

# Connected Library

## The Networked Librarian

**W**hen I think about the isolated role of the teacher-librarian, the mournful lyrics of “Are you lonesome tonight?” wail over and over in my mind. While our days are populated with students, teachers, parent-helpers, and vendor calls, our role within our school community is often a lonely one. Have you ever wondered about how teacher-librarians build their knowledge? Where do they find support for their professional questions? *Together for Learning* (2010) directs us to “share successes and challenges with other professionals through Professional Learning Communities and Personal Learning Networks” (p. 12). Just how do we build a personal learning network (PLN) that is meaningful and supports our needs?

While many of us enjoy face-to-face interaction with colleagues through local teacher-librarian associations, professional development activities and conferences, these events are often sporadic. If you are like me, you might want to seek out a mentor who listens to your questions and queries and gives advice (and whom you meet at Chapters or Starbucks once a week for something yummy and some book browsing). But the six days between our get-togethers are long and I find myself looking more and more to the Internet for instant inspiration.

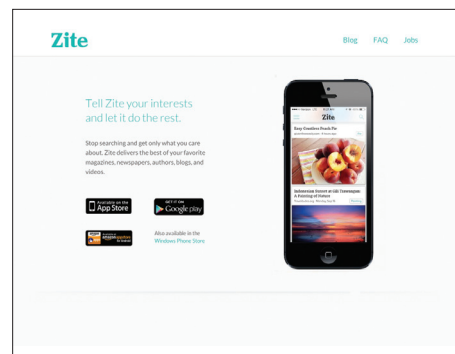
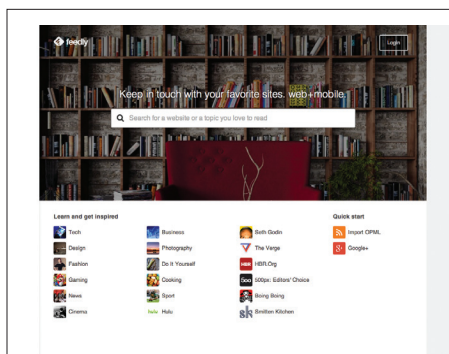
Twenty-first century tools provide us with an array of choices that foster connections with others. Building your PLN takes a little bit of planning in the beginning. If you’re new to building a professional learning network, I suggest that you start as a consumer of information by following blogs. I wouldn’t be able to keep current if I didn’t follow a landslide of blogs – authors, teacher-librarians, publishers, reviewers, tech gurus, and libraries.

### HOW TO BECOME A NETWORKED LIBRARIAN

#### Step 1: Choose an Aggregator

[feedly.com](http://feedly.com) or [zite.com](http://zite.com)

In order to follow blogs efficiently, you need an aggregator. An aggregator is a website or program that collects specific web content for you. Instead of bookmarking 10 blogs and visiting each one individually, your aggregator collects the latest posts from your 10 blogs and presents them in one place. There are many aggregators available. Two of my favourites are Feedly or Zite.



1. Ontario School Library Association. (2010). *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Library Association.  
2. Turk, R. & Handman, L. (n.d.). Are you lonesome tonight. T.R.O. Inc., Bourne Co. Retrieved Feb. 8, 2014 from [http://www.lyricsfreak.com/e/elvis-presley/are-you-lonesome-tonight\\_20049343.html](http://www.lyricsfreak.com/e/elvis-presley/are-you-lonesome-tonight_20049343.html)