aka Blind Date with a Book
  - Literary spin on Blind Boxes
  - Recently changed to a more inclusive term
- Wrapping or bagging a book & adding a few identifiers – but don't give it away!
- A fun way for people to try new titles
- Seeking Feedback: 4 patron responses
  - None knew about the event beforehand, but walked in and participated
  - "Love the representation – it really makes an impact"



# Incorporating Inclusivity

- Include authors of various backgrounds & historically excluded voices
  - Safe environment & representation
  - Remember underrepresented communities
  - Step 1: Make a spreadsheet



Title	Barcode	Call #	Location	Status	Count	Key Words	Blurb
			General	In Library	1	LGBTQIA+	
			Sci- Fi	Checked Out	0		

- Gen-Z Lingo: 18-21 year old patrons
  - consult younger student workers and use their jargon

# Know Your Audience

## Millennial Staff

Genre: Science Fiction

Subject: Afro-Futurism

Plotline: Mystery Rom-Com

Barcode: 31262 09788 4588

About: Mad scientists and witches falling in love.

Please read me.

## Gen Z Students:

Free books, tea

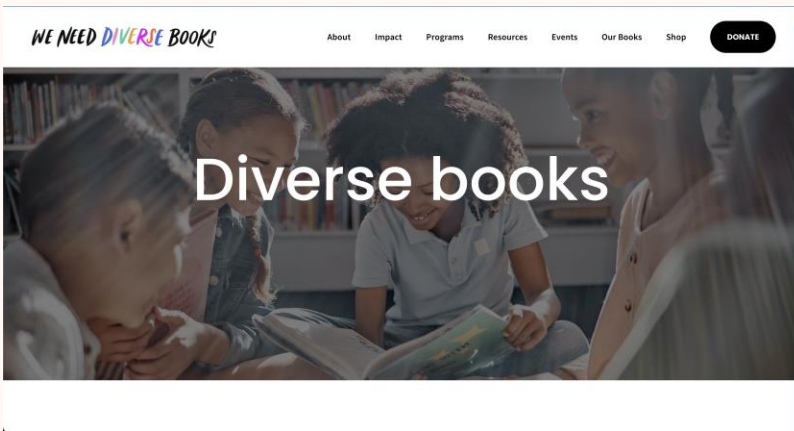


# Know your audience (cont.)

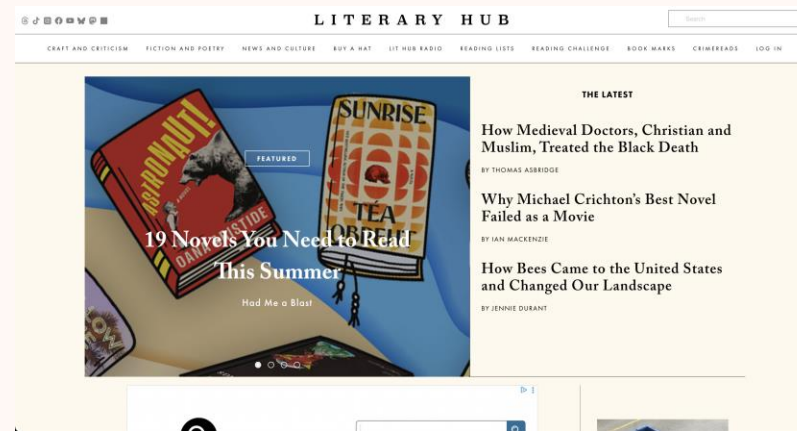


- Team-Building opportunity
  - Involve student assistants and volunteers
  - Work together! This is a multi-step operation
- Highlight different programs
  - Strengthen departmental relationships
  - Have a makerspace pamphlet? A 3D printed item? Include it!
- Keep up with current trends
  - Social media opportunity

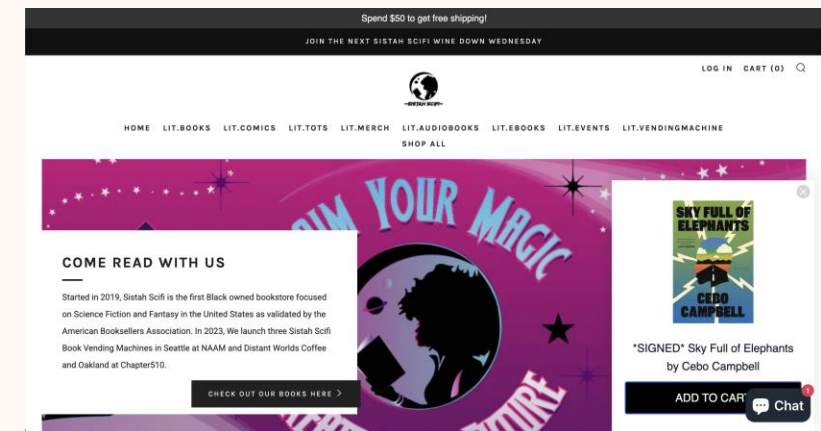
# Know your audience (cont.)



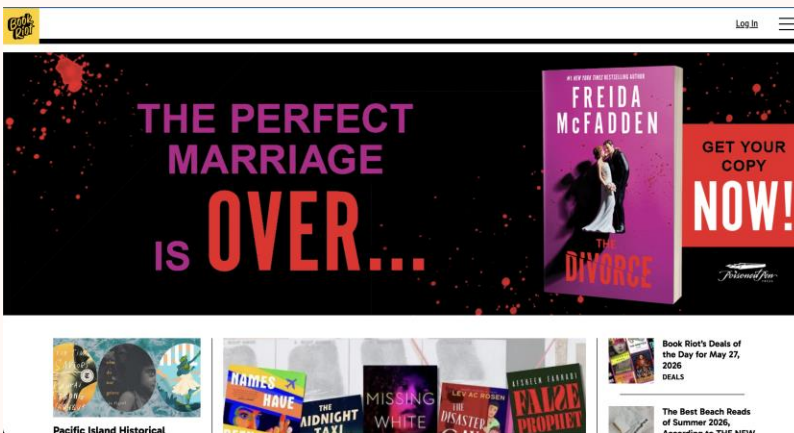
<https://www.diversebooks.org/>



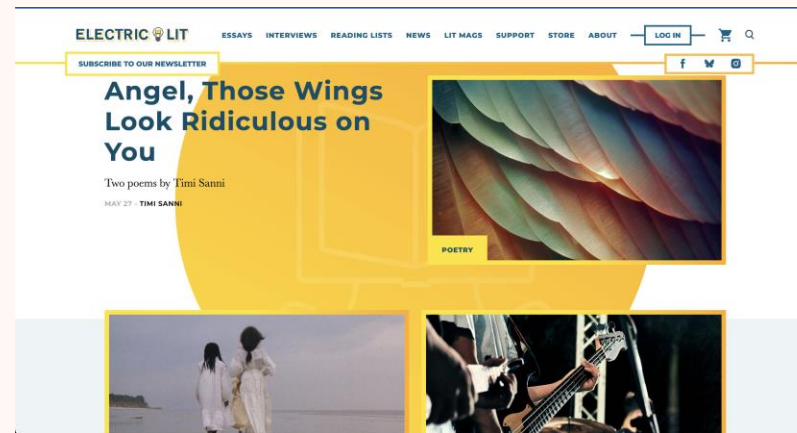
<https://lithub.com/>



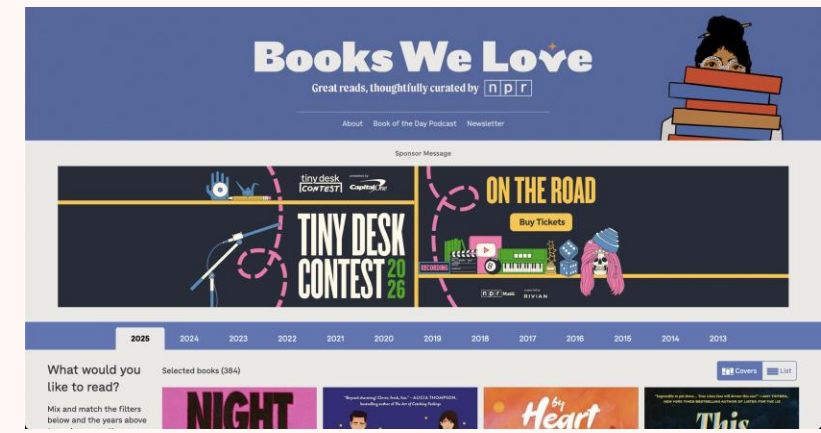
<https://sistahscifi.com/>



<https://bookriot.com/>



<https://electricliterature.com/>



<https://apps.npr.org/best-books/>

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# What You'll Need

- Book, Wrapping Paper, & Markers (only required items!)
  - Write blurbs
    - Remember the inclusivity point! (1) If a book is by a Black Female Author, write that down (2) Choose colors that stand out
  - Barcodes - still need to check books out
    - Tell staff not to unwrap the books but rather to type in the barcode numbers
- Making it Pretty
  - Ribbon to tie in a bow, tags to write barcodes or quotes on



# What You'll Need (cont.)

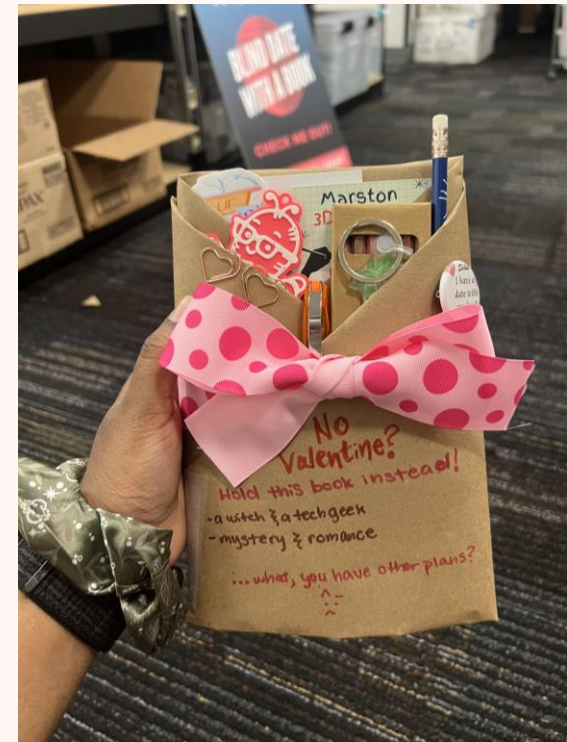
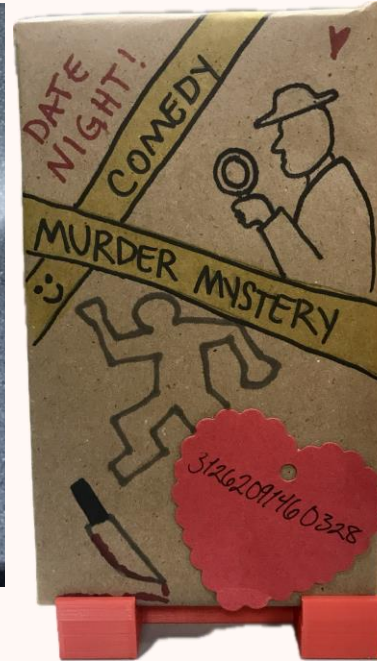


- Library Swag
  - Sticky notes, bookmarks, writing utensils, keychains, phone accessories, pins, hand sanitizer, mini notebooks
- Other Reading Accessories
  - Paperclips, binder clips, thumb page holders, pen holder strap
- A display stand or library cart to showcase finished books with signage



# Types

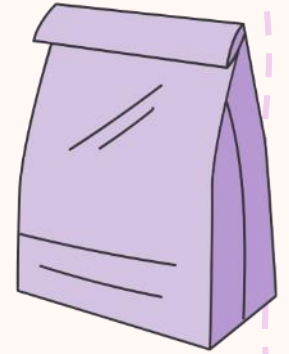
Basic → Mid-Range → Most Complex



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# K-12, Academic, & Public Library Applications

- Can be applied in any library setting
  - Age appropriateness, genre, time of year, etc.
- Accessing Funding
  - Accessible event with little-to-no budget requirement
  - Creative collaborations & items
  - Simple design with room to add more
  - No two iterations of this event look the same, even at the same library
    - All the photos in this presentation show how diverse this event has looked at our own library!



# How We Run the Event & Potential Confines

- Valentine's Day Event – or whenever else!
  - Many bookstores have this year-round
  - Don't have to have a theme; it just makes things more fun!
- We only use Sci-Fi books at our Library
  - Even specialized libraries can participate
- Signage saying "check me out at the circulation desk"
  - Some people think they're free to just take
  - Others think they're for display only and will never take them at all



# How we Run the Event (cont.)

8-12 Weeks	Request Funding & Plan Collabs
6-8 Weeks	Search the Catalog & Make your Spreadsheet
4-6 Weeks	Gather Materials
1-2 Weeks	Check Book Availability
3-4 Days	Pull Books & Wrap
0 Days	Put out book display & Restock

# A Demonstration



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YouTube Link:



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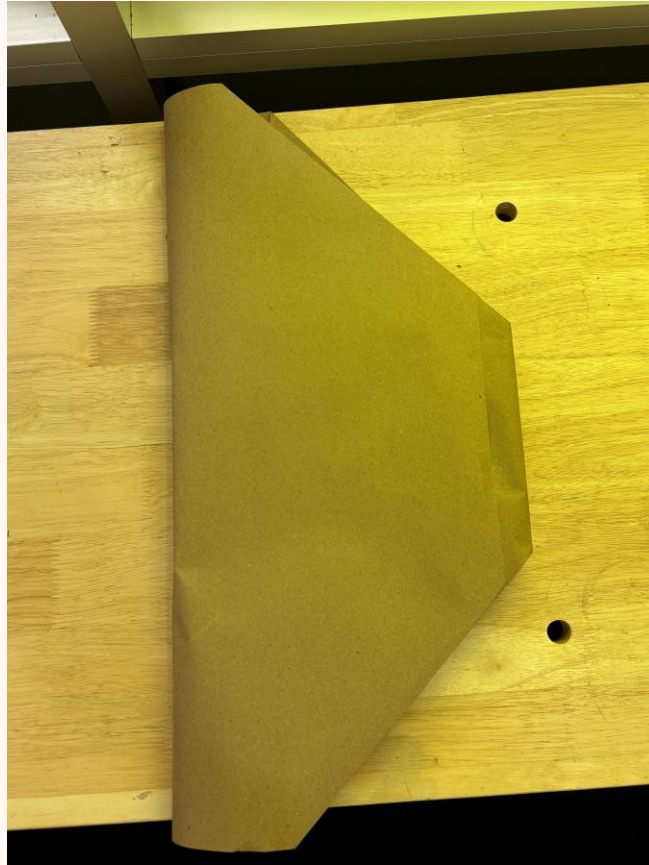




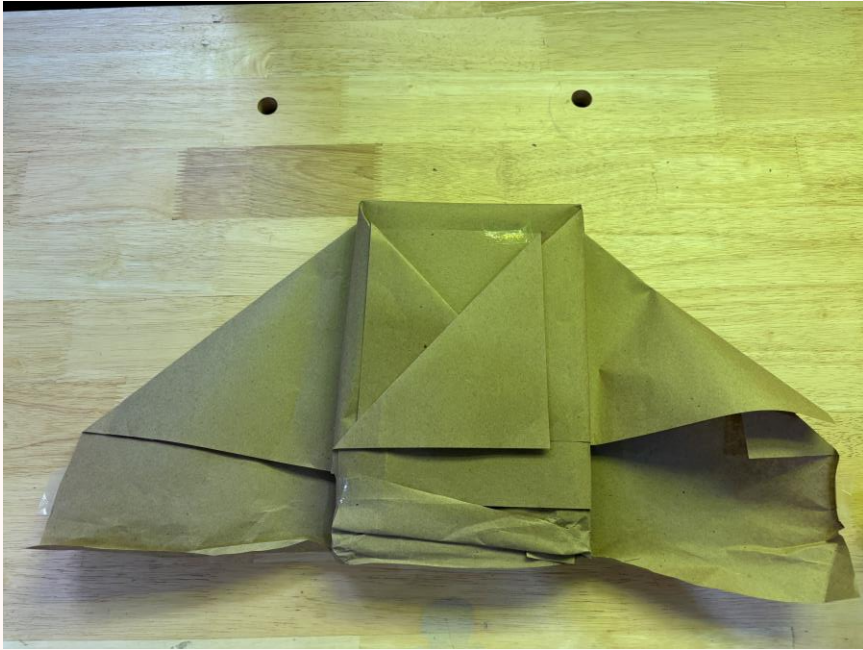
Step 1: Measure a piece of wrapping paper that is 2.5x the height of the book and place the book in the middle.



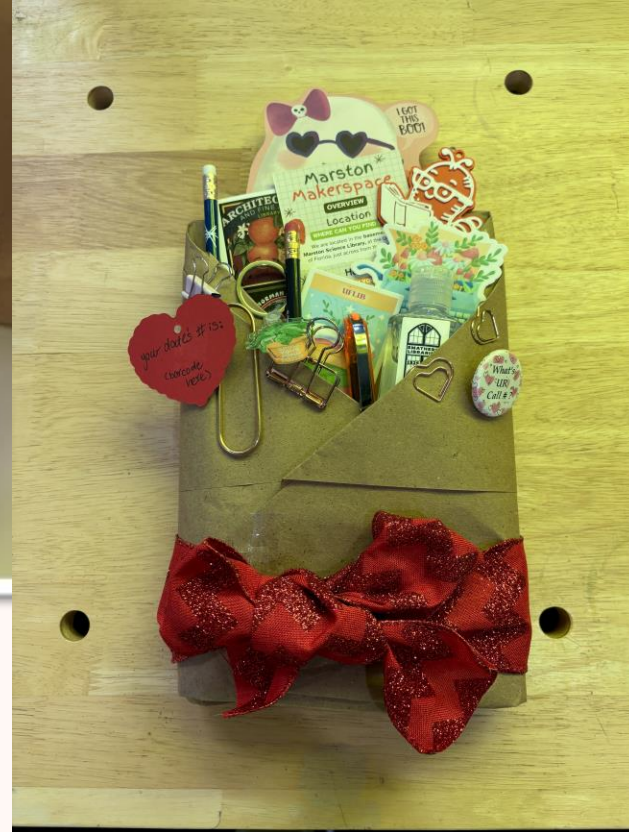
Step 2: Fold over left & right sides of paper all the way, tape.



Step 3: Fold the corners in to be flush with the book, creating a trapezoid. Crease along the way.



Step 4: Cut along each side up until the book. Alternate folding in left and right flaps, taping one at a time to create the pockets.



Step 5: Fill in the pockets with merch, putting bulkier items in the front and readjusting tape

Step 6: Tie a bow, write blurb about the book, and remember to add the barcode



# Questions?

Come up & look at our example surprise book :)

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