

Recent Alum Lands Job that Infuses New Technology into Traditional Library Service by Kristin Kemp



Technology is integrated into seemingly everything we do. But what do you do when your devices aren't operating properly? How can you optimize technology to make your life easier?

These are questions alumna Matilda Asuzu (MA, '14, emergent digital practices) answers daily. As a district-wide technology specialist for the Arapahoe Library District in Colorado, she helps visitors understand and use current technologies, such as smartphones and tablets. She also introduces them to emerging technologies, such as 3D printers, drones and development computers for app makers.

The lines between artists, designers, scholars and inventors have largely dissolved. Asuzu's [emergent digital practices](#) (EDP) master's degree is structured to build upon a student's undergraduate studies by exploring the possibilities that arise from the inclusion of technology in that field – whatever that field may be. Indeed, Asuzu entered the program having previously studied communication and computer science. Serving as a library technology specialist blends all her skills into one position.

“My day can vary from helping a senior citizen build confidence using their first computing device to discussing the future of 3D printing with mechanical engineers,” said Asuzu. “I help people of all ages and backgrounds become skilled and independent users of technology. You wouldn't believe the confidence and joy this brings people. I'm happy to be part of it.”

There were so many career paths for Asuzu to follow; it was a challenge to narrow her job search. But she knew she wanted a position where she could help and work directly with people. EDP hosted the Association of Internet Researchers conference, where Asuzu connected with professionals and academics who are leaders in the digital media field. “My vision for applying my MA degree to possible careers expanded after seeing their work,” said Asuzu.

Plus, many industries are evolving quickly due to technology, and Asuzu was able to capitalize on that during her job search. In fact, Asuzu's position at Arapahoe Library District didn't even exist a year ago.

Given the newness of her position, it's no surprise that Asuzu doesn't really have a typical day at work. Each day she faces new questions from patrons. It's her job to help find the solution.

“Any general question about technology is fair game for my position, and I love the variety this brings to the job,” said Asuzu. One day she's fulfilling orders for free 3D printed items, the next

she's running drop-in demonstrations for visitors to learn how to use the multimedia editing and recording studios and the next she's helping a novice learn how to operate their computing device.

In addition to her job at the library district, Asuzu has continued to work internationally on her research that she started as a graduate student. All EDP graduate students produce a thesis that must balance digital creation with a written discourse that provides a critical analysis and evaluation of the cultural dynamics of emergent digital practices.

Her graduate thesis focused on the application of data visualization to cultural studies, specifically through her field research on salsa dancers. In November 2014 she was invited to present her work entitled, *Applying Data Visualization to Cultural Study of the Salsa*, at the prestigious International Symposium on Electronic Arts held in Dubai.

"The most attractive aspect of the EDP program at DU is its interdisciplinary and critical approach to understanding the effect of digital technology on society. EDP goes beyond making and creating with the latest tech gadgets," said Asuzu. "My professors encouraged me to ask, 'How will this tech change the way we live and relate to each other, for better or for worse?'"

[EDP](#) also offers BA, BFA and MFA degrees.