



Vancouver Public Library launches next-gen fund drive

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BY VANCOUVER SUN SEPTEMBER 27, 2013

In our technological age, many people probably think of the Vancouver Public Library like an iPad - great if you want to consume content, but not the go-to resource for creating it.

That will all change in 2014 when the library opens its new Inspiration Lab.

The lab will sprawl across 3,000 square feet of the downtown library's third floor. It will be a space where people will be able to tell stories, edit videos, record sound and find all the digital resources they need to transform their creative ideas into reality and collaborate with others.

Such transformation comes at a high cost, so the library is mounting an ambitious fundraising drive to raise \$250,000 for the project. The drive will kick off with TOUCH, an event Oct. 4 that will combine interactive innovation and entertainment, giving attendees an idea of what they can expect when the Inspiration Lab opens.

"This fundraiser is meant to create a strong linkage in the minds of people that may view libraries in a traditional sense," said Daphne Wood, VPL's director of planning and development. "Storytelling, the act of writing, sharing content and building on the words of each other, are things libraries have always done and now we are doing them in a different way, now we have more tools at our disposal."

The library's not just about borrowing books anymore. It can be about creating your own ebook.

"There is a centre for selfpublishing support," Wood said of the Inspiration Lab plans. "It will be staffed by the library staff at the central library. You'll be able to sit down and they'll say 'tell me about your project, what would you like to do and here are all the various ways you can publish your ebook.' " And videos? Don't think you'll just be watching them - although a screening space is on the wish list once the initial needs of the lab are funded - you'll be creating them.

"The people using the lab will be people like you and me who not only like to consume stories, but they are people who like to generate and create stories," said Wood. "That's where libraries are really playing a strong role in going forward.

"They are not just places to get information, they are places where you can go to, to create and share information. There will be a digital recording studio and sound-mixing equipment, video-editing software and workstations.

"People can come in and build their own short videos and there will be scanners where people can come in and digitize photos or other material they want to convert to a digitized form."

As well as marking its shift to the digital age, the library is stepping away from traditional fundraising, eschewing the sit-down dinner in favour of a diversion for Vancouver's digerati that will feature Lady Gaga's DJ Brendan Jay Sullivan (DJ Vh1); a silent auction with goodies like Recon Jet wearable computer sports glasses and others from Vancouver companies; interactive and live-tweeting story creation and other activities.

"We didn't want to have a stuffy event - anything typical of a traditional fundraiser," said Paula Shackleton, a member of the VPL Foundation board and co-chair of TOUCH.

"We wanted this to be a vital, active, forward-thinking fusion between music, art and technology."

Telus has contributed \$50,000 for the initiative and is a title sponsor for TOUCH.

The Vancouver Sun and CBC are media sponsors and a number of other businesses and organizations, including the B.C. Technology Industry Association, have partnered with the library to help launch what is planned to be an annual event.

There are 400 tickets available, priced from \$75 to \$100.

For information and to order tickets, go to the VPL Foundation's website at pwp.vpl.ca/foundation or find the Foundation Facebook page at www.facebook.com/vplfoundation.

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