Who Are We and What Do We Do?

LIS510

What a Library Is

“What a library is depends on what it does: It is a social enterprise, a physical infrastructure, a symbolic site of collective memory.”

Thomas Augst

Libraries are Economic Engines

U.S. Spending

- Libraries = $14 Billion
- Video Rental = $12.3 Billion
- Movie Theaters = $13.6 Billion
- Magazine Advertising = $16.2 Billion


Libraries are Logistics Experts

- Libraries = 5.4 mil Circulation/Shipments per Day
- Amazon.com = 1.5 mil
- FedEx = 5.3 mil
- Libraries 5.4 mil

Circulation/Units handled per Day


Libraries are Valued Destinations and Global Information Suppliers

- U.S. Sports Attendance = 204 million tickets
- U.S. Public Libraries = 1.1 Billion Visits
- 16 billion volumes worldwide
- One out of every six people in the world is a registered library user.


Libraries are home to a sizable profession

- Professional Managers = 234,000
- Musicians = 160,000
- Dentists = 203,000
- Economists = 170,000
- Dental Hygienists = 155,000
- Dieticians = 126,000
- Librarians = 101,000

What is a Library?

- Not a simple question
- Word “library” is a concept that embraces library service, library collections, library staff, and a range of activities that take place inside and outside the physical plant
- Library as place
  - House print and other tangible collections from the past and those to be created in future

What is a Library? (cont.)

- Library as place (cont.)
  - House spaces for people to study, do research, and to read, view and listen for pleasure
  - Provide places in which any person (including the poor and otherwise disadvantaged) can obtain access to the Web and electronic resources, and can obtain assistance in their use
  - Provide meeting places within the community served by the library

What is a Library? (cont.)

- Library as place (cont.)
  - Provide areas for specialized collections and associated library services (sound recording and video libraries, rare book rooms, manuscript collections, etc.)
  - Provide suitable spaces in which library users can be assisted by professionals
  - Provide suitable spaces for instruction (library instruction, literacy teaching, information competence) leading to the empowerment of members of the library community

What is a Library? (cont.)

- Digital and virtual not same thing
  - Digital: practice of recording information in terms of zeros and ones, i.e. a means of recording and storing that is different in kind but not in degree from other means
    - 19th century library: “letters-on-paper” library
  - Virtual: all library’s functions, processes, staffing, mission, and purpose are reconsidered, reorganized, and shaped around digital documents

What is a Library? (cont.)

- Will we go digital or virtual?
  - Digital: library incorporating electronic resources into its programs, collections and services, and making the necessary changes to allow that incorporation
  - Virtual: Look at every aspect of the library. Complete replacement of all other forms of communication in favor of digital

Collection of a Modern Library

Includes:

- Tangible objects (books, videos, sound recordings, etc.) that the library owns
- Local intangible (electronic) resources owned and controlled by the library (CD-ROMs and the like)
- Tangible objects owned by other libraries, but accessible to local patrons by means of union catalogs and interlibrary lending schemes
Collection of a Modern Library
Includes (cont.):
• Remote intangible resources not owned by
  the library but to which the library gives
  access

The library paradigm shift

From...
- Book custodian ➔ Service-oriented info provider
- One medium ➔ Multiple media
- Own collection ➔ Library without walls
- Just in case ➔ Just in time
- In-sourcing ➔ Outsourcing
- Local reach ➔ Global reach
- You go to library ➔ The library comes to you

Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources

• 96% have visited a public library
• 57% use a library several times a year or more
• 72% overall hold a library card
• 90% of students have cards

How you would rate the information available from each source?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search engines</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstores</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online bookstores</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online libraries</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What sources have you actually used?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN Search</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Jeeves</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AltaVista, Lycos (tie)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netscape</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Web Site</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online librarian/“Ask a Librarian”</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing libraries to search engines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Libraries</th>
<th>Search Engines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy/credible sources</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate, quality information</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Comparing libraries to search engines

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate, quality information</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable/always available</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost-effective</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to use</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trustworthiness of information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information from libraries is…</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less trustworthy than information from search engines</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More trustworthy than information from search engines</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO DIFFERENCE in trustworthiness</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Comparing librarians to search engines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance from librarian was…</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Much better</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO DIFFERENCE</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much worse</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Roles for the library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% agreeing or completely agreeing that this is a library’s role</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A place to learn</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place to read</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make needed info freely available</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support literacy</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide research support</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide internet access</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote kids’ learning/development</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide free info for less fortunate</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place to get books/videos/music</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What is Librarianship? (cont.)

- Jesse Shera (1970)
  - “Librarians have seldom asked themselves about the philosophy of librarianship”
  - His idea of librarianship rooted in two great ideas
    - Service
    - Core of intellectual theory
  - Called his redefinition of librarianship “Social epistemology”

- Library economy
  - Term stresses the practical, results-oriented nature of the profession
- Pierce Butler (1933)
  - “Librarian strangely uninterested in theoretical aspects of his profession”
  - Plea for scientific method in librarianship
  - Librarians doers and not thinkers
What is Librarianship? (cont.)

– Epistemology: the study of the methods and the grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity; broadly the theory of knowledge
– Components of social epistemology
  • the problem of how humans know
  • the problem of how society knows and how the knowledge of an individual becomes part of the knowledge possessed by society as a whole
  • the history of knowledge and the philosophy of knowledge as it has evolved through time and across cultures

What is Librarianship? (cont.)

– Components of social epistemology (cont.)
  • existing library systems and how effective they are in meeting the communication needs of individuals and societies
  • Library science
    – Term coined by Ranganathan
    – His idea that librarianship could be thought of in terms of scientific principles that governed all the activities of librarians

Ranganathan’s Five Laws of Library Science (1931)

• Books are for use
• Books are for all; Every reader his book
• Every book its reader
• Save the time of the reader
• A library is a growing organism


• Libraries serve humanity
• Respect all forms by which knowledge is communicated
• Use technology intelligently to enhance service
• Protect free access to knowledge
• Honor the past and create the future


• Web resources are for use
• Every user his or her web resource
• Every web resource its user
• Save the time of the user
• The Web is a growing organism

What is a Librarian?

• Master’s level education
• Carries out tasks of a librarian
What Librarians Do

• Select
  – tangible objects (books, printed journals, scores, recorded sound, films and videos, manuscripts, microforms, etc.) to be added to the library’s collection
  – by creating profiles that define the kinds of materials to be acquired by the library
  – resources to be purchased or subscribed to or identified as part of the library’s service to its users

What Librarians Do (cont.)

• Acquire
  – by purchase
  – by subscription
  – by gift and exchange mechanism

What Librarians Do (cont.)

• Organize and give access
  – by cataloging according to national and international standards
  – by classifying library materials in order to organize objects or to facilitate subject retrieval in online systems or both
  – by creating and maintaining online systems
  – by adding cataloging records to national databases and union catalogs
  – by maintaining the library’s physical collections

What Librarians Do (cont.)

• Preserve and conserve
  – by using good conservation techniques to ensure that tangible collections are passed on to future users in the best possible condition
  – by working cooperatively with other libraries to ensure the survival of “last copies”
  – by working with others to preserve electronic documents and resources of value – by medium specific policies, such as transferring 35 mm films to video formats

What Librarians Do (cont.)

• Assist library users
  – by maintaining and giving good, accessible general reference service to all library users
  – by creating and maintaining user-friendly systems and environments conducive to easy use of the range of library materials
  – by making the library’s collections accessible with the minimum necessary effort on the part of the users
  – by creating and making available guides to library use in all formats (print, Web pages, etc.)

What Librarians Do (cont.)

• Instruct library users
  – by devising and implementing instruction programs that teach
    • basic library skills
    • basic computer skills
    • how to locate, identify, and use relevant sources
    • how to choose the format(s) most likely to yield relevant answers to specific questions
    • critical thinking
### What Librarians Do (cont.)
- Instruct library users (cont.)
  - by incorporating instruction in the preceding skills into reference service in environments in which formal instruction programs are either infeasible or inappropriate
  - by using all available modern pedagogical techniques to carry on instruction programs
- Administer and manage the library and its personnel, services, and programs

### Values and Librarianship
- **Value**
  - Something of deep interest (often and quite reasonably self-interest) to an individual or group
  - A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to the opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence

### Values and Librarianship (cont.)
- **Value system**
  - Group of values assembled
  - A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-state of existence along a continuum of relative importance

### Central Values of Librarianship (Gorman)
- **Stewardship**
  - Preserving the human record to ensure that future generations know what we know
  - Caring for and nurturing of education for librarianship so that we pass on our best professional values and practices
  - Being good stewards of our libraries so that we earn the respect of our communities

- **Service**
  - Ensuring that all our policies and procedures are animated by the ethic of service to individuals, communities, society and posterity
  - Evaluating all our policies and procedures using service as a criterion

- **Intellectual freedom**
  - Maintaining a commitment to the idea that all people in a free society should be able to read and see whatever they wish to read and see
  - Defending the intellectual freedom of all members of our communities
  - Defending the free expression of minority opinion
  - Making the library's facilities and programs accessible to all
Central Values of Librarianship (Gorman)

- Rationalism
  - Organizing and managing library services in a rational manner
  - Applying rationalism and the scientific method to all library procedures and programs

- Literacy and learning
  - Encouraging literacy and the love of learning
  - Encouraging lifelong sustained reading
  - Making the library a focus of literacy teaching

- Equity of access to recorded knowledge and information
  - Ensuring that all library resources and programs are accessible to all
  - Overcoming technological and monetary barriers to access

- Privacy
  - Ensuring the confidentiality of records of library use
  - Overcoming technological invasions of library use

- Democracy
  - Playing our part in maintaining the values of a democratic society
  - Participating in the educational process to ensure the educated citizenry that is vital to democracy
  - Employing democracy in library management

Twelve Ways Libraries are Good for the Country

- Libraries inform citizens
- Libraries break down barriers
- Libraries level the playing field
- Libraries value the individual
- Libraries nourish creativity
- Libraries open kids’ minds
Twelve Ways Libraries are Good for the Country (cont.)

- Libraries return high dividends
- Libraries build communities
- Libraries makes families friendlier
- Libraries offend everyone
- Libraries offer sanctuary
- Libraries preserve the past