

New Media and the future of Libraries in a Digital World

Unit 10 Bibliographic Essay

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Merriam-Webster defines library as “a place in which literary, musical, artistic or reference materials (as books, manuscripts, recordings or films) are kept for use but not for sale.” (Merriam-Webster) Libraries have long been thought of as big imposing buildings, repositories of paper, books, art and more. What is to become of that version of library in a digital world? New media, new technology, the constant influx of new ideas has shaped and changed the world. Can it shape and change libraries? This paper will focus on Digital Libraries and eBooks and how they can coexist with traditional libraries.

Digital Libraries

What is a digital library? Seadle and Greifeneder located several definitions in their article

“Defining a Digital Library.” The National Science Foundation (NSF) uses this:

Digital Libraries basically store materials in electronic format and manipulate large collections of those materials effectively. Research into digital libraries is research into network information systems, concentrating on how to develop the necessary infrastructure to effectively mass-manipulate the information on the Net.” (Seadle & Greifender, 2007)

This is an accurate definition, but it lacks the soul of what a library is and does. It addresses the technical design and need for infrastructure but does not address the user or users. It centers on the hardware but not the potential for uniting users with information to which they might not ordinarily have access.

Because the NSF definition focused heavily on the technical aspect of a digital library, Seadle and Greifeneder sought out further definitions. This is from the National Leadership Grants program of the Institute of Museums and Library Services:

The Digital Revolution has affected nearly every aspect of library and museum services, from the automation of internal recordkeeping systems to the digitization of physical collections, and from the acquisition of new “born-digital” works of art or library publications to the use of technology to present collections and engage audiences. Digital technology enables the full range of holdings in our museums, libraries and archives – audio, video, print, photographs, artworks, artifacts, and other resources – to be catalogued,

organized, combined in new ways, and made accessible to new audiences in new ways. Digital technology connects more people to the resources and services that only museums and libraries can provide.” (Seadle & Greifender, 2007)

In classroom lectures, Seadle, who is Editor of Library Hi Tech and Professor at the Institute of Library and Information Sciences at Humbolt University in Berlin, came up with the following definition which sought to connect the digital library with the “bricks and mortar” library:

A “digital library” is fundamentally a resource that reconstructs the intellectual substance and services of a traditional library in digital form.

Digital libraries consist of digital contents (which are sometimes but not necessarily text-based), interconnections (which may be simple links or complex metadata or query-based relationships), and software (which may be simple pages in HTML or complex database management systems). A single, simple, stand-alone web page is probably not a digital library in any meaningful sense, any more than a single page or a single book is a traditional library. A mass of raw data such as comes from the Hubble telescope is probably also not a digital library, though its contents arguably belong in one.

Digital libraries are not replacements for traditional libraries. They are rather the future of traditional libraries, much as medieval manuscript libraries simply became a specialized and much revered part of the larger print-based libraries that we have today. (Seadle & Greifender, 2007)

The conclusion of the article (written in 2007) was that perhaps the Digital Library was too new to have any meaningful definition become permanent.

In researching her article “What are Digital Libraries? Competing Visions”, Christine L. Borgman looked at many definitions of Digital Libraries, including the ones above. She concluded that:

A review of these definitions indicates that in general, researchers focus on digital libraries as content collected on behalf of user communities, while librarians focus on digital libraries as institutions or services. These communities are not mutually exclusive. Some researchers are focusing on practical problems related to institutions and services and some practitioners are participating in

research teams addressing issues of content, collections and communities.
(Borgman, 1999)

In 1996, the NSF refined its definition in light of the “Social Aspects of Digital Libraries” workshop:

1. Digital libraries are a set of electronic resources and associated technical capabilities for creating, searching and using information. In this sense they are an extension and enhancement of information storage and retrieval systems that manipulate digital data in any medium (text, images, sounds; static or dynamic images) and exist in distributed networks. The content of digital libraries includes data, metadata that describe various aspects of the data (e.g. representation, creator, owner, reproduction rights) and metadata that consist of links or relationships to other data or metadata, whether internal or external to the digital library.

2. Digital libraries are constructed, collected and organized, by (and for) a community of users and their functional capabilities support the information needs and uses of that community. They are a component of communities in which individuals and groups interact with each other, using data, information and knowledge resources and systems. In this sense they are an extension, enhancement and integration of a variety of information institutions as physical places where resources are selected, collected, organized, preserved and accessed in support of a user community. These information institutions include, among others, libraries, museums, archives and schools, but digital libraries also extend and serve other community settings, including classrooms, offices, laboratories, homes and public spaces. (Borgman, 1999)

In their article “Going Digital: A Look at Assumptions Underlying Digital Libraries,” David M.

Levy and Catherine C. Marshal (neither of whom are librarians but rather researchers for Xerox)

discuss the three crucial aspects of libraries:

Documents – All libraries, bricks and mortar as well as digital, share one thing, they house documents. The word document is used to include all “enduring communicative records” (Levy & Marshal, 1995) including books, written works, art, electronic files, film, music and more.

Traditional libraries are seen to be more about fixed media, media with a sense of permanence, like books. This is hardly true, though. Most libraries contain special collections, archives and more. Many times these special collections contain ephemera such as correspondence, photos and more.

Technology – Though most closely associated with the technology of printing and books, libraries are becoming centers of other media as well. When books on tape first came out, libraries jumped on the new technology. These were followed by CDs, VCR tapes, DVDs, and much more. When the technology of computers and then the World Wide Web was introduced, libraries shifted their technologies away from date stamps and card catalogues to software and online catalogues.

Work – The research and service done by librarians is integral to the function and sustainability of libraries, whether digital or bricks and mortar. The article contends that the “highest priority of a library, digital or otherwise, is to serve the research needs of its constituents.” (Levy & Marshal, 1995) The article works to dispel the myth that the Digital Library is for the single user while traditional libraries are gear toward collaborative research. The article, written 14 years ago, points out that email is used to communicate with many people at once, meaning that there are ways to collaborate using technology. Digital Libraries can be used for collaborative research. Now, 14 years later, there are virtual whiteboards, web conferencing, VoIP and more, enabling people to connect for the purpose of collaboration.

While we try to differentiate between traditional and digital libraries, Levy and Marshal remind us that libraries are constantly evolving to meet the needs of their constituents.

The academic and public libraries most of us have grown up with are the products of innovation begun approximately 150 years ago. We would find libraries that existed prior to this time largely unrecognizable. It is certain that the introduction of digital technologies will again transform libraries, possibly beyond recognition, by transforming the mix of materials in their collections and the methods by which these materials are maintained and used. But the better word for these evolving institutions is “libraries,” not “digital libraries,” for ultimately what must be preserved is the *heterogeneity* of materials and practices. As library materials and practices of the past have been diverse—more diverse than idealized accounts allow—so they will no doubt remain in the future. (Levy & Marshal, 1995)

In “What is a Digital Library Anymore Anyway? Beyond Search and Access in the NSDL” Lagozei, et al point out:

There seems to be a belief that a digital library is just about search (“can I find it?”) and access (“can I get it?”). These functions are indeed essential (and remain challenging), but they are just part of an information environment. Traditional libraries are much more than well-organized warehouses of books, maps, serials, etc. In their full expression, they are places where people meet to access, share, and exchange knowledge. The resources they select and services they offer should reflect the character of the communities they serve. (Lagozei, Krafft, Payettei, & Jesuroga, 2005)

They suggest that digital libraries should extend the function of traditional libraries, not take the place of them.

As such, they should be much more than search engine portals. Like any library they should feature a high degree of *selection* of resources that meet criteria relevant to their mission, and they should provide *services*, including search, that facilitate use of the resources by their target community. But, freed of the constraints of physical space and media, digital libraries can be more adaptive and reflective of the communities they serve. They should be *collaborative*, allowing users to contribute knowledge to the library, either actively through annotations, reviews, and the like, or passively through their patterns of resource use. In addition, they should be *contextual*, expressing the expanding web of inter-relationships and layers of knowledge that extend among selected primary resources. In this manner, the core of the digital library should be an evolving information base, weaving together professional selection and the “wisdom of crowds” (Lagozei, Krafft, Payettei, & Jesuroga, 2005)

Because of their use of metadata, digital libraries can be effective tools for education. The makeup of digital libraries is not merely static documents but collaborative, fluid and manipulated by the audience it serves. The ability to correct, change and update data makes digital libraries particularly conducive to educational settings. The digital library has to distinguish itself from a search engine though. A digital library is not the same as search and find. It puts the information in a context. This is one of the many ways digital libraries are similar to traditional libraries. The information provided by a digital library is not merely information; it is enhanced information, information retrieved within a specific context and for a specific purpose.

In their article “Digital Libraries and User Needs: Negotiating the Future,” Anita Coleman and Tamara Sumner addressed the concept of community-based digital libraries. Each community will use a digital library in a different way. The library, therefore, needs to be organized to suit the needs of the user community. A scientific digital library will be used differently from a public library’s digital library.

Within the landscape of community-based digital libraries, an enduring challenge is negotiating the future with diverse community members, i.e. establishing plans and strategies to guide future library technologies, collections, and services. In this context, design and planning requires organizations to take into account the day-to-day practices of individual users, and the needs and desires of the larger community as the library strives to reflect the values and long-term vision that the participants have for their community or academic discipline as a whole. However, community members do not necessarily share the same worldview with respect to values, vision and library priorities, and careful attention must be paid to negotiating diverse worldviews to arrive at a consensus for action (Coleman & Sumner, 2004).

Coleman and Sumner further divided the organization of these libraries into three broad categories (Coleman & Sumner, 2004):

- User-centered design
 - Main objective is to develop an understanding of user needs before developing the library
 - Elicit user feedback in design process
- Participatory design
 - Work with users as “co-designers” to achieve the desired result
 - Requires “significant and ongoing collaboration between designers and users throughout the design process” (Coleman & Sumner, 2004)
- Shared governance design
 - Seeks to elicit a sense of shared ownership through consultation
 - Used in situations to effect social and educational change – for example, the creation of Connecticut History Online “a new non-profit entity to support cross-institution collaboration, incorporating different advisory groups, including one for teachers and one for educator specialists, into a formal governance structure. Partnership is a core value, while ownership and consensus building are integral to all the project's efforts. CHO holds promise for changing the digital futures of libraries, archives, museums, and educational institutions from objects on separate trajectories to partners in a more seamlessly integrated world of multimedia information. (Coleman & Sumner, 2004)”

Coleman and Sumner concluded that no matter the model, digital libraries are designed to bring together a, generally, virtual community to a common purpose. This purpose may be to serve educators, scientific professionals or the general public and these groups may work alongside professional funding agencies, software developers and librarians, but it takes a community to build an effective digital library.

In their article “Participatory networks: the library as conversation,” Lankes, et.al. assert “knowledge is created through conversation” and:

The library has been a place that facilitates conversations, though often implicitly. Facilitation not only enriches conversations with diverse and deep information, it also serves as a memory keeper, documenting agreements and outcomes to facilitate future conversations. The library serves this vital role for many communities. The concept of learning through conversations is evidenced in libraries in large initiatives like information literacy and teaching critical thinking skills (using such meta-cognitive approaches as self-questioning), and in the smaller events of book groups, reference interviews, and speaker series. Library activities such as building collections of artifacts (the tangible products of conversation) inform scholars' research through a formal conversation process where ideas are supported with evidence and methods. This is how libraries have traditionally facilitated and preserved conversations. (Lankes, Silverstein, Nicholson, & Marshall, 2007)

How do digital libraries fit into this model? If a digital library is designed to serve a community then its primary role is to facilitate conversation and the exchange of information and ideas. A digital library allows access to information to which one might not otherwise have access. It can be an aggregator of scholarship, a repository of ephemera, a vault of music and video for current and future users.

Lankes, et.al. are promoting a participatory library model. They investigate bricks and mortar libraries as well as digital libraries. They assert that using a participatory model allows a fine tuning of data to fit user needs.

In traditional librarianship, the librarians provide metadata that patrons then use to make selections. By examining this use data, recommender systems can be created to help users locate new materials. In participatory networking, patrons will be encouraged to add comments about items. If standards are used for these comments, then they can be shared among libraries to create larger pools of recommendations. As these comments are analysed, they can be combined with usage databases to create stronger recommender systems to present patrons with additional choices based upon what is being explored.

At this point in the evolution of distributed systems into a truly integrated library system, the Participatory Library, there are two large collections: one of resources and one of information about the resources. The first collection of digital content, the community repository, is built by the library and its users collaboratively. The second collection, the enhanced catalogue, includes metadata, both formal and user-created (such as ratings, commentary, use data, and the like). Yet to realize the dream of a seamless system of functionality (seamless to both the user and the library), these two systems must be merged allowing users to find resources and, much more importantly, conversations. Users must be able to add both metadata and content in the creation of the Participatory Library. (Lankes, Silverstein, Nicholson, & Marshall, 2007)

Now that we have several digital library models, how do we get people to use them? We must get users to accept the digital library, its technology and its data. This is sometimes easier said than done. In their article "Understanding user acceptance of digital libraries: what are the roles of interface characteristics, organizational context, and individual differences?" (Thong, Hong, & Tam, 2002) Thong, et.al. assert that there are three main advantages to digital libraries: (1) resources stored in digital form, which are easier to keep track of; (2) remote, fast and fair access of digital library collections and (3) techniques for searching offer increased flexibility and power to users. They also assert that there are three main external variables which act on the intention of a user.

- Interface characteristics are important to the user's embracing of the digital library because they are how a user accesses the information. Some interface characteristics include:
 - Screen display
 - User interface
 - Dialogue styles
 - Ease of navigation
- Organizational contexts are important to the intended user's use of the digital library. Some organizational contexts that might limit the usefulness of the digital library include:
 - Limiting the machines used to access the data
 - Irrelevant data
 - Lack of visibility

- Individual differences can contribute to the use of digital libraries
 - Computer experience
 - Knowledge of the subject
 - Skill, desire, time and opportunity of the user

In “Digital Libraries,” Fox et. al. discuss the factors encouraging the demand of digital libraries.

This era and what we are building go by many names, including Cyberspace, Global Information Infrastructure, Infobahn, Information Age, Information (Super)Highway, Interspace, and Paperless Society. (Fox, Akscyn, Furuta, & Leggett, 1995)

It is this Information Age that leads to a quest for information, the 24 hour news cycle, the exhilaration of pursuing information to a degree that was previously unheard. We live in an “instant” society; one that values the fast answer. These quests lead to the internet, to digital innovation and to digital libraries. The digital library seeks to walk the divide between the traditional library (and traditional users) and the digital advances of this century (and the tech savvy, information seeking users).

The phrase “digital library” evokes a different impression in each reader. To some it simply suggests computerization of traditional libraries. To others, who have studied library science, it calls for carrying out of the functions of libraries in a new way, encompassing new types of information resources; new approaches to acquisition (especially with more sharing and subscription services); new methods of storage and preservation; new approaches to classification and cataloging, new modes of interaction with and for patrons; more reliance on electronic systems and networks; and dramatic shifts in intellectual, organizational, and economic practices. (Fox, Akscyn, Furuta, & Leggett, 1995)

Fox, Akscyn, Furuta and Leggett point out that moving toward digital libraries does not mean the end of the traditional library. As with all things, a balance must be struck. (Fox, Akscyn, Furuta, & Leggett, 1995) Not everything will be digital, nor does everything lend itself to being digitized.

eBooks

Along with the implementation of digital libraries worldwide came another innovation, the eBook. Wikipedia.org defines eBook as:

An e-book (short for electronic book, also written eBook or ebook), as known as a digital book, is an e-text that forms the digital media equivalent of a conventional printed book, sometimes restricted with a digital rights management system. E-books are usually read on dedicated hardware devices known as e-Readers or e-book devices. Some personal computers and cell phones can also be used, especially to read documents in pdf format. (E-Book)

In her article “Electronic books: their definition, usage and role in libraries,” Susan Sawyer discusses the advantages and disadvantages of eBooks over traditional printed books. Some of the advantages include cost effective distribution, the ability of the reader to interact with the text in many cases (through search features, hypertext links, etc.) and widespread accessibility through the internet. Disadvantages include portability (in many cases printed books are easier to travel with than a laptop or eBook reader – although the technology is improving), quality of the screen upon which they are read, and often eBooks utilize proprietary software forcing the potential reader to purchase a specific reader or specific software. (Sawyer, 2002)

Early studies of eBook usage focused on academic settings. Preliminary results were mixed. Depending upon the study print was valued over digital; digital was valued over print. These studies revealed that immediate access and lower cost of the text were helpful factors in encouraging the use of digital texts. On the print side of the equation, length of time a person is able to read on-screen was a large factor in swaying toward print versions of a text. (Sawyer,

2002) A final caution is given that with an eBook, it is important that a student be sure they have the latest edition. Because digital formats are easier (and cheaper) to update and re-distribute than traditional print books, it is vital for students to be sure the book has been properly maintained academically. (Sawyer, 2002)

Advantages of eBooks in libraries include the ability for a single copy to be available to multiple patrons, 24/7 access, maintenance of the digital collection is less costly than its print counterpart, and ease of updating certain materials such as reference collections (e.g. encyclopedias). There exist disadvantages as well; impermanence of the collection – because eBooks are frequently stored on a third party server if the provider goes out of business or experiences hardware failure patrons suffer; use of subscription services could cause loss of collections if a library decides not to renew its service; and intrusive digital rights management methods can detract from their perceived value. (Sawyer, 2002)

The issue of hardware for eBooks has been debated for the last 10 years. Because of the device dependent nature of many eBooks, libraries have to make choices about what to purchase, not just for subscriptions, but also for hardware to loan. In 2000 a Library Journal article titled “The Emerging Role of eBooks,” Roy Tennant explored this subject. He asked what would happen if, when VCR tapes were popular, libraries had to loan the VCR as well as the tape, especially if specific VCRs were pre-loaded with specific movies. (Tennant, 2000) Until there is a standard for eBooks, libraries may have to purchase multiple formats and multiple reading devices.

The main difference that libraries face over individuals is that individuals purchase for themselves, libraries have to think about multiple users, multiple devices and how to handle it

all. NetLibrary and OverDrive have both developed systems to “check out and check in” books both audio and eBooks. These subscription services can be cost effective but must their fees must be included in yearly budgets. So, why should a library buy or subscribe to eBooks? In the article “eBooks, Critical Mass: Where do libraries fit with Oprah?” Bedford lays out the main reasons. (Bedford, 2009)

- Popular titles don't disappear. These include books such as SAT Prep guides, Nolo legal titles, tax preparation books, and chemical handbooks.
- Ebooks can't be lost by misshelving.
- Automatic check-in, checkout, and holds eliminate clerical tasks required to get books back on the shelves, as well as processing holds.
- No additional physical space is required to expand the collection. Academic libraries, in particular, face space crunches, and weeding is difficult. Corporate libraries are primarily virtual.
- Materials for high-demand periods can be easily managed online, i.e., statewide, California Mission projects for fourth graders are due every spring.
- Some collections are better managed as ebooks. Romance novels are an underappreciated genre in public libraries and may not even be cataloged as part of their collections. Typically, these are paperbacks that disintegrate with normal, high usage and go out-of-print quickly. OverDrive has found that romances are the most popular ebook category for its 8,500 public library customers. Ebooks don't wear out!
- Instructional manuals for company products can be important in providing customer service, without requiring a phone call or email or maintaining an inventory.

Ms. Bedford concludes that with more titles available comes a greater chance of success. Publishers do not want to have to produce multiple formats of each book. This should lead to a quicker establishment of a universal format. The other major factor she

says is inclusion in OPACs. If eBooks are included in the regular catalog and easily found when a patron is searching, there is a much greater likelihood of use. If eBooks are relegated to their own special section, they are less likely to be found and utilized. (Bedford, 2009)

In his article "The California State University E-Book Pilot Project: implications for cooperative collection development," Marc Langston discusses the use of eBooks across the California State University system. Langston determined that the "special advantages" of eBooks enabled information to be disseminated that would have been virtually impossible using a traditional monographic collection. (Langston, 2003) The study concluded that, after the study period, the eBooks had a nearly identical circulation to the print versions during the study. (Littman & Connaway, 2004)

In building a cooperative collection, Langston concluded that there are several options to consider when including eBooks. These options include:

- Purchasing a collection of titles in a broad range of subjects based upon predetermined criteria.
- Target heavily used print titles, especially those frequently requested through Interlibrary Loan.
- Replace books which are frequently repurchased due to use/damage with eBooks.
- Purchase eBooks of Manuals which are frequently updated and rapidly go out of date.

- Schools with distance learning programs can purchase eBooks to support their specific curricula. These books could be removed from general circulation and reserved for specific classes using NetLibrary's features. (Langston, 2003)

There are many "value-added" aspects of eBooks. These include Resource Links, Review Links, Editorial/Feedback, Author Links, Links to Journals, Author Biographies and Companion Websites. (Armstrong, 2008)

Mr. Armstrong, references McCracken, R. (2004) ('Agreements, User Licences and Codes of Practice', in C. Armstrong and L.W. Bebbington (eds) *Staying Legal: A Guide to Issues and Practice Affecting the Library, Information and Publishing Sectors*, 2nd edn, pp. 122–39. London: Facet Publishing) in his discussion of copyright and eBooks.

Licensing rights is different from buying a physical object in a very important and fundamental way. The first sale doctrine does not apply . . . This means, for example, that if a library buys a copy of a book or subscribes to a print magazine or learned journal then, under the first sale doctrine, it may retain old copies as part of its archive or grant access to readers who are not members of the library. This applies even if the subscription lapses . . . However, if the library instead subscribes . . . it does not buy a physical copy of the work and the doctrine does not apply. Depending on the terms of the subscription licence, access to archived editions . . . may evaporate along with a lapsed subscription and casual readers may be excluded.

In looking at advantages of eBooks in libraries, Lynn Silipigni Connaway lists even more:

- Easy access to content
- On-demand availability
- Prevention from being lost, stolen, or damaged
- Capability to search within a book and across a collection of books
- Ability to be linked to other resources, including dictionaries and thesauri

- Absence of physical space requirements
- Device independence for accessing the content
- Access to content using standard web browsers
- Customizable search interfaces
- Easy transportation, and
- Access from anywhere. (Connaway, 2003)

Sarah Ann Long, in her article “The Case for eBooks: an introduction,” discusses the strides that need to be taken before widespread acceptance of eBooks in libraries will take place.

- Standard’s that allow reading all of a library’s e-book titles through one interface
- Standardization of devices for reading eBooks
- Improvement of the readability of hand-held eBook readers
- Standardization of reader interaction with eBooks, such as integrating eBook content with other sources, annotating texts, and citing eBooks
- Standards for cataloguing and adding eBook titles to a library’s electronic catalog
- Help for librarians in making sense of the multiple choices available in the eBook market and determining the best use of their collection development funds in this area
- Contracts with eBook distributors that address specific library needs, such as multiple simultaneous users (Long, 2003)

Conclusion:

The survival of libraries lies in both the past and the future. Part of a library’s mission is to catalog and maintain our history through books, newspapers, manuscripts and more. The digital library can play a role in that maintenance by preserving our past digitally. This

preservation not only saves items which might not survive moves, temperatures and tragedies like fires and floods, but provides access to those who might not otherwise have access. This preservation of the past ensures the future. We must move with the times. The same can be said of eBooks. The technology to provide books to people “where they are” enables people who may not be able to get to a library for a number of reasons, health, access to a vehicle, hours of availability, etc. makes the attention to digitization of books essential.

In writing about eBooks (and it could be extended to digital libraries), Lynn Silipigni Connaway, concludes:

We, librarians, must think beyond the paper book and utilise the capabilities of the eBook. It is more than an alternative to a paper book. Let us not make the mistake that we made when moving the paper card catalog to the online environment by simply digitising the catalog card, without considering the new possibilities for search and retrieval. (Connaway, 2003)

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