THE FUTURE OF LIBRARY – LIBRARIES WITHOUT BOOKS

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ABSTRACT

Digital Libraries are omnipresent nowadays. Almost every single institution is hosting its own. Sometimes they even use their own servers and customized software to provide information to users. However, a single isolated Digital Library is valueless. It must be connected "to the world": to users as well as to content and services provided by other Digital Library systems. Since it is not possible for an information provider to host every single information of a specific topic locally at its server, a portal might be the right solution. In this article we will give an overview of Future at your Library and Libraries without books.

INTRODUCTION

The future of libraries may seem grim; however, librarians are dedicated to adapting with the times to stay in tune with what community members want from their libraries, whether it's the latest best-seller in e-book form or a place to check Facebook and put off writing that final paper. Digital technology will be the key to future library service delivery but our research points out that its true potential will not be achieved unless the principle of an open, enabling ICT infrastructure is agreed by local authorities and library services.

If the library of the future will look different from those of the past and present, their enduring role and purpose means that some things will feel familiar. A high value will continue to be

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placed on the importance of quality leadership, professional skills and experience. Books will sit comfortably alongside digital and other cultural resources in a rich and diverse library collection. This article will examine trends and developments for the future at your library and Library without books.

THE FUTURE OF LIBRARY

The library as you know it is predicted to go extinct by 2019, according to 'Future Files' from Richard Watson. Academic and public libraries alike are facing numerous challenges that are forcing closings, and thanks to those obstacles, libraries are having a harder time than ever staying open and well-funded.

The physical space of an academic library is also becoming an issue. While a majority of a library's brick-and-mortar space is devoted to physical volumes, on average, half of the physical library materials never circulate. And as physical books and journals become less-used by students, librarians' training has become outdated. Many current librarians are inadequately trained in the use of new electronic resources, creating a barrier to integrating e-books and other electronic resources into academic libraries.

The role of a librarian and library employees is also expected to change. Libraries will shift from becoming centered around books to being centered around technology that will be used by an increasingly diverse population. Current librarians will need to stay up-to-date with professional development and new practices, while future librarians' training will focus on language and technology.

In other words, libraries need to be the community hub where people can come to see the new and exciting—to see the future. And by communities, I mean all the communities we serve as libraries: municipalities and counties, colleges and universities, elementary and secondary schools.

Libraries were once the place where community members gathered to experience the exotic, new, and exciting. A hundred years ago, the library was the place where people came to see the

first magic-lantern-show lectures or to look at 3D stereopticon slides of exotic destinations such as India and Egypt.

Today, e-content, 3D printers, video editing stations, and the newest devices and apps have replaced the magic lantern, but the dynamic remains the same. At the Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library system, for example, library users who have never been near an art gallery can play with the Cleveland Museum of Art's innovative, interactive Gallery One, which features the museum's permanent collection on a 40-foot interactive multi-touch screen wall.

OTHER WAYS TO KEEP A PLACE

A shift is needed. To move libraries from places where you look up facts to those where you learn skills and engage in new experiences. Instead of "shushing" librarians and stilted study rooms, libraries often have integrated art galleries, coffee shops and even cafeterias. And some are even exploring the idea of a 21st century gathering space.

Libraries are also pushing to offer spaces for kids to hang out, play games and learn in what's being called a "maker culture." Three years ago, the Chicago Public Library started its YouMedia program to engage kids with interactive learning programs like those focusing on laser cutters and 3-D printers. In Chattanooga, for example, a record-setting 1,200 people stopped by the library in one day to check out large-scale industrial models, 3-D scanners and an experimental 3-D videoconferencing system using Kinect cameras. And Kids in other libraries can do more than use gadgets — they can learn soldering and circuitry to build them.

Books won't fade, but with so many other mediums to explore, libraries, especially those with technology, can enhance skills. Access itself isn't enough: libraries need to harness the sheer overabundance of information in the digital age and become facilitators to help us sort through the avalanche.

A UNIQUE FUTURE PLACE

I talk quite a lot about digital and electronic developments in the future of libraries, but equally key is the future role of libraries as a space and in communty, information, inclusion, culture and the arts.

The library of the future will be a unique destination with an offer that can't be provide by any other organisation. A safe, third place for learning, culture, heritage and information. A modern, inviting place to relax and enjoy coffee and the unique atmosphere from cradle to the grave. A business hub and an employability and skills haven for young people. A place for people to learn the ICT skills they need.

LIBRARIES WITHOUT BOOKS

Even before the mass popularity of book readers, libraries will experiment with a version of the digital library I've termed the Electronic Outpost. Traditional books require vast amounts of library staff time, with sorting and organizing often coupled with repairs and replacement. So it begs the question, what would a library without books look like?

Think of an Electronic Outpost as a type of library that is designed to inspire the mind, serve as a place for intellectual spontaneity, a safe haven for creative ideas, where visionary thinkers can go for solitude and support. Sometimes they will serve as the branch of an existing public library,

other times as a specialty library in support of specific groups or organizations. Size, shape, and purpose will vary.

Some may fit well in shopping centers while others may be better suited to function as stand-alone buildings. A few may be very small, others quite large. Many will be planned with a homey, living room-like feel to them, while others will go with a more eclectic atmosphere to inspire industry-specific thoughts. Electronic Outposts will evolve over time around the core services most relevant to a particular user group.

CONCLUSION:

In some ways, libraries are doing what they've always done: adapting to technology, whether by collecting documents, storing records and videotapes or offering e-books and computer terminals. Today, they're under pressure to give more and create spaces that connect people to information and ideas. As communities begin to experiment, the Electronic Outpost Libraries without books will evolve to serve a different role than that of a traditional branch library.

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