The Future of The Library
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Provocations

• Do we need a library building to be relevant?
• Will we disappear if no one knows we are supplying the digital information?
• Where does all the digital data go?
• Have Librarians attained the status of sacred cow?
• What is the essence of “library-ness” that will outlive all change?
Agenda:

1. The Context of Disruption
2. So What Are You Going To Do?
Libraries confront a variety of disruptive technologies and these technologies will disrupt libraries.

David W. Lewis
A Strategy for Academic Libraries in the First Quarter of the 21st Century
2007
History of Libraries 101

• Processes refined over hundreds of years
• Tiers of staff
• Hierarchical organizational structure
• Selectors / Purchasers / Gate-keepers
• Preservers
• Authorities
• Value based on numbers of items owned
• Value unquestioned
Where does research start?
Figure 5: Starting point for research identified by faculty, in 2003 and 2006.
Where Electronic Information Searches Begin—
by College Students and Total Respondents

Where do you typically begin your search for information on a particular topic?

- Search engine
- E-mail
- Topic-specific Web sites
- E-mail information subscriptions
- Online news
- Instant messaging/online chat
- Online bookstore
- Online database
- Library Web site

Note: Only electronic resources with usage rates of 1 percent or more are represented on this graph.
“Perhaps no problem facing the individual scientist is more defeating than the effort to cope with the flood of published scientific research, even within one’s own narrow specialty.”

Bentley Glass
Department of Biology, Johns Hopkins University
1954
The Big Picture:

Culture is changing in two big areas:

– Information and Communication
– More of both, more kinds of both, more continuous change in both, more individual ownership of both, and each becomes the other.
Why does this matter?

• Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship are about communication and information.

• Rooted in old C’s:
  – control, credentials, conduits, classes, curricula, collection-building, calm.

• New C’s coming in:
  – creation, curation, collective, collaboration, community-orientation, constructivist, casual, constant, chaotic.
Exercise: Context of Disruption

Time: 15 minutes

Goal: At your table, name the top 3 disruptors in your environment
Group Feedback:
What are the top 3 disruptors in your environment?
Our own disruptors:
– Dis-Interested Stakeholders
– Merged Organization
– Old building
– Insulated staff
– Growing numbers of graduate students
– Sciences becoming self-sufficient
– Cost (of everything)
– Accountability and assessment
Part 2

So What are you Going to Do?
Stuff
Space
People
It’s a bit about the stuff

What happens when you don’t control the stuff anymore?
Who’s keeping stuff safe?
It’s a bit about the space

You want people in your library . . .
But what do you do with them there that adds value?
It’s all about the people
People, Part 1: USERS

- What do they need?
- What do they do?
- Do they know?
- Do you know?
People, Part 2: STAFF

• What do they need to know?
• What do they need to know how to do?
• Do they know?
• Do you know?
Exercise: What are You Going to Do?

Time: 15 minutes

Goal: At your table, name 3 things your library should do to add value to the institution
Group Feedback:
Top 3 things libraries should do to be of value to the institution
What WE think libraries should be doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yesterday</th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>Tomorrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Warehouse</td>
<td>Information Gateway</td>
<td>Learning &amp; Teaching Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High tech study hall</td>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td>Publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Navigators of the information environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies We’ve Adopted

• Purchase single format, digital preferred
• Focus on unique resources
• Give up idea of print repository, ownership
• Outsource routine processes
• Cultivate resource-sharing partnerships
• Create collaborative staff spaces
• Insist on matrix management
• Set Priorities
Our Priorities

1. Engage with the community
2. Develop and support LATTE
3. Shift to online documentation
4. Develop critical literacies instruction
5. Develop vast new staff skills
6. Develop access to information
7. Just-in-case staffing
8. Traditional selection activities
• No longer control information, or the access to information
• DIY user community not looking for mediation
• Budgets don’t support acquisition of information
• Preservation: physical v digital
• Ongoing “library-ness” = knowledge of the information world
• What’s changing is how to apply that knowledge – no longer within internal, insulated organizations, but out in the world of learning, teaching and scholarship
See you in 2020
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