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## We can see ourselves here: Strategically building a library collection to support Women in IT

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# We can see ourselves here: Strategically building a library collection to support Women in IT

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# Background

- New STEM Librarian position created in 2013
- New Education Librarian hired in 2016
- No "ownership" of our collections for at least several years so purchases were haphazard or as requested
- University of NE at Omaha made STEM Education a campus priority in the interim to reflect national recruitment efforts



# ALA Diversity in Collection Development:

Interpreting Library Bill of Rights

"Librarians have an obligation... to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all persons in the community the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues."

# **N** Our community

**8,485 female students**  
**1,192 first-year female students**

**Nearly 50% of all students of color  
in NU system attend UNO**





# College of Information Science & Technology

2013 - only 14% of undergraduate students in college were female

Women in IT Initiative started to increase recruitment and retention of female students





# Women and Girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

"One of the things I really strongly believe in is that we need to have more girls interested in math, science, and engineering. We've got half the population that is way underrepresented in those fields and that means that we've got a whole bunch of talent...that is not being encouraged..."

President Barack Obama  
February 2013



# What makes a collection representative?



## **TIMELY**

Reflects current research needs, philosophies, trends and accepted theories in the discipline.



## **BUDGET**

Resources are carefully purchased to show good stewardship but also used to build up new areas as needed.



## **ASSESSMENT**

Is the item still timely, relevant, accurate, or authoritative in its representation?



# **N** Why our collection can't just be "neutral"

- Boys are more likely to take physics and engineering in high school
- Girls have less confidence in math abilities than boys starting in middle school
- 2015 - only 25% of computing occupations were held by women
- 56% of women in IT leave organizations at mid-level points in career

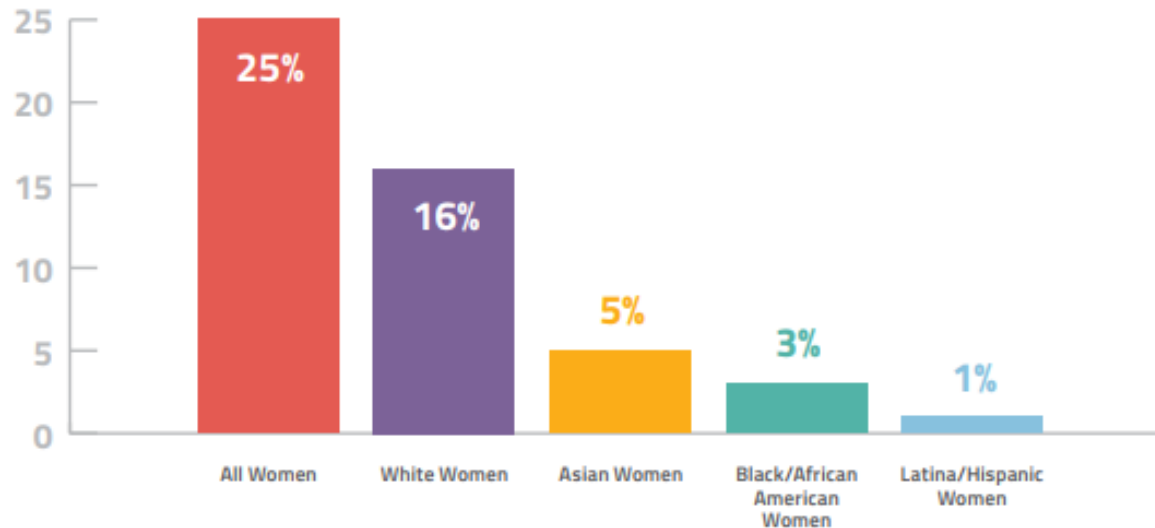


# Why our collection can't just be "neutral"

**OVERALL PARTICIPATION:** How many technical occupations are held by women?  
How do these patterns vary by race/ethnicity?

In 2015, women made up 25 percent of computing-related occupations. As Figure 1.1 indicates, levels of participation are even more concerning when it comes to women of color (Bureau of Labor, 2016).

FIG. 1.1 // Percentage of Computing Occupations Held By Women, 2015



©NCWIT. Bureau of Labor, 2016.



# Why our collection can't just be "neutral"

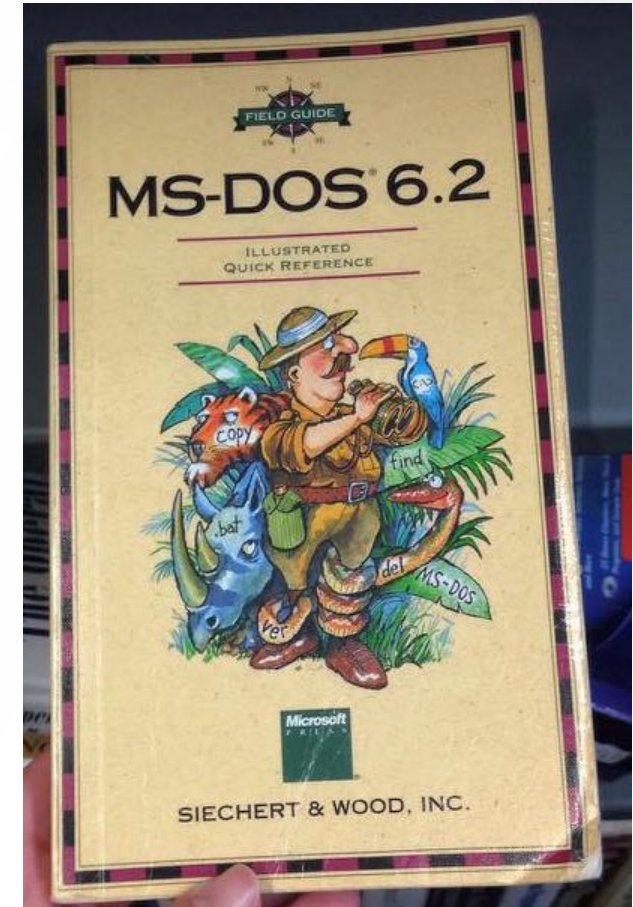
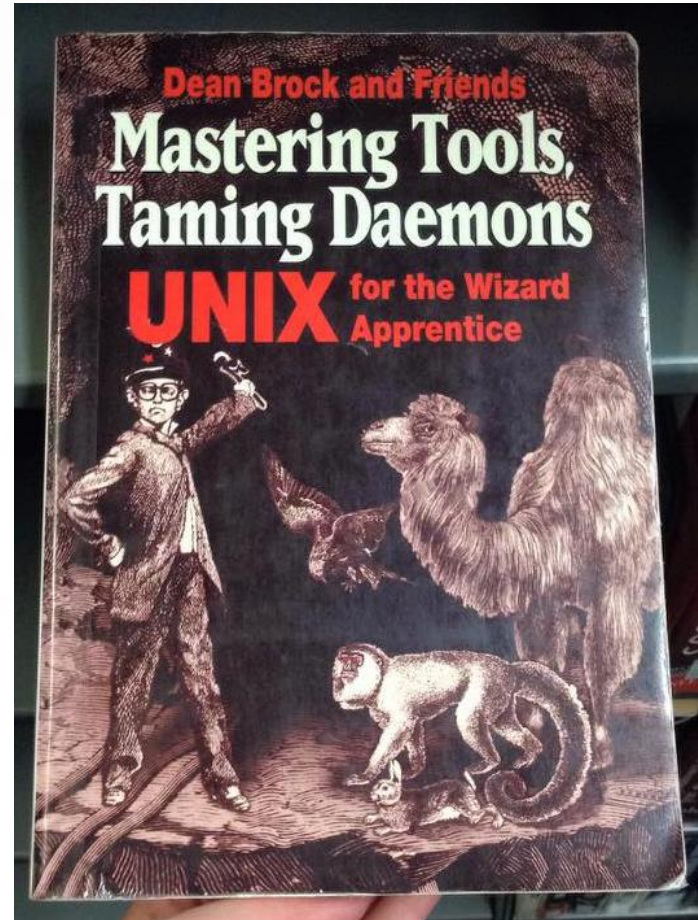
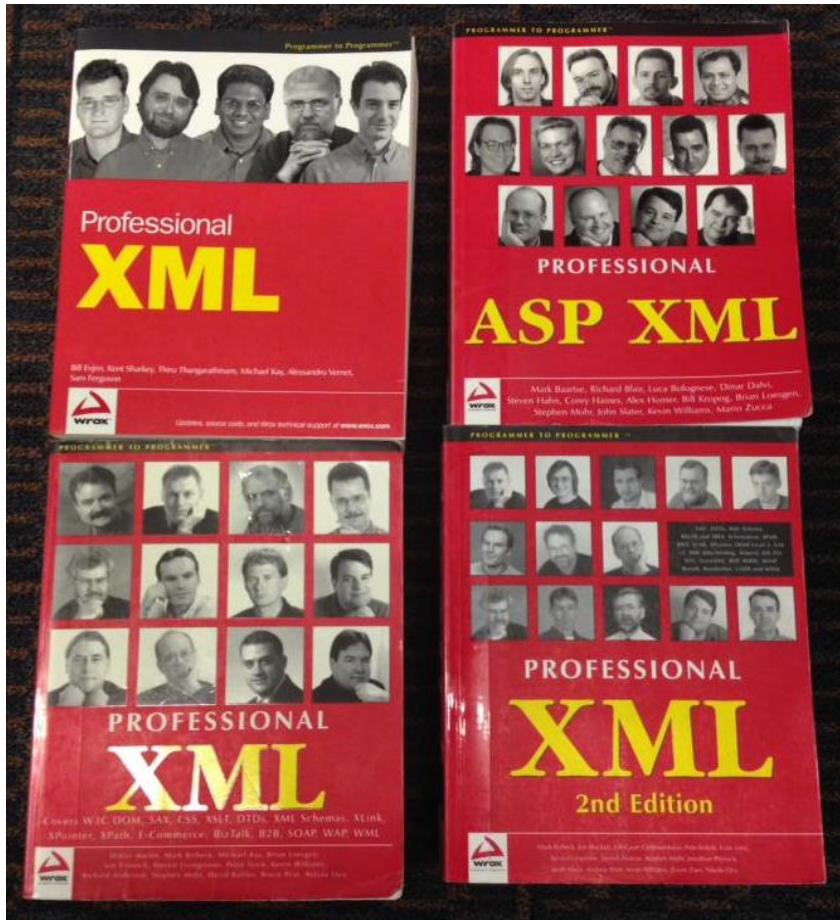
- Representation is crucial for the recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in IT
- Fiction, non-fiction, and biographical texts can highlight careers and social impacts
- Helps debunk myths, stigmas, and misconceptions
- Offers role models for females aspiring to STEM careers



# "How bad could it be?"

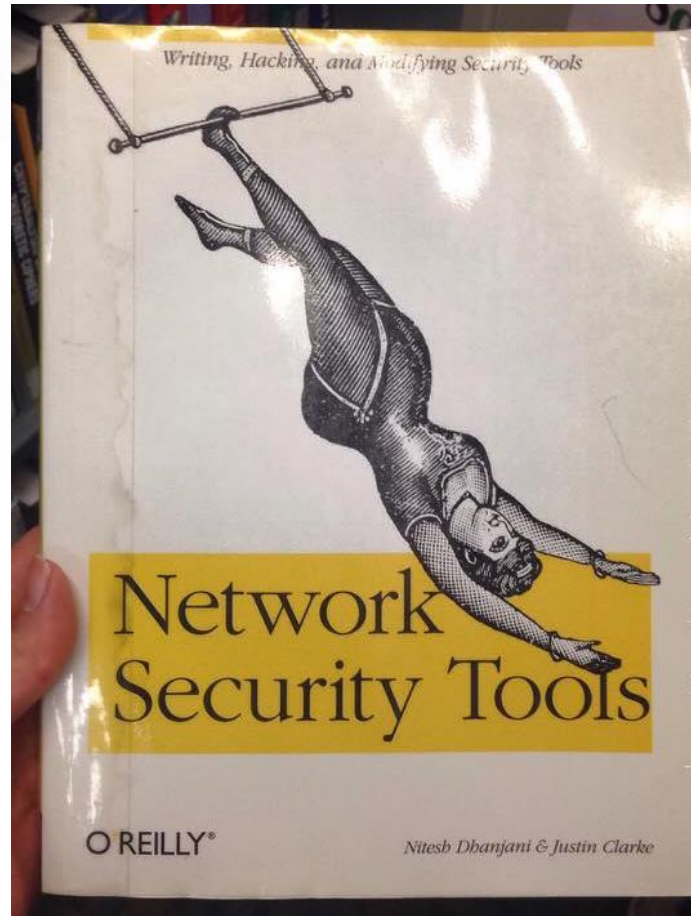
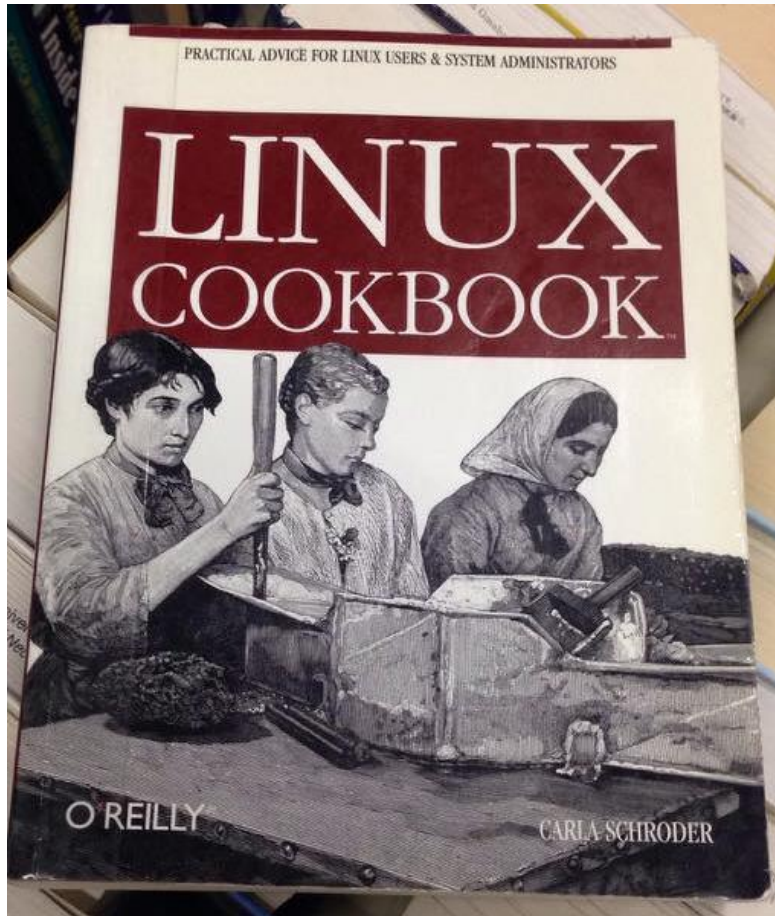
Holistically assessing the research collection

# N So. Bad.



**N**

# There's some women...!

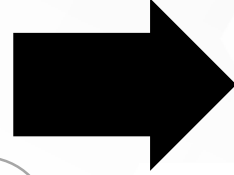




# Goals for inclusion

## Short term

- Improving collection development in Nonfiction and Young Adult/Juvenile



## Long term

- Weeding collections
- Promoting new titles with displays
- Being mindful of new titles and representation of voices



# Awesome stats:

## Children's books

- 28 new print books (2016)
- 41+ new print books (2017)
- Total collection with "Women and technology" subject tags = 23 eBooks and 14 print books

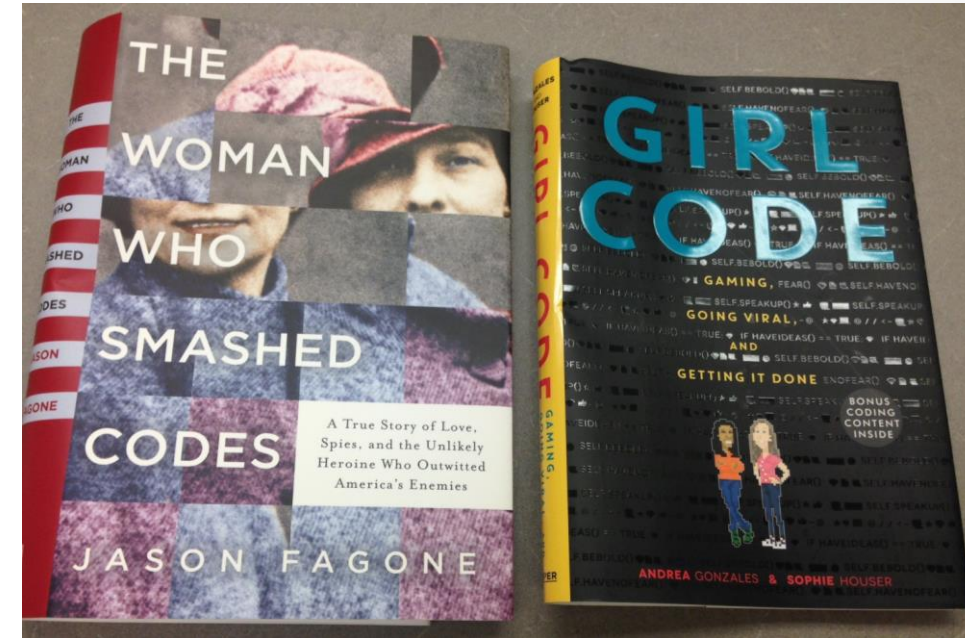
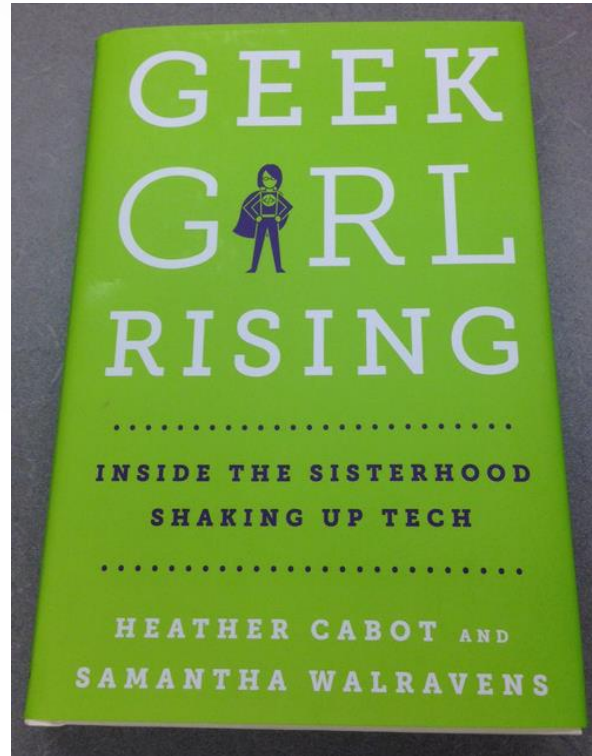
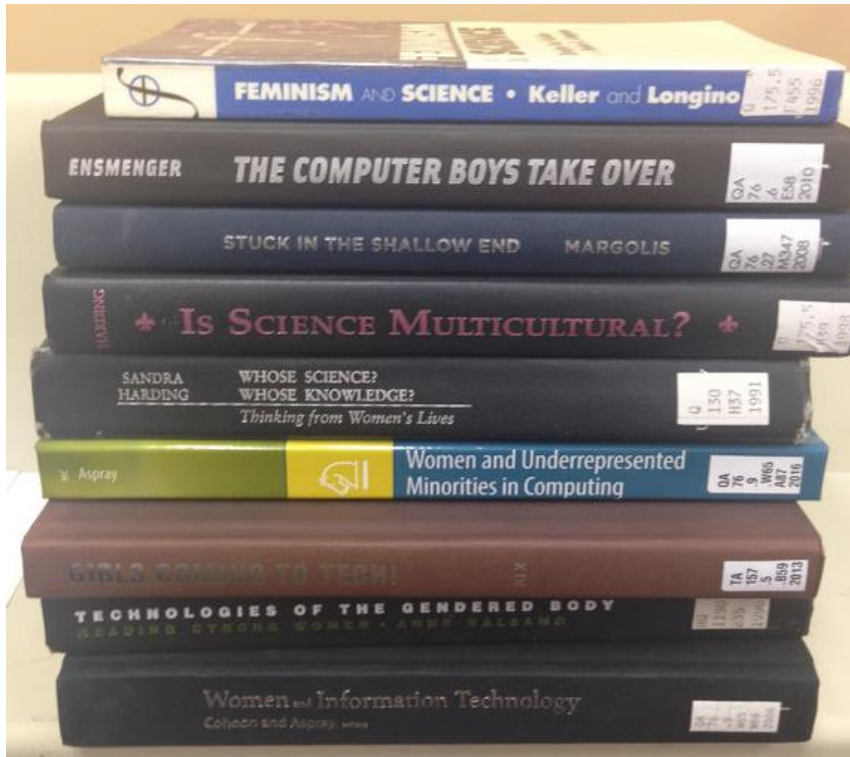
## Research books

- 35 new print books (2016)
- 15+ new print books (2017)
- Total collection with "Women and technology" subject tags = 234 eBooks and 114 print books





# Stocking the research collection



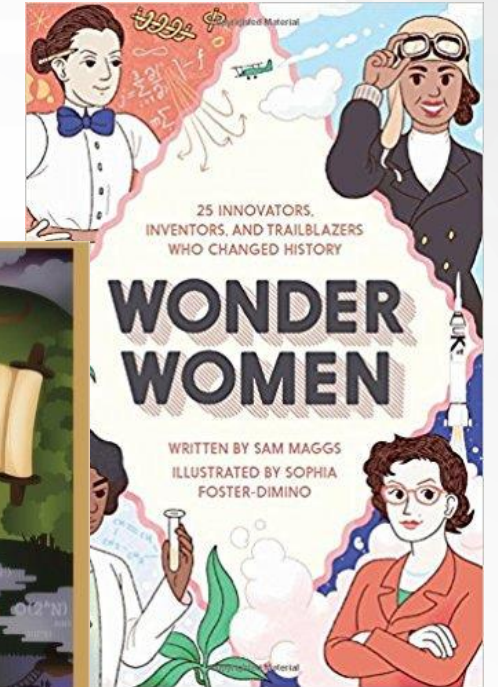
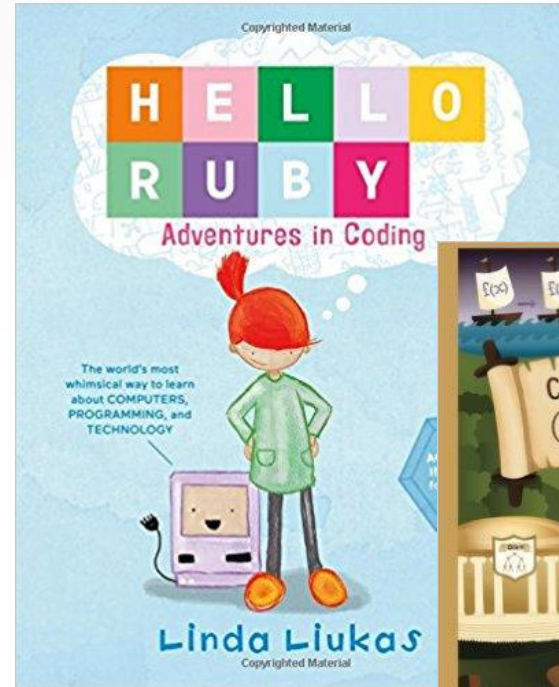
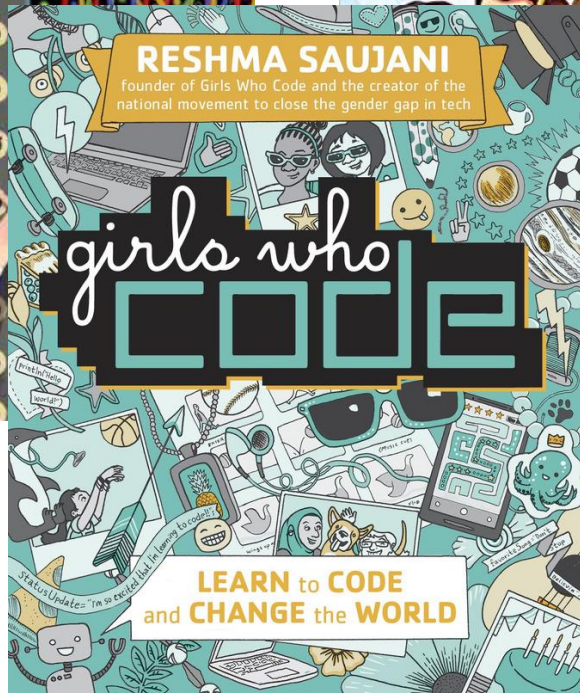
# N. Stocking the research collection



# N Stocking the young adult & children's collection



# N. Stocking the young adult & children's collection



# N Promoting the collections





Can you see yourself here? :D





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# Thank you!

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