New Technologies, New Services, New Directions for Librarianship?

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BEING DIGITAL

LIBRARIES:
A TIME TO CHANGE

A time to rethink:

- what libraries can be in the future
- who libraries will be serving
- what library roles need redefining
- what new library roles can be established

THINK DIFFERENT:
Three Tasks for the Future

- **Management of Things:**

  Building Coherence.

- **Management of Relationships:**

  Building Trust.

- **Management of Perceptions:**

  Being Relevant.

A PROBLEM...

It sometimes seems as though Gertrude Stein's observation that 'everyone has so much information that they have lost their common sense' has become literally true.

Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness & Reality. Crawford, Walt and Gorman, Michael

A SOLUTION: SENSE-MAKING

The future belongs to neither the conduit or content players, but to those who control filtering, searching, and sense-making tools we will rely on to navigate through the Expanses of Cyberspace.

Paul Saffo, Institute for the Future. *"Its the Context, Stupid."*

THE MANAGEMENT OF THINGS

- ▮ Metadata (traditional cataloguing, Dublin Core)
- ▮ Unique identifiers (URNs, PURLs, DOIs)
- ▮ Authority services (traditional authorities but also for security and privacy)
- ▮ Gateways, directories and pathfinders
- ▮ Classification services.
- ▮ Collaborative indexing.
- ▮ Community "caches."

THE MANAGEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS

▮ Information anxiety.

  ▮ volume and noise

  ▮ increasing fragmentation

  ▮ de-contextualization

  ▮ transience

  ▮ loss of materiality

▮ Need for predictability and control.

▮ Librarian as Info-Therapist.

BUILDING TRUST

▐ Being information exemplars.

▐ Developing quality info services:

  ▐ Providing benchmarks.

  ▐ Developing standards: technical and performance.

  ▐ Providing ratings, labels, reviews.

  ▐ Usability testing and evaluation.

  ▐ Licensing and rights management.

  ▐ Privacy and information ethics.

THE MANAGEMENT OF PERCEPTION

- Communicate / collaborate.
- Building communities.
  - Story-telling for the electronic era.
  - Electronic party lines.
- Building community services.
  - Training and education.
  - SME support.
  - Mailing lists, bulletin boards, forums.

A CONSIDERATION...

Most of the information in organizations - and most of the information people really care about - isn't in computers.

Thomas Davenport, "Saving IT's Soul: Human Centered Information Management." *Harvard Business Review*. **March/April 1994.**

FOUR PROPOSITIONS

■ Information is not easily stored on computers (and is not "data")

■ The more complex an information model, the less useful it will be

■ Information can take on many meanings.

■ Technology is only one component of the information environment and often no the right way to create change.

INFORMATION ECOLOGY

▮ Values and beliefs about information (culture)

▮ How people actually use information and what they do with it (behavior and work processes)

▮ The challenges of information sharing (politics)

▮ The information systems in place (technology)

SUSTAINABLE INFORMATION ECOLOGIES

- A sustainable information ecology must strive to meet the information needs of the present, with the *appropriate* use of technology and sense-making agents, and without compromising the ability to meet information needs of the future.

- Key concepts: "needs" and "limitations".

THE REAL PROBLEM: INFORMATION OVERLOAD

What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention, and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it.

Herbert Simon, Nobel Laureate economist

RETHINKING DIGITAL LIFE

▮ Context is the key.

▮ Knowledge creation, not data retrieval.

▮ Time to invest in people, not only technology.

▮ If you don't want to be replaced by a machine, don't act like one.

▮ Computer ownership does not guarantee computer literacy.

▮ Machines only manipulate numbers; people connect them to meaning.

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THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIANSHIP

To be out of place is not necessarily to be out of power.

Dr. Samuel Johnson

RANGANATHAN'S FIVE LAWS

- Books are for use.

- Books are for all; or Every reader his book.

- Every book its reader.

- Save the time of the reader.

- A library is a growing organism.

RANGANATHAN'S FIVE "NEW" LAWS

- Resources are for use.
- Resources are for all; or Every researcher his resource.
- Every resource its researcher.
- Save the time of the researcher.
- A library is a growing organism.

NINE PROPOSITIONS FOR BEING RELEVANT

▋ Build Better Digital Librarians.

▋ Context is Key.

▋ Less & Best: Select, Evaluate, Describe.

▋ Focus on Knowledge Creation not Data Retrieval.

▋ Be Responsible Consumers & Producers of Information.

▋ Mediation not Disintermediation.

▋ Think Local, Act Local.

▋ Storytelling for a Digital Era.

▋ Collaborate and Communicate for Success.

COLLECTIVE ACTION!

▮ For political action.

▮ For knowledge transfer.

▮ For cost- and resource-sharing.

▮ For revenue-generation.

▮ For interoperability of systems.

ON LIBRARIANS

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