

Public library will lend out people as 'living books'



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We've seen some innovative initiatives undertaken by libraries in recent months involving [iPads](#), [augmented reality](#) and [beer](#). Not until just recently, however, had we come across a library that lends out human beings as well as more traditional media. Sure enough, a new public library soon to open in [Surrey, B.C.](#), will do just that as a way to supplement books with local human expertise.

Slated to open sometime in the coming weeks, Surrey's 77,000-square-foot City Centre Library will be notable in many ways, not least of which is its LEED silver certification for sustainability. Even more intriguing, though, is that in addition to a planned collection of some 100,000 items, the CAD 36 million library will also allow users to "check out" human experts with knowledge of particular topics, according to a report on [Canada.com](#). Numerous such "living books" have reportedly already volunteered and will be available for chats over coffee in the library's new cafe. "What we're aiming to do is bring the library to life for people," explains deputy chief librarian Melanie Houlden. "There are huge repositories of experience and knowledge in their own brains."

After originating in Europe, the living-book idea has reportedly already been put to work in at least two other B.C. libraries. How about in your local library?

Website: www.surreylibraries.ca

Contact: www.surreylibraries.ca/contact-sfiis.aspx

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