

Information for Social Change Number 27 Summer 2008

Special Issue on Radical Bookshops

Zine Libraries

and a Directory of Zine Libraries and Infoshops

Lacey Prpic Hedtke

"...It's hard to find library materials that challenge the for-profit, corporate culture. Our well-stocked county, community college, and university libraries, though publicly funded, primarily serve private middle-class constituencies—businesses, professions, students, job-seekers, and consumers. There's not much there for those who don't share the American Dream."¹

In some circles a radical statement, in others, a motivation for action. Zine libraries, infoshops, bookmobiles, street libraries, zine vending machines- all very different spaces and ideas, but all with the same purpose-to provide access to information outside the corporate mainstream. I'm especially interested in how people who don't fit neatly into categories create venues for their own access to information, specifically through the establishment of zine libraries and infoshops.

Here's the breakdown:

- A zine is a small-run self-published chapbook, pamphlet or broadside that is usually photocopied, but can fall under the label of artist book. Zines are made by anyone who wants to disseminate information without going through the mainstream channels of publishers. Zines are a DIY (Do It Yourself) venture that have been around for decades.
- A zine library is a collection of zines organized by zine-lovers and makers (often referred to as zinesters) in the hopes of preserving and making accessible obscure materials. Since most zines typically have runs of 1-500, each and every one is rare.
- An infoshop is what its name implies- a place to go for information. Infoshops are usually, but not always, run by anarchists, but not necessarily for anarchists. They are volunteer-run non-hierarchical spaces where people can go to for lectures, meetings, events,

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Atton, C., *Alternative Literature*

concerts, and activist resources. Some infoshops house libraries and reading rooms. Many have cafes or at least a cup of tea available. Infoshops sprung up in Europe and have caught on in the US in the past fifteen years. Infoshops are ideal for activist travelers, functioning as a place to stop in to find out where the coop is, where to crash, and to find people with similar interests. They usually have free internet access too.

There are millions of inventive and creative ways of getting resources and materials to the interested. Zine bookmobiles and vending machines are some venues I've stumbled across. Tool lending libraries and zine recycling programs are another. It's surprising how many new ways there are of exposing people to self-published media.

All of these resource centers have something in common: The aim of fulfilling the need for access to materials and information otherwise difficult to obtain. You won't find *People* magazine proudly showcased in these venues. I'm mainly focusing on infoshops and zine libraries, as they are the most enduring and organized forms of information centers, and have more evolved methods of collection maintenance. It's interesting to see what happens when people who aren't librarians by profession, or even by education, get together to form a library or resource center.

Why do these people need their own library? Can't they just go to the public or academic library?

No. There's a reason why so many alternative libraries exist. There is a clear gap in the information world. As stated above, most libraries keep to the middle of the road. It is very hard to find any materials published outside the mainstream, and especially hard to find materials that have been self-published, or non-mainstream periodicals, newspapers and tabloids. Also, infoshops and zine libraries tend to have later hours, be connected with galleries, music show spaces, and other resource venues such as darkrooms or screenprinting shops, as is the case at ABC No Rio in New York City. It also seems these types of libraries draw the paranoid, and rightfully so. Since the PATRIOT Act was enacted in the US, library records are no longer private information. Activists and anarchists, and even sometimes artists are watched by the FBI. Rather than give the government fodder to harass them through questionable library research, the use of a zine library for information results in trackless searching. "In many groups...there is an emphasis on self-education...Groups often establish their own small "libraries" of relevant books, periodicals and papers, sometimes in collaboration with a local alternative bookshop or information centre. The rise of the "infoshop" in recent years throughout Europe and the US is one manifestation of such local activity. Usually based around a local anarchist group, although it is of benefit to more than anarchists, it acts as a communication and distribution point for any number of local, national and international groups, movements and projects...The infoshop emphasizes empowerment, providing information freely (or very cheaply) to enable people to work together, directly on issues that affect their lives."²

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Atton, *Alternative Literature*, 1999

What kind of spaces are they housed in? How could you possibly have a library in a house or old gas station?

The people organizing these types of places aren't going for glamorous. In most cases, they're going for whatever they can get. Which is why you'll find these libraries in people's living rooms, trucks, basements, in tenements, galleries and student centers. Unless a non-profit organization is backing the infoshop or library, be prepared for creative solutions to space problems. Cheap rent in a bad neighborhood usually equals a great place for an infoshop or zine library. "Besides financial problems, neighborhood communication difficulties are common. ...many infoshops are organized by white youth in communities populated by minorities. The subculture that patronizes the shop...sticks out in contrast to the surrounding neighborhood. Residents may perceive the infoshop as a beach-head in the gentrification happening in that town."³

The Mobilivre out of Canada travels across the continent in a stylish Airstream trailer, bringing zines and workshops with them. The Anchor Archive Regional Zine Project in Nova Scotia offers an artist-in-residence program where artists can stay in a storage shed in the backyard for a few weeks to make a zine. A few libraries accompany Food Not Bombs, an organization in several cities handing out free food at different parks or public areas weekly.

What are in these libraries? How are they run?

Some infoshops sell things-patches, t-shirts, books, videos, art, etc. Most places operate collectively, which often involves paying out of collective member's pockets, and most frequently relying on donations of materials from people with a lot of zines lying around, other zine libraries with duplicates, or donations of cash. Zine-makers tend to understand a zine library's motives, and since they aren't making zines to make money anyway, feel great donating their creation to the library. It provides another venue for a reader to stumble across their hand-bound lovingly screenprinted handmade book.

A way most libraries pay rent is through benefit concerts or sometimes art auctions, or anything else that might be fun and also raise money. In the case of the Papercut Zine Library, the group of librarians was able to trade building labor for a free room.⁴ Rarely are materials bought outright. Sometimes library dumpsters are raided for discarded books, and also for organizational materials (bookshelves, magazine racks, etc.) Dumpstering is a fantastic way to get a lot of what you need for free. But that's another topic. However these libraries obtain their materials, almost all ask the subject matter not be racist, sexist, or homophobic. Collective action entails each member committing to the project, coming to meetings and voting on each major decision, and each being equally responsible to maintain the space, and everyone is also able to plan events or enact ideas within the space. No one person is in charge of a collective. A collective is a cooperative effort, which if done with a certain amount of enthusiasm and respect for each other, can work out fantastically. If those basic values aren't in place, there will be burn out, and the space could fail. Luckily, people working on fun projects like zine libraries just want to see the library succeed and grow, and they do!

³ Dodge, *Taking Libraries to the street*, 1998

⁴ Stockton, Ah, a new literary oasis, and she the zine queen, 2005

How can you possibly organize information that hasn't already been cataloged by another person?

Easy. You make it up. This is where Sanford Berman would argue the access part comes in. How easy is it to find this information? In some instances, there is no organization. Your findings are left up to fate, chance, and synchronicity. Which is great if your psychic skills are honed. Several zine libraries stick to the alphabetical system, but most zine libraries catalog by topic. If you go in to the library searching for a good book on bicycle maintenance, you'll also find a zine on good routes to ride without getting hit, how to weld your own tall bike, and riding safely, if you're searching the bicycling section. Since zine and infoshop library collections tend to be radical in nature, their subject headings are unique. DIY (do-it-yourself) is a HUGE category, with several subsets to the category. A few others you won't find in the public library are- radical menstruation, squatting, dumpstering, protesting, XXX, sustainable living, fat, and grrrls. The people cataloging this material respond to their material through topics and organizational methods appropriate for their subject matter. It's important to point out that although there are librarians by profession involved in infoshops and zine libraries, most zine librarians are either still in library school, or have never had any experience working in a library at all. They just want to give people access to information they might not even know was out there.

Take for instance the Papercut Zine Library, in Cambridge, Massachusetts⁵. Even though this library is housed in the Harvard Social Hall, in the same neighborhood as some of the world's biggest and best libraries, this library is thriving. There is obviously a need within the community for zines and all the information they contain and offer. With over 2,000 zines organized by topic on small shelves, and an online searchable catalog, the volunteer zine librarians running the place have figured out how to catalog and organize their material without burying it underneath unsearchable databases or vague subject headings. None of these libraries use cataloging terminology or systems. None of them have scannable barcodes, use the Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal systems. I'm sure they have never once consulted the Library of Congress subject headings to make sure they're using the appropriate heading for the zine on home dentistry. Most record which zine or book belongs in what section, maintain a list of what they have and what gets checked out, if theirs in a circulating collection, and forget the rest. The extent to which the digital cataloging systems go are Filemaker or LibraryThing, making the catalog available online. It's important to realize that even though these zine librarians aren't trained in cataloging, they've merged systems that have already been invented with their own original systems.

Although each system is different-some might throw zines into a box and let you sort through, some cut the tops off cereal boxes for organizational systems, and some have book racks, displaying items more like a store, all have invented innovative ways of cataloging and finding the material.

Who uses zine libraries? How do they find out about them?

Anyone who wants to access information not available at their public library uses zine libraries or infoshops. Anyone interested in underground publishing, little

⁵ Stockton, P., Ah, a new literary oasis, and she the zine queen, 2005

magazines, one-offs, tabloids, art, quirks, or free speech in general are excited by zine libraries. Researchers, students, zinesters, artists, old hippies and beatniks, those on the political left and outfield use them. Zine libraries and infoshops don't advertise in newspapers or magazines. Because they're poor. They're found through word of mouth, posters put up in co-ops, bike shops and on telephone poles. There are a few websites about zines that mention library locations. They are often moving and sadly closing. But new ones are always opening, in different forms. The Zine Machine, for instance, is a vending machine with zines inside. For a dollar or two you can have your own zine to take home. Some are in university libraries, and they are much more organized and professional-looking and operating, which is why I didn't choose to focus on them here. Some libraries are connected to other ventures, and if you look, or go to any zine-related event (store, reading, zine fair), you'll be sure to find a trail to the zine library or infoshop.

How do the libraries attract users? Who are these libraries geared toward? Do I have to pay to get in?

Other than word of mouth, libraries will often bring cross-sections of their collection for on-site checkout to zine fairs and events, anarchist book fairs, or to zine and book readings in the punk community. The libraries aren't necessarily geared toward anarchists or punks, but due to the radical materials and DIY ethics of zines, these groups are a large user base. These libraries are frequented by anyone interested in the subjects they cover, and most importantly, it is almost always free to check out a book or zine, if they don't think their collection is too valuable or rare to let off-site. It is because of this idea of libraries for all that such a wide variety of people are drawn to the zine library or infoshop.

Are zine libraries *really* libraries? I don't know about this...

Zine librarians take the stance that if anyone says it's a library, it is. If Duchamp can say found objects are art, zine librarians spending hours cataloging and organizing ephemera and oddities can call themselves librarians and their creations libraries. In this sense, anyplace that provides access to information in a somewhat organized or searchable form, can be considered a library. The word library seems so authoritative and smarty-pants. Zine librarians are taking the word and applying its meaning to a wide range of information resources, including a roomful or bagful of books or zines.

I do hope that zine libraries and infoshops grow in popularity and use. I hope that the collectives running them find reliable methods of funding so fewer are closing. And I do hope that public libraries will become hip to the idea of zines and alternative/non-mainstream periodicals and other materials. Some are starting to realize what a valuable resource they are in terms of documenting cities, contemporary culture and events otherwise not covered by the media. However, there will always be a need and space for infoshops and zine libraries. No matter how much information makes it into public and academic libraries, unless these libraries are suddenly taken over by zine librarians, the board of directors booted, and the institutions are run collectively, zine libraries and infoshops will be filling the information gap in storefronts, garages and shacks.

Lacey Prpic Hedtke

A Directory of Zine Libraries and Infoshops

Arizona

Catalyst Infoshop
109 N. McCormick
Prescott AZ 86301
www.catalystinfoshop.org

The Dry River Radical Resource Center
C/o Skrappys
201 E Broadway
Tucson AZ 85701-2013
www.dryriver.org

The Hive
319 S. San Francisco St
Flagstaff AZ 86001

California

Anno Domini Zine Library
366 S. 1st St.
San Jose CA 95113
www.galleryAD.com

Free Mind Media
546 Pacific Ave
Santa Rosa, CA
www.freemindmedia.org

Long Haul Infoshop
3124 Shattuck Ave.
Berkeley CA 94705
www.thelonghaul.org

pond Zine Archive
214 Valencia
San Francisco CA 94103
www.mucketymuck.org

Santa Cruz Anarchist Infoshop
509- Broadway
Santa Cruz CA 95060-4621

Santa Barbara Infoshop
421 Alisos St.
Santa Barbara CA 93103
sbinfoshop.org

Zine Library at Mission Records
2263 Mission Street
San Francisco CA 94110
www.smurph.org/zines

Colorado

908 Collective
908 Laprte Ave
Fort Collins CO 80521

Clandestinos Collective
719 W 8th Ave
Denver CO 80204
Confluence Collective
1450 Elm Ave
Grand Junction CO 81501
www.myspace.com/confluencecollective

Denver Zine Library
1644 Platte St
Denver CO 80202
www.denverzinelibrary.org

Left Hand Books
1200 Pearl St #10
Boulder CO 80302
www.lefthandbooks.org

Connecticut

Alternative Media Library
C/o Michelle Chen
PO Box 200077
New Haven CT 06520
www.yale.edu/altmedia

Florida

Civic Media Center
1021 W. University Ave
Gainesville FL 32601
www.civicmediacenter.org

CORE Infoshop
PO Box 14531
St. Petersburg FL 14531

Stonewall Library and Archives
1717 N. Andrews Ave
Ft, Lauderdale FL 33311
www.stonewall-library.org

Subterranean
9 E Gregory
Pensacola FL 32502

Georgia

Common Ground
157 N Newton St
Athens GA 30601
www.commongroundathens.org

Illinois

Chicago Underground Library
C/o Butchershop
1319 W. Lake St.
Chicago IL 60607
www.underground-library.org

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center
202 S. Broadway
Urbana IL 61801
www.ucimc.org

Indiana

Boxcar Books
310A S. Washington
Bloomington IN 47401
www.boxcarbooks.org

Kansas

Solidarity! Revolutionary Center and Radical Library
1109 Massachusetts St
Lawrence KS 66044
www.lawrencesolidarity.org

Kentucky

Brick House
1103 S 2nd St.
Louisville KY 40203
www.brickhouse.cc

Louisiana

Iron Rail Books and Aboveground Zine Library
511 Marginy St @ Decatur St
New Orleans LA 70117
www.ironrail.org

Maine

People's Free Space
144 Cumberland Ave
Portland ME 04101
www.peoplesfreespace.org

Maryland

Charm City Art Space
4820 Roland Ave Apt B
Baltimore MD 21210
www.ccspace.org

Massachusetts

Flywheel Arts
43 Main St
Easthampton, MA 01027
www.flywheelarts.org

Papercut Zine Library
45 Mt Auburn St
Cambridge MA 02138
www.papercutzinelibrary.org

Michigan

Bloom Collective
1134 Wealthy St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
www.mediamouse.org/library

Minnesota

Bat Annex Free School Library
C/o Belfry Center for Social and Cultural Activities
3753 Bloomington Ave S
Minneapolis MN 55407
www.belfrycenter.wetpaint.com
www.myspace.com/belfrycenter

Stevens Square Center for the Arts Zine Library
1905 3rd Ave S,
Minneapolis MN 55404
www.stevensarts.org

Missouri

Bread and Roses Library/Infoshop
Community Arts and Media Project
3022A Cherokee St.
St. Louis MO 63118
www.stlcamp.org/library

Crossroads Infoshop
C/o Creative Mind Art Center
3109 Troost
Kansas City MO 64109
www.infoshop.org/crossroads.html

New York

ABC No Rio
156 Rivington St.
New York NY 10002
www.abcnorio.org

Access Community Infoshop
Buffalo NY 14214
www.accesscommunity.net

Booklyn

37 Greenpoint Ave, 4th fl
Brooklyn NY 11222
www.booklyn.org

Lesbian Herstory Archive
PO Box 1258
New York NY 10116
www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org

Rochester Infoshop
222 Driving Park Ave
Rochester NY 14613

Social Justice Center Infoshop
33 Central Ave
Albany NY 12210

Oklahoma

Third Space
813 College Ave A
Norman OK 73069

Oregon

Black Rose Collective Bookstore & Community Resource
1038 N. Mississippi Ave
Portland OR 97227
www.blackrose.revolt.org

Cascadia Rising Infoshop
1540 SE Clinton
Portland, OR 97202
www.geocities.com/crinfoshop
Portland OR 97202
Independent Publishing Resource Center
917 SW Oak St. #218
Portland OR 97205
www.iprc.org

Pennsylvania

Big Idea Infoshop
504 Millvale Ave
Pittsburgh PA 15224
www.thebigideapgh.org

Lancaster Ave Autonomous Space
Lancaster
Philadelphia PA 19143
www.lavazone.org

Tennessee

Firebrand Community Center
918 Ward St.
East Nashville, TN 37207
www.thefirebrand.org

Texas

Monkey Wrench Books
110 E North Loop
Austin TX 78751
www.monkeywrenchbooks.org

Sedition Collective
4816 Old Spanish Trail
Houston TX 77021
www.myspace.com/seditionbooks

Utah

Boing! Anarchist Collective
608 S 500 E
Salt Lake City UT 84102
www.myspace.com/boingcollective

Virginia

The Flying Brick Library and Reading Room
506 South Pine St
Richmond VA 23220

Rocktown Infoshop
85 E. Elizabeth St.
Harrisonburn, VA 22802
www.rocktowninfoshop.org

Washington

Olympia Zine Library
211 E 4th Ave E
Olympia WA 98584
www.olymedia.mahost.org/olyzinelib/index.htm

Pitchpipe Infoshop
617 S 17th St.
Tacoma, WA 98405
www.myspace.com/pitchpipeinfo

Zine Archive Project
Richard Hugo House
1634 11th Ave
Seattle WA 98122
www.hugohouse.org

Washington DC

Brian MacKenzie Infoshop
1426 9th St NW
Washington DC 20001
www.dcinfoshop.org

Wisconsin

Cream City Collectives
732 E Clark St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
www.myspace.com/creamcitycollective

Madison Infoshop
1019 Williamson
Madison WI 53703
www.madisoninfoshop.org

Argentina

Biblioteca Anarchista Alberto Ghirardo
Paraguay 2212
2000 Rosario

Argentina

Biblioteca Popular Jose Ingenieros
J. Ramirez de Velasco 958
1414 Buenos Aires
www.nodo50.org/bpji

Biblioteca Popular Juventud Moderna
Diagonal Pueyrredon 3318
Mar de Plata
Argentina

Australia

Barricade Infoshop
5 Pitt Street
Brunswick
East Brunswick, Victoria 3057
www.barricade.org.au

Misfit Zine Library
PO Box 68939
Newton Auckland

Rising Mobile Infoshop
PO Box 126
Cygnet, 7112
Tasmania

Austria

Ernst Kirchweger Haus
Wielandgasse 2-4/A-1100 Wien
Vienna
www.med-user.net/ekh

Infoladen Graz
Lendkai 45
Graz 8020
infoladengraz.at.tt
www.infoladen.iwoars.net

Infoladen Salzburg
Lasserstraße 26
Salzburg 5020

Infoladen Treibsand
Rudolfstrasse 17
Linz 4040
www.servus.at/treibsand

Canada

Anchor Archive Regional Zine Project
5684 Roberts Street
Halifax
Nova Scotia
www.anchor.revolt.org

Bibliograph Library
C/o #3-765 Champagneur Ave.
Montreal, QC
H2V 3P9
bibliograph.ca

DIRA (Documentations, informations, références et alternatives)
2035 St-Laurent
Montreal, Quebec
www.repertoire.crac-kebec.org/?q=dira

Edmonton Small Press Association
Room #9, 6th Floor
Stanley A. Milner Library
#7 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2V4
www.edmontonsmallpress.org

EXILE Infoshop
256 Bank St
Suite 203 (2nd floor)
Ottawa, Ontario

Junto Local Ninety-One
2D 91 Albert St.
Winnipeg MB, R3B 1G5

Librarie Anarchiste L'Insoumise
2033 St-Laurent
Montreal, Quebec
www.linsoumise.entretroise.org

Old Market Autonomous Zone (Winnipeg A-Zone)
3B-91 Albert St
Winnipeg, Manitoba
a-zone.org

Queen Zine Library
95 The Country Way
Kirchener Ontario
N2E 2K3

This Ain't Rosedale Library
483 Chruch
Toronto Ontario
M4Y 2C6
www.torontothebetter.net/2thisaint.htm

Chile

Emma Goldman Community Space/Anarchist Bookstore
Avenida Cumming #453
Santiago
www.traidores.org/emma

Croatia

Infoshop Skatula
Kruzina 8,51000
Rijeka

Infoshop Tabula rasa
Schulteissa 19
Cakovec
www.actnow.hr

Czech Republic

Utopia Infoshop
Wenzigova 21
120 00 Praha 2

England

1 in 12 Club
21-23 Albion St.
Bradford, West Yorkshire
www.bd9sound.co.uk/1in12events.html

56A Infoshop
56 Crampton Street
London
SE17 3AE UK
www.56a.org.uk

Cornerstone Resource Centre
Back 16 Sholebroke Ave
Chapelton, Leeds
www.cornerstonehousing.org.uk/crc

Kebele Kulture Projekt
14 Robertson Rd
Easton, Bristol

London Action Resource Center LINKS
62 Fieldgate St
Whitechapel
www.londonarc.org

Rainbow Centre
245 Gladstone Street
Nottingham
NG7 6HX

The Women's Library
Old Castle Street
London E1 7NT UK

France

Le Clan de Infokiosk
9 rue Queven
31000 Toulouse

Les Tanneries Infoshop
17 Blvd. Chicago
Dijon

Germany

Eine Welt e.V. Leipzig

Stockartstr. 11

D-04277 Leipzig

www.einewelt-leipzig.dede

Infoladen Bremen

St.-Pauli-Str. 10-12

28203 Bremen

www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/infoladen_bremen

Holland

Het Fort van Sjakoo Bookstore

Jodenbreesstraat 24

Amsterdam

Autonomo Politiek Infocentrum

Burgtstraat 3

Wageningen 6701 DA

<http://www.infocentrumwageningen.nl>

Ireland

Cork Autonomous Zone

61 Barrack St.

Cork City

www.corkautonomouszone.blogspot.com

Israel

Salon Mazal Infoshop

3 Simta Almonit

Tel Aviv

www.salonmazal.org

Italy

Forte Prenestino

Via Federico Delpino Centocelle

Rome

www.isole.ecn.org/forte

Mexico

Biblioteca Social Praxedis G. Guerrero

C/Gobernador Curiel 2133. Conolia

Ferrocarril, Guadalajara, Laslisco

New Zealand

Misfit Theatre
PO Box 68939
Newton, Auckland

Norway

Ivar Matlaus Bokkafe
Strandveien 23
Trondheim

Romania

Popescu ADI Alea Teatrului
BL.T2 Apt. 21
Craiova

Scotland

The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh
17 West Montgomery Place
Edinburgh
www.autonomous.org.uk

Glasgow Womens Library
4th Flr
109 Trongate
G1 5HD 0141
www.womenslibrary.org.uk

InfoSeed
In basement of The Forest
3 Bristo Place
Edinburgh
www.theforest.org.uk

Slovenia

Elf's reading room
Metelkova ulica 4
Ljubljana 1000
www.ljudmila.org/anarhiv

Izbruh Alt culture club
Soraska 7,4000
Kranj

Spain

@ Infoshop Barcelona
c/Perill 52 Metro
L4 Verdaguer
PO Box 97104
08080 Barcelona

Gatazka Infoshop
Ronda Street
12 48005 Bilbao
www.ddtgatazka.com

Switzerland

Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme
Avenue de Beaumont 24
1012 Lausanne
www.anarca-bolo.ch/cira

Reithalle Infoshop
Neubr ckstr 8
Ch-3013 Bern

Online Projects

Bookmobile Project
www.mobilivre.org/en

Bottles on a Sill Lending Library
www.geocities.com/bike_terrorist/bottlesonthesill.html