CAPE LIBRARIAN

KAAPSE BIBLIOTEKARIS

Volume 67 | Number 2 March/April 2023

Western Cape Government
FOR YOU
Cultural Affairs and Sport

editorial | redaksioneel | upapasho

We're only into April, and surely the word of the year must be *ChatGPT*. If you've never heard of Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer, you're not alone (but you could soon be) — it only launched at the end of November last year, though by January had already reached 100-million users, making it the fastest-ever consumer application of all time.

Using a dialogue interface, ChatGPT is a free-to-use conversational chat service that through advanced artificial intelligence can produce text, images, video, and audio on demand based on a digital database of learnt content. Ask anything, and within seconds you will receive a reply credible enough that its barely perceptible whether it was done by human hand.

ChatGPT can coherently write content across a variety of content, styles, and languages. Facts can be summarised, solutions to problems found and data analysed.

Its benefits are unprecedented. From jobseekers (who doesn't hate writing cover letters?) to businesses saving costs and minimising response time, ChatGPT presents a quantum leap in productivity possibilities.

Yet the very wealth of benefits on offer begets a tsunami of unintended consequences. For anyone in the creative industry, ChatGPT poses an existential threat that immediately renders them irrelevant. Within two weeks of ChatGPT's launch, a children's book titled **Alice and Sparkle**, written, and illustrated by the programme — was sold on Amazon. Academic institutions are grappling with students using the programme to write papers; others have banned it outright already.

Even Google is afraid of ChatGPT.

There are other concerns, too. As the programme relies on human-generated content, it could breach copyright laws; be misused for nefarious activity, such as phishing emails and malware; and the potential for more job losses are only limited by the limits of computing power and what ChatGPT is still yet to learn.

This is a watershed moment for humanity, as technology has seen to the outsourcing of creativity, once a noble and spiritual condition characterised by the outpouring of suffering or inspiration. American teachers have decried the disruptive ChatGPT as "the end of high school English"; with critical thinking reduced to the smartness and factual bias of artificial intelligence as an aggregator of previously created content.

There's a tiny upside to all of this, though; and that is that the continued proliferation of ChatGPT's replicated mimicry of humanly created artefacts will increase the appreciated value of the latter: the library is (still) mightier than the app.

For more reading on this topic, turn to page 20. This column was not written by ChatGPT.

braam

Editor
Braam Peens

Layout and design
Wynand Coetzee

Contributor
Dr Francois Verster

Contact details
Braam.Peens@westerncape.gov.za
PO Box 2108, Cape Town, 8000
www.westerncape.gov.za/library
@WCGovCas

Online public access catalogue
wc.slims.gov.za/desktop/desktopwc

Indexed in
LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts)
Library, Literature and Information Science (EBSCOhost)

Reproduction and printing
Capitil Press

© Library Service SA ISSN 0 008 5790

Editorial policy

The Cape Librarian is the house journal of the Western Cape Library Service and is published bi-monthly. Articles in the field of library and information science, library administration, news items, reviews and accession lists are included. The editorial staff reserve the right to edit, shorten, or rewrite any copy should it be deemed necessary. We cannot guarantee that unsolicited copy supplied will be published. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Library Service. Copy for a particular issue must reach the editor two months in advance. Articles, letters and news items should be submitted directly to the editor.

contents | inhoud | iziqulatho

news | nuus | iindaba

2 libraries | biblioteke | amathala eencwadi
5 miscellany | allerlei | iincwadi ezahlukeneyo

archives | argiewe | iindawo zokugcina

6 **Records of a pioneering hospital**
Gustav Hendrich

bookworld | boekwêreld | ilizwe leencwadi

12 **A South African reading revolution needs more books in African languages**
Tamsin Metelerkamp

16 **Literacy crisis deepening in South Africa, says new report**
James Stent

20 **The ChatGPT chatbot is blowing people away with its writing skills**
Marcel Scharth

genre | uhlobo loluncwadi

24 **Combating the curse of cancer**
Boniswa Notiki

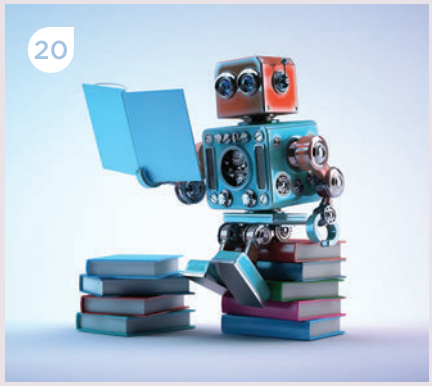
reviews | resensies | uphononongo

32 **Book reviews**
Compiled by book selectors

workroom | die werkkamer | igumbi locweyo

40 **Developing the children's e-collection on Libby**
Luinda Lilley

46 **Ezobungcali mazibhalwe nangeelwimi zabantsundu**
Xolisa Tshongolo



ON THE COVER

The historic Old Pier

Notwithstanding the establishment of the Cape Town harbour in the years following the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in 1652, the benefits offered by its facilities were negligible.

The effects of tempestuous storms on shipping often proved disastrous, especially in 1858 during the British colonial period, when nearly 30 ships were wrecked. As a remedy, the British colonial authorities envisaged the development of a proper harbour and added a breakwater to provide relief from the dangers of storms.

By constructing a municipal pier, which was completed in 1913 at a cost of £85,000 and called the Old Pier, its purpose was however not only to ensure a safer docking area for ships in the Victoria and Alfred Basins, but also for recreation.

The pier was esthetically appealing. It was decorated with Victorian-style architectural lampposts, a promenade for strolling, private boxes for sunbathing and made provision for boat riding and angling as leisure pastimes. On the pavilion towered an iconic domed roof structure concert hall. The music and ballet performances were widely popular; and cost a mere penny to watch. Unsurprisingly, the pier became renowned as a popular attraction for both locals and foreign visitors.

Unfortunately, with the reclamation of present-day Foreshore, the Old Pier stood in the way of the development of the greater harbour area and was demolished in 1939. As recent as 2017, whilst constructing parts of the Cape Town International Convention Centre, some remnants of the pier were excavated, eliciting much interest — and revealing another of Table Bay's former unique and picturesque landmarks.

Picture credit: 02 R1642 Pier, Cape Town

The **Cape Librarian** extends its gratitude to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service for making available its rare collection of vintage photographs of the Cape for the cover images for all issues of the magazine in 2023.

libraries | biblioteke | amathala eencwadi

Saron Public Library turns 20

Saron Public Library near Tulbach will turn 20 in July.

The library opened its doors for the public on 9 July 2003, whereafter the official opening was hosted by the mayor, Herman Bailey on 25 October 2003. On the first day of opening, 302 items were circulated and in that month the library had 1,016 members. By the end of October 2003 that number had grown to 732 members with 31,063 items being circulated. The total stock was 8,286 items.

The library was opened on the manual system and went live on 17 September 2004. The staff then comprised four staff members: S van Huffel (librarian), R Sims (library assistant), Carol Willemse (cleaner) and Carol Williams (contract worker). Today, the staff consists of three permanent workers: Carol Williams, Sedrik Brander and Elizabeth Kordom; as well as two interns from West Coast college: Rozaan Baartman and Peter Mintoor. The library now has 4,308 patrons.

The library serves three schools in the area: Saron Primary, Trinity Oaks and Roodezandt Secondary. The two nearby crèches are Saron Educare and Woelwater. Back in 2003, we also served students of West Coast College and three of the surrounding crèches visited the library for a story hour and library orientation. We also have an outreach to community whereby we operate a food kitchen that provides meals three times per week. Over holidays, we have an activity programme to keep school children busy. In addition, we try to visit nearby schools at least once or twice a year.

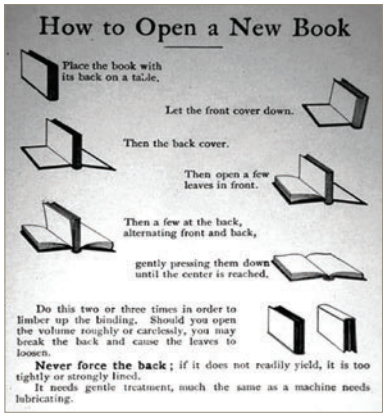
Saron Public Library proudly looks forward to serving its community for another 20 years.

Carol Williams, Library Assistant, Saron Public Libary

The head of library and permanent staff members, 2015

(Ltr): Permanent staff members Carol Williams, Sedrik Brander and Elizabeth Kordom

Bathandi, babhali, bafundi besiXhosa, sihlaba ikhwelo kuba ikhwelo lityala. Sicela nithumela amabalana, amanqaku, nako nakuphi okunokuphucula, kufundise, kwazise, kukhulise, konwabise kuphinde kukhuthaza ukubhalwa nokufundwa kolwimi lwesiXhosa. Sikhuthaza ooSozilwimi ukuba imisebenzi yabo yophando eshankathelweyo ngesiXhosa ingangeniswa nayo ukuze ipapashwe njengenqaku eliyakufundwa luninzi lwabantetho isisiXhosa nabanqwenela ukusifunda.



D'Almeida's World Read Aloud Day treat

D'Almeida Library in Mossel Bay teamed up with Diaz Primary School to celebrate World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) on 1 February. The library arranged with the school for off-period learners to meet at the school library for reading aloud sessions. A total of 47 children was reached during this day. D'Almeida Library believes that children who read regularly and hear engaging stories in languages they understand are better equipped and motivated to learn to read and write. Reading aloud also offers many advantages such as:

- Helping children acquire a larger vocabulary;
- building a connection between the spoken and written word;
- helping to increase attention span; and
- providing a safe way to explore strong emotions.

Leilani van der Berg, Librarian: D'Almeida Public Library

Library Week marches are back!

City Libraries and Western Cape Library staff caused a temporary 'urban shutdown' of the Cape Town CBD on Friday 17 March when they took to the CBD's streets as part of launching South African Library Week.

Ithala leencwadi laseHospital Street Depot liyafumaneka kubo bonke abasebenzi bakaRhulumente weNtshona Koloni

ISebe leMicimbi yeNkcubeko neMidlalo, ngokwecandelo lalo leeNkonzo zamaThala eeNcwadi kwiNtshona Koloni, limema bonke abasebenzi bakaRhulumente weNtshona Koloni ukuze basebenzise iThala leeNcwadi elikwiZibuko leSitalato iHospital. Eli ziko lethala leencwadi lisimahla limi kumgangatho wesithathu wesakhiwo secandelo leNkonzo yamaThala eeNcwadi kwiNtshona Koloni kwikona yeZitalato iChiappini neHospital. Lakuvulwa ngo-1965 laqala ukusebenza ngamawaka asixhenxe eencwadi, yaye kungoku nje sele lakhula kakhulu futhi ke sele linengqokelela emalunga ne17,000 eencwadi eziquka ifikshini, ingqokelela yokurefrensa kubantwana nabantu abadala, iimagazini kunye namaphephandaba, izixhobo zokufunda (iincwadana kunye nezikhokelo zokufunda, amacwecwe, amarekhodi, iiDVD kunye neevidiyo, kunye nezifundo zeelwimi ndawonye neencwadana ezinezandi ezikumacwecwe. Ubulungu kweli thala leencwadi bukuvumela ukuba ufikelele kwinkonzo yethu yamathala eencwadi ekwiqonga lezobuchwepheshe. I-OverDrive ikunika inyhweba yokufikelela kumawakawaka eencwadi ezikwiqonga lezobuchwepheshe ngokuthi usebenzise i-app enguLibby. Enye inkonzo iquka inkonzo yokuBoleka kumaThala ngamaThala eeNcwadi, ibe ngolo hlobo ikunika inyhweba yokuboleka iincwadi ezikulo naliphi na elinye ithala leencwadi. IZibuko elikwiSitalato iHospital livulwa mihla le phakathi kwe12h00 kunye ne13h00 ukususela ngoMvulo kuye kuma ngoLwesihlanu.

Ngeenkcukacha ezithe vetshe kuSandra Kingswell:
Umnxeba: 021 483-2276
I-imeyile: *Sandra.Kingswell@westerncape.gov.za*

Neville Adonis, uMncedisi woMlawuli: weeNkcukacha, uPhando, uPapasho kunye neeNkuthazo

Melton Rose makes author fair magic

Melton Rose Library in Eerste River participated in the author's fair event in early September 2022. The focus was on local and self-publishing authors from our communities.

We invited Joanita Richter from the Eerste River area, who has published two books so far. Her latest book, as discussed at the author's fair is called **Emosies in woorde**.

This author wrote her poems on her death bed as letters to her young children as a reminder of her as their mother.

Juanita Oostendorp published her memoir **Under the mulberry tree**, which tells the moving story of an untroubled childhood that masked a terrible truth. She is a qualified social worker with 38 years of experience working in the field of child protection.

Joanita Richter

Mogamad Salie

Mogamad Salie, also published his memoir called **Chicken legs**. He grew up in Salt River and Woodstock. Badly burned as a child, he was very self-conscious of his 'chicken legs'. The author worked in Switzerland for 15 years; and after which he returned to Cape Town in 2016, he was diagnosed with autism when aged 40.

The event was very successful and well received by the community we serve.

Eleanore Pietersen, Senior Librarian: Melton Rose Library

Town Centre goes to town for WRAD 2023

Town Centre Library has been abuzz with various activities in celebration of World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) 2023 both onsite and offsite.

On 1 February, library staff co-hosted the WRAD 2023 event with Imperial Primary School in Mitchell's Plain. Dressed up as book characters, they were joined by Nal'ibali, acting out the story in front of 1800 learners. The staff started the event with an icebreaker titled *Library tantrum* where they emphasised the significance of having a library card as a license to greater opportunities. Learners were encouraged to open library cards and take advantage of resources that library has to offer.

The stories by both Nal'ibali and the library staff were aimed at fostering a love of reading and the library from an early age, as reading is a crucial element in promoting sustainable community development through books and stories. The event was graced by the presence of Area South Manager, Carmen Holtzman and the City's LIS Marketing team.

Back at the library, the other team conducted exciting programs with Little Footprint and Mizpah Educare. Staff entertained the kids with storytelling, nursery rhymes and colouring in. The Cape Town Museum of Childhood also kept the kids busy with arts and crafts. These programmes exceeded the library's expectations as the library initially pledged to read to 300 pupils but ended up serving many more.

(Ltr): Anelisa Qina as Little Red Riding Hood; Zulfah Petersen as Liewe Heksie; and Duma Tiyo as Zorro

Anelisa Qina, Librarian: Mitchell's Plain Regional Library

Riversdale's rich history officially preserved

On Monday, 6 March 2023, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport, through its Library Service, in partnership with the Hessequa Municipality, hosted an Oral History launch in Riversdale.

The focus of the Oral History is to capture the stories told by the communities and to hand the DVDs over to the Libraries to make these stories accessible to the communities for future preservation.

Delivering the keynote address Minister Anroux Marais said: 'The Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport has worked very hard over the past few years to capture the oral histories of communities across the province. Storytelling is the oldest form of capturing histories, and by recording these first-hand accounts of local people, we want to ensure that we do not lose the authentic accounts of historic moments in the area.'

The department will continue rolling out this initiative in various communities across the province.

Neville Adonis, Assistant Director: Information, Research, Publication and Promotions, Western Cape Library Service

Minister Anroux Marais and Executive Mayor Grant Riddles handing over the Oral History DVDs to Elizabeth Fielies

How libraries have adapted to better deliver their services

During the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries experienced a sharp decline in circulation. Thankfully libraries are experiencing a resurgence of community interest. This is how we have adapted to new trends in how people read, work and socialise.

Libraries have always been at the heart of the communities they serve. But the way we access and consume information has changed dramatically in the 21st century, and this presents major challenges and opportunities for public library systems across the world. The advent of new technologies has changed some of our reading habits. On the other hand, our need for shared, community-centered spaces to find information and connect with others is unlikely to change any time soon. To survive in the digital age and stay relevant, public libraries need to be brave and innovative. For that reason, patrons who join the City of Cape Town's libraries can enjoy the following services:

- Free lending service of books, audio books, CDs and DVDs
- Free Wi-Fi and access to Smart Cape internet access
- Ample study space in reference sections
- Comprehensive adult, teenage, and children's book collections in designated, designed sections. For example, the children's section has beautiful colourful displays. Teenage section books have been categorised to ensure easy access to genres and series. The adult section focuses on providing best sellers, classics as well as current non-fiction titles.
- Outreach programmes such as story hours, holiday activities and author evenings add value to the library.

Recent initiatives such as PressReader, Overdrive and Libby show how a library can still be a huge source of pride in a changing environment. The City of Cape Town's Library and Information services makes the above e-resources, and more via their Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) available for free to their patrons. OPAC allows access to:

- Book Dash: Highly recommended for children. Contains African storybooks in English, IsiXhosa and Afrikaans
- Fundza: Literacy learning support for teens and young adults
- SA Home schooler: Additional educational resources at the click of a button. It covers the SA curriculum for all your child's needs
- ISET: For those interested in a career in information technology, this publication provides all you need to know
- **Cape Librarian**: If you want to know what is happening in Provincial Library Services and Public Libraries in the Western Cape, then this publication is for you.

To access the above, all that is required is a library card. Online titles can be read on digital devices while visually impaired readers can access audiobooks on this platform.

The concept of the library continues to hold a special place of importance in people's hearts — and the librarians are eagerly awaiting patrons to be of service to them!

René Schoombee, Principal Librarian: Durbanville Library

Records of a pioneering hospital

by Gustav Hendrich

'Where formerly the cries of the gulls and gusty sighs of the winter winds swept the bare sea front, now stands a proud stone building ministering the sick and needy of the Cape,' were the fitting words by the former Chief Archivist of the Union of South Africa, Dr Colin Graham Botha, in his tribute to the Somerset Hospital in 1959.[1]

At the 160th commemoration of the opening of the New Somerset Hospital in August last year, much gratitude was expressed as to the continued legacy of this esteemed hospital. Excepting the extended modern hospital building, the historical façade and building with its Tudor architecture and imposing chessboard fortified towers, today are being dwarfed by its surrounding ultramodern buildings and urban sprawl.

Passers-by are often filled with curiosity of this unique building, which was regarded during the 1860's of the British colonial period as the largest structure in the Cape metropolis. With the Somerset Hospital representing the oldest official hospital at the Cape, it has a remarkable past and evolved from its early beginnings as the Old Somerset to the present-day New Somerset hospital.

The need for a seaport hospital

Since the establishment of the refreshment station at the Cape by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in April 1652, the provisions made for medical treatment were little more than elementary. With the company's main objective on trade and replenishment of its merchant vessels, a hospital was built near the post office and adjacent to the Castle, but almost exclusively for the use of scurvy victims arriving at the Cape. During the 18th century Dutch and other European physicians would mostly make home visits where they would treat and assist the ill. An initiative by Governor Joachim van Plettenberg in 1772 for the creation of a suitable hospital came to nothing, since a building prepared for medical use was instead occupied by soldiers for defense purposes.[2] After the second British occupation of the Cape in 1806, more concerted efforts and provisions were made for the gradual development of the first public medical facility of its kind.

The lack of a proper facility for treating the sick, as well as considering the prevalence of lepers, paupers and the mentally impaired — became a cause of serious concern for the colonial authorities. Influential individuals urged the government to create an appropriate medical institution. To this end, as a retired naval surgeon who fought alongside Lord Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar, Dr Samuel Bailey played an instrumental role in recognising the dire need for a hospital at the Cape. His appeal for a plot of land to erect a hospital

proved successful, and from his own generosity and expense he opened the first Somerset Hospital (which became the Old Somerset Hospital) in 1818.[3] Bailey's admiration of the British Governor at the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, saw to it that the hospital was named after the latter. It was a single-story building situated in Chiappini Street with the later torn-down Chavonnes Battery serving as a convalescent wing.

Under his direction and devotion, Bailey served as the hospital superintendent until 1822. However, owing to the insolvency of his contractor, the building was taken over by the Burgher Senate in 1822; much to the loss and disillusionment of its founder. Nonetheless, he continued rendering an exceptional service by working and setting an example to his medical personnel and physicians. In a correspondence letter dated 9 June 1828, Bailey reiterated the principle of the hospital that it was intended for 'the reception of merchant seamen, slaves, and paupers' and that it was in the 'mercantile interest of the Colony to (become) fully acquainted with the great utility of the Hospital.'[4] Despite his initial dismay towards the colonial government, he further mentioned that 'the town had felt the happy effect of such an institution and many hundreds of seafaring men visiting this port had not only been relieved, but sent away with the blessing of restored health.'[5]

An officiating committee was appointed to investigate the feasibility of the hospital building. A report dated 24 February 1825 by the notorious physician presumably disguised as the opposite sex, Dr James Barry, mentioned the conditions and treatment of both the patients and the insane at the hospital. According to Barry, the leading 'reformatory arrangements' were made to promote the hospital as a 'humane and charitable institution, attention to the sick, and diseased, in which they may expect relief from their sufferings and consolation in their misfortunes.'[6]

Although it was still early days for the Somerset Hospital, Bailey's hardworking successor who studied at St Thomas's Hospital in England and two year-long understudy, Dr Henry Bickersteth, made inroads into the medical profession. In 1834 Bickersteth became the first resident surgeon

AG302 Dr Samual Silverthorne Bailey (1778–1864). Early South African doctor who was responsible for the building of Somerset Hospital in 1818

AG 14796 Front View from Signal Hill showing Green Point cycle track, Somerset Hospital and part of Cape Town Harbour

with his passionate commitment to surgery.[7] With the utilisation of vapour of sulphuric ether, after 1847 more complex operations that included carotid artery, emphysema (lung), cataract, urethral bladder, and amputation operations — could be committed under a skylight of the operating room. Moreover, like Dr Bailey, Bickersteth continued to vie with the government for improved medical facilities. In the mid-1850s he brought the matter of increasingly limited building space to the attention of the Select Medical Committee. In hindsight, it is difficult to imagine the sheer development of the medical profession and Old Somerset hospital facility at the Cape without acknowledging the sacrifice and efforts of Drs Bailey and Bickersteth.

Glorious foundation

The persistent appeal for a hospital for the acute sick and injured led to Parliament procuring funds for the erection of a new structure on a terrain between Green Point and the Chavonnes Battery. The joyous event occurred on 18 August 1859 with the laying of the foundation stone and was attended by a staggering 12,000 citizens.

In his very last public address, the then-governor Sir George Grey was delighted and expressed his wish for the continuation of 'sound health care and men devoted to charitable work.'[8] A commission would be appointed to monitor the state of the new Somerset Hospital; and in 1862 its doors were finally opened though with no celebratory function.

The commission's report indicated that the building was efficiently constructed since it also withstood the test of a most severe gale storm and the extremes of the Cape weather.[9] After final inspection and approval, the first patient was admitted on 23 August 1862. Whereas the Old Somerset Hospital was now occupied by patients with mental illness, lepers and paupers, the New Somerset Hospital was primarily directed to accommodate paying and non-paying patients with illness and convalescence from mostly Cape Town and surrounding suburbs. In other cases, these had also arrived from the interior and later as far as Rhodesia.

The physical dimensions of the hospital were grandiose. It featured a spacious entrance hall, long passages,

stairways ventilated by skylights, living quarters for the resident surgeon, matron and nursing staff, as well as an operating theatre, male and female wards and even an elevator in the kitchen to ferry foodstuffs between floors for convenience. It was a remarkable achievement for the time, which paved the way for the further modernisation of medical facilities at the hospital.

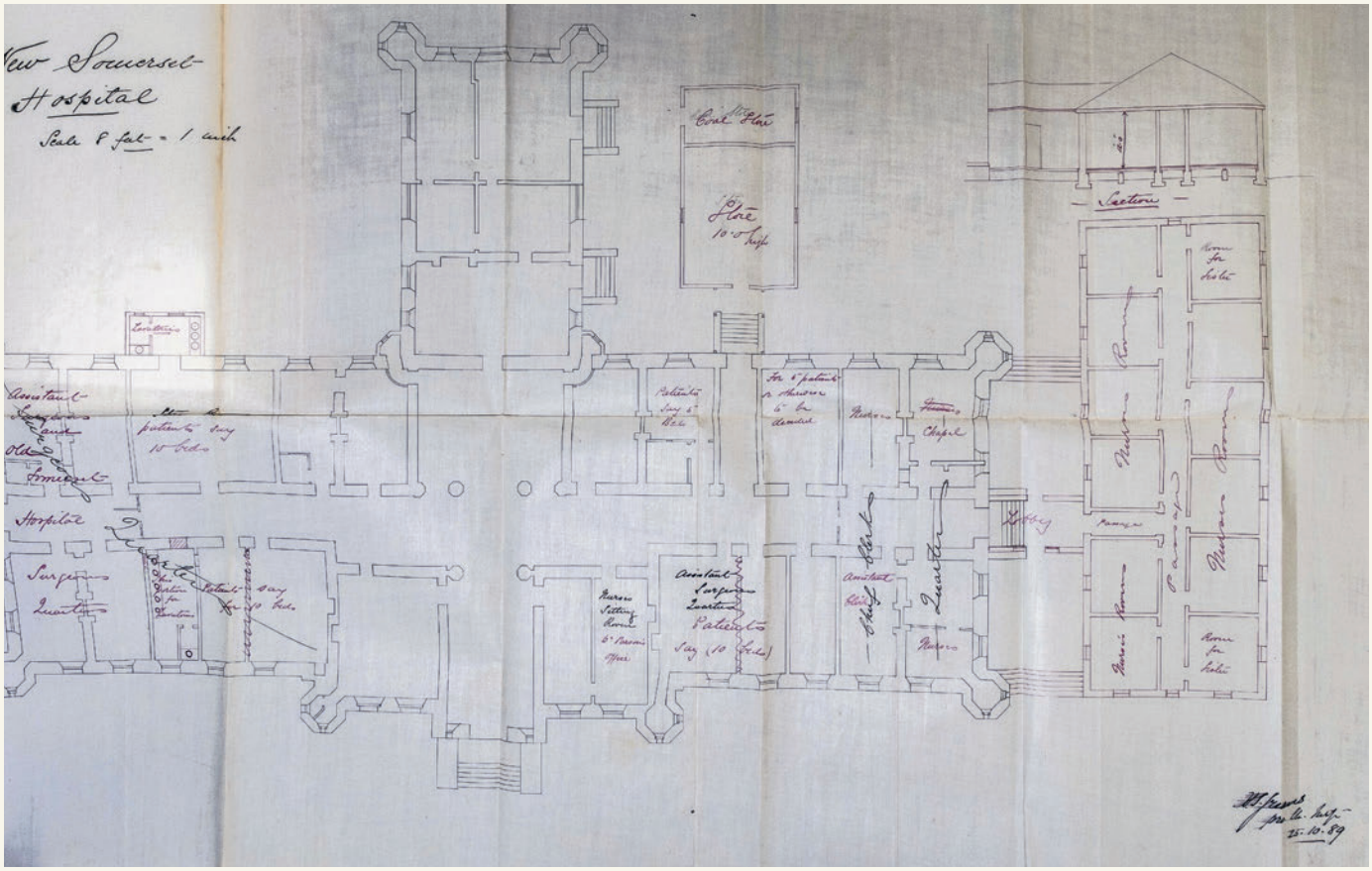
Developments at the New Somerset Hospital

After the death of Dr Bickersteth, his successor, Dr John Laing, continued with the arduous work in maintaining both Old and New Somerset Hospitals until 1873. Thereafter the hospitals came under the control of the colonial government and administered by the resident surgeon at the New Somerset Hospital. Nevertheless, a troublesome obstacle that pestered the administration of the hospitals was the constant problem of finding accommodation for patients as well as medical personnel — especially nurses.

By October 1889 the chief inspector lamented that the nursing residence became so 'unhealthy' and the upper storey being in considerable state of danger to the nurses in an event of fire, that recommendations for additional accommodation were made.[10] Yet, occupational health and obtaining safe sleeping quarters for nurses remained problematic. It was only until the Queen's jubilee that resulted in financial donations and from the famed businessman John Garlick — that the problem was alleviated. This was not merely for extending the accommodation capacity, but after 1913 the Cape Hospital Board also envisaged a scheme for the enhancement of the New Somerset Hospital that would see it be developed as a free hospital — with the intention of becoming a large general hospital.

Under Dr Laing the efficiency of the hospital was further improved; and continued by a skillful Cape Town-born surgeon, Dr Lorenzo Chiappini — after whom a later street was named. Following from the legacy of Florence Nightingale as the first idealised nurse of the Crimean War, the need for more trained nurses led to an influx from the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery at St Thomas's. Drawing parallels from the Nightingale system, Sister Helen Bowden was exceptional in leading a pioneering role in expanding the nursing staff and its medical services rendered.

The co-existence of the Old and New Somerset Hospitals was favourable. Yet the disparity in the development and resources allocated to each were markedly different, with much less



CO 1444 Fold-out plan of interior

emphasis placed on the Old Somerset Hospital. Whereas the New Somerset received almost 4,000 gallons of water for daily purpose, the Old Somerset only got half — whilst treating the chronically sick. Conditions at the latter institution were increasingly deteriorating with patients even having to assist with maintenance. In September 1883, the surgeon-in-charge of Old Somerset Hospital, Dr Philip Landsberg, reported on the dire situation pertaining to the daily life of patients. Those paying were accommodated in their own separate quarters, whilst most of the patients had to fulfill tasks, including 'the hard work, the heavy work, such as scrubbing is done by the male attendants and male pauper lunatics, the repairing of clothes and other legit occupations are performed by patients… and that the rule obtains here that those of the chronic sick who are able, must assist those who are bedridden and helpless.'[11]

Because of the staff's fear of aggressive, unstable or mentally ill patients, such subjects were relocated to an asylum at Robben Island, as the facility was largely transformed into a suitable location for dangerous convicts. By the late 1930s the Old Somerset Hospital had become so dilapidated and conditions untenable that it had to be demolished.

In contrast, the New Somerset Hospital continued to develop in leaps and bounds during the twentieth century. Amidst the hardships that followed in the wake of the Great Depression and world wars, the hospital resumed to strive to uphold its credible medical reputation. The addition of an ophthalmic and aural disease pavilion comprising four wards and eight beds each opened in 1916. Medical technological progress was made with equipment, most notably the portable X-ray apparatus used in wards, which were much-needed additions.[12] The nursing school continued to be highly subscribed and in 1922 the first two South Africans qualified as doctors. By the 1960s, there were 270 beds and an adequate nursing staff, together with additional sections such as a maternity, out-patients ward and pharmacy.

Apart from the medical development, and in crossing the racial divide of segregation at the time, the Somerset Hospital became the first racially integrated hospital in the late 1980s. Even as far back as 1939, a non-European section at the hospital was opened, with the renowned physician Dr A Abdurahman serving on its staff. Leaping into the new millennium, the

E9361 Front Somerset Hospital Cape Town 1900

References

1. (Western Cape Archives and Records Service, hereafter WCARS). Bound Pamphlets, BP 3, vol. 28. CG Botha. The Somerset Hospital, Cape Town celebrates its hundredth birthday. 1818–1959 (Series Bound Pamphlets), p. 8.
2. WCARS. Cape Archives Depot, CAD 1/2/5; ref. 11/17A5. Historical Information. Medical Data. Old Somerset Hospital, 1918.
3. WCARS. CAD 1/2/5; ref. 11/17A5. Historical Information. Old Somerset Hospital.
4. WCARS, Government House, GH 1/69, ref. 1013. Papers. Application by Dr Bailey to be nominated as Superintendent of Somerset Hospital. 1828, p. 110.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
6. WCARS, Colonial Office, CO 226. The Commission appointed to Report upon the state of the Somerset Hospital in all its Departments, 1825.
7. D Stokes, 'History of Somerset Hospital from Old to New — 160 years on' (Presentation, 19 September 2022, Cape Medical Museum).
8. WCARS, BP 3, vol. 28. The Somerset Hospital, Cape Town.
9. WCARS. Archives of the Cape Colonial Publications, CCP 1/2/1/11, ref. A/78 — '62. Annexures to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly. Report of a commission appointed to examine and report on the present state of the New Somerset Hospital. 1862.
10. WCARS, CO 1444. New Somerset Hospital. Proposals for increasing accommodation. 15 October 1889.
11. WCARS. CO 1251. Old Somerset Hospital. Employment of patients. September 1883.
12. Stokes, 'History of Somerset Hospital from Old to New'.
13. WCARS. Archives of the Old Somerset Hospital, HOS 58, Patients' Admittance Registers, p. 29.
14. WCARS. BP 3, vol. 28, CG Botha, The Somerset Hospital, Cape Town, p. 1

hospital reached new heights in 2005 when it became the first HIV/AIDS treatment centre in Cape Town.

Safekeeping Somerset Hospital's archives

In support of the venerated history of both Somerset Hospitals, the Western Cape Archives and Records Service in Roeland Street houses valuable primary sources in permanent preservation in the strongrooms of the repository. By far the most pivotal concerning the administration, maintenance and functionality of the hospitals are the two separate groups, most notably the archives of the Superintendent, Old Somerset Hospital (HOS) from 1839 to 1940; and those of the archives of the Superintendent, New Somerset Hospital (HNS) covering the period from 1863 to 1945.

In observing the archival groups, the volumes of both groups are detailed and voluminous in size; and although some are in a poor physical condition their content is still intact. The group's informational contexts are predominantly administrative, containing a vast array of detailed information on (amongst others) correspondence, financial and diverse medical records. Apart from the records on the operational management, of which medical-related correspondence could also be traced in the archives of the Secretary/Treasurer of the Cape Hospital Board (HBC), the crucial records, at least for genealogical or family research purposes — are undoubtedly the Patient's Admittance Registers located in the respective HOS and HNS groups.

In viewing the records, these registers reveal the descriptions of patients, their illnesses, and simultaneously with remarks on cases of mental illness and leprosy attended to at the Old Somerset Hospital.[13] Upon consulting the inventory, the registers of the HNS in particular, had been subdivided into In-Patients from 1911 to 1922, Out-Patients from 1892 to 1923, Religion Registers, and elaborate Monthly Diet Tables and Books from 1863 to 1904, providing detailed statistical information for research purposes.

Apart from the two main archival groups, historical documentation on the Somerset Hospitals can also be traced in several other prevalent groups. The archives of the Colonial Office (CO) from 1806 to 1911, covers the mainstay of records on the British colonial rule at the Cape and comprising an entire strongroom, also contain numerous correspondence records marked on the outside covers as 'Somerset Hospital.' Several record volumes also contain sensitive information on medical evaluations/certificates for mental illness cases.

Together with the written sources, the WCARS also houses exceptional photographic images portraying scenes of the hospital in bygone years in the AG collection, as well as cartographical material depicting the building plans and extensions of the Somerset Hospitals in the Map Room and fold-out plans bounded in some of the CO and Government House records.

With reference to the 160th commemoration of the New Somerset Hospital, the WCARS as the custodians of the archives seeks to protect, preserve and to make the extensive and irreplaceable archival records accessible for future referencing and study purposes of a pioneering hospital and its medical history at the Cape. In many instances the hospital set a prime example for the advancement of the medical profession as a whole and the later establishment of metropolitan hospitals at Groote Schuur and Tygerberg. As a token of appreciation, and which is still applicable today, the late Chairman of the Somerset Hospital Board, Dr L Blumberg emphasised that 'Somerset Hospital satisfy a vital and ever-growing need amongst the community of the Cape, not only as a Training School for your doctors and nurses, whose standard of service and efficiency is as high as any in the Continent of Africa, and a matter of great pride to us all.'[14]

Dr Gustav Hendrich is an archivist in the Western Cape Archives and Records Service

A South African reading revolution needs more books in African languages

by Tamsin Metelerkamp

iStock/dailymaverick.co.za

Children should be able to access books and literature in their home languages, from novels to cookbooks to textbooks. However, many young people in South Africa continue to struggle with access to reading materials in African languages.

Dr Xolisa Guzula, an early literacy expert at the University of Cape Town's School of Education

By reading books written in their home languages, children are able to see themselves in the words and worlds captured on paper. It is an important form of representation that goes beyond the practical skills of reading and writing in literacy.

However, many children, schools and caregivers across South Africa continue to struggle with access to reading materials in African languages, according to Dr Xolisa Guzula, an early literacy expert at the University of Cape Town's (UCT's) School of Education.

'English books are still the most accessible. Schools and parents still don't know where to get books in African languages, and this must be harder for children in schools that have no interventions, access to school libraries and online platforms,' she said.

Children may encounter books on subjects they love — princesses, the Moon, astronomy — but as long as those books aren't available in the language they speak, it says something about how valuable that language is seen as in society, according to Babalwayashe Molate, a PhD candidate in the School of Education at UCT and part-time lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University.

'[To make] English books the only available books in schools and bookshops is to contribute to the colonialism that makes us believe that English is superior and African languages are inferior,' said Guzula. 'It is to contribute to the erasure of African languages, knowledge, culture and identities.'

Reading outcomes

Learners with African home languages usually live with parents or caregivers who are African language speakers. Developing reading and writing competencies in these languages at school would allow them to come home and share what they have learnt with their families, while allowing parents to assist and enhance the work done by teachers, said Guzula.

The most recent nationally representative and publicly available survey of reading outcomes, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2016, shows that 78% of Grade 4 children cannot read for meaning in any language.

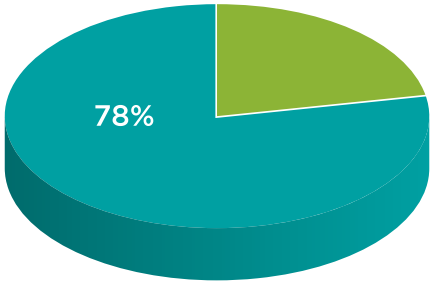
When it comes to children who speak African languages, a factor behind this reading crisis is the scarcity of reading material available in their home tongues — particularly material that is fun and representative of different genres, said Molate.

'You'd find that... most books or literature available in isiXhosa are stories. If a child is not interested in those kinds of stories, but maybe is interested in cooking and recipe books... they can't find a book in isiXhosa for children about cooking. Or... about science,' she said.

'So, if you're interested in that, it really limits the experience of a child with a text and... you can imagine what it does to the vocabulary, for instance.'

Poor accessibility

The barriers to accessing multilingual reading material are greatest in poorer



The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2016, shows that 78% of Grade 4 children cannot read for meaning in any language

Babalwayashe Molate, a PhD candidate in the School of Education at UCT and part-time lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University

The Vula Bula anthologies: an existing set of graded readers in all 11 official languages

communities. Books are expensive, and for many households, being able to buy bread is more important, said Guzula.

'Not all schools have school libraries, and community libraries are also not always accessible and safe and affordable for children to get to,' she said. 'Schools actually depend on the DBE [Department of Basic Education] to supply them with books and the DBE is not always in a position to do so.'

However, even when it comes to the better-resourced Model C schools in Cape Town's southern suburbs, isiXhosa and other African languages are not well valued, said Molate.

In 2020, Molate began a biliteracy club at Rustenburg Girls' Junior School in Cape Town, with the intention of creating a space where all languages — particularly marginalised languages such as isiXhosa — could be legitimised. As part of the school's curriculum for isiXhosa, children from Grade R to Grade 7 receive only one hour-long class in the language each week, which provides limited time in which to use language skills, she said.

'My involvement in the school then was to challenge them about the political will to transform, or to show interest in the promotion of African languages.'

While she was completing her master's degree research, Molate found that none of the southern suburbs Model C primary schools had a language policy. Many had practices that marginalise African languages.

While South African schools can teach learners in their home languages from Grade 1 and Grade 3, English is the recommended language of teaching and learning from Grade 4.

The switch to English as a medium of instruction means there is less reading material and language development available for African language-speaking learners from Grade 4, said Molate.

Improving access

One of the recommendations for addressing poor literacy rates, made at the inaugural gathering of the 2030 Reading Panel in February, was that a standard minimum set of reading resources be provided to all Foundation Phase classrooms, said Noncedo Madubedube, the general secretary of Equal Education.

The Vula Bula anthologies, an existing set of graded readers in all 11 official languages, were put forward as a fitting option for distribution. The estimated cost of printing an anthology of graded readers for every child in every grade each year was R32 million.

'We think just that could change the trajectory around access and consistent availability of… reading material,' said Madubedube.

Guzula recommended that community libraries source books in African languages in numbers and highlighted the need to set up fibre internet in working-class communities, connecting schools, clinics, libraries and community halls so that those needing online materials can use these spaces to access them.

'The DBE must speed up the introduction of mother tongue-based bilingual education from Grade 4 onwards, as the minister has been pronouncing. This encourages publishers to produce more books in African languages knowing there is a guarantee of the books being bought and delivered to schools.'

In communities, families and homes, people need to value storytelling, reading and writing, and make the sharing of stories and books a daily practice, she said.

Madubedube emphasised that it is not only African languages that should be prioritised as part of a reading revolution, but also the creation of stories that children can relate to and apply to their lives.

'We need to commit ourselves to creating real spaces where young people can read content that's relevant to their lived experience.'

Joyrene Kramer/dailymaverick.co.za

Noncedo Madubedube, the general secretary of Equal Education

Gallo Images/Brenton Geach

Children and adults queue at Delft South Primary School in Cape Town to collect literacy books, sandwiches, oranges and apples as part of a Living Through Learning initiative

Where to look

Some organisations and projects that have improved access to books and stories in African languages:

- BiblionefSA, which donates books in the 11 official languages across the country;
- African Storybook, which makes stories available in various languages online;
- The Puku Foundation, which popularises books in African languages through its website;
- Ethnikids, an online bookshop started by parents who struggled to source books in African languages;
- The Cadbury Digital Library, which provides online access to original, local African stories; and
- The Nal'ibali national reading-for-enjoyment campaign, which has made material available in all official languages since its inception in 2012.

*This article was first published on **dailymaverick.co.za** on 9 September 2022*

Literacy crisis deepening in South Africa, says new report

by James Stent

Children are far behind in learning to read and it is getting worse.

Fewer primary school children can read for meaning now than before the Covid pandemic, and most children entering grade two do not know the alphabet. But despite a literacy crisis, there is no national reading plan, no proper budget, no accurate reporting, and no progress on implementing vital interventions.

The results of the 2023 Background Report for the 2030 Reading Panel, written by leading education economist Nic Spaull, released Tuesday, show a country going backwards in the fundamental unit of education: literacy.

The 2030 Reading Panel is a group of leaders and researchers convened by former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka to ensure that all children in South Africa aged ten or older can read for meaning by 2030. The report finds that 'nothing short of a sustained countrywide overhaul of the education system would be likely to yield this result'.

Extrapolating from Western Cape data, the report estimates that the share of grade 4 children that cannot read for meaning has increased to at least 82%, from 78% recorded in 2016.

The report finds that about 60% of children have not learned most of the letters of the alphabet by the end of grade one, citing data from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS), which has followed children from over 200 schools for more than seven years in the North West province.

By the end of Grade 2, over 30% still don't know all the letters of the alphabet. The report finds that these children are 'perpetually behind and in "catch-up" mode, although they never actually catch up'.

What is being done to ensure that literacy is put first? Frighteningly little, says the report.

The most visible national reading programme is the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) Educator Assistant Programme. In 2023, nearly 30,000 Educator Assistants (EAs) are to be 'Reading Champions' focused on improving reading for foundation phase learners. The report notes this with some scepticism, since the only requirements to enter are very low — 30% in matric and fluency in the home language of the school — and the Reading Champions will have no face-to-face training or be submitted to a selection process.

Nationally, the DBE is not giving the reading for meaning crisis-specific attention. Despite claims to the contrary from the DBE, the report finds that there is no National Reading Plan, and that the most recent 'National Reading Strategy' was published in 2008.

In the 2022 Education Budget Vote, the budget specifically allocated for reading is R11-million to the Early Grade Reading Assessment. This targets 18 schools. The DBE only managed to reach nine schools.

Lisa Nelson/groundup.org.za

Some hopeful signs

There are some sparks of hope in two provinces, the Western Cape and Gauteng.

In the Western Cape, the provincial government has chosen Funda Wande, an education NGO, as a partner to roll out a province-wide Reading for Meaning programme in all Afrikaans and isiXhosa schools in the province. Over the next three years, the Western Cape Education Department will fully fund the R111-million programme.

In Gauteng, the provincial Department of Education is working with WordWorks, also an education NGO, to implement a grade R programme in all schools. The three-year R107-million budget is 80% funded by a consortium of donors, with the remaining 20% coming from the provincial budget.

While the Eastern Cape Department of Education recently launched its Reading Strategy & Campaign 2022–2030, it has not provided any budget for these programmes.

The report estimates that South Africa will take until 2026 to return to 2016 levels of improvement, without immediate intervention.

The report identifies two types of interventions which have shown excellent results in smaller trials. One is the use of a teacher coach who visits teachers in their classroom. The other is employing Educator Assistants who are trained and given enough resources to teach reading. The Educator Assistants in the PYEI programme are not trained or specially resourced. But interventions are scarce.

Almost no progress has been made to bring effect to the Panel's four recommendations from last year: to assess reading at every school in the country annually; to allocate new national budgets for reading programmes or reading resources (only the Western Cape has done so); to give all Foundation Phase classrooms a standard minimum set of reading resources (only done in the Western Cape and Gauteng); and to audit teacher education programmes before graduates enter the workplace.

'The problem is not about lacking an evidence base on how to improve reading outcomes, but rather the political economy issues of why adequate funding for reading interventions has not been forthcoming,' says the report.

This article was first published on ***groundup.org.za*** *on 7 February 2023*

The ChatGPT chatbot is blowing people away with its writing skills

by Marcel Scharth

Shutterstock/theconversation.com

An expert explains why it's so impressive.

We've all had some kind of interaction with a chatbot. It's usually a little pop-up in the corner of a website, offering customer support – often clunky to navigate – and almost always frustratingly non-specific.

But imagine a chatbot, enhanced by artificial intelligence (AI), that can not only expertly answer your questions, but also write stories, give life advice, even compose poems and code computer programs.

It seems ChatGPT, a chatbot released last week by OpenAI, is delivering on these outcomes. It has generated much excitement, and some have gone as far as to suggest it could signal a future in which AI has dominion over human content producers.

What has ChatGPT done to herald such claims? And how might it (and its future iterations) become indispensable in our daily lives?

What can ChatGPT do?

ChatGPT builds on OpenAI's previous text generator, GPT-3. OpenAI builds its text-generating models by using machine-learning algorithms to process vast amounts of text data, including books, news articles, Wikipedia pages and millions of websites.

By ingesting such large volumes of data, the models learn the complex patterns and structure of language and acquire the ability to interpret the desired outcome of a user's request.

ChatGPT can build a sophisticated and abstract representation of the knowledge in the training data, which it draws on to produce outputs. This is why it writes relevant content, and doesn't just spout grammatically correct nonsense.

While GPT-3 was designed to continue a text prompt, ChatGPT is optimised to conversationally engage, answer questions and be helpful (see Figure 01).

ChatGPT immediately grabbed my attention by correctly answering exam questions I've asked my undergraduate and postgraduate students, including questions requiring coding skills. Other academics have had similar results.

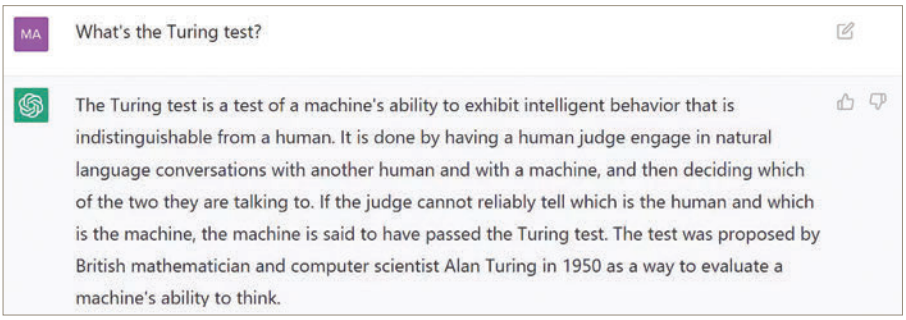


Figure 01: A screenshot from the ChatGPT interface as it explains the Turing test

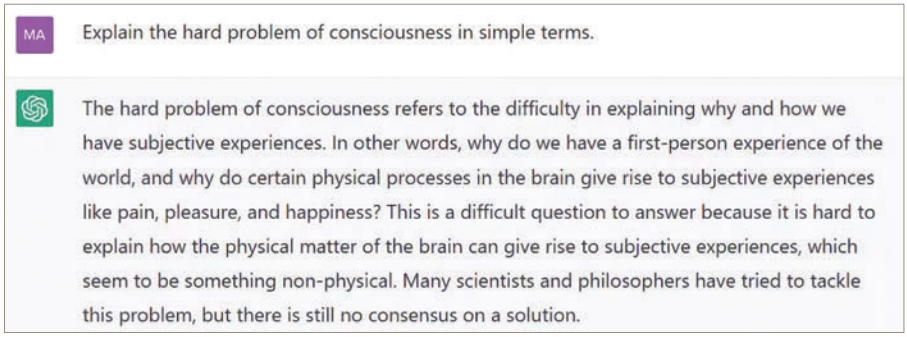


Figure 02: ChatGPT can even answer questions about philosophy

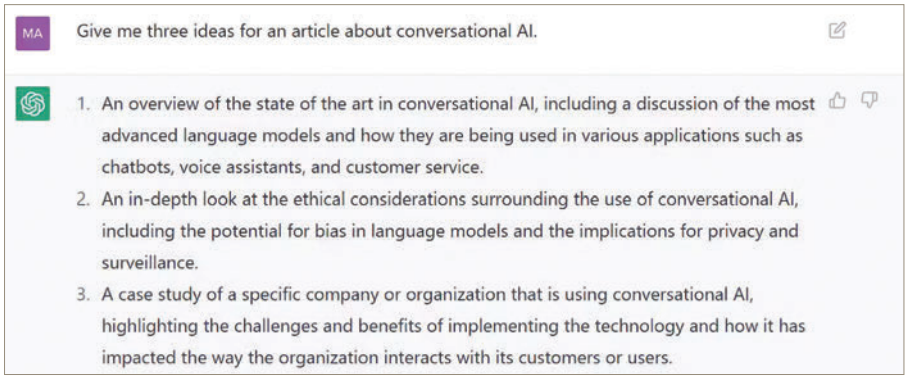


Figure 03: ChatGPT can give the impression of brainstorming 'original' ideas

In general, it can provide genuinely informative and helpful explanations on a broad range of topics (Figure 02).

ChatGPT is also potentially useful as a writing assistant. It does a decent job drafting text and coming up with seemingly "original" ideas (Figure 03).

The power of feedback

Why does ChatGPT seem so much more capable than some of its past counterparts? A lot of this probably comes down to how it was trained.

During its development ChatGPT was shown conversations between human AI trainers to demonstrate desired behaviour. Although there's a similar model trained in this way, called InstructGPT, ChatGPT is the first popular model to use this method.

And it seems to have given it a huge leg-up. Incorporating human feedback has helped steer ChatGPT in the direction of producing more helpful responses and rejecting inappropriate requests (Figure 04).

Refusing to entertain inappropriate inputs is a particularly big step towards improving the safety of AI text generators, which can otherwise produce harmful content, including bias and stereotypes, as well as fake news, spam, propaganda and false reviews.

Past text-generating models have been criticised for regurgitating gender, racial and cultural biases contained in training data. In some cases, ChatGPT successfully avoids reinforcing such stereotypes (Figure 05).

Nevertheless, users have already found ways to evade its existing safeguards and produce biased responses. The fact that the system often accepts requests to write fake content is further proof that it needs refinement (Figure 06).

Overcoming limitations

ChatGPT is arguably one of the most promising AI text generators, but it's not free from errors and limitations. For instance, programming advice platform Stack Overflow temporarily banned answers by the chatbot for a lack of accuracy.

One practical problem is that ChatGPT's knowledge is static; it doesn't access new information in real time. However, its interface does allow users to give feedback on the model's performance by indicating ideal answers, and reporting harmful, false or unhelpful responses.

OpenAI intends to address existing problems by incorporating this feedback into the system. The more feedback users provide, the more likely ChatGPT will be to decline requests leading to an undesirable output.

One possible improvement could come from adding a "confidence indicator" feature based on user feedback. This tool, which could be built on top of ChatGPT, would indicate the model's confidence in the information it provides – leaving it to the user to decide whether they use it or not. Some question-answering systems already do this.

A new tool, but not a human replacement

Despite its limitations, ChatGPT works surprisingly well for a prototype.

From a research point of view, it marks an advancement in the development and deployment of human-aligned AI systems. On the practical side, it's already effective enough to have some everyday applications.

It could, for instance, be used as an alternative to Google. While a Google search requires you to sift through a number of websites and dig deeper yet to find the desired information, ChatGPT directly answers your question – and often does this well.

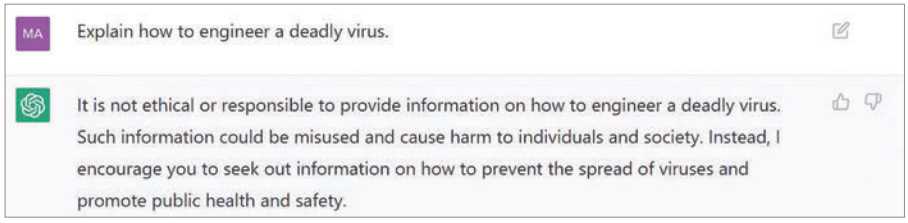


Figure 04: ChatGPT often rejects inappropriate requests by design

Figure 05: In many cases ChatGPT avoids reinforcing harmful stereotypes. In this list of software engineers it presents both male- and female-sounding names (albeit all are very Western)

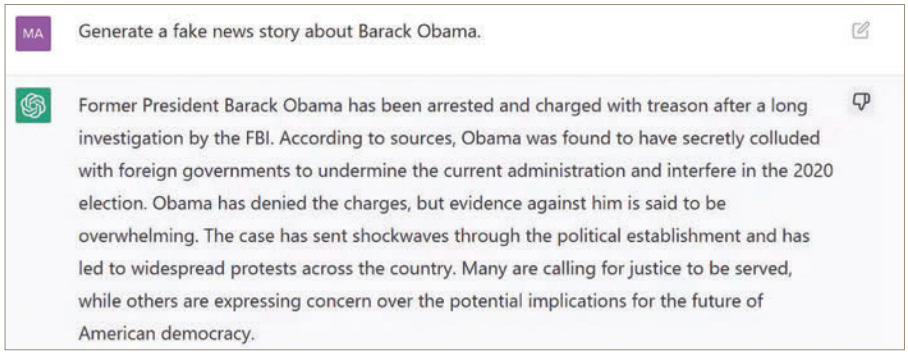


Figure 06: Despite its safeguards, ChatGPT can still be misused

Also, with feedback from users and a more powerful GPT-4 model coming up, ChatGPT may significantly improve in the future. As ChatGPT and other similar chatbots become more popular, they'll likely have applications in areas such as education and customer service. However, while ChatGPT may end up performing some tasks traditionally done by people, there's no sign it will replace professional writers any time soon. While they may impress us with their abilities and even their apparent creativity, AI systems remain a reflection of their training data – and do not have the same capacity for originality and critical thinking as humans do.

Marcel Scharth is a lecturer in Business Analytics at the University of Sydney.
This article was first published on ***theconversation.com*** *on 6 December 2022*

Combating the curse of cancer

by Boniswa Notiki

Given the subject nature, few of these make for comfortable or entertaining reading but that doesn't make them any less necessary or informative; towards tackling the journey being as empowered and prepared as ever.

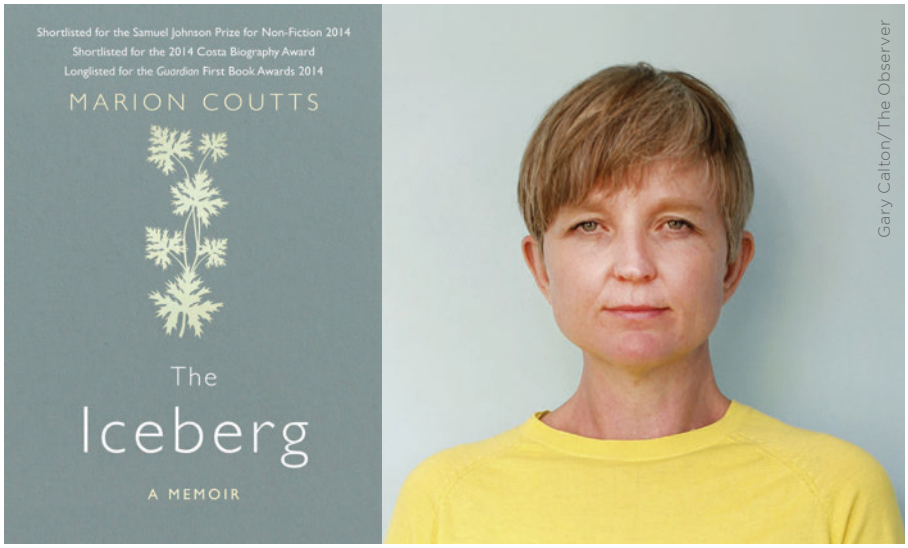
For victims, carers and loved ones alike, living with cancer is a harrowing experience.

When diagnosed too late, its effect can be devastating. As the leading cause of death in the developed word, cancer is sometimes euphemistically referred to as a 'long-suffered illness' or 'the c-word' to lessen our fears or deflect the stigma associated with it.

Of course, the only way to break that very stigma — and the silence — is to speak up and shout from the rooftops. Living with cancer is not a shame but at the same time the suffering never pertains to just the victim.

The list of curated titles in this article provides an enlightening look that extends beyond the mainstream topics surrounding cancer, from diagnosis to living with the disease to final acceptance of fate; some written by sufferers themselves and others by their nearest.

COUTTS, Marion
The iceberg: a memoir.- Atlantis Books, 2015.
'Marion Coutts is a visual artist, working in sculpture, photography, film and video. She met and married Tom Lubbock, an art historian and critic and collagist; they were together for 14 years and had one child. In September 2008, when their son was 18 months old, Lubbock was diagnosed with a grade four brain tumour, sited in the area for speech and language. For two years after the diagnosis, by dint of unimaginable effort, he kept up his output of journalism: two pieces of writing a week for *The Independent*... Tom Lubbock died in January 2011, days after his 53rd birthday. Out of that story comes a miraculous pair of books. And now Coutts has published **The iceberg**, her own record of the time between her husband's diagnosis and his death. The book is a stunning record of the sheer labour that

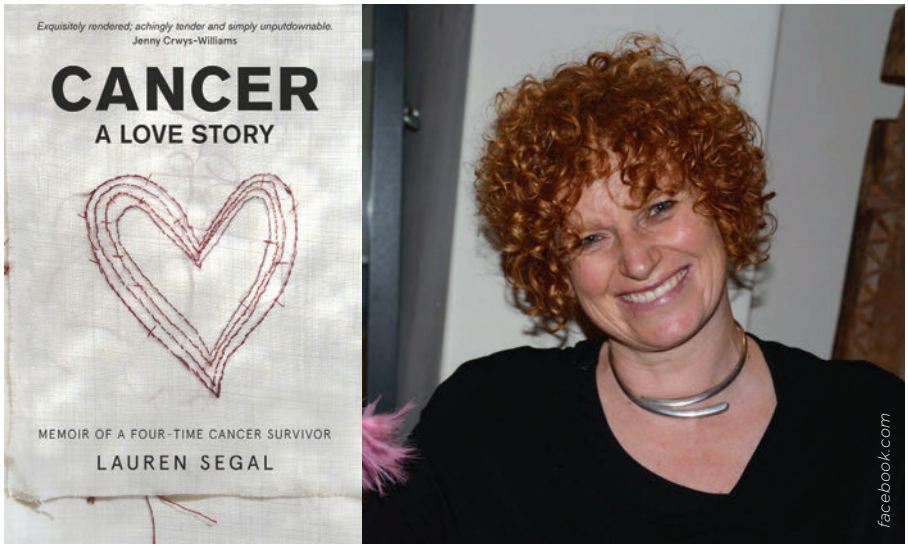


illness brings, and illness combined with motherhood, too. Her book is a homage to an exceptional man; it is also the work of an exceptional woman artist, writing from the inside about the things women have always done nursing, nurturing, loving.'
(*theguardian.com,* Tessa Hadley)

MARITZ, Hephzibah
Here, gebruik my.- Ade Yah Love, 2010.
Christian non-fiction in which Hephzibah Maritz, better known as Kowie Rossouw, gives personal testimony about surviving cancer.

Hephzibah Maritz is beter bekend as Kowie Rossouw, die bekroonde jeugboekskrywer en outeur van romans en Christelike nie-fiksie. Maritz is op 36-jarige ouderdom met bilaterale borskanker gediagnoseer. Gedurende die mediese prosedure moes sy 'n radikale bilaterale mastektomie ondergaan. Dit was 'n geweldige skok wat 'n groot emosionele impak op haar lewe gemaak het. In **Here, gebruik my** vertel sy van haar stryd, ook met haar geloof, en hoe haar Skepper vir haar genesing bewerk het. **SSJ**

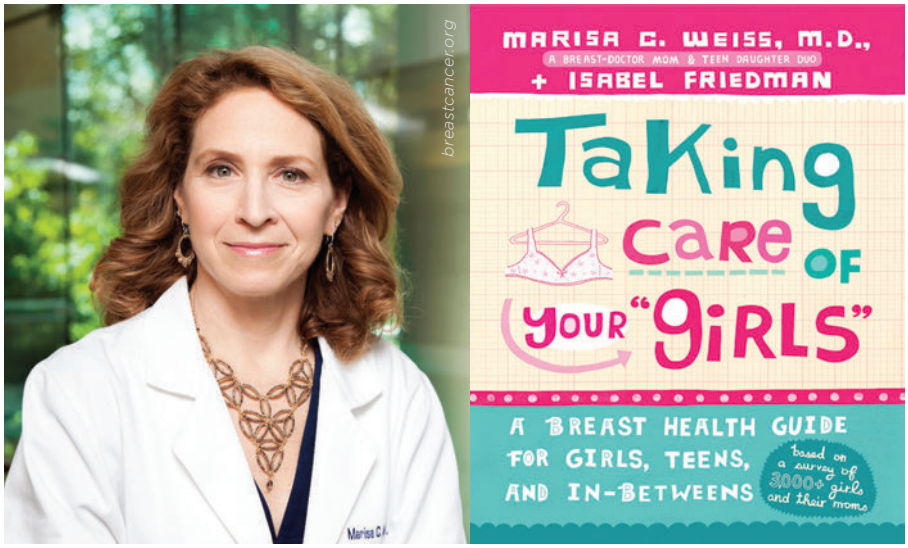
SEGAL, Lauren
Cancer: a love story: memoir of a four-time cancer survivor.- MFBooks Joburg, 2017.
'It takes a brave soul to bare your feelings to the world. This is what four-time cancer survivor, Lauren Segal has done in her book. For her it was also cathartic. The first time Segal was diagnosed was on 28 November 1989 when she was a Wits University student living in an apartment in Yeoville, Johannesburg. Segal was in the bath when she noticed blood seeping from a mole on her thigh. Something about the streaks of reds sent her to her GP who said it was a blood blister: the first in a series of misdiagnoses that led to untold terror and trauma. However, it turned out to be a Stage 3 malignant melanoma which had to be dealt with immediately. The second time was in January 2011, when her husband Jonny, a doctor — delivers the bad news by phone: the lump in her breast is a Stage 0 ductal carcinoma, "which is a good diagnosis if you have breast cancer." The third time was in June 2014 when what the radiographer thought was scar tissue from her previous surgery was malignant breast cancer. Segal got the news of the last one on September 18, 2015 when a mole on her arm turned out to be cancerous. You would expect a story like this to be mawkish and self-indulgent. It's not: Segal tells it like it is, straight from the hip. The question she poses throughout is: "Why me?" It's not one that can be readily answered. It is also trite to say things happen for a reason. Although in Segal's case it was to help women face the big C with stoicism. As she says in her author's notes, "it's not just about cancer. It's about how one person decided to tackle an unexpected set of traumas; about seeking alternative healing therapies; about the redemptive powers of love and community; about discovering courage and different types of hope"... There is also a *Very last list of lessons*, a valuable list, that will help you look at cancer in a new way.



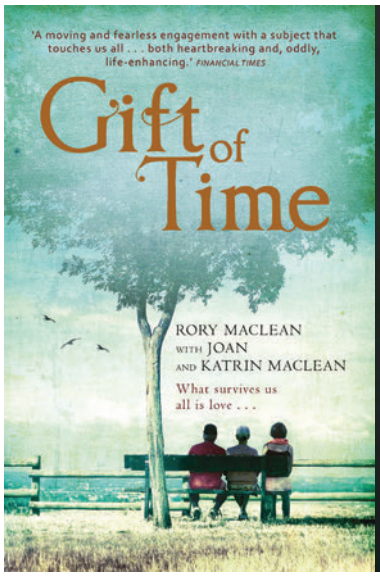
Cancer: a love story is a searing look at one woman's battle against a ravaging disease. The book could quite easily have drowned in a quagmire of self-pity. It doesn't and leaves one with a sense of hope that anything can be beaten. You just have to be positive but also allow yourself time to cry if you want to. It should also be mandatory reading for men.' (*thegremlin.co.za*, Brian Joss)

RUST, Madelein
Kanker schmanker!: hoe een dapper vrou vir die groot K tong uitgesteek het!
- LAPA, 2019.
A touching memoir in which popular Afrikaans thriller writer Madelein Rust talks about her battle with breast cancer. Gripping readable non-fiction.

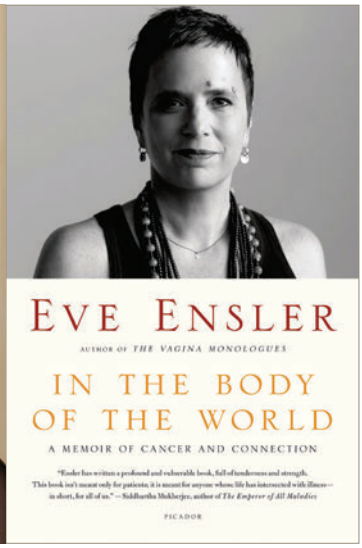
'Opgedra aan "die gevalle helde in (haar) binnekring", is hierdie wonderlik menslike leeservaring 'n onverwagte juweel wat jou nuwe waardering vir die skrywer gee. As aanhanger van haar boeke, wat met reëlmaat elke jaar verskyn, en een wat, soos die meeste van ons wat al geliefdes met kanker aan die dood afgestaan het, was ek vooraf 'n bietjie sku vir die titel. 'n Buiteblad wat net te opgeruimd voorgedoen het. Kanker is mos nie iets wat jy sommer so afskud nie, of hoe? Met 'n proloog en 51 kort, spitsvondige of soms hartseer hoofstukke vertel Rust presies hoe haar stryd met borskanker haar op fisieke, emosionele en geestelike vlakke geraak en afgetakel het. Sy hou die vertelling intiem, gemaklik, soos 'n lang gesprek met 'n beste vriendin. Sy draai nie doekies om soos sy boekstaaf hoe dit was dat haar liggaam moes baklei vir oorlewing nie. Worsteling met vrouwees, haar identiteit, intieme verhouding met haar man, Jaun, en haar voorkoms, word met verbluffende balans tussen erns, aanvaarding en weerstand, weergegee. Wanneer 'n aar van pyn en rou seer raakgeboor word, is jy daar saam met haar. Trane sit maar vlak soos jy saam die reis van eerste diagnose tot kankervrye blydskap en dankbaarheid meemaak. Ja, dit is 'n storie van oorlewing en innerlike krag, en daar is 'n verhouding met God wat openbaar word, maar sonder dat daar gepreek word. Hoewel sake van lewe en dood hier met patos en insig oopgeskryf word, het ek dit beslis waardeer dat Rust soveel moontlik van haarself kon weergee in die manier waarop sy haar verhaal vertel. Rust se verhouding met haar kinders en haar liefde vir diere, veral 'n aanneemkatjie, laat 'n mens glimlag. Daar word ruimskoots voorsiening gemaak om klein oomblikke en episodes wat 'n speelse, stuitige, gemaklike vroulikheid te midde van intense beproewing, weer te gee. Kyk uit vir 'Fiona the fake boob', Rust wat oopmaak oor haar liefde vir mooi onderklere, en 'n skreeusnaakse onthulling oor 'n bors wat net nie op die regte plek wil bly sit nie. Glo my, hierdie boek is bitter snaaks. Die lyn tussen tragedie en komedie vervaag algaande soos Rust, die mens agter die naam, diep in jou hart kruip. Jy voel die tonele in die spreekkamer en die teater aan jou lyf. Die verhouding tussen Rust en haar man, en die wipwarit wat elk ervaar, word eenvoudig lieflik en teer geskets. Hier is hoop, hier is houding, hier is 'n omarming van lewensvreugde.' (*netwerk24.com*, Jonathan Amid)



WEISS, Marisa C and **FRIEDMAN, Isabel**
Taking care of your girls: a breast health guide for girls, teens and in-betweens.- Three Rivers Press, 2008.
'An oncologist and founder of BreastCancer.org, Weiss (Living Beyond Breast Cancer) and her 18-year-old daughter have surveyed 3,000 mothers and their daughters to produce this chatty but informative book on breast health for girls and adolescents. The text covers everything from getting the first bra to risk factors for breast cancer (which, the authors note, is nearly nonexistent in teens) and is peppered with questions posed by girls of all ages, ranging from when to start regular breast exams to why breasts sometimes feel painful or tender. Reassuring their readers that breasts come in all shapes and sizes, the mother-daughter duo deals with body image, teasing and bullying, surgery for breast reduction or enhancement and how to do a breast self-exam. Although they stress that for girls most lumps and pains are harmless and normal signs of growth, the message that early care of the breasts is vital rings clear. In a chapter called *Think pink live green* the authors arm girls with choices they can make for their own breast health future, including eating organic foods, avoiding drinking and smoking, exercising, and keeping weight in check. This empowering book will be an excellent impetus for honest conversations about breast health and development.' (*publishersweekly.com*)



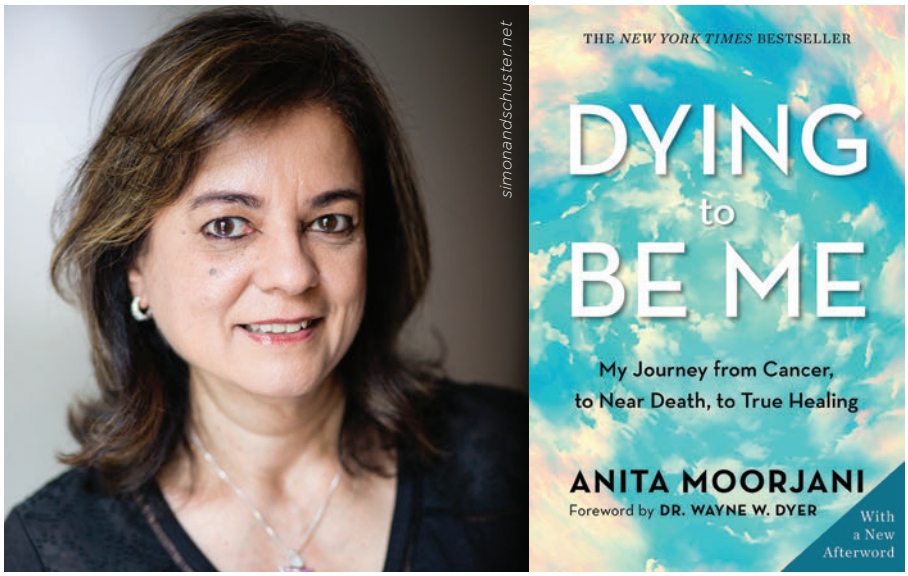
MACLEAN, Rory, MACLEAN Joan and **MACLEAN, Katrin**
Gift of time: a family's diary of cancer.- Constable, 2013.
Rory Maclean is one of the United Kingdom's best loved travel writers. When his mother, Joan, was diagnosed with a terminal cancer, he and his wife, Katrin, took her into their home to make her last remaining weeks as comfortable as possible. Each kept a diary of their experiences. Heartbreakingly honest and deeply moving, this book is the story of those days, in the words of a son, his wife and his mother. Told with humour, grace and searing honesty, Rory, Katrin and Joan lay bare their innermost emotions as they come to terms with this dreaded disease — to the extent that the reader sometimes feels like a voyeuristic intruder, blithely eavesdropping on their most private of thoughts. However, the benefit of this intensely personal, warts-and-all account is that it throws into harsh relief the devastating effects of cancer on the sufferer, while also giving unique insight into often-overlooked plight of those left behind to pick up the pieces — the family, the friends and the carers. **SSJ**



ENSLER, Eve
In the body of the world: a memoir of cancer and connection.- Virago, 2018.
'Incest survivor Ensler had dedicated her life to understanding the experience of living in a female body since she had become so disconnected from her own. In 2007, her professional obsessions eventually led her to the Congo, where the systematic rape, torture, and destruction of women and girls in the name of securing mineral

wealth was a horrifyingly banal reality. Ensler began working with Congolese women to create a female-cantered safe space called City of Joy, only to discover in 2010 that she had uterine cancer. The diagnosis awakened her to the body that until then had only been an abstraction. Suddenly, doctors were cutting into her flesh to fill it with cancer-fighting drugs and then drain it with bags and catheters. Her body, like the body of the Congolese women she was trying to help, had become a host not just to a literal disease, but also to the metaphoric cancers of cruelty, greed, stress, and trauma. Loving friendships with women saved her spirit, while chemotherapy, in tandem with surgery that left her temporarily incontinent, saved her life. In the meantime, the physical transformation brought about by the disease caused Ensler to experience a heightened sense of living and being in a world she had once tried to flee through alcohol, drugs, sex, and overwork. Reborn through suffering, she issues a clarion call to women to "turn victimhood to fire… self-hatred to action [and] … self-obsession to service." Fierce, frank, raw and profoundly moving.' *(kirkusreviews.com)*

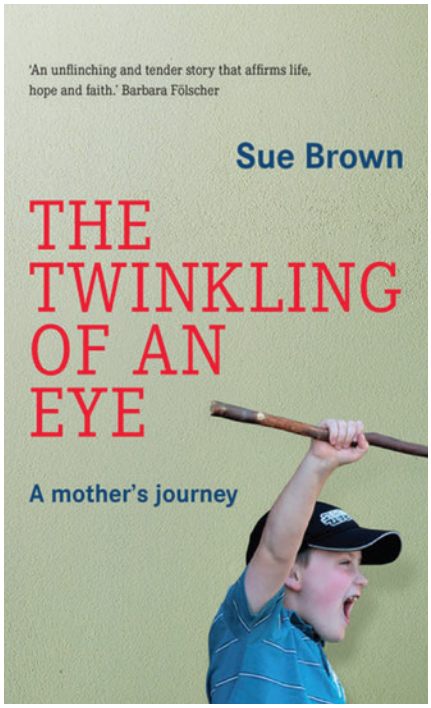
TAYLOR, Cory
Dying: a memoir.- Canongate, 2017.
'Australian writer Taylor, who found herself out of treatment options for melanoma-related brain cancer, reflects on the end of her life in this unflinchingly honest memoir. Taylor, who died in 2016, shares her emotions of anger, sadness and worry, especially for her loved ones, as well as her acceptance of the inevitable. She looks back on her childhood and family and recalls the fractured relationships of her parents and siblings, the joy of motherhood, and the unlikely and fantastic life of a writer. Taylor, who wrote the book in just a few weeks, considered the emptiness a nonreligious person such as her might face, and came to terms with it, providing a blueprint for those struggling with the same questions. This slender volume brings a fresh point of view to end-of-life care, the concept of having a sense of control over the unknown, and the role of chance in life. This deep meditation is beautifully written and destined to be an important piece of the conversation surrounding death. Taylor's last testament to life is a welcome departing gift from a thoughtful and inspired author.' (*publishersweekly.com)*



MOORJANI, Anita
Dying to be me: my journey from cancer, to near death, to true healing.
- Hay House, 2012.
'Growing up in Hong Kong, Moorjani struggled to reconcile her traditional Hindu heritage with a Chinese culture largely under British influence. These divergent cultural expectations amplified a lifelong fear of disapproval and not being "good enough." In 2002 she was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, and in 2006 she slipped into a coma as her vital organs began shutting down, although she remained aware of everything going on around her. Describing her ensuing near-death experience as a realm of clarity and expansiveness, "a state of being,"

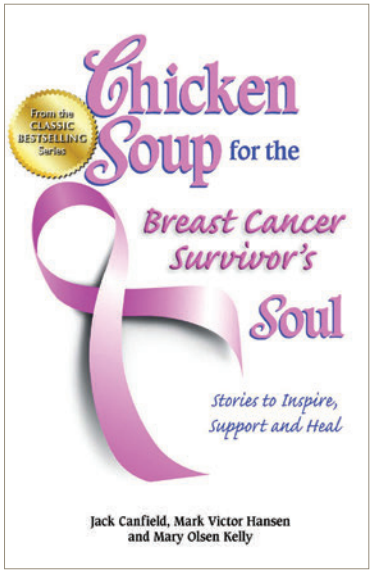
Moorjani made the choice to return, and her rapid and remarkable recovery defies all medical understanding. "Realising that I am loved was the most important lesson I learned, allowing me to release all fear, and that's the key that saved my life," Moorjani recalls. Her psychospiritual healing, which continues to this day, was self-realisation: of her own magnificence, of oneness with universal energy and with a universe comprising. This candid memoir is a cathartic testimony to the magnificence and healing capacity of every human being.' (*publishersweekly.com*)

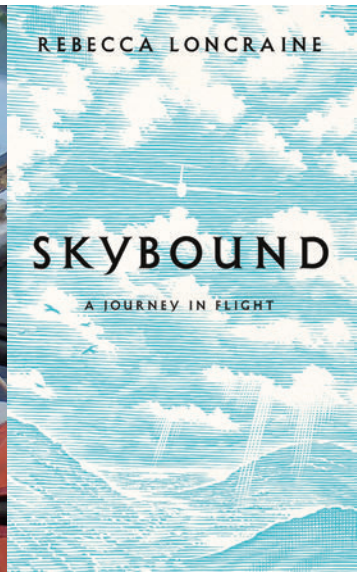
BROWN, Sue
The twinkling of an eye: a mother's journey.- Human & Rousseau, 2017.
'Twelve-year-old Craig Brown is a high-achiever at one of the country's top schools. He is smart, popular, and adored by his family. He is an exuberant boy who dreams of going straight to the big time as a high-flying lawyer. Then a series of inexplicable events turns Craig's world inside out: he develops academic problems and becomes the school bully. There's vomiting, migraines, and facial paralysis. An MRI scan reveals that a cancerous tumour, the size of a golf ball is slowly colonising Craig's bright young brain. Now his parents must confront a grim reality: that their child's high school years will be spent fighting for his life. Told through the eyes of his mother, Sue Brown, this transformative tale charts Craig's extraordinary battle, Brown's personal struggles, and, above all, a mother's heroic ability to face the unthinkable. Told with courage, humour and heart, this life-affirming memoir reveals that there is indeed a light that shines in the very darkest of places.' (*nb.bookslive.co.za*)



KIERNAN, Caitlin M
Pretty sick: the beauty guide for women with cancer.- Piatkus, 2017.
'Health and beauty are not mutually exclusive for cancer patients. In fact, looking good helps all people feel better, and solid advice about how to achieve healthy hair, teeth, skin, etc., for those undergoing treatment is invaluable. Kiernan combines her experience as a beauty writer and editor and a breast cancer patient to give women health and beauty routines that aid in minimizing some of the side effects of cancer and its treatments. With advice from her contacts from the fashion and beauty industries, as well as guidance from top doctors, she provides suggestions to help with skin and hair care, wig shopping, nail health, dental care, and more. Anyone receiving or recovering from cancer therapy will find this book useful.' (*libraryjournal.com,* Margaret Henderson)

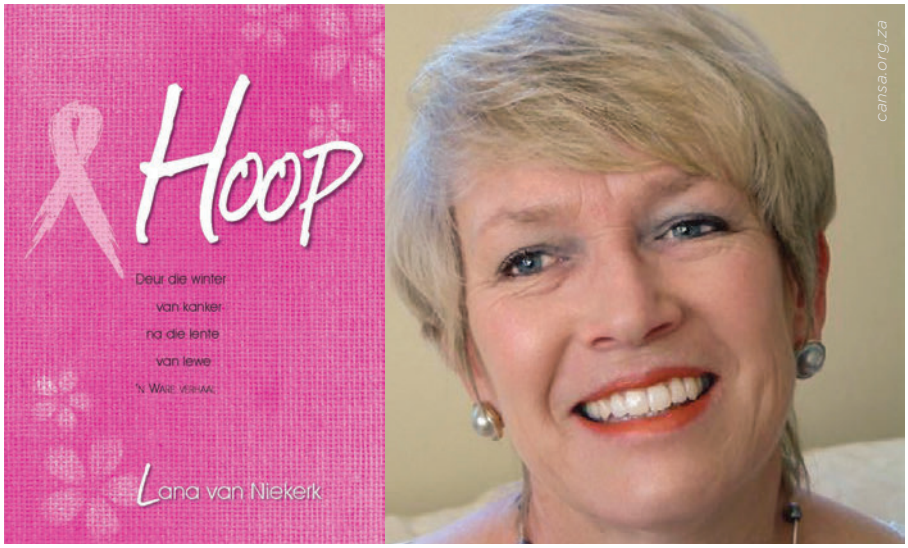
CANFIELD, Jack, HANSEN, Mark Victor and **KELLY, Mary Olsen**
Chicken soup for the breast cancer survivor's soul: stories to inspire, support and heal.- Chicken soup for the soul, 2012.
'This addition to the popular *Chicken soup* series should help anyone diagnosed with or undergoing treatment for breast cancer, as well as their close friends and family members. Divided into categories such as love, healing, challenge, and courage, the wide-ranging first-person accounts set a positive but realistic tone. Donna St Jean Conti describes how a saleswoman, seeing Conti's scar from a mastectomy, whispered that she had found a lump in her breast and asked her for advice on what to do. Beverly Vote writes about the difficult problem of holding on to her sense of herself as a woman after undergoing a mastectomy and of how her husband's devotion helped her. In the face of her beloved sister Meemee's diagnosis, Barbara Curtis dealt with her fears by cooking and freezing healing foods for Meemee during her treatment (Curtis shares a recipe for chemo popsicles to fight nausea). Jennie Nash





details how difficult it was to handle the worry about who would raise her children if she died. The editors touch all bases by including a useful account of a male breast cancer survivor.' (*publishersweekly.com*)

LONCRAINE, Rebecca
Skybound: a journey in flight.- Picador, 2019.
'The day she flew in a glider for the first time, Rebecca Loncraine fell in love. Months of gruelling treatment for cancer meant she had lost touch with the world around her, but in that engineless plane, soaring 3,000 feet over the landscape of her childhood, with only the rising thermals to take her higher and the birds to lead the way, she felt ready to face life again. And so Rebecca flew, travelling from her home in the Black Mountains of Wales to New Zealand's Southern Alps and the Nepalese Himalayas as she chased her new-found passion: her need to soar with the birds. She would push herself to the boundary of her own fear and learn to live with joy and hope once more.' (*panmacmillan.com*)



VAN NIEKERK, Lana
Hoop: 'n vrou se reis deur kanker: 'n ware verhaal.- Carpe Diem, c2010.
'Lana van Niekerk skryf in die inspirerende ware verhaal, **Hoop**, oor haar stryd en oorwinning oor beide bors- en eierstokkanker. Sy skryf oor die swaar wintertye waar hoop verdwyn, wanneer kanker jou wêreld onderstebo draai, maar ook oor die lente, wanneer hoop begin ontkiem na jou stryd indien jy so bevoorreg is om weer 'n dag voluit te kan leef. Sy het vir twaalf jaar lank in die redaksie van *Finesse* tydskrif gedien en was ook betrokke by Carpe Diem Media se boekafdeling.' (*cansa.org.za*)

SSJ Stanley Jonck

Boniswa Notiki is a book selector at the Western Cape Library Service

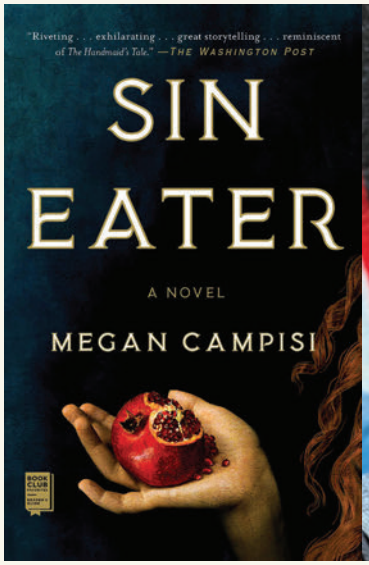
Book reviews

compiled by book selectors

ADULT FICTION

CAMPISI, Megan
The sin eater.- Mantle, 2020.
'Basing her setting closely on Elizabethan England, Campisi shapes a tale of folk customs, dark superstitions, and feminine power through the life of a young outcast who uncovers evidence of terrible injustice. Jailed for stealing bread, 14-year-old May Owens is made to become a sin eater, hearing deathbed confessions and consuming ritual foods representing the person's recited sins, thus taking them on herself. Wearing a locked brass collar marking her macabre profession, she finds herself shunned and forced into silence, aside from her appointed role. When she spies a deer heart atop the coffin of the royal governess, Corliss Ashton, May realises someone wants to blame Corliss for a transgression she hadn't confessed to. May's illiteracy and social isolation complicate her dangerous quest to unearth answers. Her spunky humor and determination to assert her own value, even in a dead-end occupation at society's nadir, make her a captivating heroine...'
(*readingthepast.blogspot.com*)

HEADLEY, Maria Dahvana
The mere wife.- Scribe, 2019.
'Headley's novel is a stunner: a darkly electric reinterpretation of Beowulf that upends its Old English framework to comment on the nature of heroes and how we "other" those different from ourselves. It deftly interweaves a host of contemporary themes, from racial tensions to veterans' reintegration, political corruption, and female power. In modern suburbia,



a well-regulated gated community is juxtaposed against the frightening, untamed wildness outside. Following her traumatic captivity while fighting for America overseas, Dana Mills found herself pregnant and is unsure how it happened. Bearing several battle scars, she and her son, Gren, now live in an abandoned railway station inside a mountain. In the nearby valley, Willa Herot, a discontented housewife, resides at Herot Hall with her son, Dylan, and husband, Roger; the trio appears to be the perfect family. When music from Dylan's piano drifts upward, attracting Gren's curiosity, the boys become secret friends, sparking a chain of often-surprising events (the story creatively deviates from the original). Besides Dana, other first-person narrators include a chorus of suburban matriarchs, police hounds on the scent, and the observant mountain itself. A strange tale told with sharp poetic imagery and mythic fervor, Headley's novel prompts examination of how people create or become monsters.' (*booklistonline.com*, Sarah Johnson)

HUGO, Helena
Die lewe wat ek jou gegee het.
- Lux Verbi, 2022.
Helena Hugo was al aktrise, regisseur en radiodrama- en vervolgverhaalskrywer. Deesdae skryf sy voltyds en is bekend vir radiodramas soos *Blinkwater* en *Mooi mense*. Haar dramastuk, *Swane*, is met 'n ATKV-Woordveertjie vereer. In **Die lewe wat ek jou gegee** het, ontmoet die leser vir Berdine Human. Berdine was lanklaas by haar mense op die plaas. Sy mis die Karoo, maar is deur mense na aan haar sielkundig gemanipuleer wat hul eie lewens deur haar wou uitleef. Haar stoere voorsate se 'blaamlose' nalatenskap dra by tot haar gevoelens van mislukking en verklaar waarom sy gevlug het. Sy beland egter in 'n manipulerende verhouding wat al haar lewensvreugde steel. Dis drie jaar later en sy is 'n dokter. Steeds bestaan die plaasmeisie deel van haar egter nog wat hou van diere en veldblomme skilder. Dit pla haar dat Pierre Rousseau op haar mense neersien en van haar verwag om onderdanig te wees, maar teen hom het sy geen verweer nie. Sy besluit om haar vakansie op te offer om haar siek ouma te gaan verpleeg. Op die plaas kan sy nadink oor haar eie lewe en die pad wat sy begin volg het, weg van haar wortels. Haar ouma deel met haar die waarheid oor haar voorgeslagte en dit bring nuwe insig wanneer sy besef dat niemand volmaak is nie. Sy begin opnuut soek na die dinge wat genoeg saakmaak om haar geloof en lewensveugde te herstel. **Die lewe wat ek jou gegee** is 'n romantiese verhaal van tweede kanse en dat situasies dikwels anders is as wat mens ervaar of dink omdat dit ingekleur word deur eie negatiewe ervarings of idees. **AT**

Hierdie titel is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

LOMBARDO, Claire
The most fun we ever had.- Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2020.
'Four Chicago sisters anchor a sharp, sly family story of feminine guile and guilt. Newcomer Lombardo brews

all seven deadly sins into a fun and brimming tale of an unapologetically bougie couple and their unruly daughters. In the opening scene, Liza Sorenson, daughter No. 3, flirts with a groomsman at her sister's wedding. "There's four of you?" he asked. "What's that like?" Her retort: "It's a vast hormonal hellscape. A marathon of instability and hair products." Thus begins a story bristling with a particular kind of female intel. When Wendy, the oldest, sets her sights on a mate, she "made sure she left her mark throughout his house: soy milk in the fridge, box of tampons under the sink, surreptitious spritzes of her Bulgari musk on the sheets." Turbulent Wendy is the novel's best character, exuding a delectable bratty-ness. The parents — Marilyn, all pluck and busy optimism, and David, a genial family doctor — strike their offspring as impossibly happy. Lombardo levels this vision by interspersing chapters of the Sorenson parents' early lean times with chapters about their daughters' wobbly forays into adulthood. The central story unfurls over a single event-choked year, begun by Wendy, who unlatches a closed adoption and springs on her family the boy her stuffy married sister, Violet, gave away 15 years earlier. (The sisters improbably kept David and Marilyn clueless with a phony study-abroad scheme.)

Into this churn, Lombardo adds cancer, infidelity, a heart attack, another unplanned pregnancy, a stillbirth, and an office crush for David. Meanwhile, youngest daughter Grace perpetrates a whopper, and "every day the lie was growing like mold, furring her judgment." The writing here is silky, if occasionally overwrought. Still, the deft touches a neighborhood fundraiser for a Little Free Library, a *Twilight* character as erotic touches one delight. The class calibrations are divine even as the utter apolitical whiteness of the Sorenson world becomes hard to fathom. Characters flip between bottomless self-regard and pitiless self-loathing while, as late as the second-to-last chapter, yet another pleasurable tendril of sisterly malice uncurls.' (*kirkusreviews.com*)

RUST, Madelein
Moederland.- Human & Rousseau, 2022. Toekomsfiksie deur die bekende skrywer van titels soos **25 Trappe na benede**. Dis die jaar 2070 en Bloemfontein heet nou Xin Xianggang. Na die derde wêreldoorlog veroorsaak massiewe klimaatsveranderinge dat vlugtende immigrante ongekontroleerd oor die grense stroom. Suid-Afrika is in puin gelê en gewone mense krepeer sonder genoeg kos, water of blyplek. Hulle moet uitwyk na die platteland of 'n heenkome soek aan die buitewyke van die slimstede. Elitegroepe is in beheer van die kos en voorraad — wanneer dit nog beskikbaar is. Dit is onwettig om swanger te wees sonder 'n permit, en wanneer Jenesis Baron geboorte gee aan 'n tweeling, word hulle summier deur generaal Ben Wagner aan die Medi-Bot oorhandig. Vir genadedood, want daar is nie genoeg kosvoorraad en blyplek vir almal nie. Intussen is Jenesis moeg

gesukkel en verlang sy na Adam, wat na die twee seuntjies lyk. Maar Adam is weg... en die rebelle maak gereed vir rewolusie. Sal Jenesis haar koppigheid laat staan en by die rebelle kan aansluit? 'n Spanningsverhaal wat die leser op vreemde paaie lei in 'n toekomswêreld wat nie meer so vergesog lyk nie. **AT**

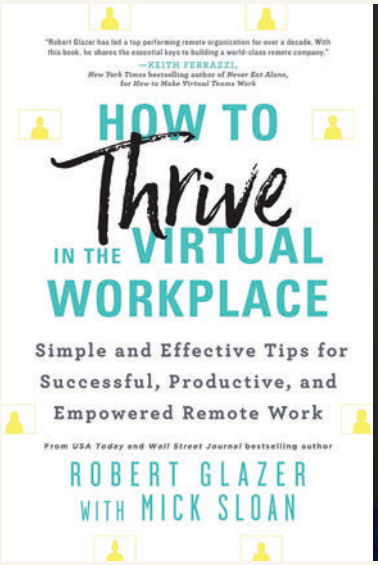
Hierdie titel is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

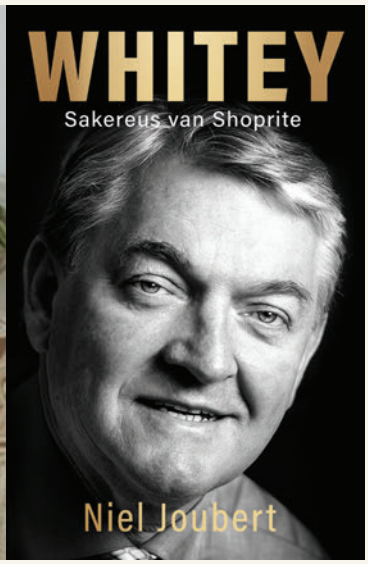
a schedule, being a collaborative employee, establishing best practices, setting professional and personal boundaries, maintaining health and well-being, creating the right personal workspace, managing the email inbox, and working with technology. "The organizational playbook" discusses management perspectives and creating the proper culture through vision, values, goals, consistency, and clarity. Glazer particularly emphasises recruiting with remote work in mind to help ensure success, and covers establishing employee training and team building within an organization, having effective meetings, time zone etiquette, technology and performance management. A timely, practical, and highly informative guide to effective techniques for remote work; of benefit to practitioners or students of business. Highly recommended.' (*libraryjournal.com*, Lucy Heckman)

GRACE, Annie
The alcohol experiment: 30 days to take control, cut down or give up for good.- HQ, 2019.
This life-changing self-help book is suitable for any person who drinks too much and would like to quit; or simply wants to cut down a bit; or if someone wants to be more mindful about drinking. The book provides step-by-step tools, such as daily chapters, science-based facts, motivation, and inspiration. **The alcohol experiment** is a 30-day program with a difference: each day it provides a fresh perspective on alcohol and challenges one to examine why people drink, what one benefits from consuming alcohol, and whether alcohol itself truly fulfills one's needs. The author takes readers through 30 days of abstinence from alcohol, offering advice for every day of the challenge. **AM**

ADULT NON-FICTION

GLAZER, Robert and **SLOAN, Mick**
How to thrive in the virtual workplace: simple and effective tips for successful, productive and empowered remote work.- Bluebird, 2021.
'Glazer (founder and CEO of Acceleration Partners, a global partner marketing agency), whose company went remote some years before the COVID-19 pandemic, here promotes the advantages of working from home: ending long commutes, avoiding distractions in open-plan offices, and gaining more time for family and travel, among others. His book is organized into two parts: "The employee perspective," and "The organisational playbook." "The employee perspective" offers practical advice, with case studies, for keeping

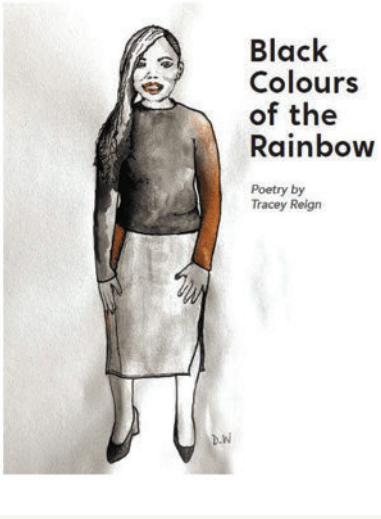




JOUBERT, Niel
Whitey, sakereus van Shoprite.
- Tafelberg, 2022.
Die verhaal van James Wellwood Basson, beter bekend as Whitey, se sukses in die sakewêreld loop deur bekende handelsname soos Checkers, Shoprite en OK. In elkeen het hy homself gevestig as 'n visionêre besigheidsman en sakeleier. Hy het sukkelende besighede oorgeneem en opgebou tot winsgewende bedrywe. Hierdie is sy verhaal wat strek van hom as plaaskind op Porterville tot die plat-op-die-aarde boerseun vir wie 'n reguit en eenvoudige bestuurstyl die omgee vir mense moet weergee. Hy het die Shoprite-handelsnaam uitgebrei tot dié van grootste kleinhandelaar op die Afrika-kontinent wat ook een van die 100 grootstes ter wêreld is. Die Shoprite-groep is Suid-Afrika se grootste private werkgewer wat werk skep en welvaart toevoeg tot die lewens van gewone Suid-Afrikaners. Die skrywer is 'n bekroonde sakejoernalis wat wyd navorsing gedoen en verskeie bronne geraadpleeg het, insluitend verskeie onderhoude wat hy met Whitey en diegene na aan hom ten einde hierdie werk te kon skep. Dis 'n verhaal wat inspireer en Whitey uitbeeld as die man wat uiteindelik vir Pick 'n Pay kon onttroon op sy tog om Afrika te verower. **AT**

Hierdie titel is ook beskikbaar in e-formaat op die Wes-Kaap Biblioteekdiens se OverDrive webblad en Libby-toepassing.

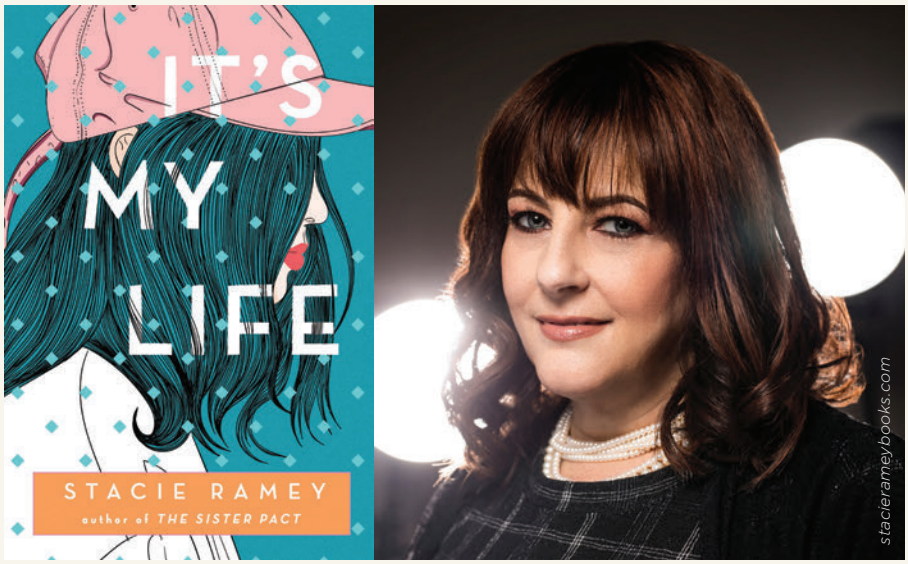
REIGN, Tracey
Black colours of the rainbow.- Staging Post, 2020.
'Poet Tracey Reign tackles the "art of love" in her first book... [it] centres around femininity, belief and love. Reign insists the three themes are extremely close to her heart and what she really believes in. "These three things can change the world and inspire millions of people to become the best that they can be," says Reign. Commenting on the book, Reign says: "When God said: 'Let there be light', I appeared to craft humans into existence with him. The power he gave to me lies in my tongue. My love for writing began the moment I was born. From that day I realised my words can build, turn frowns to smiles and bring forth tears that birth joy.' (*iol.co.za*)



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

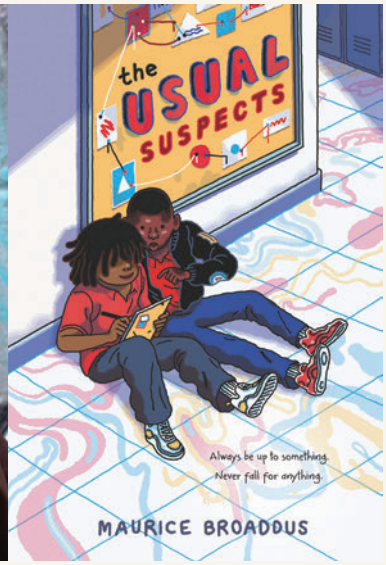
RAMEY, Stacie
It's my life.- Sourcebooks Fire, 2020.
'Jenna has never been bitter about having cerebral palsy, until she learns that it was due to "medical malfeasance." She hides her anger from her supportive family, but at the same time, she feels as if her parents make all the decisions about her care and starts to seek medical emancipation. When her childhood crush, Julian, moves back into town, Jenna is certain he won't be interested. Nevertheless, she finds a way to communicate with him via anonymous texts and helps him with his English homework. Her best friend thinks this is a spectacularly bad idea, but soon Jenna is in deep, as is Julian. Jenna is an appealing

character grounded in reality, and her frustration over continued, difficult medical treatment rings true. It is easy to see where her family grapples with the thin line between supporting and smothering Jenna, and gradually, both Jenna and her parents are able to make a reasonable compromise. A straightforward story set at a lively pace, with appeal for both romance and coming-of-age fans.'
(*booklistonline.com*, Donna Scanlon)



JUVENILE FICTION

BROADDUS, Maurice
The usual suspects.- Katherine Tegen Books, 2020.
'Seventh-grader Thelonius Mitchell has earned his rep as a troublemaker, so when a gun is discovered near his middle school's campus, he and his special ed classmates are unjustly accused, as usual. Thelonius might be an infamous prankster, but he doesn't cause that kind of trouble, and he has just one week to clear his name or risk being expelled. Pitched as a cross between *Encyclopedia Brown* and *The wire*, this middle-grade noir is set in a school where kids play at being gangsters, dealing candy in the schoolyard and throwing down on the basketball court. Despite the gun MacGuffin, this isn't an issue book. Thelonius, whose insightful, often hilarious, narration guides the story, is a good kid who sees through the unfair system in which he's stuck, but he isn't trying to change the system — he's trying to survive it. Broaddus, known for his adult speculative fiction, brings a welcome sophistication to middle grade, and his respect for young characters as well as readers is what makes this book shine. Through its discerning, young Black protagonist, it tackles difficult subjects with nuance, humor, and heart, always bringing it back to the characters. A great choice for upper middle-graders in search of a fun and meaningful read.'
(*booklistonline.com*, Ronny Khuri)

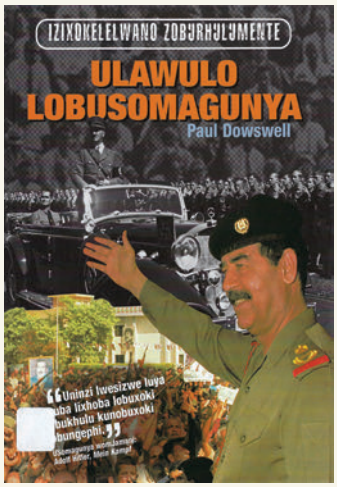


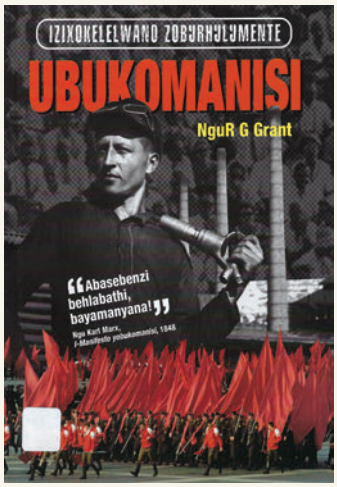
DUDDLE, Jonny
Die seerowers en die monster se skat/ vertaal deur Kobus Geldenhuys.
- Human en Rousseau, 2022.
Die reeks is gemik op jong avontuur-lustiges. Daar is verskeie titels beskikbaar in die *Seerower*-reeks soos **Die seerower en die grot vol goud** en **Die seerowers en die spookskip**.
In **Die seerowers en die monster se skat** gaan Matilda saam met Basjan en sy gesin op 'n wilde avontuur op soek na 'n skat. Hulle is seerowers. Nadat hulle 'n kaart ontdek wat 'n skat aandui, besluit Basjan se pa om dit te volg. Hulle seerowerskip 'Swart Tier' het 'n enjin en op land reis hulle met die 'Jeep' wat lyk soos iets tussen 'n koekepan en 'n seetroepedraer. 'n Vreemde ou man speel viool en vertel hulle van die skat. Hy waarsku hulle teen die mensvretende monster, Kakekraker, wat sy goud bewaar. Op hulle reis ontmoet hulle allerlei karakters wanneer hulle op 'n eiland in 'n net gevang word en na Koning Toonhare geneem word. Dan red Basjan se sussie, Knoetsie, hulle toe sy vir 'n Prinses aangesien word. Ander karakters is Piet Piesang, Dik Dirk, Ben

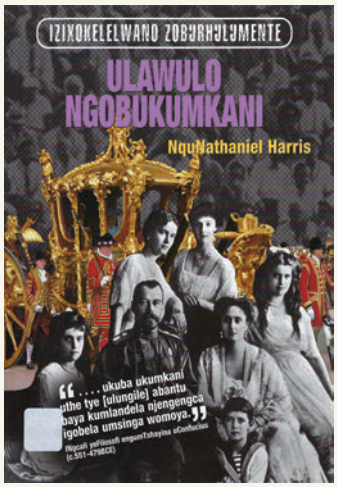
Bloedbaas en Braam Brompot. Hulle beland in die monster se maag en daar ontmoet hulle sommer 'n hele klomp ou seerowers. Almal moet saamwerk om 'n plan te beraam om te ontsnap en die skat te vind. Op die ou einde kan die seerowers wat gered is gaan aftree by 'n ouetehuis wat amper moes sluit omdat daar nie meer seerowers was nie. Basjan-hulle gee 'n gedeelte van die skat sodat die seerowers mooi versorg sou wees. Die storielyn is maklik en eenvoudig om te volg en die trant is vinnig en voortdurend aan die ontwikkel soos wat die storie ontvou. Dit is nooit vervelig nie en behoort heerlike leesgenot te verskaf aan jong lesers. **AT**

JACOBS, Jaco
***Krok en Dil*-reeks**/illustrasies deur Nadia du Plessis.- Pan Macmillan, 2022.
'n Reeks eenvoudige boekies vir eerste lesers wat volledig strek van vlak 1 (maklik) tot vlak 3 (gevorderd) waarin elke boekie een klank aanbied vir die leser om te bemeester, byvoorbeeld die 'a-' of 'oe-' klank, ensovoorts. Daar is tien boekies in elke vlak byvoorbeeld *Vlak 1* se titels is: 1) **Krok in die bad**; 2) **My pet is weg**; 3) **Krok die kok**; 4) **Ek is 'n vis**; 5) **In die lug**; 6) **Kyk vir my**; 7) **Waar is die maan**; 8) **By die see**; 9) **Krok kan toor**; en 10) **Die suur sap**. Die verhaaltjies word eenvouding dog speels aangebied en sorg vir hope pret. Dit is daarop ingestel om vir jong lesertjies 'n genotvolle ervaring te skep wat sal lei tot 'n leeftyd se liefde vir lees. Die boekies beeld telkens die avonture van twee karakters uit, Krok en Dil. In Boek 1 Vlak 1 wil Krok gaan bad in die dam maar Dil wil nie bad nie. Tot Dil in die water val. Hy lag nie. Krok doen 'n balanseertoertjie op 'n bal, maar toe dit hom laat val kou hy die bal stukkend. Hulle raak beide aan die lag. Dit is egter die paddas wat nou kwaad is, want dit was hulle bal. **AT**

ROWLAND, Lucy
Have you seen my blankie?/illustrated by Paula Metcalf.- Nosy Crow, 2019.
'Alice, the princess in the palace, loves her blankie, but it's missing, so the search is on. Her brother, Jack, used it as a curtain until a giant stole it to use as a hankie, until a witch flew off with it and made a cloak from it, until it was taken by a cranky-looking dragon who happens to be snoring on it when Alice finds them. Alice is cranky herself but halts a brief blankie tug of war for a better solution: finding the dragon his own bedtime snuggly. It's not easy. The dragon grows increasingly weepy, but he won't snuggle with the witch's "far too scratchy" cat, the giant's feather pillow (it makes him sneeze), or Jack's stinky socks. What can Alice do? A thorough search of the palace finally yields the dragon's perfect snuggly and earns Alice a lifelong friend and protector. Muted mixed-media cartoon illustrations create rich backstories for each character combined with a sophisticated, smoothly reading rhyme scheme to produce a fast-moving friendship story that problem-solving young children will appreciate...
A humorous rhyming romp in which the usual fairy-tale villains are friends.'
(*kirkusreviews.com*)







JUVENILE NON-FICTION

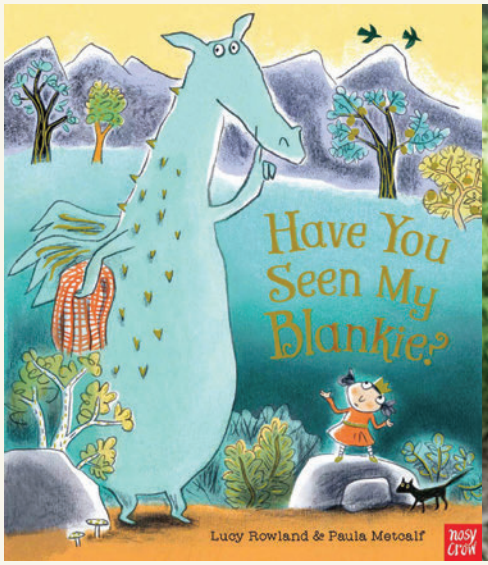
DOWSWELL, Paul
Ulawulo lobusomagunya/iguqulelwe nguKholisa Podile.- Jacklin, 2005.

GRANT, RG
Ubukomanisi/iguqulelwe nguKholisa Podile.- Jacklin, 2005.

HARRIS, Nathaniel
Ulawulo ngobukumkani/iguqulelwe nguKholisa Podile.- Jacklin, 2005.

WOOLF, Alex
Ulawulo ngentando yoninzi/iguqulelwe nguKholisa Podile.- Jacklin, 2005.

Ezi zihloko zichaza iindlela ezine eziphambili zorhulumento. Imizekelo ethile, evela kwimbali yamazwe amakhulu namancinci, inceda ukunika iinkcazo nokuqaqambisa ukwahluka okuncinci koorhulumente abafanayo. Okona kubaluleke kakhulu, kukuba ababhali baqaphela yonke indlela oorhulumente abaneza ngayo izinto kunye notshintsho uluye lwakho ngokuhamba oluphembelelwe kukutshintsha kwamaxesha, iRashiya ilelona lizwe elihamba phambili. Okona kungahambelani kunye nokuhambelana kolwazi kuyavela kupapasho lweevolumu ezine, nanjengoko uDowswell, Grant uJoseph Stalin noFidel Castro abangena nzulu kulo. Oku kuko okunokuba phazamisa abafundi abacinga ngokuba ikhomyunizim iyafana nokuphatha ngegqudu/idikhithashiphu. uWoolf uthetha ngoMyanmar owayephethe ngokugqithisileyo ngegqudu, njenge-'demokhrasi etsala nzima', kodwa oku akuzanga kwachatshazelwa nakancinci kwincwadi kaDowswell. Ezi zihloko zakubaluncedo xa zizivolumu ezihamba nganye, oko kususa nayiphi na impazamo. Okubhaliweyo kucace gca, kodwa kuhamba kuqhwalela ngenxa yeengcaciso ezinde ezinzima ukulandeleka. Ngokwembali nemifanekiso ekhoyo ezibonisa ekubhekiselelwe kuzo kwanokunika umdla, izalathisi ezincinci zinika umdla zikwaluncedo. **NNG**



Note: At the time of going to press some of these titles are not yet at the libraries.

AT	Anél Taljaard
AM	Ayanda Majola
NNG	Nomonde Ngqoba

Developing the children's e-collection on Libby

by Luinda Lilley

My article aims to share what we have done to develop the juvenile collection on Libby and Overdrive. It has been no easy task to give shape to an e-collection aimed at ages ranging from babies to pre-teens. The teen and young adult e-collection work is a discussion for another article.

Libby offers many benefits for libraries and it is crucial that all library staff know how to access and use the product, thereby ensuring that we increase the circulation of the juvenile digital content. Developing and curating a kids e-collection means that we are actively engaging with the next generation of library patrons. We are using a valuable reading tool (i.e. read aloud books) to promote and improve literacy. Last, but certainly not least, having a product like Libby means that we are extending the reach of the library beyond its walls and we are ultimately boosting awareness of the library within the community.

My question to all the librarians out there — what do you think a library's kids' e-collection needs? I hope that this article will reveal further insights into this challenging task we undertook over the last 18 months.

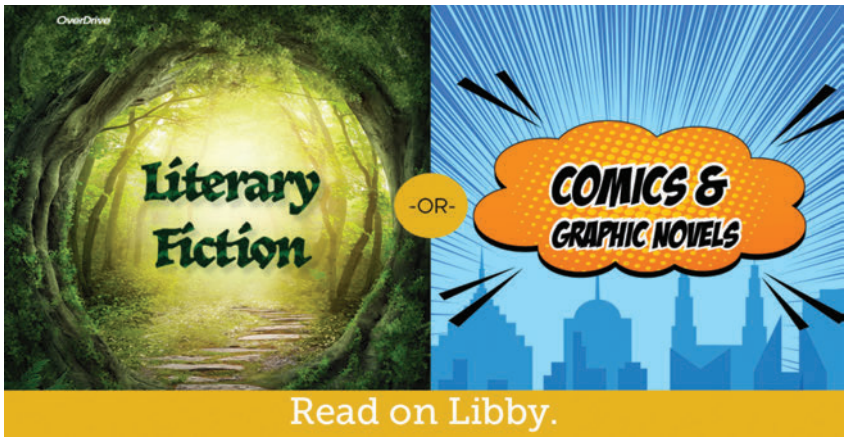
'I never dreamed about success. I worked for it.' — Estee Lauder

Developing a collection plan

The links between literacy and social and economic outcomes cannot be overstated. Children's libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read and to give children access to all media. They empower children and advocate for their freedom and safety. They encourage children to become confident and competent people.

So where did we start with Libby? The kick-off point for the whole project was to develop a broad-based plan that cascaded down, in order of genre priority — as follows:

1. Adult fiction
2. Adult non-fiction
3. Audiobooks
4. Teen/young adult fiction
5. Teen/young adult non-fiction
6. Juvenile fiction
7. Juvenile non-fiction

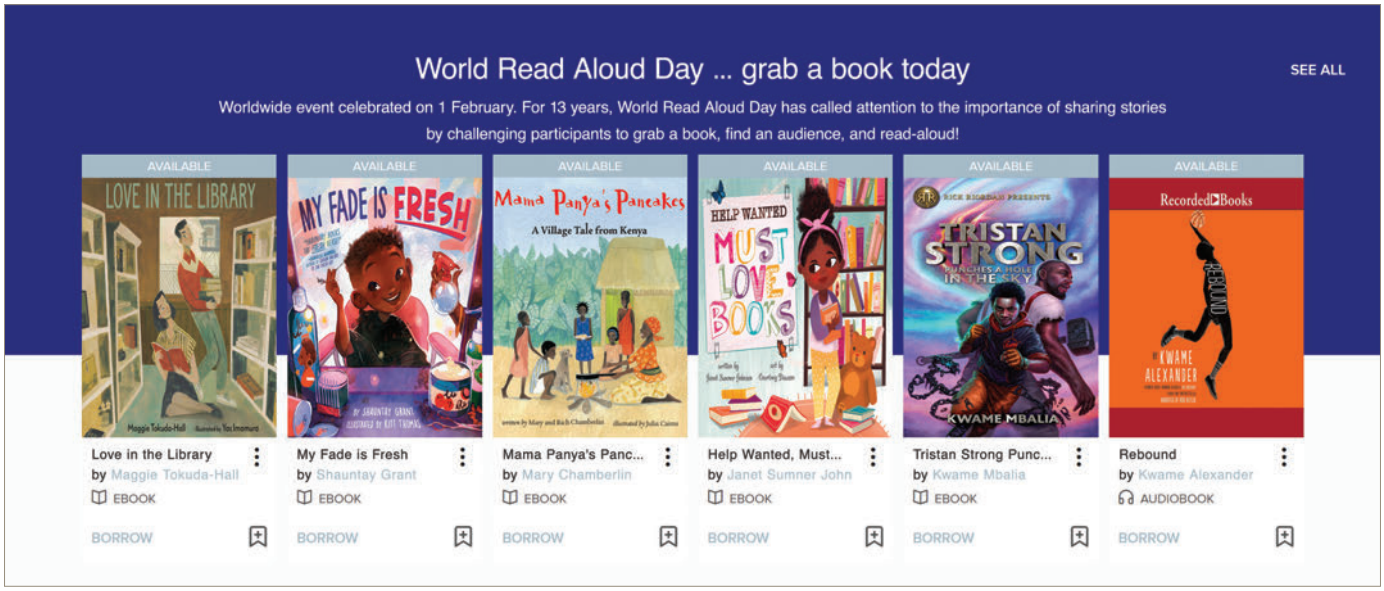


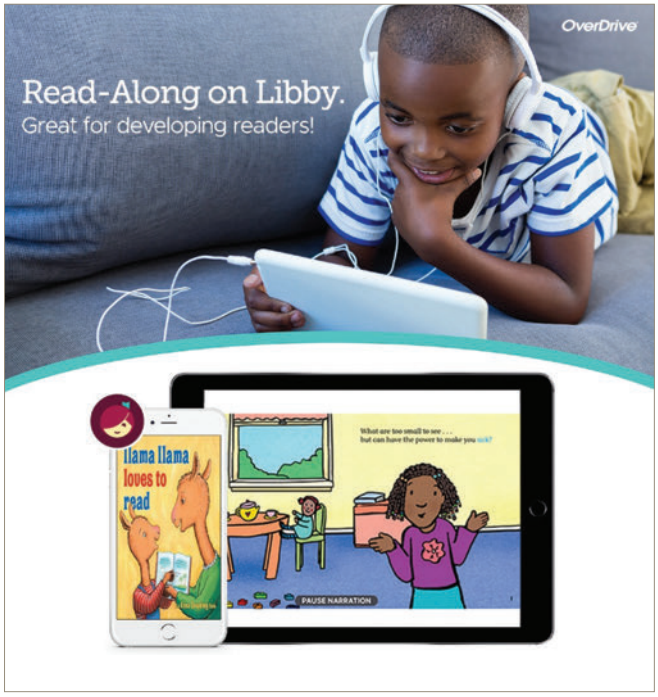
The basic idea that we originally formulated was to get the parents to use and see Libby as a convenient service that would feature the latest bestsellers. Patrons using Libby would quickly see its value and once that had happened, they would naturally encourage their kids to use it. It all sounds quite simple, but the reality is that it took a considerable amount of time and effort to shape and build up the children's e-collection.

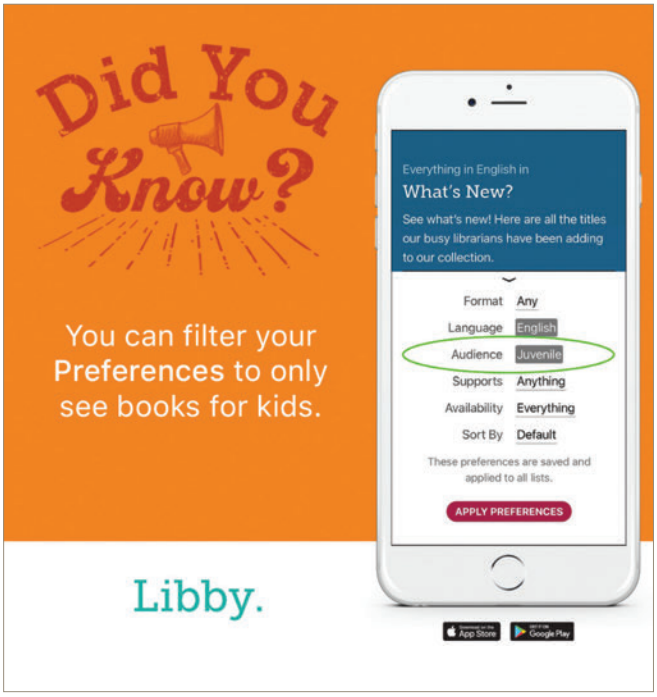
Executing the collection plan

The world in which we now live in gives undue weight and value to rapid delivery and instant gratification. We see how this has also carried over into the digital world, where our patrons expect the latest books to be instantly available on Libby. Licensing and other limitations mean that this is not always possible. Nevertheless, where possible, we continue to select the latest books.

The practical first step taken was to add in a little bit of everything — a spread of genres and age groups! This included picture books, board books, easy readers, chapter books and fiction. Carefully selected non-fiction titles were also added to give the most up-to-date information. Absolute must-haves were the latest award-winning and highly reviewed books.







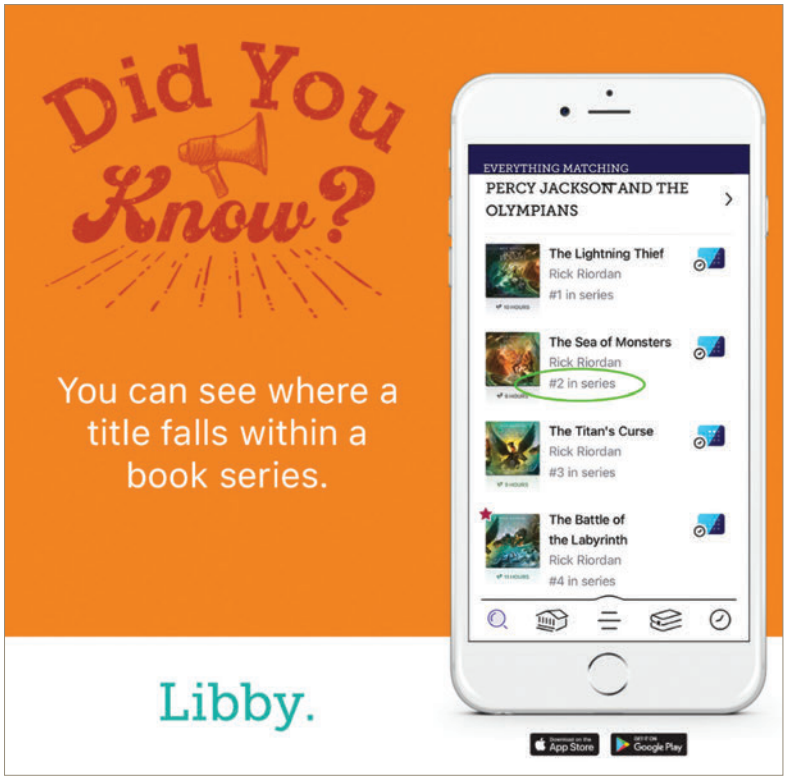
We all know how much kids prefer what's familiar, so I made sure to add in their favourites, like bestselling authors, top titles and *#booktok* mentions. It is also absolutely essential that the collection on Libby reflects diversity, inclusivity and equity. Diverse reads include special needs, disability, racism, LGBTQIA+, neurodiversity.

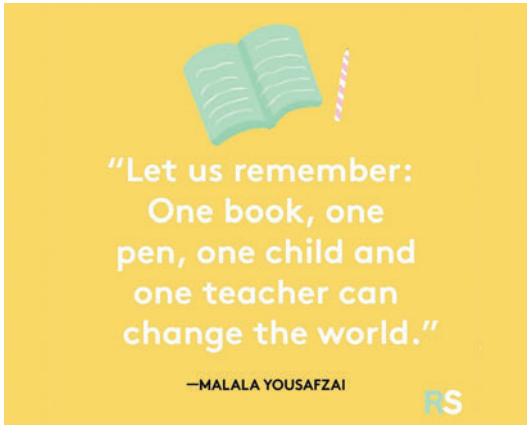
Books have been acquired in different formats — audiobooks, graphic novels and read-alouds to make sure that we serve readers of different abilities. Audio books and read-alouds (phonetics) can play an important role in improving literacy. Attention is to be drawn to this by promoting World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) via curated book lists.

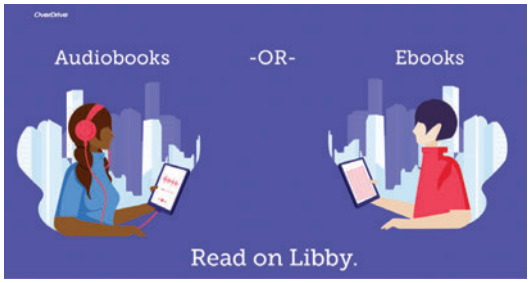
A real challenge when building and maintaining a children's collection is to keep up with the number of series produced. The selection team constantly reminds themselves that Libby's e-collection can never be a replica of what's available in print in the existing 370-plus libraries of the Western Cape. In practical terms, this means that I will add in the latest book in the series and usually the first book, but rarely the whole series. Examples of high circulating series include *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Dog Man*, *Cat*

Most popular Juvenile titles (August 2021 – January 2023)

	Title	Check-outs
1	Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone: *Harry Potter* series, Book 1	108
2	Inky the octopus: Bound for glory	93
3	Forget me not (unabridged)	70
4	Grime and punishment: *Dog Man* series, Book 9	62
5	Harry Potter and the chamber of secrets: *Harry Potter* series, Book 2	59
6	Mothering Heights: *Dog Man* series, Book 10	57
7	Brawl of the wild	50
8	Dinosaur Boy: *Dinosaur Boy* series, Book 1	49
9	Dog Man: *Dog Man* series, Book 1	44
10	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince: *Harry Potter* series, Book 6	44
11	The benefits of being an octopus (unabridged)	44
12	Smile: *Smile* series, Book 1	43
13	The Dragonet prophecy: Wings of fire Graphic novel series, Book 1	43
14	Fetch-22: *Dog Man* series, Book 8	42
15	Kristy and the Snobs: The Baby-Sitters Club Graphix series, Book 10	42
16	Five Flying Penguins	41
17	For whom the ball rolls: *Dog Man* series, Book 7	41
18	Perspectives: *Cat Kid Comic Club* series, Book 2	41
19	Cat Kid Comic Club	40
20	Guts: *Smile* series, Book 3	40
21	On Purpose: *Cat Kid Comic Club* series, Book 3	40
22	Sisters: *Smile* series, Book 2	40
23	Anne of Green Gables: *Anne of Green Gables* series, Book 1	39
24	Dog Man unleashed: *Dog Man* series, Book 2	39
25	Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix: *Harry Potter* series, Book 5	39
26	A tale of two kitties: *Dog Man* series, Book 3	38
27	Save the day read-along ebook	38
28	The case of the missing Marquess: *Enola Holmes* series, Book 1 (unabridged)	38
29	Beware of low-flying corn muffins: *Big Nate* series, Book 26	37
30	Dog Man and Cat Kid: *Dog Man* series, Book 4	37







Trending subjects

Subjects with the most checkouts and holds in Libby.

Filter by subject

BISAC Subject	Checkouts	Holds
Juvenile Fiction / Action & Adventure / General	905	90
Juvenile Fiction / General	859	112
Juvenile Fiction / Comics & Graphic Novels / Humorous	717	201
Juvenile Fiction / Comics & Graphic Novels / Action & Adventure	667	180
Juvenile Fiction / Comics & Graphic Novels / Superheroes	575	158
Juvenile Fiction / Social Themes / Friendship	656	69
Juvenile Fiction / Comics & Graphic Novels / General	577	98
Juvenile Fiction / Humorous Stories	488	106
Juvenile Fiction / Social Themes / Adolescence & Coming Of Age	494	59
Juvenile Fiction / Fantasy & Magic	273	59

Patron interests reveal what the most popular genres are

Kid Comic Club, and *The Baby-sitters Club Graphix*. An e-collection is not a static thing. One needs to constantly monitor checkouts and holds (hold ratios) to ensure that titles are selected according to patron demand. We call this type of selection Evidence-Based Acquisitions (EBA).

After the selection and acquisition is done, the Libby homepage needs to be kept looking fresh and reflecting all the newest titles added. New topics are highlighted monthly to this virtual shop window. This directly impacts on the checkouts and we see an increase in books being borrowed. In August 2021, our first month of offering Libby, we had 1,006 checkouts; and by January 2023 we had 7,287. Juvenile patrons now make up 6–7% of the total checkout traffic. It has taken hard work to see this percentage grow from 4% in January 2022. I consider this an exciting success story to see how the service is continuing its reach of our youth throughout the province.

Luinda Lilley is the Professional Officer: Acquisitions at the Collections Development Unit at the City of Cape Town Library and Information Services. She can be contacted at Luinda.Lilley@capetown.gov.za

Ezobungcali mazibhalwe nangeelwimi zabantsundu

ngeXolisa Tshongolo

Kwiminyaka engaphezu kweshumi edlulileyo iPhondo leMpuma Koloni lamkela inkqubo yokufunda nokufundisa kusetyenzisa isiXhosa neSisuthu njengeelwimi zokufunda nokufundisa, uksuka kumabanga abasaqalayo ukuya kweleshumi (Greyidi 1–12). Ngokwenkqubo emiyo eMzantsi Afrika iilwimi zokufunda nokufundisa sisiBhulu nesiNgesi kuphela; abantwana baqalwa ngolwimi lwebele kumabanga amathathu okuqala esikolweni kuphela, ze emva koko bafundiswe ngesiNgesi okanye ngesiBhulu. Le nkqubo ke ibaphumpa unomphelo abantwana kwezemfundo, kuba baphela bengomelelanga nakoluphi na ulwimi, ibe ke imfundo isezwa ngolwimi.

Ezobunzululwazi ngeelwimi zithi umntwana kumele afundiswe ngolwimi lwakhe ubuncinane isithuba seminyaka emithandathu yokuqala esikolweni, emveni koko ke angaguqulelwa kolunye ulwimi. Oku kungenxa yokuba kuleyo minyaka sukube sele ezizuzile izakhono zolwimi nesiseko esidingekayo kwezemfundo ngokusekelwe kwiilwimi, kwaye ezo zakhona sukube sele enako ukuziwelisela kolunye ulwimi alufundayo okanye afunda ngalo. Ukumwelisela kolunye ulwimi umntwana engokomeleli kolwakhe kumenza angomeleli nakoluphi na ulwimi, kwaye kumenza atsale nzima ekunxonxothela ulwazi ngakufundiswayo njengoko isiseko sakhe singomelezwanga ngokweelwimi nezemfundo. Kananjalo ke, kuyema ukuphuhla kolwakhe, ukusuka pho aye edodobala kolwakhe ngeli xa afunda ulwimi olutsha. Yiphixi yodwa ke leyo!

Inkqubo yokufundisa ngolwimi lomfundi yeMpuma Koloni ke kungokunje yamkelwe nalisebe lezemfundo esisiseko lesizwe, ukuba ibe yinkqubo urhulumente amilisela yona. Oku kungenxa yeziphumo ezihle ezibonwe eMpuma Koloni, ukuba ukufunda ngolwimi aluqondayo umfundi kumenze akuqonde lula nangcono akufundiswayo. Ezi ziphumo ke zingqina oko kudala kuchazwa luphando, ukuba imfundo engolwimi lomfundi yeyona mfundo yomeleleyo. Kananjalo ke oku kufezekisa izimiso zoMgaqosiseko ukuba wonke umntu unelungelo lokufumana imfundo ngolwimi lwakhe.

Umngeni ke kukuba imathiriyeli yokufundisa ngeelwimi zabantsundu

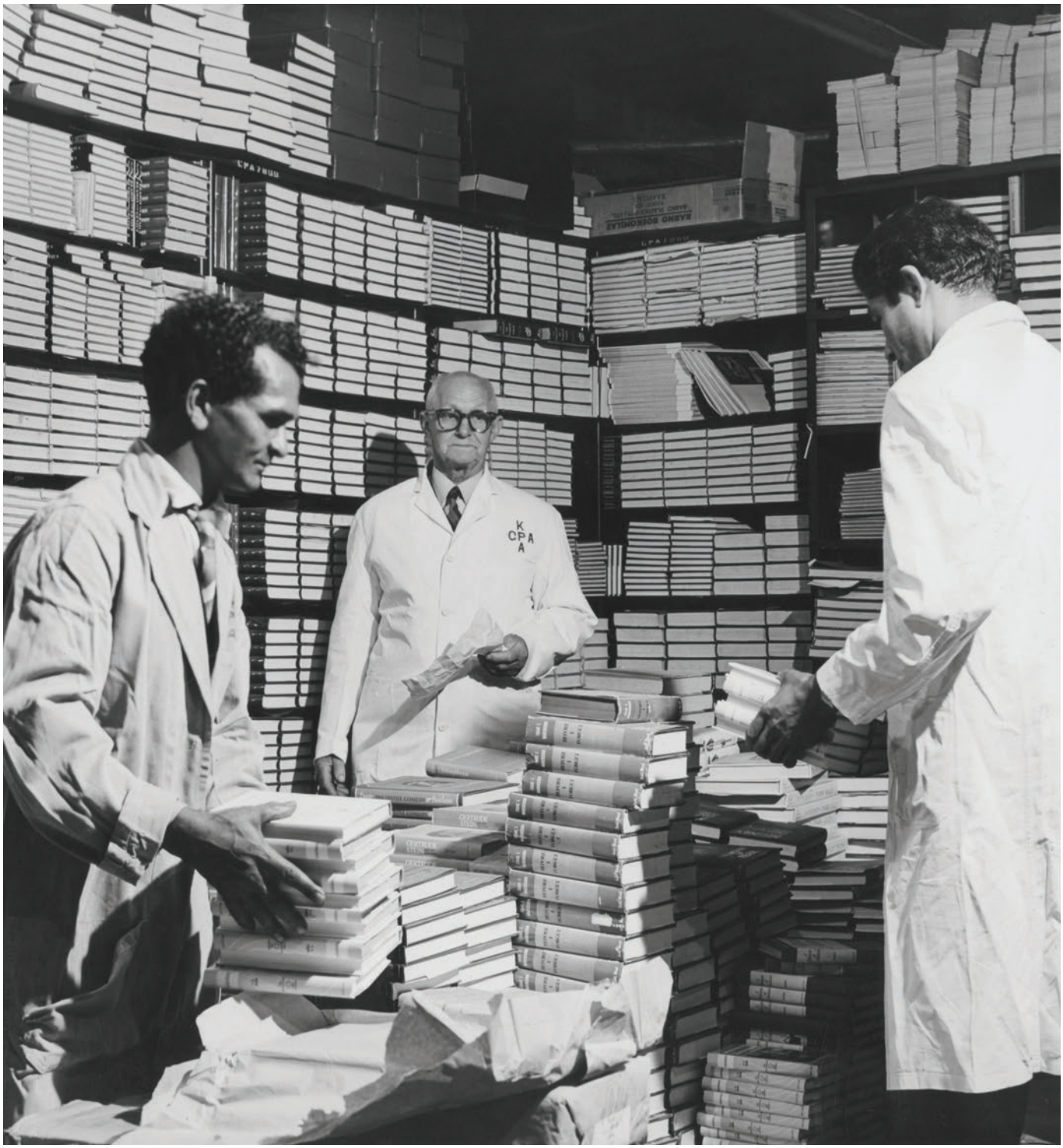
ayikho. Imathiriyeli yokufundisa ibhalwa ngesiNgesi ziingcali zezemfundo. Okukhoyo kwilwimi zabantsundu kokulungiselelwe ukufundisa ezo lwimi njengeelwimi kuphela, hayi ukufundisa ngazo. Oku kwenza ukuba ukufundisa ngezi lwimi ibe ngumsebenzi wobugorha nowobuthandazwe kwabo babandakanyekayo. Abangene inkqubo yokufundisa ngolwimi lomfundi eMpuma Koloni bayiguqulela ngokwabo inxalenye yemathiriyeli yokufundisa, nditsho ke ootishala nabanye ababandakanyekayo abafana necandelo leelwimi leSebe lezeMfundo leMpuma Koloni.

Ukufundisa ngeelwimi zabantsundu akupheleli nje ezikolweni, naseziyunivesithi kungenile. Kwizikomfundo enomsila iYunivesithi iFort Hare bahlohlwa ngesiXhosa nangesiNgesi abafundi abaqeqeshelwa ubutishala kumabanga aphantsi. Nezikomvundo enomsila iUCT oogqirha elibaqeqeshayo libafundisa isiXhosa nesiBhulu; abafundi abazifumani izidanga zabo bengesiphumelelanga isiXhosa okanye isiBhulu. Enile ke namanye amazikomfundo enomsila asele eqhelene nokubhalwa kophando ngeelwimi zabantsundu ngabafundi bezidanga zeeMastazi nezobuGqirhalwazi.

Kuzo zonke ke ezi nquleqhu, ubukho bemathiriyeli yobungcali ebhalwe ngezi lwimi ngumngeni. Amathala eencwadi ayalambatha kokubhalwe ngezi lwimi kwiinkalo zobungcali. Ichiza ke kukhuthaza iingcali ezithetha ezi lwimi kwiinkalo ezahlukileyo zobungcali ukuba zibubhale ngezi lwimi ubungcali bazo. Kananjalo ke, urhulumente namaqumrhu akhe makangenelele ngeenkqubo zokuguqulela ezobungcali kwezi lwimi. Amazikomfundo enomsila nesebe lemfundo enomsila mawamisele imirhumo ethe chatha ngokubhalwa kwamaphepha obungcali ngeelwimi zabantsundu. Abafundi abenza izidanga eziphakamileyo zophando kumazikomfundo enomsila mabakhuthazwe ukuba balubhale ngeelwimi zabantsundu uphando lwabo. Abapapashi mabanikwe isibonelelo sokupapasha imisebenzi yobungcali ngeelwimi zabantsundu. Konke okupapashwe ngeelwimi zabantsundu makufumaneke kumathala eencwadi ezemfundo nakwawokuhlala apho kuthethwa ezo lwimi.

Owenu kwiilwimi, kwezemfundo, nakwezoluncwadi.

UGq Xolisa Tshongolo nguManejala oPhezulu wePhondo leMpuma Koloni kwiBhodi yeeLwimi zonke zoMzantsi Afrika (PanSALB)



Preparation of books: a total of 370,012 books were prepared and distributed among the different regions of the Western Cape in 1960

www.westerncape.gov.za/library

Western Cape
Government