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# **MAKING THE JUMP: the Need for a Phenomenological Shift through the Literature Experience in the Adult Literacy Classroom**

**by Jenny Bossaller & John M. Budd**

**E**xamination of reading by individuals in an Adult Education program relies upon certain notions of literacy and its relationship to reading. Literacy has been defined by various stakeholders and organizations using specific criteria such as being able to read and fill out a form or interpreting instructions for taking medicine. One way of thinking of literacy is: “a condition of being-with-language in a particular way—that is, of being possessed of the letter—and for this reason literacy is most often linked to the history of writing in its formal and restrictive sense” (Armand, 2006, p. 201). The definitions share the characteristic of emphasis on the more technical elements necessary to the deciphering of texts; with an emphasis on the societal benefits of literacy rates (employment, etc.). Adult literacy is usually framed in such terms (employment or lack of) and as such, education of the non-reading adult, through the school system, is described in terms of functional ability.

Looking at literacy as an agent of change in the individual—the way that it affects thinking and sense of being—gives researchers and teachers a meaningful way to grapple with adult literacy. However, the two views of literacy (functional skill versus reading for pleasure or transcendence) do not always mesh well in the classroom. A curriculum which focuses on workplace readiness—which schools that function with federal funding generally do—is one obstacle. Another obstacle is the students themselves, some of whom are there not on their own accord, others who read at varying speeds and have different interests.

This paper seeks to deepen an understanding of the experience of reading fiction for the adult new reader. Expert readers, those who have been reading for many years, understand what it means to ‘get lost in a book.’ Interviews and classroom observations in an adult basic education classroom revealed some obstacles for the students with literacy. The participants all discussed their feelings about education and learning how to read as an adult, and some of their observations were keen and heartbreaking. The goal of the paper is to show that reading fiction in the adult education classroom is valuable for the adult new reader. While reading fiction might not directly affect their employability, their descriptions of reading and

how it has affected their lives were positive. They also demonstrated their potential to engage with the text in a varied and meaningful way. Perhaps the biggest surprise was one new reader's description of transcendence through reading, which we might not expect in a person who tests at a second grade reading level. Her revealing interview gave birth to an idea involving phenomenology and the reading brain, and when and how it might occur in a new adult reader.

### *Reading and the Brain*

Decoding skills necessarily precede fluency, which is required to become 'a reader'—that is, "possessed of the letter" so that he might consider picking up a book for entertainment's sake or escapism. There are other avenues for this type of escapism through words which might appeal to new readers, such as listening to or reading along with audio books. The classroom gives the new reader a place to discuss textual meanings, and it can help him understand references to experiences which he has not had in life or previous reading experiences. A positive classroom experience can provide the new reader a means of escaping into a text, engaging them, and encouraging them to continue with their difficult journey.

Wolf (2007) has studied the reading brain extensively. She contends that the human brain was not actually made to read—it is an unnatural act. In describing how children learn to read, she points out the problems that can occur on the road to fluency. Some children experience the shift from verbal to written communication seamlessly, as their brains are rearranged and recircuited. Some children do not learn to read easily, because their brains are not wired to translate lines and squiggles to sound. We know of this as dyslexia. Another factor affecting a child's reading ability is home life. The child who is not read to, who has little exposure to print, begins school with a deficit, or what Wolf refers to as word poverty: "By five years of age, some children from impoverished-language environments have heard 32 million fewer words spoken to them than the average middle-class child...and "the sheer unavailability of books will have a crushing effect on the word knowledge and world knowledge that should be learned in these early years" (p. 102 – 103).

### *Wolf's Stages of Reading Acquisition*

Stage 1. The Emerging Pre-Reader. The young child listens to stories; "emerging reading arises out of years of perceptions, increasing conceptual and social development, and cumulative exposures to oral and written language" (p. 115).

Stage 2. The Novice Reader. The child learns how to decode words on a page and learns that those words tell a story (p. 116). In this stage, the reader cracks the alphabetic code—"Learning all the grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules in decoding...involves one part discovery and many

parts hard work. Aiding both are three code-cracking capacities: the phonological, orthographic, and semantic areas of language learning” (p. 117). If one of these capacities is not properly functioning, reading is very difficult.

Stage 3. The Decoding Reader. At this stage, Wolf explains that the word-poor child “has consequences for their oral and their written language... precious little explicit vocabulary instruction goes on in most classrooms” (p. 129). The child who has been read to and has a large vocabulary is able to build upon it at this stage, and is poised for reading fluency.

Stage 4: Fluent Comprehending Reader. Wolf says that “Fluency is not a matter of speed; it is a matter of being able to utilize all the special knowledge a child has about a word—its letters, letter patterns, meaning, grammatical functions, roots, and endings—fast enough to have time to think and comprehend” (p. 130 – 131). The brain has to be able to draw upon past knowledge at the same time that it decodes the phonemes and vocabulary; it is able to make sense of words quickly enough to sustain a train of thought. This enables the reader to become a reader—to engage with a text in the way that we are calling the “phenomenological shift.”

Stage 5: Expert Reader. At this stage, the reader is able to read any word without thinking about meaning.

Based on the description of the stages of reading above, we can see that there is equal weight on nature and nurture in reading development, and deficiencies in either can result in low reading skills. Fortunately both can be overcome in children, but interventions in the classroom and home are necessary.

#### *Challenges to Literacy; an aside*

There are some personal and societal realities related to reading that functional literacy addresses and with which literacy teachers must contend in order to help their students be successful. Personal experiences and exposure to standard uses of the language determine how people interpret questions on tests and what words they are able to use and understand. Users of nonstandard English are at a disadvantage in standardized testing situations. They also may not enjoy reading texts that do not reflect their experiences of reality, which can be a determinant factor in how well they do in school. The language used in coursework and testing in public schools provides evidence of another way that the dominant culture maintains control over education; it is effectively a form of indoctrination.

Though control has a negative connotation, the reality is that the ability to communicate effectively using the dominant language enhances the ability to participate in public discourse. Hofstetter et. al. (1999) quantified ways that higher-level reading habits correspond to greater political awareness and involvement. By learning how to read students are not only able to

gain better employment but they also become more socially powerful. They said that “knowledge is the key to establishing and maintaining power relationships. Furthermore...literacy is a key, possibly the key, to acquisition of knowledge” (p. 59). Schooling, public libraries, and literacy education have the potential to work together to produce citizens who are able to solve problems and are able to be engaged in the decisions which affect his or her life. Literacy is, therefore, the means to participate in society, but it is not the same as reading. Literary reading is a higher-level activity which depends upon literacy.

Why, then, discuss phenomenology? The phenomenological approach is particularly apt for describing the experiences of individuals involved in an institutionally affiliated program, such as a community reading program. Sanders explained, “When...one understands consciousness as awareness of what accounts for managerial excellence or a description of organizational myths, cultures, and symbols, then the possibilities of phenomenology as an organizational research methodology begin to emerge” (p. 353).

#### *Phenomenology and Reading*

While phenomenology and reading have been connected in the past, a set of assumptions have underlain those applications of phenomenology. Readers, according to the conceptualizations of Poulet, Iser, and others, are presumed to be literate. Their reader possesses the fundamental skills that enable reading, so the phenomenological examination emphasizes the relation of reading texts to readers' Being. Those literate readers are potentially open to an intersubjective experience based on an ability to exercise intuition and reflection regarding the work read. The assumptions transcend the technical elements of literacy; readers do not have innate ability to reach the deeper level of reading. The practices of intuition and reflection must be learned and require effort and study to master. There is the need for phenomenological growth for a certain kind of reading to be possible. The necessary growth is an integral idea that informs the research presented here, and its nature requires some description. A first step toward understanding reading in the phenomenological sense is to recognize “that there is a distinction between mental act—a part of consciousness—and the object, which is not a real part of consciousness is always real, even if the object is real. While the act of consciousness is always real, the object of this act can be real or unreal” (Velarde-Mayol, p. 33).

The act of reading has been explicitly described as a phenomenological act (see Librach, etc.). However, the act of learning to read, especially as an adult, is a step which has seldom been explored using the phenomenological construct as the theorists noted here have applied it. Adults who are learning how to read experience a shift in thinking, as they learn to see the world in a different way, as we begin to see the world through another's eyes. The act of reading is both a means and an end in this change. Librach suggests that reading introduces doubt (p. 55) of one's own naturalistic viewpoint:

“attempt to doubt introduces...the phenomenological neutralization of our intentions.” The suggestion is an important one that begs for examination. Books themselves can be viewed as an intersubjective agent in that they embody a voice and an expression of some self. Agency also assumes a consciousness that exercises some volition, so the creation of the text is an act of will. Granted, the volitional consciousness inherent in a book is static; the author imposed the agency during writing and the reader interprets the knowable elements of the agency.

Where might the doubt Librach expresses come from? It can arise as part of a process of growth and transition; the interstice between less-than-complete literacy and the ability to perceive self and other in a text can be a source of uncertainty and unease. The interstice has an analogy in space between the natural and the phenomenological attitude (see Sokolowski, 2000). The path of a person’s life necessarily begins with experience in, perception of, and an attitude towards the natural world. “The natural life, whether it is universal unthematic horizon. The horizon is, in the natural attitude, precisely the world always pregiven as that which exists” (Husserl, 1970, p. 145). Our understanding of the world is grounded, in large part, in reaction—reaction to, and learning of, the occurrences of daily life, including the linguistic, physical, and affective relations with other people. “When we live in the natural—the nontranscendental—attitude, different thematic directions, and thus different directions of theoretical interest, open themselves to us in accord with the structure of the pregiven world—the latter being given to us as our communal surrounding world and, through this, as objective world” (Husserl, 1970, p. 329). The natural attitude lacks certain intersubjective and reflective aspects, aspects that cannot be possible until there is a transcendence beyond immediate and immanent experience. Reading—that is, literary reading—is not entirely impossible within the realm of the natural attitude, but it is definitely limited.

Contrast the natural attitude with the phenomenological attitude. The natural attitude is, by its nature, situated immanently. A person’s being is located in the world of immediacy, particular kinds of perception, and some frames that define action. The experiences of a person are examined in light of a consciousness that is bound by the natural world. The natural attitude is necessary for the fundamental functioning in the world. Husserl explains the natural attitude succinctly and fully: “When we live in the natural—the nontranscendental—attitude, different thematic directions, and thus directions of theoretical interest, open themselves to us in accord with the structure of the pregiven world—the latter being given to us as our communal surrounding world and, through this, as objective world” (Husserl, 1970, p. 329). The phenomenological attitude enables a different life-world (in fact, the natural attitude is described by Husserl as world-life to differentiate that life in the objective world) orientation. This attitude neither negates nor replaces the natural attitude; it is a difference in being. As such it creates potential for a new understanding through critical, rational reflection.

In short, mastering technical elements of reading is, of course, necessary to reading; immanence has to precede transcendence. If, however, the definition of reading is broadened to include literary reading, mastery of the technical elements may not be sufficient for expert reading. Sokolowski (2000) explains the obstruction the ego presents in the development of imagination:

Memory and imagination are structurally very similar, and one easily slips into the other. The same sort of displacement of the ego or the self that we find in memory also occurs in imagination. In both forms of intentionality, I here and now can mentally live in another place and time: In memory the there and then is specific and past, but in imagination it is in a kind of nowhere and ‘nowhen,’ but even in imagination it is different from the here and now I actually inhabit (p. 71).

The implications for the present study are clear. For adult learners, the techniques and mechanics of reading are essential; they must occur prior to any interpretative perception of texts. To state this requirement another way, the fundamentals of reading ability have to be developed so that adult learners may experience Being in another way, so that their life-world can be enriched by literature and the relation between self and other can be apprehended more fully. In part, the examination presented here analyzes growth of a phenomenological attitude in the adult learners.

#### *Why things might go wrong*

So why might some adults have difficulties learning to read in the sense meant here? Wolf describes what might go wrong as a result of both dyslexia or language disorders and a home life in which the young child is not exposed to the complexities of language through books. Either of those will result in a delay, although those may be overcome with intensive educational interventions in the early years. One other reason that must be mentioned in regards to this study: limited intelligence, which will affect the reader’s ability to become an expert reader, or one who is able to inhabit another world through reading, or making the phenomenological shift. The important thing to realize is that adults who did not learn to read as children might have any of, or a combination of these problems; limited intelligence is not always the issue, but early and intensive interventions usually are.

The problem that has the greatest likelihood of preventing acquisition of a phenomenological attitude is limited intelligence. Sokolowski explains:

...our transcendental ego is that part of us that is the agent of reason and truth...Our rationality...involves...the intentionalities by which we identify things in both their presence and their absence, the intentionalities by which we introduce syntax and part-whole

compositions in what we experience, the specifically human ways of remembering, imagining, and anticipating, and the forms of evidence and verification that we can carry out (p. 117 – 118).

It involves power over faculties. This is a necessary part of what it takes to think philosophically, to see oneself as a part of the whole. This is the expanding effect of reading: it enables the reader to expand his vision, to identify things which are not present, which have not been physically experienced—i.e., “the armchair traveler.” The phenomenological reader would contemplate what it means to do such traveling: “In the natural attitude we have a world, we exercise rationality, we identify across presence and absence, we confirm and disconfirm, and we also lie, deceive, and fall into error; but in the phenomenological attitude we clarify what it is to do all these things” (Sokolowski, 123). However, because learning how to read might be caused by other issues, there is a good chance that the new reader might become aware of a shift in thinking as fluency increases.

The reader who can adopt the phenomenological attitude is able to apply *epoch*, or reduction. This reduction does not lead to elimination or diminution; it refers to a skepticism, a withholding. It is not only reality that is suspended, judgment is suspended while the reduction is applied. It is natural intentions that are suspended; the perceived thing is not taken for granted, is not located simply within the objective world. In order to accomplish epoch\_ the reader has to bracket some things. The things, in reading, can be excerpts of text, but they may also be more complex—characterizations, narrative style, motivation, morality, kinds of speech, etc. Reading in the phenomenological attitude entails a degree of doubt. That is, the text, as langue, is read with some skepticism; the literal meaning of a text is necessary, but it not sufficient. Husserl, again, explains:

In transcendental-phenomenological reflection we deliver ourselves from this footing [of the world given to us], by universal *epoch* with respect to the being or non-being of the world. The experience as thus modified, the transcendental experience, consists then, we can say, in our looking at and describing the particular transcendently reduced *cogito*, but without participating, as reflective subjects, in the natural existence-positing that the originally straightforward perception (or other *cogito*) contains or that the Ego, as immersing himself straightforwardly in the world, actually executed (Husserl, 1999, p. 34).

#### *The study*

The ideas explained above regarding phenomenology emerged during conversations with students in one classroom about their experiences with reading. This paper focuses on reading and phenomenology, but a brief explanation of the entire project is called for in order to contextualize the conversations. Interviews were conducted with both new readers and

other community members who read the book and/or participated in events connected to a One Book experience. Interview selections from both types of readers are explored in order to find out some of the similarities and differences in the participants' experiences.

Many libraries have utilized a One Book project to engage citizens in a common reading project. A particular book is chosen, and everyone is encouraged to read it and take part in various discussions and activities related to the book. These are basically locally grown, but nationally sanctioned programs which encourage reading and civic participation – the National Endowment for the Arts gives monetary and other support to the projects. The focus of this study stems from an interest in adult new readers; the new readers read the book along with experienced readers and thus became participants in the civic reading project.

Prior interviews with the participants indicated that the students had very negative and demeaning past educational experiences. They often connected humiliating peer and educational experiences with shyness and a lack of positive social opportunities. The literacy class was a step for them towards making amends with their past—they all found that it was a supportive and understanding environment. They had little to say about their personal experiences of literature or why they enjoyed reading, but they did all say that they enjoyed reading as a group project. It enabled them to finish a book, which in itself was a large step; various other reasons were given, which will be explained below.

There were some similarities between the literacy students' answers and expert readers' answers, and some differences, although most of the data which was gathered concerning the literacy students' interaction with the text was only available through observations. The interviews were less productive for any information regarding their perception of the book and more productive for data concerning their lives, while interviews with the expert readers were very successful in regards to their purposes of reading. They enjoyed talking about books, their perceptions of the literature experience, and One Book. For the most part, talking about literature took the students out of their comfort zone, and the advanced readers into their comfort zone.

All of the literacy students said that they enjoyed taking part in the One Book events, and one of them specifically said that participating in it was an important step for her, personally, because she was able to read what the rest of the community was reading. Low literacy is often cited as a cause of social isolation. Negative school experiences were recalled by all of the students. Their teacher indicated that she believed that they were fairly isolated, based on casual classroom conversations. The combination of reading and discussion literature with the community was a way to help them become engaged in both ways:

I: Do you think that—do your students ever talk to you about being active in other community or other social events?

T1: No, in fact, they're probably not. They're generally isolated from the community. I have one student who is politically active and he belongs to a political organization, is very active. Other than that, no, I think that they may go to work, I think that one student volunteers, he does not go to work, I have another few students who work, but generally it is work, and home. There generally are not planned activities outside of home. I have one student that had never been to a restaurant until we took her.

As Wolf said, students from underprivileged backgrounds are often deprived of not just books, but also experiences that allow them to understand books.

Fundamental to this study is a question, though: why read? There has to be a desire to pick up a book; there is a transaction that takes place between a reader and that which he is reading that fulfills some need. Interviews with all of the readers (both new and expert) began with some general questions about the One Book selection, which asked the participants to reflect upon their feelings regarding the book. Next they were asked about what they generally like to read. Iser's (1978) idea that the reader must be a participant in the act of reading is central to the idea that was produced by the interview participants:

The reader's enjoyment begins when he himself becomes productive, i.e., when the text allows him to bring his own faculties into play. There are, of course, limits to the reader's willingness to participate...boredom and overstrain represent the two poles of tolerance, and in either case the reader is likely to opt out of the game (p. 108).

When the reader is lacking this creative activity, enjoyment is lost. The relationship, or intersubjectivity, between the text and the reader is lost because of inability to create the connections between the past and the future of the text. Likewise, there should be an intersubjectivity between the book and the reader's own conception of self. In the following extracts, we can see that the readers' description of this intersubjectivity, when I asked the participants to describe what makes a good book. There are several main categories that the users describe: it must be believable (in other words, it needs to connect to reality in some way), and it has to hold the readers' attention. In the following excerpt, the literacy teacher described these qualities:

T1: So a lot of the description in that story—I think it was very good for them to read that story because they were able to visualize what was going on in the story; it was very descriptive. But for [last year's book], to compare the two, one was very current, in

the news, in their own lives they probably know people who are immigrants, maybe illegal immigrants, and maybe they can relate to the main characters. Whereas, I'm not sure they could really relate or see themselves as the main character in this book.

In the following passage, one of the students described a connection that she made between a book and her life experiences. She described speaking up at one of the events the previous year (this was the second year the teacher had done this). Her feelings of marginality echoed those of the books' protagonist; the connection was significant because the book was about the immigrants' experiences of isolation through language and culture, which she transferred to disability, demonstrating figurative interpretation. The community reading event deepened her understanding of the text, when another attendee discussed his experiences with marginalization as a racial minority:

S1: That was really interesting because it wasn't only people in the class, it was people in the community. And one thing I really identified with him when he said, have you ever been in a room and you still feel like you're invisible—like nobody sees you, and you have something you want to say, want to express, and it's like nobody sees you, it's like you're not there, it's like, you want to say, "I've got something to say!" and they look over you as if you're not there? That stuck out.

T1: And as I recall, you did have something to say.

S1: I did!...

S1: It's because they were different. It's like with me, when people first look at me, they do not look at me as a person, they look at me as a person in a chair. It's like, I'm different. I stand out. They look at the chair first and the person second. And I think that's how the migrants must have felt, because it's like if you come from a different country, if you've been taught different things, and you're not a part of...you're in a different place where people do things differently,

I: And they've got the language barrier, too.

S1: I think that's how the migrants in the book felt.

This passage demonstrated how the book, and the event, enabled the literacy student to see herself in a new light and to connect with others.

#### *New Readers' Construction of Self through Literacy*

Dee, (S1) one of the new readers, brought up an interesting point: a good book should be unpredictable. She also said that she likes the book to remove her from her physical constraints; she has paraplegia. She compared reading to watching a ballet. She lives in a nursing home, so imagining doing ballet or living as a pioneer woman (her favorite genre is Westerns) must be very liberating. In the following excerpt she discussed

the experience of reading as transcendental. She seemed to revel in being able to talk about her literature experiences, which contrasts sharply with the other students' discomfort when discussing reading and books:

S1: ...it takes me from where I am now to the story in the book, or I can be watching a movie, I'm so involved in the book or the movie that I do not think about where I'm at, or that I'm disabled or that I can't do this, or I can't do that...you know, it's like when I watch...different styles of dance, like ballet, it's like, in my mind, I'm doing that. You know? I'm not here, it's not here, it's not now, it's like, in my mind, I'm the one on the floor. So...

I: Yeah...

S1: And books have that way of taking you from where you are, right now, into a totally different time, a totally different period, and you're out of yourself for the time that you're reading the book. You know, you're a person in the book, and the more you read, the more you want to know about that time period, it's just awesome. It takes you somewhere else besides in the present.

Dee was the only new reader who described reading as liberating. Her almost constant physical discomfort makes reading in class extremely difficult; she tires easily when reading out loud, and usually prefers to listen. However, it is apparent from her description of the act of reading that she is sometimes able to read at above her second grade testing level. Perhaps she actually listened to the books; I didn't want to press her on this issue because she is identifying herself as a reader.

One of the common themes among the students was that they all expressed joy and gratitude for the help they have received through the literacy program. In the following extract, Terrence (S4) equates reading with 'normalcy.' He did not enjoy talking about the book. During class, he couldn't remember what had occurred during the previous day's reading, but he did enjoy listening to the story. He said that he really does enjoy being able to read. Literacy made him feel like a 'normal' person because he was able to pick up a book or a magazine at the doctor's office:

S4: Since I started coming to the Adult Center, I have enjoyed reading more. Before I started coming here, I could care less about reading. You know, reading just wasn't something I would sit down and do like a normal person would do every day on their spare time.

I: And now you do.

S4: Yes, now I will pick up a book and read it, read for a while, even if I go to a doctor's office, they have magazines laying out, I will go through the front, every one of the magazines, and I will sit there and read maybe 2 or 3 pages of the article until the doctor calls me back. And now I really enjoy reading.

I: What about talking about books?

S4: I'm not very good in that part of...I do not know, I've always been kind of shy. And you know, I do not like talking to a lot of people.

When asked about One Book participation, he said that it did help him to be less shy, but he immediately turned the conversation back to his school and family experiences. This shift often happened during interviews – when asked about the text, the students usually returned to their lived experiences. The following extract demonstrates this shift:

I: Do you think that programs like this, having all of these different types of people—help people feel more comfortable in talking to a wider range of people? That's one of the goals of the program, is to bridge gaps between people.

S4: Yeah, you know, it helps me. I used to get...well, when I was going to school, I would just sit back, wouldn't, I would listen but wouldn't participate, wouldn't give them my opinion on anything. That's just how, during that time, I guess I could just care less about the darn book. And just wanted to move on.

I: Yeah, wanted to be having fun, not in the classroom. Yeah, I remember those days.

S4: And, but now, and I guess it also kind of helps having a teacher that really understands. When I was going to school I took seven different classes, and all seven of them, I maybe had one teacher that would really sit down and work with me one-on-one, you know, really help me, like on a math problem, and the rest of them said, just do the best you can. And to me, I do not think that's right.

I: No, it's not.

S4: And they are there to help. Help the students achieve their goals. And there was one time, I can even remember, when I was living in the foster home, I, there was a bunch of kids at school would make fun of me because I was slow learning, would call me dummy, stupid...

In the following excerpt Dee, the student who so reveled in the transcendental literature experience, recalled the dim days of her schooling. She contrasted the literacy classroom with her demeaning childhood experiences:

S1: And almost every classroom experience I've had I've been singled out as being different, not being accepted for who I was, not because of the disability, but because I was slower, I didn't pick up on things as fast as other students. And I felt like I was always being singled out for that, like there was something wrong with me. You know, if you do not want to be like she is, you need to do 'this, this, this, and this.' Otherwise you'll be where she is for the rest of your life. And that's one of the things I admire about Telyn still to this day, is she does not come across as that kind of person. She treats you as an equal and not every classroom environment is like that—you get pointed at and stared at if you're the least bit different.

It would be nice to think that taking the new readers to the library would help them to overcome some of their social isolation and their reading difficulties, but they often have problems getting to the library because of time or practical constraints. In the following excerpt Tim (S3), explained

that he does not go to the library often because he is so busy. He, also, turns back to his past (perceived) failures in school, and why he is in school again:

S3: I do not go to the library that much because I'm busy and working, working two jobs, and going to school here...

I: That would keep you busy.

S3: Yeah, maybe some day I will go to the library, if I have free time.

I: Do you have much time to read outside of class?

S3: Well, right now I'm still working on reading, and writing, so that's what I'm doing right now. I'm happy about that, I'm glad I go to school here because back in...back around the '80's, I was going to school out there (unintell.) and I ain't learned nothing out there, I ain't never learned to read or write, or nothing, so what I did, I said, well, I know I'm too old, but I decided I'm going to go to school, I'm going to go to night class.

#### *New Readers and the Phenomenological Attitude*

The meaning of participation for the new readers was quite different from that of the confident readers, which was apparent through both interviews and observations. The literacy students had very little experience with reading for enjoyment. While experienced readers often pointed out that they used the community reading book as a 'seal of approval', the new readers read the book because their teacher bought it for them. They had a difficult time reading it — each time they started reading it, the teacher recapped the previous days' readings and the basic plot.

At public events, the new readers were shy about participating—their body language was very reserved or even stiff, and they did not talk amongst themselves as many other audience members did, although they later said that they enjoyed the events. The more confident readers were more likely to talk to each other—both strangers and friends.

Observations and interviews also indicated that the confident readers were able to make more connections between the book and the events in their own lives. Literature gives people another lens through which to view their own lives, and the confident readers had developed this lens. They also had more finely developed communication skills to describe their experience of literature, while the literacy students generally avoided talking about the book.

Despite the literacy students' low skills in communicating about literature, simply being a part of the experience gave them a new way to think about literature. As Dee pointed out, she enjoyed going to the events of the previous year because she was able to see that everyone interpreted the book differently. She also expressed a confidence which the other students lacked—when the conversation was about 'being on the outside,' she was able to speak up. She knew exactly what it was like to be on the outside,

and she had the confidence to tell people about it. She demonstrated that the new readers are not always too shy to speak, and that they can make connections between the literature experience and their own lives. She shares a common trait with the other literacy students, in that reading is extremely difficult for her. However, she also shows that not all literacy students are too shy to participate, and that they can experience the transcendent experience of reading.

New adult readers tend to have experienced the world in a particular way. The natural attitude, at best, characterizes the experiences. “At best” is used here because there may be some absence of reflection on the immanent nature of the objective world. It is apparent that these readers do not engage in *noesis*; they are not prepared to approach intentionality from the phenomenological attitude. The readers certainly demonstrate some reflection, but reading, as some may take for granted, is not part of the life-world of these individuals. The interpretations that are illustrated above indicate the situatedness of the interviewees, their perceptions of the reading experience in terms of experience in the world. The readers do accept that there may be some benefits, some usefulness to reading, but the phenomenological attitude has not been created. As Husserl says, “This reflection of knowledge, however, was not transcendental reflection but rather a reflection on the praxis of knowledge and was thus similar to the reflection carried out by one who works in any other practical sphere of interest, the kind which is expressed in the general propositions of a technology” (Husserl, 1970, p. 92).

*What does this mean for libraries?*

First of all, we must remember that there are many reasons for illiteracy or low literacy. Some brains are wired to easily acquire literacy; for others it is a struggle. If a child’s home and educational life does not provide extensive interventions, acquisition of the written word will be very difficult. Librarians should avoid making assumptions about literacy levels, taking cues from patrons, displaying compassion and understanding towards patrons of all ages regarding reading ability. Low literacy is often hidden, and a patron who lacks reading skills has probably experienced intense humiliation and frustration.

Second, research has shown that there is a correlation between reading and civic participation. The scenario in which the students took part in community-wide events engaged the students in both, because they had the opportunity to be part of the community through the act of reading. This suggests that libraries can be an avenue for civic engagement for new readers and experienced readers in One Read events. However, as the above interviews indicated, many new readers are not likely to go to the library due to time constraints and negative past experiences. The library might have more success partnering with literacy groups and other existing organizations. Providing these groups with book club suggestions which might speak to the students—that speak their language—might also help

engage the students. Connecting with adult education and literacy classes and bringing the new readers into the library can enrich the conversation for all participants and might be especially meaningful and helpful for the new readers when they see how experienced readers connect with literature.

We know the value of becoming “one” with a text, and this research has shown that it might be possible for new readers. However, there are other ways to engage new readers with books in such a way that they can experience the phenomenological shift; as indicated above, one student who only tested at a second grade level was able to describe this shift. Providing the students with opportunities to listen to the books and discuss the meanings of difficult words and concepts can help them to experience this shift. This process feeds on itself as a love of reading develops. This research has shown several benefits of participating in community reading events for new readers: it can help them connect to the community and widen their perspective. The research also demonstrates the value of moving beyond a functional definition of literacy in the classroom. Realizing the value of literature in adult education could give librarians a unique and valued position in adult literacy; developing relationships with new readers through partnerships can reinforce this role.

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## **LIBRARIANS AS LITERACY SPONSORS: a critique of information literacy assessment tools**

**by Kerry Sutherland**

**D**eborah Brandt claims that literacy sponsors “are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach and model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress or withhold literacy – and gain advantage by it in some way” (19). Literacy, in this regard, is the ability to communicate successfully in writing to an intended audience. One might expect a definition of literacy to include reading ability, but because reading is not a productive skill, it does not afford the same attention as writing, which offers “the only viable way to have voice” (48). Sponsors of literacy, who aim to advance the production of successful written communication, control access to the benefits of these particular skills, primarily the benefit of having one’s concerns and ideas taken into consideration by an intended audience for a specific purpose, whether it be to inform, describe, persuade, impress, or entertain.

Brant, emphasizing the productive aspect of literacy, notes the economic, political, intellectual, and spiritual benefits for those who develop literacy as a written ability (5). The ability to communicate through writing has a profound effect on one’s sense of security and dignity (1), and is “a key resource in gaining profit and edge” (21). Literacy sponsorship has to do with the “association between literacy skill and social viability” (19). Clearly, teachers, and composition teachers in particular, are literacy sponsors who promote these skills as much as possible under the circumstances of their work environment, and gain advantage by fulfilling the terms of their positions and producing students who can make their voices heard through the written word, ideally earning job and financial security, along with “credit by association” (19) by successful sponsorship.

Librarians, on the other hand, are generally associated with reading as opposed to writing. Teaching students how to find reading material suited to their information needs has always been the primary role of academic and school librarians. Those needs revolve around a lack of information; therefore, the skills involved in the ability to access information fall under the umbrella of information literacy, according to the American Library Association. “Ensuring that students are information literate . . . has long been a key priority for the profession of librarianship,” explains Neely

(2). Reading is well-promoted in a variety of highly publicized campaigns through various venues, but “writing enjoys no such sponsorship. Writing is less explicitly taught and publicly valued than reading [is]” (Brandt 167). How is literacy in terms of written communication, and the sponsorship of that literacy, connected to information literacy, and what role do librarians play as literacy sponsors by the behaviors of teaching and assessing information literacy?

The five standards for information literacy set forth by the Association of College and Research Libraries, which break down into twenty-two performance indicators, are meant to offer a guide for teachers and librarians to use in the pursuit of effective critical thinking acquisition instruction. The outcomes are meant to aid the assessment of the skills to which information literacy standards aim. While the ACRL information literacy standards document published by the American Library Association does not indicate priority or preference for any one standard over the others, ACRL information literacy competency Standard Four is generally neglected by information literacy assessment practices and is also the standard most closely tied with written communication and writing performance. It states that “the information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose . . . [outcome 3.d] communicates clearly and with a style that supports the purposes of the intended audience” (ACRL 13).

While the primary concern of this essay is that of practices in post-secondary education, the transferability of information literacy skills from high school to college is worth note. The American Association of School Librarians standards for information literacy, which focus, according to the AASL, on the learning process, include the ability to “use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively” (3.1.3; AASL 15). This focus on written expression is clearly of the same mind as the above mentioned ACRL standard, with the ACRL standard at a higher level of expectation of student ability. While Gavin claims that “students must leave the pedagogical comfort zone of high school where they learned bits of knowledge fed to them incrementally by their teachers” (1), according to the ASSL, these students should leave the K-12 experience with information literacy skills already in development, established at the primary school level and built upon through high school.

#### *Assessment — a critique*

The assessment of information literacy, which is generally undertaken by librarians as opposed to subject instructors, is primarily limited to questionnaires or multiple choice examinations on the suitability of specific resources to research needs, and if and when the written product of the research is involved in information literacy assessment at all, as Knight notes, the quality of the writing is not observed, but rather, only the content in a manner of discovering whether or not research was pertinent is of interest.

Kent State University's Project SAILS, or Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills, is a high-profile example of information literacy assessment outside of the context of written product performance. This 45 question multiple choice test for undergraduate students, developed by award-winning librarians at the Kent State University's School of Library and Information Science (the developers won the 2009 Ilene F. Rockman Publication Award for their book on information literacy assessment), is "a response to a growing need to measure information literacy of college students with a valid and reliable instrument." The team "envisioned a standardized tool that is valid and reliable," and claims validity and reliability of the SAILS instrument based on the "good measure" of information literacy, compared to SAT/ACT scores and another information literacy examination, the Information Literacy Test (ILT) from James Madison University.

The SAILS developers' award-winning publication, *A Practical Guide to Information Literacy for Academic Librarians*, defines validity as referring to "how well the measurement tool, in this case, the knowledge test, measures the phenomenon of interest" (92). This definition, outdated by at least twenty years, is, according to Huot, "impoverished" because it "allows for claims of validity regardless of the theoretical orientation of the assessment or its consequences" (Re *Articulating* 37). SAILS developers consider their instrument valid, but validity, by the currently accepted definition of the word, cannot be based on the instrument itself, nor can it be finite or complete. Twenty years ago, Messick explained that "validity . . . is not an all-or-none question" but rather an attribute described by degrees (10), and Cronbach notes that "validation is never finished" (5). Sireci agrees that "validity can be evaluated only with respect to a specific testing purpose" (478), which, of course, is not for test developers to decide, since they do not make the value judgments and decisions that test administrators and users of test results do. Validity is about this aspect of testing, rather than the test itself or what it purports to measure.

The latest edition of *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999) explains validity on the first page of the first section of the publication, thus enforcing the importance of clarity and understanding of the word in use for assessment purposes: "Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed uses of tests. Validity is, therefore, the most fundamental consideration in developing and evaluating tests" (9). This 'fundamental consideration' is incorrectly defined and justified by the SAILS team, which includes a professor with a background in educational measurement, and claims validity for the test itself based on the test's ability to measure what it claims to measure. Huot claims that "such a limited definition is not only inadequate, but dangerous because it accords an unexamined authority to an assessment that has the power to define educational achievement and influence instruction" (Re *Articulating* 48). Messick insists that "validity is an inductive summary of both the existing evidence for and the actual as well as potential consequences of score interpretation and uses." (5)

A shift from the former understanding of validity, as used by the SAILS team, to the current one, occurred between 1955 and 1989, beginning with Cronbach in 1955, who recognized the need to consider the proposed interpretation of test results before evaluating validity. The currently accepted definition of validity encourages critical reflection on the use of the results of the test, which are, of course, the materials with which those in power control those who take the test by using the results to affect the lives of test takers.

Project SAILS, which is based on the ALA Information Literacy Content Standards for Higher Education, tests skill sets involving the development and execution of research strategies (searching for, retrieving, evaluating, and documenting information) and the legal and ethical use of found information. The overview for the project includes the intention to treat the “ability to locate, access, and evaluate information” because those are the skills the developers believe “essential to closing the gap between the information rich and the information poor.” The team acknowledges the omission of 25 objectives and outcomes that are not tested by the SAILS instrument, specifically because they “cannot be tested in the multiple-choice format.” These represent skills within four of the standards represented by the test. The glaring absence of an entire standard (Four), however, is not admitted in any part of the SAILS document.

Project SAILS is not the only information literacy assessment instrument that fails to examine standards and outcomes dealing with written communication. Only three of the 23 instruments featured in *Assessing Student Learning Outcomes for Information Literacy Instruction in Academic Institutions* handle communication outcomes; and several of the instruments, while included in a book on information literacy assessment, are not actually tools for such assessment. Instead, they detail the evaluation of research or information skills, rather than information literacy. Information literacy, by definition, includes a communication aspect, and without the consideration of that aspect, those instruments explore skill sets that operate without the aspect of literacy and communication. To place all of these instruments together under the umbrella of ‘information literacy’ is inaccurate and misleading.

Another publication that represents research skills as information literacy is *Integrating Information Literacy Into the Higher Education Curriculum: Practical Methods for Transformation*, in which Lynn Cameron details the evolution of the Library Skills Test at James Madison University. Aptly titled, the LST, which was created and used in the 1980s, became the Informational Skills Seeking Test (ISST) by the late 1990s. Neither version looks at the communication of information, and in fact, are not titled as information literacy assessments, but are included in this book, which states that there is an “increasing validity” to the ISST (229), when validity, in actuality, is not about the test itself. Messick is very clear in determining that the test itself is not validated, but rather the use, inferences, and decisions made based on the interpretation of the score

is validated (5). Kane agrees that “validation focuses on interpretations, or meanings, and on decisions, which reflect values and consequences” (18). The comment on Standard 1.2 of the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* adds additional credence to this perspective:

Statements about validity should refer to particular interpretations and uses. It is incorrect to use the unqualified phrase ‘the validity of the test.’ No test is valid for all purposes or in all situations. Each recommended use of interpretation requires validation and should specify in clear language the population for which the test is intended, the construct it is intended to measure, and the manner and contexts in which test scores are to be employed (17-18).

In another article in *Integrating Information Literacy Into the Higher Education Curriculum: Practical Methods for Transformation*, Lindauer and Brown outline the development of the Bay Area Community College Information Competency Assessment Project. The authors note that the project, which was designed from 2000-2003 by librarians working within five community colleges in California, is an incomplete assessment, because of the “practical limitations of what could reasonably be assessed in an exam setting” (171). Standard Four is not included in the exam, as it “would require some type of fairly lengthy writing and/or speaking assignment to assess” (171). Since Standard Four does not ‘fit in’ to the desired testing structure, it is ignored.

The aforementioned assessments, as they are called, are not really assessments at all, because assessments, according to Delandshire, are “concerned with determining the significance, importance, or value of an event and refers to the procedures used to obtain information and form value judgments” (16). If, according to Messick, the basic validity question is “*should* the test scores be interpreted and used in the manner proposed?” but there is no concern for “value judgments” or use of the results, these activities are merely measurements, or the “assignment of numbers to properties of objects or events” (16). “When assessments are adopted and promoted without appropriate validation inquiry . . . we are jeopardizing our students’ opportunities for learning and success,” claims O’Neill (62).

Mueller very specifically denies the necessity for a standard “for *using* the information once it has been located, assessed, and evaluated. Virtually everything we do involves using information, so, in my view, to include it in the definition of information literacy unnecessarily broadens it” (78). What is the purpose, then, of teaching and assessing research and evaluation skills if the end result, that is, the communication of the information processed and reformulated, is not considered? Mueller believes that the communicative aspect of the research process should lie in the hands of others who teach and assess writing and speaking: “I believe that to include such uses of information dilutes the meaning of information literacy, stretching it too far” (78). He advocates, essentially, divorcing the goal of

the process from the process itself, and while librarians, prompted by ALA standards and statements, claim to pursue partnership with other academic disciplines by collaborating on assignments in order to instill information literacy skills as part of a natural, problem-solving process, they fall short when it comes to the standard involving written communication.

Lane recognizes that in “standards-based education, the standards should be derived from the construct” (390) but this is not happening in information literacy education, which is, apparently, standards-based but removed from the context of actual use with the entirety of the purported standards, allowing for the evaluation of only those skills promoted by librarians. Why should we teach information literacy up to the communication standard, when it seems pointless to have skills of research and evaluation if one cannot successfully share newfound knowledge with others?

University graduates should, as a primary goal of those responsible for their education, be able to problem solve and successfully participate in knowledge extension with those in their field and the community in general. An information literate individual is action-oriented (Bruce 27), practiced in problem solving from his or her experience with writing processes which make use of information literacy skills as outlined in information literacy standards set forth by the AASL and ALA beginning at the grade school level and continuing through post-secondary education. Baker recognizes that composition teachers “provide space for students to develop a critical consciousness, both about their own lives and the academic world in which they will perform” (187) and the opportunity to express that consciousness through the written word. The assessment of information literacy skills and the use of said skills as a whole rather than as parts separated from the critical thinking process they are meant to develop is essential to determine a student’s ability to communicate successfully through writing.

Project SAILS authors suggest collaboration with teachers by offering to “evaluate the citation list for a research paper or to compare students’ bibliography annotations to database abstracts” (117), which is not enough to assess the information literacy standards and outcomes as a whole. They also state that “there is an implicit expectation that associated skills will be incorporated into the curriculum” (8). Instead of “expecting” others to do this, librarians should take the initiative to approach the university community regarding collaboration, and involve themselves to a deeper extent than merely checking bibliographic citations. Edward White asserts that “writing must be seen as a whole and [that] the evaluating of writing cannot be split into a sequence of objective activities” (28); the same can be said of information literacy acquisition and assessment.

Assessment is “an integral part of the information literacy standards for student learning” (AASL 174). Attempting to determine if students are information literate (one of the questions posed by the Project SAILS team) without assessing the communication standard is merely an examination of research skills and does not address literacy in any regard. According

to Brandt, literacy learning refers to “specific occasions when people take on new understandings or capacities” (6). Information literacy instruction must include assessment of the entire information literacy acquisition process. Librarians who are responsible for information literacy instruction are those responsible for the assessment of that instruction and the student performance that results from it.

Like writing assessments, information literacy assessments should be site-based and locally controlled; there should be no need for large scale standardized assessments such as SAILS, which are actually research skills measurements purporting to be information literacy assessments. The use of such standardized assessments reduce information literacy from the realm of higher order thinking critical thinking ability that is necessary to produce and communicate new knowledge to a set of disconnected, decontextualized skills that have nothing to do with knowledge production and communication.

During the inquiry process, students “build constructs for writing, composting, and relating” and form a focus for their written expression, while they “explore information and ideas within sources to form new understanding from these ideas”(Kuhlthau 22). Brandt reiterates that “contextual perspectives tend to emphasize the relational nature of reading and writing: People build up and exercise skills through participation with others in particular contexts” (3). If “recording and sharing the processes and results of exploration is the foundation of the academic enterprise” (Francois 122) then librarians, charged with responsibility for ensuring that students are information literate, must accept that writing is part of information literacy, and as literacy sponsors, “enable, support, teach, and model” effective and purposeful writing for the benefit of students and the security of the librarian’s position in the academic world. Huot asserts that “a valid procedure for assessing writing must have positive impact and consequences for the teaching and learning of writing” (*Toward*, 551); the same should be expected of information literacy assessment, and the goals of those librarians responsible for that assessment should include changes for the better in the teaching of information literacy and the lives of those students assessed on an individual basis.

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# THE ETHICS OF OPEN ACCESS TO RESEARCH: A Call for Civil Disobedience and Moral Courage

by Denise Troll Covey

This article explores the ideological context, official rhetoric and rank-and-file behavior of authors and publishers in the movement to provide free online (open) access to scholarly journal articles. Analysis reveals transparency among authors and obfuscation among publishers. The core values and ethical principles of librarianship require librarians to stand with authors and to exercise and foster civil disobedience and moral courage in support of open access.

## *The Context*

For the purposes of this article, open access (OA) means the free online availability of journal articles with the permission of the author. Authors may make their articles OA in websites or repositories or in journals. OA advocates refer to self-archiving articles in websites or repositories as “green OA” and publishing in OA journals as “gold OA.” Hybrid journals provide open access only to articles for which a fee has been paid on behalf of the author (Suber, “Open Access Overview”).

Despite the growth and momentum of the OA movement (Morrison), staunch supporters and staunch detractors continue to argue the costs and benefits of OA. The seeds of the dispute lay in what Corynne McSherry calls the epistemic regime. (See table 1) The regime is comprised of two social worlds: a world where knowledge cannot be owned and a world where knowledge can be owned. The academy produces the knowledge that cannot be owned, facts and ideas conceived as cognitive property. It monopolizes competence in a gift economy. Researchers have a moral obligation to generate facts and ideas and to give them to their peers and the public as gifts. The ethic is sharing. The value of a gift to its creator is the recognition it brings. But to give the gift, researchers must express their facts and ideas in fixed form. They must turn them into artifacts. Creating an artifact moves the work into the realm of law and knowledge that can be owned. Copyright law polices artifacts perceived as intellectual property. It monopolizes intellectual commodities in a market economy. The ethic here is economic rights. The value of the artifact is its potential for economic gain (McSherry 6-7, 17-18, 27-28, 40, 68, 76, 108).

Table 1. The epistemic regime.

	Epistemic regime	
Social world	Academy	Law
Property	Cognitive facts and ideas	Intellectual artifacts
Monopoly	Competence	Copyright
Knowledge	Cannot be owned	Can be owned
Economy	Gift (public good)	Market (private interest)
Ethic	Sharing and moral obligations	Property and economic rights
Incentive	Potential for recognition	Potential for economic gain

The gift and market economies of knowledge are polarized, interwoven and mutually constitutive (McSherry 99). Border disputes arise because the boundary between the two worlds is fuzzy and unstable. Open access to journal articles – artifacts for free – is a border dispute with profound implications. The OA dispute is possible because authorship is a boundary object, a vehicle capable of disrupting the regime by deploying the norms of one economy in another (McSherry 4, 15, 68, 59). The OA movement is the gift economy operating in market space, a subversive, confrontational and competitive phenomenon. The rhetoric of the dispute creates and addresses moral communities (McSherry 12).

#### *The Rhetoric*

Both proponents and opponents of OA use crisis rhetoric to state their case. Theodore Windt has identified three key components of successful crisis rhetoric (128). First, a situation must be identified as dangerous and the danger grounded in facts. Second, the situation must be tied to an ongoing battle between incompatible ideologies that has escalated to a crisis of values. Third, acceptance of the new policy proposed to resolve the crisis must be seen as the moral choice. According to Paul R. Wolpe, crisis rhetoric is essential for substantive social change (1138-1140). The values and assumptions underlying an established practice must be challenged and the problems unveiled carefully elevated to crisis proportions – without breaking all bonds with established practice – for substantial change to occur. Breaking all bonds with established practice risks having the challenge dismissed as fanatical.

To advocates of the OA movement, the fact-based crisis is twofold: an economic crisis of journal prices spiraling out of control, and a social crisis of commodifying knowledge that cannot be owned, thereby enclosing the commons, impeding innovation and hampering the public good. The movement issues two challenges to the status quo. First, by requiring authors to legally retain certain rights to their work it challenges the tradition of

full copyright transfer to the publisher. Wolpe calls this type of challenge rebellion (1139-1140). Second, it challenges the model underlying U.S. copyright law that assumes economic gain is the incentive that drives faculty to conduct research and to publish journal articles. Wolpe calls this type of challenge heresy and heresy a form of civil disobedience (1138, 1142). Given the market economy of publishing and the long history of unquestioned copyright transfer, publisher resistance to such dissent is no surprise. Their crisis rhetoric is examined later in this article.

The gift and market economies have always clashed, but the incompatibility was relatively inconspicuous until digital technologies changed what was possible, what researchers expected, and what publishers did with their gifts. Now that technology enables vast dissemination at minimal cost and journal publishers are leveraging technology to raise prices, license access and limit fair use, the moral choice from the perspective of many authors is open access to the gift of journal literature.

#### *Law and Ethics*

Before examining the behavior of authors, publishers and librarians in the dispute over open access, it is important to distinguish law and ethics. The two are not synonymous. Ethics is concerned with right and wrong. It discerns good from bad behavior based on principles of conduct grounded in moral values, duty and obligation. The law is concerned with prescribed rules of conduct enforced by a controlling authority. The judiciary discerns legal from illegal behavior. Laws may or may not be ethical, though the legislature endeavors over time to align law and ethics, for example, in legislation on civil rights and the rights of the disabled.

Determining whether a behavior is ethical entails examining the intentions, foreseen consequences and values motivating the behavior (Sinnott-Armstrong). Ethical intentions are both self- and other-regarding; they consider what is best for all concerned. Foreseen consequences can be benevolent, innocuous or harmful. Ethics allows harmful foreseen consequences to be accepted reluctantly if the harm does not exceed the benefit (Arneson 1-2). Reluctant acceptance must be demonstrated in attempts to avoid or to minimize harm. On the value hierarchy, greater, intrinsic goods dare not be sacrificed for lesser, extrinsic goods. For example, the public good must not be sacrificed for private gain. Finally, if behavior results in harmful unforeseen consequences and the harm exceeds the benefit, steps must be taken to correct course.

#### *Researcher Ethics and Practice*

Research faculty have a hybrid ethic (McSherry 110). They want to create and give gifts, but they also want the academic exception that enables them to own copyright to their work rather than have it owned by their institution as a work for hire. Copyright ownership preserves their honor, academic freedom, control of their work and sense of propriety (McSherry 125-40).

Many faculty members resist efforts to help them manage their copyrights. They resist policies that would require them to retain certain rights or to grant certain rights to their institution. They resist these initiatives because they perceive them as threatening their honor, autonomy, control of their work and sense of propriety (McSherry 103, 105-106).<sup>1</sup>

Despite this strong stand, authors willingly transfer their copyright to journal publishers. They intend in transferring copyright to get broad distribution of their gift. The foreseen consequence is recognition of their contribution to the discipline. They do not receive royalties from the publisher. Highly valued articles might yield indirect financial gain in the form of promotion or grant funding, but gifts must be freely given to secure this benefit.

What researchers did not foresee over centuries of blithely transferring copyright to journal publishers was the day when publishers would hold their gifts hostage for a ransom increasingly few could pay. When that day arrived, the response was the OA movement to free the hostages and end the perceived harm to authors and the public good. The official rhetoric of the movement upholds copyright law. To increase faculty participation, leaders encourage the use of author addenda to modify copyright transfer agreements and push for OA mandates (Swan and Chan, ROARMAP). To minimize harmful consequences to publishers, they support reasonable delays (embargoes) before making articles OA, the study of alternative economic models to finance journal publishing, and compacts to facilitate publishers transitioning from toll access to open access (Suber, “AAA adopts 35 year embargo”; SPARC; Shieber).

In practice, researchers do not understand their copyrights or manage them well. They typically do not consider copyright transfer terms when selecting a publisher or try to negotiate copyright transfer terms.<sup>2</sup> Many faculty sign agreements without even reading them and many are confused about who owns the copyright to their work (Troll Covey, “Faculty Rights”; University of California 61; Swan and Brown 56). They are also confused about open access. Few faculty who self-archive believe they need publisher permission to self-archive. Regardless of their beliefs, most self-archivers do not ask permission and are unaware of publisher OA policies (Swan and Brown 56, 48).

Not surprisingly, faculty are infringing copyright to their own work. My study of Carnegie Mellon faculty self-archiving practices discovered that 38% of the 4,816 journal articles self-archived on personal or departmental websites were not aligned with publisher policies (Troll Covey, “Self-Archiving Journal Articles”).<sup>3</sup> Assessment of alignment was based strictly on whether publisher policy allowed self-archiving on websites and if so, whether the policy allowed, required or prohibited self-archiving the Version of Record (NISO 3-4).<sup>4</sup> The biggest problem by far was self-archiving the Version of Record when it was prohibited: 73% of the unaligned articles were publisher PDFs.<sup>5</sup> In disciplines where key publishers prohibited OA,

self-archiving in breach of the prohibition was a significant problem. In disciplines where faculty share work early in its life cycle, self-archiving in breach of publisher policies that allow self-archiving of the author's manuscript prior to publication but require faculty who self-archive to self-archive the Version of Record after publication was a problem. (See tables 2 and 3.)

Table 2. Carnegie Mellon faculty self-archiving of journal articles.

College	Faculty		Articles			
	Total	OA	Total	OA	Not aligned with policy	Policy unknown
Business and economics	90	46%	1,415	16%	18%	13%
Computer science	205	67%	2,340	55%	31%	8%
Engineering	179	30%	4,713	24%	35%	7%
Fine Arts	184	3%	200	17%	58%	15%
Humanities & social sciences	148	34%	2,419	40%	63%	8%
Public policy & management	54	17%	380	26%	45%	19%
Science	158	31%	3,414	41%	29%	5%
TOTAL	1,018	34%	14,881	32%	38%	8%

Table 3. Carnegie Mellon faculty OA article lack of alignment with publisher policy.

College	OA prohibited	Pub PDF required	Pub PDF prohibited
Business & economics	7%		93%
Computer science	5%	25%	70%
Engineering	25%	14%	61%
Fine Arts			100%
Humanities and social sciences	9%	1%	90%
Public policy and management	22%	2%	76%
Science	47%		53%
TOTAL	18%	9%	73%

Conversations with Carnegie Mellon faculty revealed that some of them knew they were self-archiving in breach of publisher policy; some of them did not. Those who knowingly infringed copyright to their own work assumed no harm to the institution or to their personal reputation. Those who were concerned about copyright infringement and those who were concerned that OA would kill key journals by eliminating subscriptions did not self-archive.

Publishers care when faculty infringe copyright to their own work because of the potential impact on the market, but they have not charged them with copyright infringement. Publishers need faculty submissions to stay in business; sanctions could produce an unwanted backlash of sympathy for authors. The academy seems not to care if faculty infringe copyright to their own work. Self-archiving in breach of publisher policy is not seen as a serious breach of standards of faculty conduct. Administrators do not interfere with faculty autonomy, perhaps because the institution has limited liability for faculty copyright infringement (U.S. Copyright Office 11-12). Nevertheless, universities have mounted programs, often led by librarians, to educate authors about their copyrights, the benefits of OA and the need to retain the rights necessary to make their work OA. The futility of this approach is beginning to be acknowledged (Hahn 28; Duranceau and Anderson 33). The approach more likely to increase self-archiving and compliance with copyright law is institutional or governmental mandates. Despite researcher resistance to interference in managing their copyrights, a study conducted by Alma Swan and Sheridan Brown indicates that a large majority (94%) of faculty would comply with a mandate.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Publisher Ethics and Practice*

Publishers have an ethic of economic rights. They intend in acquiring copyright to broadly distribute journal articles through sales. The foreseen consequence is economic gain. To increase economic gain, for-profit publishers created artificial scarcity, triggering the spiral of increasing prices and decreasing subscriptions that invited the competition of open access. The formerly unforeseen consequence now seen by many publishers is authors stipulating the terms for copyright transfer or, more likely, rescuing their work held hostage without negotiating the right to self-archive their work or paying the ransom for hybrid journals to make their work OA. In an attempt to minimize harmful consequences, publishers resist OA mandates, reject author addenda and either prohibit OA or allow it if certain conditions and restrictions are met.

In theory, many journal publishers support OA. In December 2009, most (62%) of the 661 publishers in the SHERPA RoMEO database allowed self-archiving of some version of their articles in some venue, in a sense releasing hostages and restoring their gift status (RoMEO). But in practice, what do they release when and where?

Over a third (38%) of the publishers in the RoMEO database prohibit self-archiving, holding all article versions hostage with no terms for their release. Of the publishers that allow OA, most hold the Version of Record hostage and many prohibit self-archiving in an institutional repository. In a study conducted by the Publishing Research Consortium (PRC), 90% of the journals that allowed OA prohibited self-archiving the Version of Record (Morris 12). Presumably most faculty want to provide open access to the Version of Record and most publishers hold this version hostage because it is the most useful presentation of the gift. Roughly 80% of the 203 publisher policies examined in the PRC study allowed self-archiving on websites, but only 60% allowed self-archiving in an institutional repository (Morris 10). The study also reported that from 2005 to 2008 the number of publishers that allowed self-archiving increased, but among large publishers (those that publish most of the journal articles) there was a decrease in allowing self-archiving, particularly of the Version of Record (Morris 14).

My analysis of publisher policies explored in the Carnegie Mellon study of faculty self-archiving practices confirms that most publishers hold the Version of Record hostage and that publisher policies are more liberal about self-archiving on websites than institutional repositories. (See table 4.) Because faculty websites are typically deleted when faculty leave the institution, prohibitions on providing open access in an institutional repository in effect hold articles hostage from long-term preservation.

Table 4. Carnegie Mellon analysis of publisher self-archiving policies.  
 Total publishers = 282      Total titles = 2,833  
 IR = institutional repository

Publisher policy	Author's Original or Submitted Manuscript		Author's Accepted Manuscript		Version of record (publisher PDF)	
	Publishers	Titles	Publishers	Titles	Publishers	Titles
Allowed on website	43%	83%	65%	90%	25%	17%
Allowed in IR	38%	75%	54%	80%	20%	14%
Prohibited on website	48%	14%	33%	9%	56%	75%
Prohibited in IR	52%	22%	44%	20%	61%	79%

Beyond limiting support for OA to less useful versions of an article and less secure venues for article preservation, many publishers specify conditions and restriction for OA that require maintenance over the life cycle of the work. For example, some policies stipulate that the Original Manuscript must be removed when the article is submitted for publication, accepted for publication or after publication. Some policies allow the Accepted Manuscript to be self-archived only after the article has been published. Table 5 indicates the percentage of publishers and journal titles examined in the Carnegie Mellon study that will release hostages under various circumstances. The dizzying array of stipulations and tedious tracking required for full compliance suggest that publisher support of OA is disingenuous. The policies reflect little understanding of disciplinary culture or respect for researchers' time.

More telling than publisher policies as a gauge of actual support for OA is the crisis rhetoric marshaled in response to the proposed National Institutes of Health (NIH) open access mandate in 2007. A group of scientific publishers hired a public relations "pit bull" to develop anti-OA strategies (Giles 347). The goal was not to make precise statements or to engage OA advocates in intellectual debate, but to craft media messages that would garner support for the opposition. Shortly thereafter, the Partnership for Research Integrity in Science & Medicine (PRISM) was launched with support from the Association of American Publishers. PRISM charged the OA movement with threatening peer review and the integrity of the scientific record, illegally forcing publishers to surrender their articles and copyrights, putting scholarly publishing at risk and censoring scientific information. The charges are false or dishonest (Suber, "Publishers Launch"), but they continue to fuel the ongoing campaigns to revoke the NIH open access mandate and to prevent passage of the Federal Research Public Access Act that would legislate a similar mandate for other government funding agencies (H.R. 801; S. 1373).

The crisis rhetoric of journal publishers is limited to describing the situation as dangerous. The rhetoric eschews facts for media fanfare, being careful not to expose the underlying conflict between author and publisher ideologies and values. Exposing the conflicting interests would acknowledge that journal publishers do not speak for authors and risk revealing that the economic model of copyright is not the incentive driving production of journal articles.

Table 5. Carnegie Mellon analysis of publisher OA policies conditions and restrictions.

Total publishers = 282      Total titles = 2,833

IR = institutional repository

Publisher policy	Author's Original or Submitted Manuscript		Author's Accepted Manuscript		Version of Record (publisher PDF)	
	Publishers	Titles	Publishers	Titles	Publishers	Titles
Allowed	30.14%	61.77%	36.17%	51.25%	11.70%	3.81%
Allowed with permission	1.42%	0.67%	1.77%	0.21%	1.06%	0.11%
Allowed only on private websites	0.35%	0.11%				
Allowed after accepted for peer review	0.35%	0.18%				
Allowed, but must remove after accepted for publication	0.71%	2.36%				
Allowed, but must remove after publication	3.55%	8.19%				
Allowed after publication			2.48%	1.02%		
Allowed after publication with permission			0.35%	0.04%	0.71%	0.07%
Required after publication					2.13%	5.79%
Allowed after embargo			9.93%	21.88%	3.19%	1.59%
Allowed after embargo; embargo on website longer than embargo on IR			0.35%	0.32%		
Allowed on website; request permission for IR	0.35%	0.88%	0.71%	3.32%		
Allowed on website after publication; allowed in IR after embargo			1.42%	1.38%	0.71%	2.19%
Allowed on website; prohibited in IR	5.32%	8.30%	9.22%	9.07%	4.96%	2.86%
Allowed on website if sign License to Publish (not Assignment of Copyright); prohibited in IR			0.35%	0.60%		

Table 5. continued

Allowed on website, but must remove during peer review; prohibited in IR	0.35%	0.07%				
Allowed on website after accepted for publication; prohibited in IR			0.35%	0.49%		
Allowed on website after publication; prohibited in IR	0.35%	0.07%	0.71%	0.11%		
Required on website after publication; prohibited in IR					0.71%	0.56%
Allowed on website after embargo; prohibited in IR			0.71%	0.21%		
Allowed in IR; prohibited on website	0.35%	0.32%	0.35%	0.07%		
Allowed in IR, but must remove when submitted for publication; prohibited on website	0.35%	0.25%				
Allowed in IR, but must remove after accepted for publication; prohibited on website	0.35%	0.11%				
Allowed in IR after embargo; prohibited on website			0.35%	0.11%		
Allowed if externally funded or required by institution			0.35%	0.04%		
Prohibited	46.45%	13.34%	32.62%	9.32%	54.96%	74.94%
Prohibited unless pay fee					0.71%	0.39%
Unclear	9.57%	3.39%	1.77%	0.56%	19.15%	7.70%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### *Librarian Ethics and Practice*

The ethic of librarianship is service. Librarians organize, preserve and provide equitable access to resources. We uphold intellectual freedom and resist censorship. We do not advance personal or private interests. We treat others fairly and with respect. And most importantly for the purposes of this article, “We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders” (ALA, *Code of Ethics*). Our professional practice is defined, informed and guided by our core values. The values that motivate our participation in the OA movement are service, equitable access, democracy, preservation and social responsibility (ALA, *Core Values*). Our profession requires us to resist the commodification of knowledge that cannot be owned.

Academic librarians participating in the open access movement intend to educate campus faculty about the benefits of OA, to help them make their work OA and to support alternative economic models for scholarly publishing. The foreseen consequences are increased faculty participation in the OA movement, more OA articles, and lower prices for journals, all of which will facilitate research and innovation and serve the public good.

When Carnegie Mellon’s provost provided the University Libraries with funding for an open-access institutional repository, we faced the quandary encountered by all libraries that operate OA repositories and mediate the deposit of materials. How do we populate the repository as quickly and cost-effectively as possible while respecting both copyright and the beliefs and behaviors of the faculty? Obviously we must consult publisher policy, but must we insist on full compliance with publisher policy?

Full compliance with publisher policy will slow the deposit of materials and increase costs. Mediating the maintenance required for full compliance would be tedious if not impossible. Faculty will likely ignore or be discouraged by repeated queries about their submissions. Certainly repeated rejections will discourage their participation in the repository. In short, requiring full compliance with publisher policy would yield poor return on the investment in the repository and compromise many of the core values of librarianship.

In contrast, requiring alignment with publisher policy would enable us to support and educate the faculty, reduce risks and costs, and uphold our professional values. But alignment would mean knowingly and willingly mediating copyright infringement. At Carnegie Mellon, the University Libraries is the unit accountable for the university’s copyright policy. According to the policy, “all members of the university community must comply with U.S. Copyright Law” (“Copyright Policy of Carnegie Mellon University”). Presumably we must also comply with publisher policy. Alignment is illegal, but is it unethical?

As I adjudicate the border dispute over OA, alignment with publisher policy is ethical because of the nature of research, the permission of the author and the transparency of the breach. Openly infringing copyright to one's own work given as a gift is significantly different from surreptitiously infringing someone else's work or work produced for economic gain. No one seems to perceive infringement of a gift by its creator as theft on a par with piracy of music, movies or software. Research is funded, conducted and published for the public good, not economic gain. Publisher interest in restricting access to journal articles does not serve researcher interest in the broadest possible distribution of their work (Suber, "An Open Letter"). Faculty who infringe copyright to their own work make an important and conspicuous statement about their interests. Regardless of whether they are aware of the infringement, the OA copies openly challenge the current copyright regime. They indicate what Kevin Smith observed: "faculty authors feel a legitimate sense of ownership over the products of scholarly publishing, even when they have not retained legal ownership" ("Presses, Piracy and the Slumping Economy"). Open challenges and established alternatives are powerful forms of dissent (Martin, "Against Intellectual Property").

Alignment with publisher policy is best for all concerned. It facilitates equitable access and encourages the use and application of research for the public good. It respects faculty autonomy and control of their work and facilitates recognition of their contribution to the discipline. It respects and serves the university mission, entrepreneurial spirit and need for asset protection. And it respects copyright law and publisher policy to the extent that librarians can without abandoning our values. Alignment increases the return on investment in research and in the institutional repository. Furthermore it enables librarians to assist in hostage rescue and to send a signal about overly restrictive, high-maintenance publisher policies. Faculty concerned about copyright infringement can fully comply with publisher policy.

Each library must decide what constitutes sufficient alignment to assuage its legal concerns. The intentions driving this position are self- and other-regarding. Harmful foreseen consequences are reluctantly accepted, demonstrated by efforts to minimize charges of copyright infringement. If in time harmful unforeseen consequences appear, steps can be taken to correct course.

#### *The Call*

The time has come for librarians to protest and to resist not just in intellectual debate, but in our behavior and to do so openly. Faced with the disrespectful demands and dishonest assertions of self-serving publishers, we must exercise and foster civil disobedience and moral courage in the border dispute over open access. Civil disobedience, disobeying a law on grounds of moral or political principle to influence society to accept

a dissenting point of view, is not mere passive resistance. It is action in a value-laden situation in which the conscience objects and hardship lurks. According to Rushworth Kidder and Martha Bracy, action in such circumstances takes moral courage: the strength and resolve to act to preserve the cross-cultural core values of honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility and compassion (20-22, 26-27).

Current copyright law is not achieving its constitutional purpose for research artifacts.<sup>7</sup> It is impeding rather than promoting progress. According to Georgia Harper, the copyright monopoly as it is currently cast is no longer tolerable because it strips research of its status as a gift for the common good (8). Reform is needed and copyright scholars predict that reform is coming (Litman; Samuelson). But the law changes at a glacial pace, much slower than changes in digital technology and human behavior. The law now lags significantly behind social consensus in the academy. To paraphrase Henry David Thoreau, in a democracy, when conscience and law clash we are morally justified, if not duty bound, to follow our conscience, not wait for the law to change (par. 4).

According to the *U.S. Declaration of Independence*, the government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. When these powers become destructive of the ends they were designed to serve, the people have a right to lay a new foundation and to organize power in a form more conducive to their safety and happiness (par. 2). In the border dispute over open access, researchers and librarians need to lay a new and principled foundation for research artifacts that recognizes the unique source and goal of these gifts in the marketplace. Addressing those who would stifle the possibilities afforded by digital technologies, John Perry Barlow's bold statement in *The Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace* fits our current predicament with copyright law kowtowing to commercial interests:

You do not know our culture, our ethics, or the unwritten codes that already provide our society more order than could be obtained by any of your impositions.... Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us.... [W]e cannot accept the solutions you are attempting to impose.... Your increasing obsolete information industries would perpetuate themselves by proposing laws, in America and elsewhere, that claim to own speech itself throughout the world.... These increasingly hostile and colonial measures place us in the same position as those previous lovers of freedom and self-determination who had to reject the authorities of distant, uninformed powers.

In the digital era, research is better served by open access than toll access. The OA movement is what James Boyle calls the "existence proof" (200). The critical task for OA advocates is to demonstrate that journal publishers do not speak for authors and that current copyright law is inappropriate

for research (Harper 10). Librarians have a right and a responsibility to participate in this demonstration.

According to Lawrence Lessig, we must “stop believing, listening and deferring” to those who champion the current imperialistic, one-size-fits-all model of copyright. He urges those who object to the current copyright regime to become “radical, militant activists” and to “avoid restrictions that make no sense to the underlying business model” of the academy (“It’s about Time”). OA advocates should focus on the distinction between royalty-free and royalty-producing content and the disparity between author and publisher interests and incentives. We need not belittle or denigrate the market economy, but simply recognize the obvious: “that humans act for different motives, and the motive to give deserves as much respect as the motive to get” (Lessig, *Remix* 227).

As librarians we must do what we can to avoid pitfalls, but we must stand for our values and endure what comes. Ethics are more important than rules of law. According to Henry David Thoreau in *Civil Disobedience*:

Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. (par. 4)

#### Endnotes

1. Though faculty at eighteen universities have approved policies mandating OA, recently faculty at the University of Maryland rejected a proposed policy that only encouraged OA (Suber, “Lessons from Maryland”).
2. According to Ellen Duranceau and Ivy Anderson, “Faculty promotion and tenure processes depend on publishing in particular journals, and authors therefore do not feel empowered to push back on standard publisher policies; nor is debating points of copyright a natural fit for many authors” (33).
3. Carnegie Mellon did not have an institutional repository when this study was conducted in 2007-08.
4. Assessing whether the OA articles complied with publisher policy was not possible. Though general publisher policies were found for 92% of the OA articles, the general policy might not apply to all the publisher’s journal titles. OA author manuscripts seldom noted whether it was the author’s Original Manuscript, the Submitted Manuscript or the Accepted Manuscript (NISO 1-2). Whether the embargo period had been respected prior to self-archiving could not be determined for many articles.
5. According to a study published by the Publishing Research Consortium (PRC), 70% to 80% of authors want to provide open access to the Version of Record and 50% to 60% believe that publishers allow it (Morris 12).
6. In addition to mandates, other approaches are being explored. Experiments are

- underway to incorporate authors' rights into library licenses for electronic resources (Duranceau and Anderson 35-36). Standard author-publisher contracts and a universal addendum for author-publisher agreements are also being discussed (Hahn 28, 30).
7. According to the U.S. Constitution, purpose of copyright is "To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries" (Section 8).

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# THE LIBRARY PARAPROFESSIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE DEPROFESSIONALIZATION OF LIBRARIANSHIP

by Rory Litwin

At the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago, 2005, ALA Council established the ALA Policy on Inclusion and Mutual Respect by a near-unanimous vote.<sup>1</sup> The title of the policy refers to the inclusion of library support staff, or paraprofessionals, meaning library workers who are not working as librarians and whose jobs do not require a master's degree. The Council vote authorized a statement officially recognizing the value of support staff, and established a policy of inviting their participation in the association's activities and including paraprofessional jobs in the image that ALA promotes of library workers. This policy was the result of well-organized lobbying within the association by the Library Support Staff Interest Round Table (LSSIRT) in cooperation with the ALA Human Resources Development and Recruitment Advisory Committee (HRDR), which is primarily composed of library administrators.<sup>2</sup> The discussion on the Council floor concerning the resolution that brought this policy up for a vote treated it as more or less a long-awaited and much-deserved gesture of support and respect. Whether it was because the policy was viewed as lip service, because the issue of class status was too difficult to discuss openly, or because Council is made up primarily of library administrators who, as a group, had something to gain from the measure, Councilors brought no questions about what changes to the business of the association the new policy might bring, and no opposition to the resolution was suggested.

Since ALA is, technically, not a professional organization representing the interests of library professionals as a profession but an educational association concerning libraries in society, there was nothing revolutionary about the new policy of inclusion, even if it were to be taken in all sincerity. ALA has long had other non-librarian constituencies, including faculty in library science programs, trustees, vendors, and members of the public. However, there has always been an informal connection between the association as an organization of librarians and the association in its standards-setting role and as a voice in society representing libraries. Despite not formally being a professional association in legal terms, the ALA has served as a de-facto professional association from its beginnings and has an important accreditation role in library education programs, and

has thereby supported librarianship's claim to professional status, and, consequently, lent authority to its pronouncements about libraries.

This paper will explore the implications of the current library support staff movement for the professional status of librarianship by examining it in the light of sociologist Marie Haug's original work on the concept of deprofessionalization and subsequent discourse. Librarianship has been undergoing a process of deprofessionalization, along with other professions and semi-professions, as a result of a set of social trends going back to the 1960s. Deprofessionalization can potentially have some social benefits from a class struggle perspective, as Haug and Sussman pointed out in their early writing on the subject.<sup>3</sup> I will argue, however, that our concern about the loss of autonomy in the library profession is not entirely a selfish concern, for two reasons: first, because a loss of autonomy for librarians is a net loss of autonomy for front-line library workers, and not simply a redistribution of it; and second, because attention to the ethical foundations of professional practice depends to a great extent on the maintenance of professional identity through a graduate education requirement and a strong professional association. The deprofessionalization of librarianship and the transfer of the job functions of librarians to paraprofessionals serve as an opportunity for library administrators to take a greater share of control over library practice and to advance a business framework of metrical efficiency to the fore, displacing the ethical framework that derives from the professional orientation of librarians.

Part of the management strategy for shifting to a deprofessionalized library is to exploit the class tension between working class library workers and professional librarians by offering paraprofessionals an alliance. Management does this by calling all staff members "professionals," blurring the distinction between librarians and non-librarians and shifting attention away from the autonomy that, to a significant extent, belongs to librarians as professionals and guides them in their work according to their own expertise and professional service ethic.

#### *The Library Support Staff Movement*

The 2005 Policy on Inclusion and Mutual Respect was a landmark event in the advancement of library paraprofessionals, but was not a culmination; nor was it a beginning. The larger movement of paraprofessionals for a higher level of status in the library world has earlier beginnings, has progressed since 2005, and is presently going strong. Indications of this can be found in a variety of places. For example, support staff are now viewed by ALA presidential candidates as an important constituency to be catered to for their electoral votes. ALA 2008 Presidential Candidate Camilla Alire wrote in her campaign letter to LSSIRT,

One of my strengths I bring to the ALA presidency is my passion for advocacy. I can say that this advocacy included advocating

for support staff in every library I led. Examples of this support include:

- Advocating for support staff promotions based on their skills and not their library classification; and,
- Advocating for support staff involvement in library committees and taskforces as well as their involvement in university-wide service.<sup>4</sup>

Alire supported LSSIRT's desire for a weakening of the barrier between the professional and the paraprofessional role within the association and the workplace. Kenton Oliver, in his letter to LSSIRT requesting support for his 2009 presidential candidacy the following year, wrote in a similar vein but went further:

As a lifelong advocate for libraries, locally and nationally, you may be sure it is inclusive of library staff. I will continue that advocacy as ALA President focusing on LSSIRT specific concerns that will:

- Focus on obtaining LSSIRT representation on ALA committees and in decision making arenas, including Council;
- Support the ALA-APA as it moves forward with initiatives related to salaries and support staff certification.
- Support ALA agendas that will provide for better compensation and training of our library workforce and improves the quality and development of our library services nation wide.
- Continue President-elect Camila Alire's commitment to any future Empowerment Conferences through my support and attendance.<sup>5</sup>

Oliver's opponent, Roberta Stevens (who was elected), was less explicit but still attentive to the issues of inclusion within association decision-making, writing in her campaign letter to LSSIRT, "I am committed to being inclusive. If elected president, I will seek LSSIRT's representation and involvement in task forces, working groups and committees."<sup>6</sup>

Oliver mentioned two initiatives in his letter that should be discussed: ALA-APA efforts to develop support staff certification and ALA's "Empowerment Conferences" for support staff. The Empowerment Conferences are mini-conferences for library support staff that take place during ALA Annual Conferences. Their name expresses the overriding concern that is pursued by the exchanges that take place there. The following excerpt from the Dorothy Morgan's keynote at the 2008 Empowerment Conference provides a good example of the flavor and direction of these conferences and the support staff movement that they represent:

Carla Stoffle, in her 1996 book entitled *Choosing our Future: College and Research Libraries*, wrote that librarians must place

a higher value on the contribution of support staff, examining their ideas and suggestions on an equal basis with those of librarians. She advocated for libraries to move away from staff who perform narrow tasks within the tightly defined job descriptions toward staff who are empowered to make decisions about the work they do and how they do it in a manner that, in her words, results in “delighted customers.”

Look at the opportunities gained by support staff over the past several years: the establishment of LSSIRT (15 years ago), Library Journal’s Paraprofessional of the Year Award, COPE-3 (The ALA Third Congress for Library Support Staff held in Chicago in 2003), National Library Worker Day, special membership rate for support staff joining ALA, and more inclusiveness of library workers in professional journals. We now have many more opportunities to contribute to our profession. When we talk about new technologies, just look at how our jobs have moved into dramatically different roles as new services are implemented. We are challenged to develop and implement those services while maintaining traditional services, usually with no increase in staff. Advances in Acquisitions, Technical Services, Cataloging, and the ubiquitous Web have become the platforms for electronic patron service. What becomes inherently important to recognize is that library support staff are the backbones of libraries. We are Webmasters, systems administrators, and library skills/information literacy instructors. We are supervisors in charge of entire departments, paraprofessionals who run their own “Information Provider” enterprises, and that is just the beginning.

But, you may be asking yourself, “What’s in it for me?” When you Captain your destiny, you are attesting to taking care of your career. That it matters enough to you. Your goal is what you have set as your vision or your imagination to guide you through everything you do. You need to focus your thoughts on reasons that you can succeed, rather on why you can’t. You need to see change as a glass half full rather than half empty.<sup>7</sup>

Morgan is making a claim for a blurring, if not an end, of the distinction between professional and paraprofessional staff in terms of their roles within the workplace and the larger profession. The implication is that the master’s degree is no longer or should no longer be a requirement for library work at a professional level. Most librarians support the requirement of the master’s degree for professional-level work, but many find the issue difficult to discuss when it is restated in terms of fairness toward working-class library workers, who are pursuing their rights. As can be seen in Morgan’s statement, as well as in the minutes of LSSIRT board meetings,<sup>8</sup> the primary issue of concern for the support staff movement, at least at present, is their own career advancement and pursuit of inclusion

as professionals. Little interest in the advancement of libraries, of the core values of libraries, or of issues in professional practice are in evidence. In other parts of the association these are the concerns that merit discussion. They are, not coincidentally, the concerns that are based on the values into which librarians are acculturated in graduate school and on the knowledge of foundations for practice that is gained there. (Occasionally LSSIRT plays a supporting role in a Council resolution or initiative led by HRDR or LLAMA, the Library Leadership and Management Association, ALA's division for management.)

If Morgan's pronouncements in her keynote seem somewhat overstated in relation to the actuality of the division of labor in our own workplaces today, it is worth paying attention to a policy direction in library education that supports her vision. When the ALA Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) was originally formed, its key purpose was to organize a certification program to supplement graduate education in librarianship. The certification program that was discussed in the early stages was for public library administrators. (This certification program has now been underway for a few years.) Recently, ALA-APA has been developing standards for a certification program for library paraprofessionals, and announced the official debut of this program at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC, in 2009.<sup>9</sup> The certification program specifies "competency sets" that are at its core—three required and six elective:

The three required competency sets:

1. Foundations of Library Service
2. Communication and Teamwork
3. Technology

The six elective competency sets, from which three need be chosen:

4. Access Services
5. Adult Reader's Advisory Services
6. Cataloging and Classification
7. Collection Management
8. Reference and Information Services
9. Supervision and Management
10. Youth Services<sup>10</sup>

It is evident from the competency sets that ALA-APA has instituted a certification program that can stand in place of the MLS as an educational requirement for library workers in work functions now performed by professional librarians. While it is difficult to say exactly what will be required of students who go through this certification program, one can assume that the academic standards of graduate education will not apply, and that the process will not have as one of its aims the creation of a professional self-awareness in the sense of a shared responsibility for guiding the development of the profession and the institutions in which the students will later work as graduates. A certified paraprofessional, it is reasonable to expect, will continue to earn an hourly wage rather than a

salary and will continue to perform her work in a relatively tightly managed way. It is reasonable to expect this because management is in a relationship of tension with professionals in institutions, such that the professional worker has a degree of autonomy that, though limited and contested, exists, and to that extent limits the control that management is able to enjoy. Librarianship's claim to professional status, and the knowledge base that underpins that claim, are what give librarians the limited degree of autonomy that they have in an institution. It is in management's interest to shift the job function of librarians to a paraprofessional group for the purpose of gaining greater control (as well as saving money).

This process has been ongoing in the 2000s. Ransel, Fitzpatrick, and Hinds reported in 2001 that at Auburn University Libraries they had implemented a new career ladder structure as a way of compensating paraprofessionals for taking on more complex duties.<sup>11</sup> The more complex duties that the new paraprofessional career ladder accommodates are duties formerly performed by MLS-holding librarians.

There are librarians who raise the question of whether the MLS should be a requirement for employment for librarians, noting the experience, skill with patrons, and often the educational background of library paraprofessionals and non-MLS holding librarians.<sup>12</sup> There can be no denying that many paraprofessionals are more talented, more experienced, and even better educated than many MLS-holding librarians. There are also libraries that fill their professional positions with non-MLS holding librarians who, after years of working closely with their communities, can serve as positive examples for the profession in many respects. This is all true. The problem with framing the question in these terms, however, is that it overlooks the value of the professional status of librarians itself, both for the institutions in which they work and for the world of libraries as a whole.

#### *Professional Status*

Sociologists going back to Durkheim have been interested in understanding the nature of the professions, their role in society, and the forces that cause them to change. The distinction between professions and other occupations has been defined and refined and re-refined numerous times over the decades. Keith Roberts and Karen Donahue provide a useful synthesis of these definitions, positing six factors that are common to the professions as opposed to occupations:

1. Mastery of specialized theory
2. Autonomy and control of one's work and how one's work is performed
3. Motivation focusing on intrinsic rewards and on the interests of clients – which take precedence over the professional's self-interests
4. Commitment to the profession as a career and to the service objectives of the organization for which one works

5. Sense of community and feelings of collegiality with others in the profession, and accountability to those colleagues
6. Self-monitoring and regulation by the profession of ethical and professional standards in keeping with a detailed code of ethics<sup>13</sup>

This formulation encompasses most sociologists' understanding of the professions, with the exception of one frequently cited element that should be mentioned. Many find the monopolization of a particular sphere of knowledge and practice to be an essential factor defining a profession. Not only is it important that the professional have mastery of specialized theory but that outside access to this knowledge and the ability to perform the functions claimed by the profession are limited. In the case of the two most well-established professions, medicine and law, the monopoly on practice is supported by a legal requirement of professional licensure for performance of the work, that licensure being controlled by the profession itself. Michael Winter describes the regulatory support for the monopoly on practice of the professions as "structural authority," as distinguished from the "normative authority" that binds the profession together.<sup>14</sup> The most important consequence of structural authority for professionals is the support it provides for their autonomy in institutions (although the profession's normative authority also provide this support).

Professional autonomy can be both operational and strategic. Operational autonomy refers to professionals' freedom to determine the way their work is done, while strategic autonomy refers to their freedom to determine what is done.<sup>15</sup> Joe Raelin, in a study on the organizational status of research labs, noted an inevitable conflict between management and professionals over control, finding that in this tension, the professionals' strategic autonomy is less secure than their operational autonomy. The ability for professionals to set their agendas is somewhat more limited than their freedom to determine the way their work will be done.<sup>16</sup> This is logical given management's inherent control of resources and relative lack of mastery of the profession's knowledge base. In fields where managers typically begin their careers as members of the profession, such as librarianship, the knowledge base is likely to be less protective of operational autonomy.

Many occupations that we commonly call professions only exhibit the features of professions, in sociological terms, to intermediate degrees. Examples of occupations that are usually considered as "semi-professions" in the sociology of the professions are social work, nursing, teaching, pastoral care to religious congregations, and librarianship. While these professions are supported by a specialized knowledge base, that knowledge base is generally believed to be less developed than that of the full professions and therefore less of a barrier to entry and practice. The lower educational requirements for entry into these occupations support this impression. Sociologists consider these occupations as semi-professions based on the way that the work is organized within them, the educational requirements, and their degree of self-governance and autonomy (though

it seldom goes without mention in the literature that the semi-professions are mostly female occupations).

The term “semi-professional” is a sociological term and not a term of self-definition, of course. Nurses, teachers, and librarians do not refer to their fields as “semi-professions” (unless that are writing in a sociological context). In terms of librarianship, all of the authors whose works I reviewed for this paper, if they referred to librarianship and were sociologists, referred to it as a semi-profession. Authors who were librarians or sometimes library science professors tended to refer to librarianship as a profession. This difference may indicate the state of flux and contestation that exists for the professional status of librarianship, but it also indicates that the vocabulary of academic disciplines is specialized. Suffice it to say that librarianship is a profession for me, in the context of my professional life, and a semi-profession for the sociologists whose concepts I am attempting to relate here.

Since the semi-professions are also mostly female-intensive professions, an analysis of their formation and organization must give attention to underlying issues of sexism. Andrew Abbott, a sociologist who specializes in the study of the professions, wrote in an article that addressed the status of librarianship in particular, “[T]he conceptual difference between profession and semi-profession probably has more to do with the difference between men and women than with anything else.”<sup>17</sup> Without arguing for it directly, Abbott accepts the idea that it is feminine personality traits, rather than a sexist society, that have resulted in the female-intensive professions holding their semi-professional status and the corresponding relative lack of autonomy. Roma Harris’s 1992 book, *Librarianship: The Erosion of a Woman’s Profession*, took up this commonly held prejudice, providing an analysis that any paper on this topic would be incomplete in not discussing. Harris’ book is useful for illuminating some of thornier issues affecting workers in the semi-professions who desire greater control of the means to fulfill service objectives but find themselves frustrated by having a subordinate status. Harris presents an argument from the complex position of both wanting and not wanting the status and authority enjoyed by the male professions. As a way of resolving the paradox inherent in her stance, Harris advocates a female style of professionalization based on a female model of service, one that would result in greater respect and control, which is wanted, but not greater status or professional autonomy, which she views as problematic. Her main point, that the subordinate status of the semi-professionals is related to their female-intensivity, is an analysis that certainly needs to be taken into account in any consideration of librarianship as a semi-profession. However, she did not attempt to sort out the interactions between sexism and other factors that have influenced the development of the semi-professions, a project which, had she pursued it, might have saved her argument from its somewhat fatalistic double-bind. She left her proposed female style of professionalization and service undefined, as apparently outside the scope of the book, giving it the quality of a utopia rather than a potentiality that is subject to an analysis of its own

upsides, downsides, consequences and interactions.<sup>18</sup> Her book stands as an important reminder that gender politics and the politics of the library profession are deeply intertwined, but the threads remain to be sorted out, and the analysis needs to be multidimensional and historical.

The prevailing view in sociology in the 1960s and 1970s was that society was in a process of becoming more professionalized, as a result of the explosion of technical information and the need to manage it.<sup>19</sup> The idea of a trend toward professionalization was tied to what Daniel Bell called “post-industrial society” (although it had currency in sociology a decade prior to Bell’s coinage of this term).<sup>20</sup> As contexts of work became more bureaucratized and information-laden, more technical expertise and more education would be required to do much of the work in semi-professional jobs, which would have the effect of raising their professional status.<sup>21</sup> Blue collar occupations were envisions to be fading into the background. The idea that work in post-industrial society, and in the semi-professions in particular, was becoming professionalized was the consensus view in sociology during that period. This view generally did not give much attention to the autonomy of professionals in the institutions in which they worked, painting a picture of future professionals as skilled technicians working in highly bureaucratic contexts.

#### *Deprofessionalization*

Dissenting views about the professionalization thesis did appear during this period. Harold Wilensky studied the process by which occupations strive to attain professional status in the early ‘60s, noting especially the barriers to the attainment of autonomy in institutions, and doubted any great trend toward professionalization.<sup>22</sup> It was not until the populist social ferment of the late ‘60s, however, that the contrary thesis of deprofessionalization began to emerge.

In 1969, Marie Haug and Marvin Sussman looked at the relationship between clients and professionals in the context of social unrest. The authority of the professional in this relationship (the social worker/client relationship was under focus) came not so much from their knowledge base but from the legal structures that authorize their work and obligate the client to comply with their instructions, as well as from the class structure through which power relations are communicated more generally. The professional knowledge base served a gate-keeping role for the profession, as well as justifying the legal structure as it came into being. In this context Haug and Sussman discussed what they termed the “revolt of the client,” where young, working class, or non-white clients rejected the authority of professionals as alienating and turned to grass-roots, peer educated systems as an alternative to established institutions. As society integrated this shift, the “New Careers” movement began to establish avenues within the social system for paraprofessionals, in medicine, social work, and other fields, to perform many of the functions previously reserved for professionals.<sup>23</sup> The populist mood cut against the authority and autonomy

of professionals in institutions. As problematic as the revolt of the client may have been over time for the autonomy of the professions, it arguably brought about changes that resulted in service to clients that was more relevant and culturally aware. (Today's conservative, populist, anti-elitist current is possible to see as a second wave of the "revolt of the client" that Haug and Sussman originally observed, and may be a contemporary factor in deprofessionalization.) The beginning of the current trend toward deprofessionalization in the populist revolt of the 1960s is mostly forgotten in the discussion of the issue within the Left, and is worth recalling.

Haug continued to develop her ideas regarding deprofessionalization through the 1970s, locating its causes in deeper, more structural trends than the manifestations of social unrest that originally made the issue evident. In addition to the populist democratization of service in the New Careers Movement, Haug noted two major trends supporting her deprofessionalization thesis: mass public education and computerization.<sup>24</sup> As higher education had become available to a much greater portion of society, the knowledge base of the professions became less inaccessible to clients and paraprofessionals. This worked against the professional's authority as well as making him less necessary, where individuals were able to take care of a greater share of their needs on their own or with the help of paraprofessionals, whose knowledge was often considerable (e.g. nurse practitioners), learned both in vocational education programs and on-the-job experience with clients. Computerization served as a facilitator of rationalization and bureaucratization, which work to bypass the autonomous, humanistic professional, by providing a way to demystify and codify technical knowledge in order to make it usable by non-professionals in bureaucratic settings. Haug wrote,

Data retrieval from memory storage and the computation and reporting of complex joint probabilities are the forte of the modern computer. To the extent that scientific professional knowledge can be 'codified', it can be broken into bits, stored in a computer memory, and recalled as needed. No longer need it be preserved in the professional's heads or in books alone. A great deal of the learning transmitted to professionals-in-training can be made accessible in this way. In fact, almost by definition *academic* knowledge, upon which the diploma credentials validating professionals' expertise are largely based, is codifiable and therefore amenable to computer input. And what is put into the electronic machine can be extracted by anyone who knows the output procedures. ... The accessibility of this intellectual warehouse has already taken away some of the professional's knowledge monopoly, and will undoubtedly continue to do so.<sup>25</sup>

The trend that Haug predicted in the early and mid-'70s is observable today in the disintermediation and remediation that have been so frequently discussed in the past couple of decades.

Where Haug wrote about the erosion of professional autonomy, it was mostly vis-à-vis a relationship of tension between professionals and their clients. The trend toward deprofessionalization also affects the dynamics of the professional's role within institutions and the tension between professionals and administrators. In a Marxist overview of professionalization and deprofessionalization (highly recommended to readers who are interested in a deeper general treatment of these topics), Rajendra Pandey described the origin and structure of the tension between professionals and administrators in institutions.<sup>26</sup> The professional class, in this analysis, originated out of the bourgeoisie as a result of the need for technical experts. Firms externalized the cost of their education by shifting it to a system of public universities, which had the result, over time, of instilling in professionals, and into the professions, a concern for the collective common good. As a result of the professional's knowledge base and public values, professionalism (which is an ideology in Pandey's view) makes a tacit claim to technical and moral superiority over the moneyed class and is in conflict with it. In the mid-1980s, Pandey believed that deprofessionalization was underway and was explainable by the related Marxist concept of proletarianization, in which the fundamental cause is the shift from self-employment to employee status, which deprives professionals of an independent economic position, a development that parallels the proletarianization of craft workers in the early industrial era. Describing this contemporary trend of deprofessionalization, Pandey wrote,

The deprofessionalization involves erosion of characteristics of the profession, dequalification, and class formation. The process of deprofessionalization is underway in several ways, namely, the erosion of the monopoly of technical knowledge; the beginning of professional accountability; suspicion of service orientation; the violation of the professional code of ethics; the refutation of the professionals' claim of being liberal and humanitarian; the cutting of the professionals' control; and the creation of class antagonism.<sup>27</sup>

The deprofessionalization thesis, though it has been elaborated and built upon, has also been called into question. In the mid-1980s, Eliot Freidson examined the deprofessionalization and proletarianization theses and found that the professions had in fact retained their autonomy in society through the advancement of legal supporting and governing structures, and that the deprofessionalization story is inaccurate.<sup>28</sup> It should be noted, however, that Freidson's study focused on professional bodies rather than individual professionals working in institutions, and that it was limited to the full professions – medicine and law – and did not include an analysis of semi-professions, which have far less legal leverage and much less of a knowledge monopoly, which are the keys to maintaining professional autonomy. The deprofessionalization thesis does seem to be born out in a way that affects the autonomy of professionals in institutions in a range of professional and semi-professional fields.

### *Deprofessionalization and Librarianship*

If the semi-professions are in a weaker position in terms of maintaining their autonomy against forces of deprofessionalization, librarianship has a special problem owing to its ideological opposition to the very notion of a monopoly of knowledge. A profession that is dedicated to sharing knowledge is unlikely to create effective barriers to its knowledge base, a factor undercutting the profession's defense of its degree of autonomy. Furthermore, the role of librarians in society in helping people do research is one that would not be possible to support through a legal structure, the way medicine and law, and even social work, are supported. (Although a state government could require a license to work as a "librarian" it could not require a license to organize information or help people do research). These factors have made librarianship especially vulnerable to deprofessionalization among the semi-professions.

The idea that librarianship could be facing a trend of deprofessionalization began to be discussed widely in the early '80s (for example, William Birdsall's 1982 *Library Journal* article dealing with the subject<sup>29</sup>). An early sign that this trend was in fact underway in librarianship was a 1980 proposal by the federal government to reclassify its 3,300 federal librarians, which would have substantially lowered the pay scale and educational requirements of the positions.<sup>30</sup> Where the idea of deprofessionalization first began clearly to fit was in developments in technical services emerging later in the decade. Technology had begun to enable easy sharing of catalog records, which allowed libraries to employ fewer professional catalogers and to assign paraprofessionals the task of loading catalog records containing intellectual labor done elsewhere (an example of what Haug predicted in the effects of computerization).<sup>31</sup>

As the decade of the nineties progressed, a conflict between management and front line librarians, especially catalogers, over the process of deprofessionalization began to emerge, and management's collective strategies for dealing with objections began to make their appearance. At the 1998 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC, the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services held a program in which an invited speaker offered the management spin on deprofessionalization. Virginia Gillham, University Librarian at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, expressed a definition of "professionalism" as indicating a high quality of work.<sup>32</sup> By this definition, paraprofessionals, who rightly take pride in their work, can expect to be called professionals in their workplaces (perhaps this is the state of affairs in your library). They are unlikely to hold any expectations of professional autonomy in the library, in either a strategic or an operational sense, or to be motivated by intrinsic rewards or the ethical foundations of practice instilled in graduate education, but are rewarded in a token, psychological sense by being called "professionals." This reward owes its value to paraprofessionals to the tension existing in the class conflict with the librarians in the workplace.

In calling paraprofessionals professionals, management uses their desire for higher status to undercut the autonomy of professional librarians by blurring the distinction between them, paving the way for proletarianized “professional” work with flattering but meaningless job titles. (This echoes the management strategy that emerged during the same period in other spheres of classifying front-line workers as management in order to make them ineligible for union membership, and likely had similar origins.)

In addition to redefining a professional as a worker who does a good job, Gillham also offered a new definition for an MLS-holding librarian in technical services. A librarian in technical services, according to Gillham, is a manager, meaning that the department is left without an autonomous professional presence and the attributes that accompany it (code of professional ethics, graduate-level education, intrinsic reward of service, etc.). The logic of this strategy in technical services was very much the result of the implications of shared cataloging, but it can be extended to other areas of library work as well, especially as the effects of computerization are increasingly felt (e.g. in statewide virtual reference services).

Management’s strategy of false alliance with working class library workers in the deprofessionalization process is all the more problematic because the tension between professionals and the working class is structural and not a result of this strategy. This class tension has led some in librarianship to call for librarians to identify as workers rather than professionals. Leigh Estabrook expressed this view in a 1981 *Library Journal* article, writing

Professionalism is an ideology which prevents librarians from organizing into unions, obscures the fundamental difference between labor and management within library organizations, and creates tension and conflict between librarians and their clients. Professionalization is not a naturally occurring event. It is not a phenomenon which simply happens to an occupational group. Rather, it is something members of an occupational group strive for and create, often at great expense to themselves and to the individuals they serve.<sup>33</sup>

What Estabrook left out was the function of the ideology of professionalism in maintaining a class that is formed out of the bourgeoisie in opposition to it, able to act autonomously from it, to hold a share of power, and to have as a part of its makeup an interest in the public good. For Estabrook, unionization was the answer to the loss of autonomy implicit in deprofessionalization. The possibility of replacing the autonomy of librarians as a professional group with the kind of autonomy that could ideally be attained by library workers as an organized labor body is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is an argument that responds to the problem of the loss of autonomy and ethical foundations for practice. Estabrook’s opposition to the ideology of professionalism, though, was separate from her analysis of the loss of autonomy that librarians were beginning to face in the early ‘80s, which she viewed in terms of economic and technological

change affecting all library workers, rather than in terms of deprofessionalization.<sup>34</sup> In my view, she did not sufficiently appreciate the autonomy of librarians as a professional group and the consequences of its loss for library work in general. (She based her analysis on the work of Harry Braverman in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, which was similarly quiet about the role of the autonomy of the professional class.<sup>35</sup>) In any case, her vision of a renunciation of professional status by librarians is quite different from the present reality of management bestowing the title upon paraprofessionals without the autonomy, ethical foundation, or education it implies, with different implications for the prospect of greater solidarity with clients or patrons.

### *Conclusion*

The phenomenon of deprofessionalization was first predicted, then emerged, and has now been accelerating. The ongoing causes of deprofessionalization include the populist “revolt of the client” (in whatever political forms it has taken over the decades), improved access to education and information, the disintermediating effects of technology, and the increasing economic dependence of professionals on the institutions in which they work.

Deprofessionalization affects professionals in the degree to which their work is characterized by the attributes of the professions, and, importantly, in the degree to which their service to clients is correspondingly conditioned by these attributes. To revisit Roberts’ and Donahue’s summary of these characteristics of a profession:

1. Mastery of specialized theory
2. Autonomy and control of one’s work and how one’s work is performed
3. Motivation focusing on intrinsic rewards and on the interests of clients – which take precedence over the professional’s self-interests
4. Commitment to the profession as a career and to the service objectives of the organization for which one works
5. Sense of community and feelings of collegiality with others in the profession, and accountability to those colleagues
6. Self-monitoring and regulation by the profession of ethical and professional standards in keeping with a detailed code of ethics

To the extent that service to clients by institutions ceases to be given by individuals who have a mastery of theory, a motivation focusing on intrinsic rewards, a commitment to the service objectives of the organization, a sense of accountability toward colleagues, and who are monitored by their professional peers, institutions are able to operate with greater economic efficiency, but are less helpful to the people who encounter them.

While some may ask legitimate questions about the ideology of professionalism in terms of class solidarity, it is important to be realistic about the shifting of control that is taking place as librarianship is deprofessionalized, and the effects that this control-shift has on the nature of libraries and library service. If the current paraprofessional movement were motivated by a class-conscious “revolt of the client” as it was in the late ‘60s, then its discourse would be very much about the superior ability of paraprofessionals to help regular working-class people use libraries. Clearly, the contrary is true. The library paraprofessional movement, as much as we would like it to be otherwise, is focused on career advancement and elevated status and little else. (As Barbara Morgan asked rhetorically, “What’s in it for me?”) Paraprofessionals may be seeking greater inclusion in ALA decisionmaking processes, but will seldom receive funding to participate, and, lacking the foundation of graduate education and possessing a lower status position than their management sponsors, are likely to continue functioning primarily as supporters for the initiatives of their management “allies.” This should not be surprising given the structural position of wage earners versus professional groups, but its implications for the nature of deprofessionalized library service should not be ignored.

The certification program for library paraprofessionals that has just been instituted is important to watch for its effects on the deprofessionalization process. This certification program is based on a set of competencies that reflects the graduate library education curriculum minus the rigor, ethical emphasis, and professional acculturation, and delivered in contexts where students expect technical training rather than education for professional practice.

A paraprofessional library workforce performing the work now done by librarians can be expected to be a desire of management given management’s natural relationship of tension with professionals as a class, and their desire for greater control. The objectives of management and professionals in institutions are not necessarily congruent, given management’s focus on measured business outcomes and the professional’s emphasis on direct service. The autonomy of professional librarians is thus a problem for management, one for which solutions can be found in the forces bringing about deprofessionalization initially cited by Marie Haug, as well as in the class conflict between librarians and support staff.

To be fair and to lend the issue a degree of complexity that is very much owed to it, “library administrators” as a group are also mostly professional librarians and therefore occupy a dual class position within their institutions. Perhaps their identities and ways of thinking are often shaped more by their status as library professionals than as managers. The conflict should therefore be seen not so much as a conflict between individuals as a conflict between roles, with library administrators, as librarians, often occupying a difficult position. That said, deprofessionalization still represents a net loss of autonomy for front-line library workers and a weakening of those

professional values that are in conflict with managerial prerogatives and business methods, despite the apparently worthwhile increase in status that paraprofessionals currently seem to be achieving.

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**What is Distinctive About the Library  
of Congress in both its Collections and  
its Means of Access to Them,  
and  
The Reasons LC Needs to Maintain  
Classified Shelving of Books Onsite,  
and  
A Way to Deal Effectively with the  
Problem of “Books on the Floor”**

**by Thomas Mann**

The judgments made in this paper do not represent official views of the Library of Congress. Further, this paper does not claim to represent the view of everyone in AFSCME 2910. It seeks primarily to assure that considerations of great importance to the mission of the Library of Congress, as viewed by its scholarly and governmental clientele, will be given proper weight in both managerial and Congressional decision-making. I am grateful to the Guild for providing a forum in which these issues can be raised and discussed.

*Summary*

**T**he Library cannot solve its space problems by adoption of a “digital strategy” without seriously damaging our larger mission to promote scholarship of unusual scope and depth. If the Library’s own access to its own general book collection were to be dumbed down to only the levels of subject access provided by Google, Amazon, or Internet search mechanisms, we would effectively be endorsing, and institutionalizing, the level of ignorance exemplified by the Six Blind Men of India. We would no longer be able to satisfy the information needs of Congress or other federal agencies, or those of advanced scholars, in a timely or efficient manner. It is not enough simply to have comprehensive collections; we must equally have *efficient* access to them. While the subject access-mechanisms (LCSH cataloging in our OPAC and LCC shelving of books in the stacks) needed to provide unusual comprehensiveness and unusual depth of scholarship are themselves expensive to maintain, they are the very things that enable us to realize our distinctive mission, to provide our distinctive services, and to discharge our distinctive responsibility to provide maximal access

to the Nation's unique copyright-deposit collection, while simultaneously enabling other research libraries in hundreds of Congressional districts, which copy our systems, to achieve substantial cost-savings themselves.

To deal with the problem of books-on-the-floor, what we need is a systematic, professional weeding of our Capitol Hill collections to determine which volumes will next go to remote storage in Module 5 at Fort Meade; and Recommending Officers must be given the necessary time on an ongoing, weekly basis to undertake this huge task. Because of the delayed funding of that next module, however, we now have just the time we need in order to undertake this systematic examination and weeding of the general collection. This option is much preferable to that of relying on wholesale digitization of our books, especially since the latter process (as in Google or Amazon models) could never extend to our entire collection (for copyright reasons alone), and because it would simultaneously create more problems of access than it would solve, in ways that would directly and severely undercut our distinctive mission.

\* \* \*

In her Memorandum (6/29/09) to selected Division Chiefs and other staffers, on the subject "Meeting on Digital Strategy – June 29, 2009," Associate Librarian for Library Services Deanna Marcum proposes several points for serious discussion, among them (quoting her words):

- "Given the very small number of staff and researchers who utilize the classified collection for browsing purposes, can we justify the costs and limitations that shelving scheme imposes?"
- "Should we be devoting precious space on Capitol Hill to house materials which are (or will soon be) easily accessible online through Google and others?"
- "Are libraries at risk of survival? Are they going as quickly and surely down the same road as newspapers? Is the Library of Congress distinctly different from other libraries?"
- "Is there an economically justifiable argument to be made to Congress that we should continue to acquire and maintain physical books? Amazon, a company less than fifteen years old, became the world's largest retailer of physical books. They now report over 35% of their sales are of digital books, and they expect this to be their core business going forward. . . . Should the Library seriously consider giving priority to digital books?"
- "For any book now published digitally, should we procure (demand through Copyright) the Kindle version, and make it the preferred service copy? There are problems to be solved here, but is this the future?"

It is a truism in the field of polling that the way in which questions are framed to begin with has a noticeable effect on nudging respondents' answers in certain directions; the options contained within the question

are given more prominence than those left unspoken. It is thus noteworthy that several of these questions are immediately “framed” by comparisons of the Library:

- (a) to Google, which is described simply, without any question or further analysis, as making materials (primarily books, in this context) “easily accessible”;
- (b) to newspapers, which are “quickly and surely” going down a road that puts them “at risk of survival.” The unspoken implication is that since newspapers, operating on a business model (i.e., to make profits from providing current information), cannot compete with the Internet, then the Library of Congress itself (which is here being compared to newspapers) is in similar danger (because LC is to be regarded through a similar “business model” lens?); and
- (c) to Amazon, whose business model (again, oriented toward the goal of making a profit rather than promoting scholarship) in “going forward” with digital book sales (Kindle) is here held up, without any notice or consideration of alternative models, as the implied touchstone of what is “economically justifiable.”

*The comparison of LC to newspapers*

These recommendations all imply, without explicit articulation, a mission for the Library of Congress that does not notice to begin with how distinctive the Library’s actual mission is, in sharp contrast to the missions of Google, newspapers, or Amazon. I will consider Google and Amazon below; as for the likening of LC to newspapers, a whole range of concealed propositions in the comparison need to be brought out from under cover:

- Newspapers are dependent on making profit; LC, in contrast, is not a business, but is rather a federal agency supported by national taxes to fulfill responsibilities other than generating cost-recovery income. Every newspaper in the country could fail without affecting the continued existence of LC; we are not in the same boat.
- Newspapers fill a niche, in the overall information universe, of providing current information; LC fills a very different niche, that of promoting scholarship in all subjects, all time periods, and all languages, not only within current sources but especially within its vast retrospective holdings unmatched anywhere else.
- Newspapers do not have long-term preservation responsibilities; LC does. And LC must fulfill these responsibilities as a public service even though it does not make any profit by doing so.
- Newspapers do not have the responsibility to provide maximal access—or any access at all—to the country’s unique collection of copyright-deposited books; LC does.
- Newspapers’ niche puts them in competition, in the marketplace, with the Internet; LC’s mission and unique responsibilities do not put our distinctive functions in such competition—we do

important things other than just providing current information, and we also provide scholars with important and distinct *alternatives* to the *inadequacies* of the Internet.

One wonders why LC's management is comparing the Library to newspapers in the first place—is it simply (and naïvely) because of an unarticulated assumption that, because both “provide information” of some sort, they must *therefore* both be regarded as in competition with the Internet for “market share” of information-seekers? Such an assumption disregards, right from the start, any understanding of the distinctive niche (in both mission and mechanisms) of the Library of Congress. (Note that the Calhoun Report, which was both commissioned and highly praised by Dr. Marcum, does indeed regard libraries as in competition with the Internet for “market share,” and it also rejects any important “niche” function for research libraries [see pages 3-5 and 7 of <http://www.guild2910.org/AFSCMECalhounReviewREV.pdf>].)

*Distinctiveness in preservation responsibilities and  
in not being a commercial business*

In this paper I will leave aside considerations of long-term preservation, a concern for the Library of Congress that does not touch newspaper publishers at all. Nor is it a concern of either Google or Amazon. Both of the latter are businesses—and business can fail whereas the U.S. government cannot, short of defeat in all-out war or failure to accommodate internal revolutionary sects. With legally-enforced taxpayer support from the entire country, and with legally-mandated copyright deposits being centralized in its operations, the Library of Congress is not a business; it does not have to buy that huge copyright-component of its holdings, and it is protected from market forces of “having to show a profit” or to “increase market share” in ways that no other library in the country is. And it will remain protected unless Congress or the Library's own management changes its mission in a way that voluntarily undermines those cost-savings and protections.

It must be noted especially that along with the *unique privilege* of receiving millions of free books comes the corresponding *responsibility* to provide maximal access *to that particular* unrivalled collection. This is a responsibility that, apart from the National Library of Medicine and the National Agricultural Library, no other library has.

The business-model assumption of economic “profit” applies to LC only insofar as its collections (*and* its means of gaining access to those collections, which systems we maintain for copycat use by hundreds of other research libraries) contribute to the well-being (“profit” in more than just an economic sense) of the Congress, the Supreme Court, other federal agencies, and scholars generally. Any “profit” we generate accrues *not to LC itself* but to the better functioning of the Nation that continues to see value in the maintenance of a unique, centralized copyright-deposit collection. Of course LC must manage its operations in a fiscally prudent

manner, and no one disputes that; but prudent management means one thing when the goal is to make a profit or to increase market share, and quite another when the goal is to promote scholarship for the good of the whole country, in ways that no other institution can manage (due to both a lack of comparable collections and a lack of comparable access to them).

*Library Services' persistent assumption of  
a business model for the Library*

If LC's mission had been, before the present, based on a business model, the Library would have vanished during the Great Depression, if not sooner, along with so many other libraries that did not produce cost-recovery profits for their own operations. It is noteworthy that even the biggest corporations—unlike the federal government—that are unshielded from market forces may not be here even a few decades from now. Who in 1959 would have thought that in 2009 General Motors would seek bankruptcy protection—and then, further, require a huge government bailout to protect it from market forces? The lesson here is that the long-term existence of either Google or Amazon *is itself* by no means guaranteed—but LC's existence *is* guaranteed. Even that, however, is now questionable when Library Services continues, consistently, to formulate its thinking in terms of an inappropriate business model. Note, again, how closely the assumptions within Dr. Marcum's frame of reference, in her decidedly slanted questions (above), mirror the assumptions of the Calhoun Report, which she has highly praised, in calling for the adoption of a business model for the Library's operations. (It is meaningless to pay lip-service to rejecting such a model while at the same time consistently framing one's thinking exclusively within its terms and assumptions.)

*LC's distinctive mission to promote scholarship of  
unusual comprehensiveness and depth*

I take it as given that it is LC's core mission to *promote scholarship*—and particularly scholarship of *unusual comprehensiveness* and of *unusual depth*. This *raison d'être* tacitly underlies our serving since 1870 as the Nation's centralized depository for copyright acquisitions; it underlies our unique maintenance of multiple overseas offices for purchases from all countries and in all languages; and it similarly underlies our maintenance of multiple blanket order arrangements and exchange programs throughout the developed world—in almost every case at a level unmatched by any other library. It also directly underlies the outreach efforts we make in bringing world-class scholars to offices physically inside the Library, via the Kluge program and other residencies administered by the Office of Scholarly Programs. This understanding of our mission constitutes the very thing that attracts these scholars to the Library of Congress in the first place. And it certainly underlies our commitment to serving the information needs of Congress; as Mr. Jefferson himself said, "There is in fact no subject to which a Member of Congress may not have occasion to

refer.” (My twenty-eight years as a reference librarian here provide daily confirmation that, indeed, *no* subject is outside the purview of what our researchers—Congressional or other—ask for. See the examples below.)

This goal of promoting scholarship of *unusual* comprehensiveness and unusual depth forms the obvious beginning of an answer to the question “Is the Library of Congress *distinctly* different from other libraries?” It is truly astonishing, and equally dismaying, to staff throughout the institution that the question of whether LC is “distinctively different” can be seriously asked at all, let alone that its answer must be explained to the Library’s own administration.

*Distinctiveness not simply in the size of collections,  
but in the technical mechanisms needed to find what is in them*

Dr. Marcum’s list of questions (above), with their many concealed propositions and blurred distinctions, shows little awareness of the *distinctive technical requirements* of LC’s operations that are necessary to fulfill its own mission. By “technical requirements” I mean specifically the systems of *cataloging* (in our online public-access catalog [OPAC]) and *classification* (in our shelving of books), that provide the *means of access* to our collections that are themselves substantially different from the access mechanisms of relevance-ranked keywords provided by Google and the “more like this” customer linkages of Amazon. The latter are useful supplements to our own systems, but by themselves are wholly inadequate for the promotion of scholarship (rather than quick information-seeking).

The latter much-less-expensive-Internet search mechanisms would suffice to support the *very different* goal of providing researchers merely with “something quickly” on their topics of interest. This goal could indeed be met, in a majority of “information seeking” cases, by Google or Amazon (or Wikipedia). But the acceptance—even advocacy—of the Google/Amazon frame of reference for *all* research effectively creates a Procrustean bed that re-defines *access* to books in a way that positively precludes most of the substantive scholarship that it is the Library’s distinctive mission to promote.

And yet Dr. Marcum’s appeal to Google and Amazon as touchstones for LC’s operations contains the implication that their search mechanisms are indeed adequate for LC’s own mission. One is reminded, from the peculiar way in which her questions are articulated here, of her remarks of March 24, 2004, that with the digitization of full-texts by Google, “Library of Congress cataloging would not be needed in these circumstances” (“What Is Going on at the Library of Congress,” <http://www.guild2910.org/AFSCMEWhatIsGoingOn.pdf> p. 5). One is further reminded of Dr. Marcum’s favorable views of warehouse storage mechanisms even for onsite library collections (i.e., not just those in remote storage facilities)—mechanisms that do not require subject-classified shelving for books (*ibid.*, pp. 9-13; also <http://www.guild2910.org/AFSCMEMoreOnWhatIsGoing>).

pdf, pp. 11-12).

In her current list of questions, Dr. Marcum explicitly says that “Google and others” (evidently Amazon/Kindle) make such collections “easily accessible”—as though simply digitizing book collections and putting them “online,” all by itself, *constitutes* the provision of “easy access” to them. The clear implication is that the search mechanisms of Google and Amazon—relevance-ranking of keywords and “more like this” customer ratings/ranking—are all that is needed for the provision of *scholarly* access.

The alternative search mechanism provided by Library of Congress—Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH) cataloging in our OPAC, and classified shelving by Library of Congress Classification (LCC) in our bookstacks—are *not even noticed* in her very skewed portrayal of what makes book collections “easily accessible.”

The questions remain for scholars, however (those who actually use LC’s collections): Are books in fact “easily accessible” if they are digitized but not *findable* by Internet search mechanisms? Are not **alternatives** to Internet search mechanisms *also* necessary, to *solve* the problems of access that are in fact created and exacerbated by inadequate Internet search mechanisms?

#### *An alternative frame of reference*

Before giving concrete examples of the inadequacy of Google and Amazon search mechanisms to provide the kinds of access to books needed to fulfill LC’s distinctive mission, let me first try to be as explicit as I can about the frame within which I view the Library’s responsibilities to the American people in administering our unique, taxpayer-supported and legally-mandated-deposit book collection—“unique” in its immense and localized aggregation, not in its particular titles—with a view (again) to a mission of promoting scholarship of unusual scope and depth, rather than just providing “something quickly.” There are different parts to this alternative frame of reference:

1. Consideration of the scope of the book collection itself
2. Consideration of the scope of the *means of access* to the collection
  - a. Access mechanisms showing, systematically rather than haphazardly, the *range* of books relevant to any topic
  - b. Access mechanisms providing *depth* of access into the contents of the individual relevant books.

Of course there are more resources in LC’s collection than just book-formats: maps, manuscripts, motion pictures, sound recordings, prints and photographs, microforms, sheet music, subscription databases, et al. What is at issue in the present discussion, however (in the comparison to Google/

Amazon), is our general book collection and the means of access that we provide to scholars for discovering what is in it. It is in this area, especially, that LC is most distinctive from other libraries.

The first concern has to do with recognizing the importance of, and maintaining, the immense and unrivalled *scope* of LC's book collections, covering all subjects, all time periods, and all languages (with major qualifications only for Medicine and Agriculture). Although most of the same books exist individually in other libraries, and can be located via WorldCat and other mechanisms, it is their *physical contiguity* at LC, especially on Capitol Hill, that gives them an aggregate, synergistic power unrivalled anywhere else. When the same books can be perceived *in relationships to each other*—relationships of conceptual categorization defined by both LCSH cataloging and LCC shelving—and can also *be retrieved quickly*, without the hassles and delays of inter-library lending or remote storage transportation, then their functional utility is immensely increased. The Principle of Least Effort in information-seeking has been verified in dozens of empirical studies: what is easily and quickly findable gets used more readily than that which is not—even by senior scholars. “Findable” means both noticeable and retrievable. It is a factually false claim that Google Books provides comparable access— Google cannot display the texts of most books published in the 20th century (the vast bulk of LC's holdings) due to copyright restrictions; nor can it show the conceptual relationships created by LCSH or LCC (examples below) due to the serious inadequacies of its keyword-only search mechanism. (Relevance ranking of specified keywords is not at all the same thing as conceptual categorization, which groups similar works together no matter what keywords, or even what language, their authors may use.) Nor can Amazon, with its focus on current in-print, English-language books provide anything resembling comparable access to LC's general book collection.

This first concern, however, has already been adequately addressed by the Librarian of Congress in his letter of February 14, 2007, to Inspector General Karl W. Schornagle, responding to the IG's recommendation that, in Dr. Billington's words, “the Library should not even attempt to build comprehensive collections.” The Librarian points out how LC's collection is distinctively different from those of university libraries:

I am compelled to offer a more nuanced case for the role and responsibilities of the Library of Congress, an institution that is unique in the world. The report [from the Inspector General, *Library Services: The Library's Collections Acquisitions Strategy*, Dec., 2006] assumes that the Library of Congress is just one of many libraries collecting materials that can be used by everyone. This is simply not the case.

[Question: Why is Library Services still asking, in 2009, if it *is* the case?]

The Library of Congress is the authoritative, responsible knowledge institution for the Congress and the United States

government. University libraries, by and large, collect materials to support their institutions' curricula: consequently, there are great similarities among their collections. The Library of Congress's comprehensive collections policies allow us to provide very-difficult-to-obtain, obscure materials that provide information to our lawmakers that is available nowhere else. Quite often, it is precisely the marginal material of today that proves to be most useful at a later date. . . .

Since it is the responsibility of the Library of Congress to provide authoritative answers to Members of Congress and their staffs, it is essential that the Library have the most comprehensive collection possible of peer-reviewed, validated information that is found in books and scholarly journals. . . . The enormous legacy print collections that will never be digitized must remain available for answering questions and providing support for in-depth research...

[Question: Why does Library Services, in contrast, regard these as "materials which are (or will soon be) easily accessible online through Google and others?"]

Recommendations to develop collaborative arrangements for acquisition with other institutions are simply not practical. Our responsibility is to provide answers to Congress and staff quickly and authoritatively. . . .

[Question: Is the digitization of special collections now to be regarded as a higher priority than maintaining a full range of access mechanisms for answering such inquiries?]

Even in those cases when other libraries hold the material we need, the interlibrary loan process used among libraries across the country is labor intensive and time consuming. We cannot wait two to three weeks while requests are issued and materials are sent to us. . . .

Acquisitions is an inescapable top priority if we are to continue fulfilling our basic mission of serving Congress efficiently and "preserving a universal collection for future generations." Determining what must be acquired must be governed basically by experienced curators weighing quality judgments not by regulations about quantities—let alone by a study that suggests a presumption of overall reductions at a time when knowledge is more important than ever for our economy and security. . . . We cannot state emphatically or often enough that no other organization has the range of responsibility that the Library of Congress has.

[Question: Why is Library Services still asking, in 2009, "Is the Library of Congress distinctly different from other libraries?"]

Significant damage to the Library's core mission could result from studies that seem to advocate cutting back on the national collection.

In terms, then, of the question of LC's *scope of acquisitions*, in collecting a comprehensive range of books (and other materials), the Librarian has provided a definitive answer, that LC is indeed distinctively different from all other libraries, and must remain so in order to discharge its unique responsibilities. One must wonder, however, why this answer is not reflected in the "frame" of questions asked by Dr. Marcum.

*"Scope" entails more than just size of collections: a full scope of different access-mechanisms is also required*

In considering scope of access to LC's collections it is useful to think in terms of the fable of the Six Blind Men of India who were asked to describe an elephant. One grasped the elephant's leg and asserted, "The elephant is like a tree"; one touched the animal's side and said, "The elephant is like a wall"; one grabbed the tail and said, "The elephant is like a rope"; and so on with the tusk ("like a spear"), the trunk ("like a hose"), and the ear ("like a fan"). Each of the sages latched on to some information quickly, and each concluded, on the basis of what he found "easily accessible," that that was all there is. None perceived the number or the variety of the elephant's other parts, nor did any perceive the importance of the relationships and interconnections of the parts. The problem of understanding was not solved simply by the entirety (the "full scope") of the elephant being actually present, because a very important additional factor was lacking: none of the Blind Men had *the mechanism needed to perceive* that scope.

Researchers who have only Google and Amazon search methods available to them are left permanently in the situation of the Six Blind Men: they have no means to see, systematically (rather than haphazardly), the full range of resources that lie well beyond the purview of relevance-ranked keyword retrievals and customer recommendations. While the latter are indeed desirable (and sometimes indispensable), they are by no means sufficient by themselves to promote *scholarship of unusual scope*.

I spoke above of different component parts in the "alternative frame" of reference that is needed in assessing LC's distinctive mission and operations. Providing a *full scope of means of access to our collections* is just as important in this frame as providing a *full scope of collections themselves*.

Included within the full scope of other search mechanisms (beyond those of Google and Amazon) that are necessary — especially to provide *overview perspectives* rather than just "something" — are those providing access:

- by LCSH subject cataloging in our OPAC,
- by controlled, uniform name and title headings in our OPAC,
- by uncontrolled keywords within hundreds of commercial databases,
- by published bibliographies and professionally-created finding aids,

- by specific types of literature such as encyclopedias and literature-review articles that can be efficiently identified and cleanly segregated from all other types,
- by citation searches (showing where any source has been subsequently referred to),
- by related-record searches (retrieving articles having footnotes in common, regardless of keyword disparities),
- by people-contacts and subject experts (including reference librarians and curatorial staff), and
- by special reference collections carefully selected by professionals and segregated from the general collections.

*None* of these avenues of entry into our collections is duplicated or matched by Google or Amazon. (I have omitted, here, mentioning the additional necessary mechanism of access “by subject-classified shelving” because browsing in bookstacks is usually a very poor way to gain an overview of the literature of a large topic. Focused browsing within limited ranges of shelves, however, is nevertheless important, but for a very different purpose: its strength lies in providing *depth* of access to *particular* volumes within a *limited* topical grouping [see below] rather than in providing overviews of the *range* of *all* book-groupings relevant to the topic—the function handled by LCSH cataloging.)

Only the first of these alternative avenues of access—i.e., subject cataloging in our OPAC—need concern us at the moment: In providing professional *subject cataloging*, via the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) system, LC creates and maintains a crucial means of access to its book collection that is itself *distinctively different* from the access provided by Google or Amazon—and, in what it accomplishes in systematic overview-provision, it is *far superior*.

Tens of thousands of examples are possible here; for the present we will have to let one suffice: the *subject cataloging access* to books on “Afghanistan” that is infinitely more efficient in providing an overview of the whole scope of our relevant collections than could be provided by either Google or Amazon search mechanisms. And I need not emphasize how important it is to our national interest that Congress, and scholars generally, have access to as much knowledge on this subject as we can possibly provide. A researcher using LC’s online catalog can easily call up a browse-display such as the following:

**Afghanistan**  
**Afghanistan—Antiquities**  
**Afghanistan—Bibliography**  
**Afghanistan—Biography**  
**Afghanistan—Biography—Dictionaries**  
**Afghanistan—Boundaries**  
**Afghanistan—Civilization**  
**Afghanistan—Civilization—Bibliography**

Afghanistan—Commerce  
Afghanistan—Commerce—History  
Afghanistan—Constitutional history  
Afghanistan—Defenses—History—20th Century—Sources  
Afghanistan—Description and travel  
Afghanistan—Economic conditions  
Afghanistan—Economic Policy  
Afghanistan—Emigration and immigration  
Afghanistan—Encyclopedias  
Afghanistan—Environmental conditions  
Afghanistan—Ethnic relations  
Afghanistan—Fiction  
Afghanistan—Foreign economic relations  
Afghanistan—Foreign public opinion  
Afghanistan—Foreign relations [numerous subdivisions]  
Afghanistan—Foreign relations—Great Britain  
Afghanistan—Foreign relations—Sources  
Afghanistan—Foreign relations—United States—Sources  
Afghanistan—Gazetteers  
Afghanistan—Genealogy  
Afghanistan—Geography—Bibliography  
Afghanistan—Guidebooks  
Afghanistan—Historical geography  
Afghanistan—Historiography  
Afghanistan—History  
Afghanistan—History—Bibliography  
Afghanistan—History—Chronology  
Afghanistan—History—Dictionaries  
Afghanistan—History—20th century—Sources  
Afghanistan—History—Soviet occupation, 1979-1989  
Afghanistan—History—Kings and rulers—Biography  
Afghanistan—Imprints  
Afghanistan—In art—Catalogs  
Afghanistan—Juvenile literature  
Afghanistan—Kings and rulers  
Afghanistan—Languages  
Afghanistan—Maps  
Afghanistan—Officials and employees  
Afghanistan—Periodicals  
Afghanistan—Pictorial works  
Afghanistan—Poetry  
Afghanistan—Politics and government  
Afghanistan—Populations  
Afghanistan—Relations—India  
Afghanistan—Rural conditions  
Afghanistan—Social conditions  
Afghanistan—Social life and customs  
Afghanistan—Social policy  
Afghanistan—Statistics

**Afghanistan—Strategic aspects**  
**Afghanistan—Study and teaching**  
**Afghanistan—Yearbooks**

Such “road map” arrays in our OPAC enable scholars who are entering a new subject area to *recognize what they cannot specify in advance*. They enable scholars to see “the shape of the elephant” of the book literature on their topic *early* in their research.

Neither Google nor Amazon makes such *systematic overviews* of subjects accessible at all, let alone “easily accessible.”

Subject cataloging in our OPAC accomplishes the goal of extending the scope of scholars’ inquiries by showing them more of the full range of what is available than they know how to ask for before they are exposed to it. LCSH cataloging enables them both to recognize a much broader range of topical options within their subjects that would not occur to them otherwise; and it *also* enables them to pick those aspects of interest in a way that separates them from other aspects that would only be in the way, as clutter, without this roster of conceptual distinctions to choose from.

The serious problem of overwhelming clutter—retrieval of too much ‘junk’ having the right keywords in the wrong conceptual contexts—is one that is *created* by Internet book-search mechanisms but *solved* by LC cataloging. Google and Amazon searchers cannot see “the shape of the elephant” of their topics; LC catalog users can, much more efficiently.

Our LCSH cataloging is a truly amazing service that we provide routinely—but it is one that would be lost entirely if we dumb down our access-provision to only what a Google or Amazon “model” allows. As a reference librarian who is called upon every day to help scholars get efficiently into subject areas that are new to them, I am repeatedly astounded by what such overview-provision mechanisms accomplish that neither Google nor Amazon (nor OCLC’s WorldCat) can even begin to approximate. (Note, however, that none of these services have the responsibility to Congress which LC has.)

The actual browse-display in LC’s online catalog shows over 480 subdivisions of Afghanistan, so the above is only a sampling. Further, I have not listed any of the cross-references to still other relevant headings that are provided, nor any examples of the range of keyword-variant titles—in scores of languages—that may be included within the coverage of any *one* of these headings. (For an example of the scope of completely unpredictable title keywords retrieved, all in one place, by the single LCSH precoordinated heading-string **Afghanistan—History**, see the brief discussion at <http://www.guild2910.org/searching.htm>.)

Further still, LC now has a new way (the Subject Keyword option in our OPAC’s Basic Search menu) to bring up, systematically, a browse-menu of

all other headings in which **Afghanistan** is itself a subdivision of another topic, for example:

**Abandoned children—Afghanistan**  
**Actors—Afghanistan**  
**Administrative law—Afghanistan**  
\* \* \*  
**Buddhist antiquities—Afghanistan**  
**Cabinet officers—Afghanistan—Biography**  
\* \* \*  
**Muslim women—Afghanistan**  
**Muslim women—Education—Afghanistan—Bibliography**  
**Rural women—Afghanistan—Social conditions**  
**Sex discrimination against women—Afghanistan**  
**Single women—Legal status, laws, etc.--Afghanistan**  
**Women—Afghanistan—Interviews**  
**Women—Afghanistan—Social conditions**  
**Women and war—Afghanistan**  
**Women in development—Afghanistan—Case studies**  
**Women in Islam—Afghanistan**  
**Women in politics—Afghanistan**  
**Women journalists—Afghanistan**  
**Women—Legal status, laws, etc.—Afghanistan**  
**Women refugees—Afghanistan—Social conditions**  
**Women—Services for—Afghanistan—Directories**  
**Young women—Afghanistan—Biography**

Neither Google Books nor Amazon—*nor WorldCat*—has a search mechanism that is nearly as efficient in laying out the scope of options available to researchers, enabling them to recognize aspects of their topic, right at the beginning of their research, in ways that they could never specify in advance when confronted by only a blank Internet-type search box. While the latter does indeed offer an apparently “simple” means of searching, its limitations condemn scholars to remain perpetually in the situation of the Six Blind Men of India. The literature of the world—which LC alone among libraries attempts to collect in a systematic fashion—is itself very complicated, very disparate, and very tangled and interconnected in ways that cannot be revealed by Web search mechanisms. The amazing scope and diversity of the world’s literature itself is a rock-bottom fact that will not vanish simply because we naïvely want to believe it can be made “easily accessible” through a single search box, backed by “under the hood” computer algorithms working on keywords and democratic tags.

In short, the LCSH system of cataloging in our OPAC provides a means of *seeing* the full scope of LC’s book holdings, in a systematic manner, in a way that is *distinctively different* from what can be shown by Google, Amazon, or any Web 2.0 mechanisms. We provide menus of options and road-maps of the “subject territory” of any topic in a way that enables researchers to see, systematically (rather than haphazardly), more than

they know how to ask for, and in ways that clearly segregate relevant from irrelevant sources on whatever the topic may be. Our search mechanism is *distinctive* in its capacity to show “the shape of the elephant” in a way that the several alternative mechanisms cannot—even though the others are *also* necessary for their own distinctive capabilities.

Depth of access *entails problems (and solutions) different*  
*from scope of access*

If our mission is indeed to promote scholarship of unusual comprehensiveness (scope) and of unusual depth, then we must also look at the *distinctive means of access* that allows LC to provide *depth* of penetration into its collections. And this consideration is an additional structural element of the alternative frame of reference (beyond that of a “digital strategy” modeled on Google and Amazon) needed to understand LC’s overall distinctiveness.

In his letter to the Inspector General, Dr. Billington addressed part of this issue, without fully articulating all of the implications, by pointing out that “The Library of Congress’s comprehensive collections policies allow us to provide very-difficult-to-obtain, obscure materials that provide information to our lawmakers that is available nowhere else. Quite often, it is precisely the marginal material of today that proves to be most useful at a later date.” I fully agree; but I must point out again that we need not just the range of obscure materials that prove to be so useful, but also *the means of access to their full-texts* that cannot be provided by any digitization project.

The Library of Congress Classification (LCC) scheme *applied to the shelving* of our book collections is the alternative means of access that gives us distinctively deep penetration to full-texts within the Nation’s unique copyright-deposit collection in ways that cannot be duplicated by either Google or Amazon.

I realize that such a statement is counter-intuitive to people who do not *use* the collections—i.e., their questions are: How can classified shelving of books provide any important access to their contents that is *not also* provided by full-text digitization? If the books’ contents are fully digitized, doesn’t that in itself make them “fully accessible”?— i.e., how can it be maintained that something *else* is needed?

The first problem with such questions is their underlying—and false—assumption that the Copyright law will be successfully circumvented to allow the full text digitization of the vast bulk of 20th century books (which also comprise the bulk of LC’s own general collections). The full-text display of most of these books will certainly be precluded; but even their full-text indexing (by Google) continues to be very much a matter of questionable legality.

The second problem is that of confusing scope (or size) of collections with the scope of the *means of access* to the collections. These are not the same thing. Let me therefore *demonstrate* the substantive differences between access provided by text-digitization vs. that provided by classified shelving of full-texts, with concrete examples that zero in on LC's distinctive responsibility to serve the national government:

*A Question from a Supreme Court Justice*

In March of last year (2008) I received a rush request from a librarian at the Supreme Court library, that one of the Justices needed to confirm the statement that “the United States occupation zone in Germany after World War II encompassed 5,700 square miles and a population of over 18 million people.” I haven't the faintest idea why any judge would want such information; but if the question comes from the Supreme Court then it cannot be cavalierly dismissed as unimportant. It must be answered, and answered quickly. Period.

I first tried the subscription databases *America: History and Life and Historical Abstracts* in hopes that someone had written an article on the occupation zone; but the results were much more diffuse than I wanted. So I tried our online book catalog. Just as an initial stab I did a keyword search of “occupation” and “zone” and “Germany,” with a limit on the search, that I wanted only records published between 1945 and 1947. Within the 145 records that came up, I spotted one pretty quickly that had a formally established corporate name on it: **Germany (Territory under Allied occupation, 1945-1955: U. S. Zone). Office of Military Government**. I offered a silent “thank you” to our catalogers for their authority work in grouping relevant works together under this standardized name form, for when I searched on this standardized term I found a very focused pool of records. There were 18 hits; one of them had the word “population” in its title.

Since this was a rush request, I immediately went back to the bookstacks to look at this one pamphlet. This initial item did indeed have population figures for the American zone in 1947, but no square mileage figure. Right next to it, however, was another report that had a 1946 population figure—17,174,367—close to the “18 million” in the original inquiry, but obviously being a very different keyword character string. And it also had an area figure for the American zone—but in square kilometers, not in square miles. That was no problem, as the figure could easily be converted. The significant point, here, is that the chart providing the area figure did not say “square kilometers” written out—it said simply “sq. km.”

The equally significant point is that this particular pamphlet is indeed digitized in Google Books; but, even so, I could not *find* it there. If you search Google Books for the three words with which I started my own search in LC's online catalog, namely “occupation” and “zone” and “Germany,” and limit to publications between 1945 and 1947, you get 653

hits; the exact pamphlet I found in the stacks showed up as the *307th item in the Google “relevance ranked” display*. (I could find it in the list only because, at that point, I already knew the precise source I was looking for. The number and the ordinal position are those as of March, 2008; Google displays, however, change not only from one day to the next but also, frequently, from one minute to the next.)

I cannot emphasize the following point enough, because it is so strongly counter-intuitive to administrators who do not actually have to do such searches, or find such information, themselves; and yet it is nonetheless true: You cannot “progressively refine” such a set of 653 items down to the right pamphlet by simply typing in extra keywords. Why not? Because the terms “18 million” or “square miles”—the words contained in the judge’s question—are not the words that actually appear in the table between paragraphs 2 and 3, on page 6; nor do they appear anywhere else. In order to do “progressive refinement” you have to know in advance which exact words will produce the refinement you seek; and *it is precisely that knowledge which we lack when we are moving around in unfamiliar subject areas*. In fact, I could not get the relevant table to show up at all, even in snippet form, even after I had discovered the right keywords (via stacks-browsing), in spite of the fact that I could view other snippets from the same pamphlet. The Google software is such that it won’t show you *every* snippet containing the words you type in; and the company is playing it safe, legally, in not providing full-text views of post-1923 works, such as this occupation zone pamphlet.

The point is this: even if the Google keyword search software would display every instance of every word asked for, I still would never have known in advance the precise keywords (like “sq. km.”) that I needed to type in—I would havetyped the phrase “square miles” written out, because it would not have occurred to me to think in terms of kilometers, let alone in abbreviations of terms.

The fact that the pamphlet is digitized does not mean that it is therefore “easily accessible”—quite the contrary: it is not *findable* because Google’s keyword *search mechanism* does not provide adequate *access* to it.

By using the classified bookstacks, however, I employed a different and, in this case, a much more efficient search technique for approaching the same (or at least a comparable) body of literature—a technique that enabled me *to recognize what I could not specify in advance*, in a blank search box. I could find the source I needed because it was physically right next to the one that I started off looking for—and the one I was looking for was itself one of only 18 records, not one of 653. And I could skim both that initial full text—down to the level of its individual tables—and the one right next to it *quickly*, precisely *because* they were physically shelved right next to each other, within a limited class. I did not have to browse all 535 miles of our Capitol Hill bookshelves—I had only a very limited range of materials (less than one shelf) to inspect. In contrast, any search of Google

Books does indeed simultaneously search all of its tens of millions of texts. The relevant material in the classified shelving-array was thus effectively *segregated from, rather than merged into*, hundreds or thousands of irrelevant sources having the same keywords in undesired contexts.

Classified bookstacks allow researchers to find *through recognition within full texts* what they don't know how to ask for: we can look not just at tables of contents (which can be included in OPAC records), but also maps, charts, tables, illustrations, diagrams, running heads, highlighted sidebars, binding condition, typographical or color variations for emphasis, bulleted or numbered lists, prefaces, footnotes, bibliographies and back-of-the-book indexes—most of which cannot be included in OPAC records at all, or added retrospectively to millions of existing records—and all within *limited* physical areas. Such quick and focused browsing provides *deep access via recognition* in ways that digitized libraries of the very same texts do not.

Moreover, authority control in *library catalog records* enables researchers to zero in *on which very limited areas of the stacks* they should go to, in the first place: the established corporate name form **Germany (Territory under Allied occupation, 1945-1955: U. S. Zone). Office of Military Government** enabled me to segregate relevant records from this body from all of the others having the same keywords (“occupation” and “zone” and “Germany”) in irrelevant contexts.

Let me step back a second and put this in perspective: the 535 miles of bookshelves that LC has on Capitol Hill is greater than the distance between the District of Columbia and Charleston, South Carolina. And we have about 18 million books in over 470 languages on those shelves. (This does not count our offsite Fort Meade holdings.) Nevertheless, because of the subject-classified shelving arrangement, I was phoning the population and square mileage figures, and then FAXing them, to the Supreme Court librarian within about a half hour of my searching the catalog—and part of that time was taken up just in running back and forth through the tunnel between two of our buildings, and waiting for the stacks elevators. That anybody could find this requested information at all within such a huge and diverse collection, without knowing in advance which words to ask for—and find it quickly—is pretty amazing, even to me (and I'm the one who did it). But it was indeed possible *because of the prior work done by our professional catalogers* in creating the classified shelving arrangement. Search results coming from that avenue of access, enabling a researcher to simply recognize what he cannot specify in advance, within full texts (most of them both copyrighted and out-of-print) in a definably-limited subject-class area, cannot be matched by either Google or Amazon retrievals. The Library of Congress thus provides a *distinctive alternative* to Internet search mechanisms that in *some* cases is far *superior*.

Note the combination of factors needed to answer this Supreme Court question:

1) LC had to have acquired the obscure 1946 pamphlet to begin with—i.e., the scope of our collections had to be unusually comprehensive right from the start. (WorldCat lists only a dozen other libraries that have the same work.)

2) LC had to provide a *means of finding* it:

- that provided *fast* access (onsite rather than in a remote warehouse);
- that provided *deep* access, at page-and paragraph-levels, and even to the level of individual words (which level is not provided by OPAC records);
- that provided *systematic* access, via authority work in the OPAC enabling me to target which specific stacks area to focus on;
- that allowed *recognition* of the pamphlet’s terminology (“17,174,367” and “sq.km.”) that could not be specified in advance;
- that enabled the correct item to be found *without excessive clutter*—i.e., within a manageably small conceptual grouping defined by the classified shelving, thereby preventing the relevant pamphlet from being buried within mountains of irrelevancies having similar words (“occupation”, “zone”) in the wrong conceptual contexts.

Here is a major additional point: *at LC alone* we have similar on-shelf, full-text-level, subject-access-by-proximity to *every* item in our *unique aggregation* of 18 million books onsite—no matter how old or in what languages the books may be—rather than only to much smaller collections (as in university libraries), or only to copyright-free full texts (as in Google Books), or only/primarily to English works currently in print (as in Amazon). No other library can match the range of subject-arrayed full texts that we have here. We have both a very distinctive collection to begin with *and very distinctive access* to its contents that would be lost without classified shelving.

This is the point that was not fully articulated in Dr. Billington’s reponse to the Inspector General. It is the synergy of a uniquely comprehensive collection *coupled with the way it is shelved* that provides LC’s unmatched ability to respond immediately to the information needs of the U.S.government. If all of the obscure, seldom-used items in our collection—such as this occupation zone pamphlet—were sent to remote storage, then we *could not find them ourselves once they are removed from classified shelving*. (Books in remote storage are not shelved by subject-classification numbers; they are housed randomly in tubs, but are still retrievable by bar codeslinking the volumes to the tubs in which they reside.)

In our present configuration, *every item in the collection effectively serves as an entry point to the full-texts of every other item shelved nearby*—i.e.,

the discovery of only one potentially relevant pamphlet *also* gives us the capacity to examine, quickly and at full-text level, all of the items it is shelved next to. If we take any of those initial items off the shelf and send them to storage, then we effectively have much less full-text-level access to all of the other items, nearby, that it would have brought immediately to our attention. (Here is another truth that is counter-intuitive to those who do not themselves use the collection: searches of catalog records by class number in the OPAC are simply no substitute in such cases—such OPAC searches do not provide comparably-**quick** access, or full-text-**level** of access, or simple *recognition* access of unpredictable *text* words [e.g., “sq. km.”]—especially if the catalog records refer to items stored offsite [thereby further tilting the slope against “least effort” retrieval]. Class-number searches of records in the OPAC, as substitutes for searching the actual books in classified order, may sound appealing to cost-cutters who themselves don’t have to do such searches at all, let alone under deadlines; but they just do not *work* for those of us who do.)

And yet Dr. Marcum, referring to subject-classified shelving, speaks only of the “limitations that shelving scheme imposes”—with no mention at all of the *immense expansion of subject access* that it *creates* to *precisely* the “very-difficult-to-obtain, obscure materials that provide information to our lawmakers that is available nowhere else” (in Dr. Billington’s words).

No catalog record contains the depth of information contained in the actual book it points to; and at LC, our pre-1968 catalog records (PreMARC) are skeletal to begin with—they lack even subtitles, contents notes, and series statements. We especially need classified shelving for maximal access to the bulk of our “very-difficult-to-obtain and obscure” older books—such as the 1946 pamphlet on the occupation zone. For just such cases of providing quick access of unusual depth for important governmental purposes, policy “must be governed basically by experienced curators weighing quality judgments not by regulations about quantities”—e.g., “the very small number of staff and researchers who utilize the classified collection for browsing purposes.”

#### *A Question from a Member of Congress*

Last September (’08) I helped a Member of Congress who was actually in Main Reading Room, wanting “a list of books or other sources from the Revolutionary period on the subject of economics that would have been known to the Founders.” To make a long story short, among the many sources I turned up, one in particular was appreciatively described by the Member as “the mother lode” when I brought it out of the stacks. It is a 1967 article entitled “A Note on Jefferson’s Knowledge of Economics” from *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. I discovered its existence—while the Member was still in the room—not through any Google or Amazon search (how many individuals’ names or different verbal designations are needed to define “the Founders”?), nor through any search of our subscription databases—which I also tried—but through

a published bibliography shelved in the Main Reading Room's reference collection. And I did not know in advance the title of this bibliography or name of its compiler. All I knew was that there is a *classification area* of the bookshelves where bibliographies on Adams, Jefferson, and the other Founders are *likely* to be found, in the Z8000s (i.e., book-length bibliographies on individuals, alphabetically sub-arranged by the person's name who is the subject of the bibliography).

Within that very limited area of the collection I could quickly recognize the relevant works that I could not specify in advance (one of them refers to itself as a "reference guide" rather than a "bibliography"); this area of the shelves immediately showed me three Jefferson bibliographies, all annotated, right next to each other.

If these three sources had been shelved not by subject but by dates of accession (1982, 1983, 1993) they would have been widely separated by thousands of intervening volumes in the reference collection, or by millions in the regular stacks. Moreover, one of the three bibliographies does not list this article at all; but I would not have known in advance which of them does have it, if I had had to request the volumes from a storage warehouse—a very time-consuming process that would not have served the Member's interest.

The fact that the relevant bibliographies were shelved together, by subject, enabled me to skim through them very quickly, and to find not just the general topic of the above article (listed simply under "economics" in two of the books' indexes), but a precise annotation within the full-text of the annotated bibliography that reads "List of books in TJ's library which were also cited in Smith's *Wealth of Nations*; TJ had 94 of the 149 authors cited." This indeed is "the mother lode."

*Making our collections "maximally accessible"*

In his transmittal letter covering the *Library's Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2008-2013*, Dr. Billington refers to LC's mission to make its collection "maximally accessible" ([http://www.loc.gov/about/strategicplan/2008-2013/StrategicPlan07-Contents\\_1.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/about/strategicplan/2008-2013/StrategicPlan07-Contents_1.pdf)). Are our collections in fact "maximally accessible" if the very access to them in question is constrained through the narrow channels of Google and Amazon keyword search softwares?—and if it is further constrained through their display-limitations that cannot show the full-texts of most copyrighted books? This is not a rhetorical question; it is a serious matter and it has a definite, objective answer: the collections are *absolutely not* "maximally accessible" under such conditions. Nor are they even "easily accessible," as Dr. Marcum claims (above). These Internet-type access channels *create* as many problems as they solve for scholarly research: in this case, none of these copyrighted bibliographies is full-text searchable in either Google Books or Amazon. And even if they were, it would never have occurred to me to think of searching a keyword string such as "cited in Smith's *Wealth*

*of Nations.*” I could recognize the importance of the words when I saw them within the full-text of a lengthy annotated bibliography—a source that, itself, I could find quickly, within a very limited class area—but I could never have specified those exact words in advance. (Those who claim miracles for “progressive limitation” of large keyword sets demonstrate remarkably limited experience in having to find works in subject areas outside their own expertise. But LC reference staff have to identify and retrieve, quickly, materials on any subjects that any Member of Congress can think of, even when we ourselves do not know what the best search terms may be. But because of our distinctive access mechanism of classified shelving we can “make” the shelves show us what we don’t know how to specify.)

It would therefore be destructive of LC’s distinctive mission to promote scholarship of unusual depth if the Library decided to stop shelving its unique aggregation of books in the distinctive way that provides exactly the deep access required by a Supreme Court Justice and a Member of Congress.

Of course, *most* of the questions we get do not require that kind of access—but then *most* of them *also* do not require citation searching or related-record searching or referrals to subject experts or use of the full range of encyclopedias that LC alone can offer [example below]. But *this* Library needs to have the fullest possible set of access tools immediately available for the comparatively few times when *all* of our access mechanism are indeed necessary, and necessary under deadline pressure. We have professional responsibilities here that Google, Amazon, and OCLC do not have—responsibilities that, in fact, are shared by no other research library (including all Association of Research Libraries institutions, either individually or collectively).

#### *A question on globalization*

Let me provide another example of the unique advantages that scholars have at LC from having the fullest possible set of access tools readily available, on a moment’s notice. This was a question from an academic researcher, not a government official. He said he was interested in writing on “globalization,” but wasn’t sure yet how he was going to approach the topic. Since encyclopedia articles are often wonderful starting points for people who are moving into new or unfamiliar subject areas, I could show him very quickly (via one of our subscription databases) that overview-articles on different aspects of “globalization” appear in all of the following titles:

*Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*  
*Encyclopedia of Community*  
*Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*  
*Encyclopedia of Communication and Information*

*Berkshire Encyclopedia of World History*  
*Encyclopedia of Evolution*  
*Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*  
*Encyclopedia of Management*  
*Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology*  
*Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*  
*Encyclopedia of Democracy*  
*Globalization: Encyclopedia of Trade, Labor, and Politics*  
*International Encyclopedia of Environmental Politics*  
*Encyclopedia of African History*  
*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*  
*Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women*  
*Tobacco in History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*  
*International Encyclopedia of the Sociology of Education*  
*Encyclopedia of the Arctic*  
*Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*  
*Social Science Encyclopedia*

Since only a “very small number of staff and researchers” would ever “utilize” such a range of specialized resources, does that mean, then, that the Library of Congress need not collect that full range? or that LC can send these works to remote storage, from which each would then have to be requested for overnight (or lengthier) delivery? or that we can rely on Kindle versions (which do not exist)? The fact that these encyclopedias are easily accessible—most of them within open reference collections, and browsable in relation to other full-text reference sources—gives them a cumulative power that in turn gives any researcher at LC a *distinctively different* advantage in approaching such a topic, which he would not have in any other library in the world. The very same sources that would indeed be “little used” in other libraries *become* “more used” *here* because of the synergies brought about by their physical aggregation in our unmatched reference collections.

In other words, the bean-counting objections to the maintenance of classified shelving are remarkably similar to the Inspector General’s objections to assembling a “universal collection” of texts, in one physical location on Capitol Hill, in the first place. The fact is, the vast bulk of our book holdings, because they are copyrighted, cannot be read at full-text level by anyone who is physically outside our reading rooms. As much as our publicity emphasizes how much material we are digitizing for free distribution on the Internet, virtually none of that material comes from our general book collections. Since *only a very small number of staff and researchers* can actually *use* most of the 21.5 million volumes we have collected—i.e., those who are physically in our reading rooms, whose number is indeed “very small” in comparison to the number of those producing hits on our Web site—do low “body counts” here mean, then, that we should no longer collect a universal scope of materials to begin with, because the number of onsite scholars is so small in comparison to

Internet users? (Should we eliminate the expense of the Kluge Scholars program, or of the NEH-funded scholars in residence, because they form “only a very small number of staff and researchers” who can make full use of the scope of our onsite collections?)

The proposal to cease collecting a universal scope of material, physically centralized at LC, is exactly what the Inspector General suggested—and it is exactly what the Librarian of Congress decisively rejected; in his words, “The enormous legacy print collections *that will never be digitized must remain available for answering questions and providing support for in-depth research.*” That centralized physical collection, no matter how many people use in on Capitol Hill, enables *anyone* who does come in the door to freely pursue scholarship of both unusual scope and unusual depth [see next example], *which cannot be comparably achieved anywhere else.* And that is our mission. Any “digital strategy” that overlooks this rock-bottom fact cannot work; we must think “outside the box” of digitization alone, and proceed on the assumption that LC must maintain both onsite collections, *maximally accessible only to a comparatively small number of onsite researchers*, as well as electronic resources freely available on the Web.

#### *A Question on the Qu’ran*

Just one more example: In March of this year I helped a Muslim scholar who was interested in how a particular Arabic word for a kind of palm tree had been translated in various English versions of the *Qu’ran*. I went back into the stacks four times for him, each time bringing out armloads of all I could carry of our various English translations, *all shelved together* in BP109. He was *very* thankful—he had only one day to visit the Library, and he told me at the end of the day that he would never have seen so many different English versions in one place anywhere else in the world. The important point is this: even if the same books had been collected elsewhere, he would not have had anything like comparable *access* to them if they had not been *physically shelved next to each other* to facilitate easy retrieval and easy comparisons of full-texts. Nor could he have typed in, within any digitized collection of texts, the English translations of the particular Arabic word that interested him—because he did not know to begin with which English terms were being used. That was exactly what he needed to find out—not what he could specify in advance. When Muslim scholars themselves have unrivalled access to Qu’ranic materials here (as nowhere else), should we eliminate the very means of access that richly satisfied this gentleman because he was a member of only a “very small number of staff and researchers” who benefited by our classified shelving?

Or, rather, isn’t it *precisely because* this Library can handle that “very small number” of such inquiries—from Supreme Court Justices, Members of Congress, academics, and foreign visitors from all over the world—in ways that no other library can, that give scholars such *distinctive* results in coming here? Isn’t *this* the *unusual* kind of service the Librarian of

Congress appeals to in his reply to Mr. Schornagel, in rejecting the Inspector General's bean-counting assumptions? We have that kind of access available at a moment's notice, in all subject areas, across all languages—no matter when such questions come and no matter what their source, either governmental or private. And we have that unmatched capacity precisely because the Library of Congress is *not* like Google or Amazon.

If we no longer have classified shelving as one (albeit not the sole) important means of access to our immense aggregation, then we are not making the books either “maximally accessible” or even “easily accessible” when the most difficult questions arise. In maintaining this *distinctive means of access* to our *unique aggregation* of books we are providing a vital *synergy* for scholars that is simply not profitable for the private sector to furnish. This is precisely the role that needs to be played by the *one* government agency, tax-supported by the entire country, that is *responsible* for providing maximal access to the Nation's sole collection of copyright-deposit books, in ways that cannot be duplicated by Google, by Amazon, by OCLC, by the *entire* Internet, or by *any* other library.

Providing just this is the kind of maximal access is something we used to be proud of around the Library of Congress. But now, apparently, we're supposed to ignore our history, radically dumb down our search capabilities, eviscerate our own understanding of our mission, and just provide “something quickly” to Congress and the American people, rather than scholarship of unusual scope and unusual depth—and why? Because Library Services consistently tries to force the Google and Amazon paradigm onto LC's operations, as models for the service we ought to be providing, and no longer sees LC as distinctively different in either its mission or in the technicalities of its operations needed to carry out that mission.

#### *How to deal with very real space shortages*

What should we do, then, to deal with our very real space shortages, if we cannot rely on a digital strategy to solve the very real problem? Several things:

1) Don't “slant” the portrayal of the problem to Congress as being worse than it is; and further, don't “frame” the problem to begin with as though digitization now represents the *only* solution. The Library has dealt with the same problem of books “piled up on the floor” repeatedly for over 130 years. When we became the centralized locale for copyright deposits, before the Jefferson Building was opened, then-Librarian Ainsworth Rand Spofford's legendary memory could still find things within the piles of books that then existed. (Granted, there's no single person like him anymore; but there is still a huge distributed range of staff knowledge of the collections—a resource that can readily be appealed to as part of the solution to current problems.) When the Jefferson Building itself was

opened, the planners at the time thought they had left enough room for all of the copyright deposits for the whole 20th century; but the stacks were filled up by the 1920s. We then filled in two open courtyard areas, and lobbied for the Adams Building, which opened in 1939. That, too, rapidly filled up by the 1960s, with books on the floor; and relief was not provided until the Madison Building opened in 1980. Of course, that too filled up, and now we have remote storage facilities at Fort Meade and Landover (and separate collections at Culpepper). At every stage of our history, books became “piled up on the floor” and yet the Library survived without throwing the baby out with the bathwater—specifically, without abandoning the classified shelving needed to fulfill its mission (to promote scholarship of unusual depth) in favor of either height-shelving or accession/barcode storage for Capitol Hill books. There is no need to abandon classified shelving now, either. Doing so would cripple our ability to provide just the kind of *unusual* access for Congress, the Supreme Court, and advanced scholars, that Google and Amazon cannot provide at all.

2) Given that, in Dr. Marcum’s words, “We know from experience that funding for Fort Meade modules is slow in coming, when it comes at all,” then it is increasingly important for LC management to convey to Congress, with much greater emphasis, the message that LC is indeed distinctive, that Google and Amazon do *not* provide workable models for us to follow, and that therefore funding for another module is imperative if we are to maintain our distinctive capacity for promoting the kinds and levels of scholarship that cannot be done anywhere else. Given, further, that “the proposal to begin design work for module 5 was cut from the 2010 budget,” then *management needs to do its own job*, in lobbying all the harder for its restoration in a future budget. And will that really be asking Congress for anything unusually expensive?—i.e., since the various modules are largely similar anyway, how big of a problem is it to design another one that will basically be a carbon copy of what’s out there already? Similarity of design for add-ons is why we chose modular construction to begin with.

And, yes, we can live—as we have so often before—with *some* books “piled up on the floor” in the meantime. This is not a disaster; it never has been in the past. It is a manageable problem.

3) One very important component of the solution to books-on-the-floor is not even mentioned in Dr. Marcum’s memo, quite possibly because it does not fit within the “all digital frame” within which she limits her inquiry—i.e., the very title of her memo is “Meeting on Digital Strategy”—and yet it is exactly what Dr. Billington appeals to in his letter to the Inspector General: “Equally important are the librarians and curators who know this material intimately. There is *no satisfactory substitute* for knowledgeable staff members who have built collections over long years” (emphasis added). In the present situation, there is no satisfactory substitute for those very same knowledgeable staff members who alone are capable of *weeding* the onsite collections, to determine which works (and copies) shall go to storage when funding for new modules does become available. This point

needs emphasis: wholesale digitization cannot take the place of what the Library's professional staff can do in adjusting the collection's size to its space on Capitol Hill.

Recommending Officers (ROs) at the Library are currently weeding our general collections, on a rush basis, to get a half-million books off the floor by November of 2009. (Apparently the floor-clearing must be finished prior to the Library's testimony before Congress early next year.) ROs are the professional staff in charge of collection development in various specific subject areas; our responsibilities are divvied up, in part, by the different class areas in the LC Classification system—and the bookstack areas corresponding to those classes. We are currently inserting yellow slips in the volumes we pick to go to our remote storage warehouse in Ft. Meade, Md. But much of this present work, due to the deadline, is quick and dirty—we are looking, right now, especially for long runs of serials or comparable runs of annual volumes (or annual sets, such as encyclopedias). Serials that are shelved in classified order do not reveal the contents of their individual articles as readily as books that are shelved within the same class areas (as with the Occupation Zone pamphlet, above). The reason is that any long run of a serial may contain articles on many thousands of individual subjects; but the necessary placement of the entire run of the journal in only one class area does not show those individual articles in any noticeable relationship to the corresponding books on the same wide variety of topics. Access to journal articles has always been provided most efficiently by commercial indexes and databases (and footnotes within scholarly sources themselves) rather than through either LCSH headings in library catalogs or LCC shelving in the stacks. Such runs of serials are therefore prime candidates for weeding to remote storage (especially if their contents are duplicated in JSTOR or other databases). Their absence allows more room for retention of obscure monographs such as the Occupation Zone pamphlet, the revelation of whose content is much more dependent on classified shelving.

But a focus on weeding serials cannot solve all space shortage problems in the long run. It is unavoidable that we must also select books for transfer to Ft. Meade. I, for one, would love to have the time to go through our deck areas covering Philosophy, Psychology, and Library Science, to slip individually all of the books (and copies) that I think can reasonably be sent to remote storage in a way that still preserves access to “very-difficult-to-obtain, obscure materials that provide information to our lawmakers that is available nowhere else.” Having the books in every such class slipped by the professionals in charge of those areas would be the best way to clear the floors when the next “crunch” comes. If management does its own job, it is inevitable that we will indeed get a Module 5 for additional remote storage—even if it takes a few more years than we would like.

But shelf-by-shelf examination of individual monographs, throughout LC's 535 miles of bookshelves, is not something that can be done quickly or under a short deadline. Assuming I had as much as three hours per week

to weed all of our B and Z classes, I suspect it would take me a couple years to do a good job of it.

*We have just the time we need*

In this connection, however, the current delay in securing funding for a new module at Ft. Meade can reasonably be regarded as very much a blessing in disguise: if we cannot have a new module for a few more years, then we can use just that intervening time to intelligently “slip” which books should go there when the space does become available. *We now have exactly the time we need to pre-select which books should go to Module 5: let's make the best use of it.* This is a much more practical way to deal with space shortages than any reliance on wholesale digitization of texts by Google or Amazon. (Of course the weeding process would have to be an ongoing practice rather than a one-shot project; but that is exactly what I am recommending. Time in the stacks should be regularly scheduled for all ROs, as a permanent feature of their jobs.)

An added benefit of such a practice would be an increase in Recommending Officers' own knowledge of their own areas of the collections, derived from direct and systematic reviews of their entire stacks areas. I can foresee one spin-off benefit already, since I've experienced it myself in the current round of weeding. One problem that we have with the new reorganization of cataloging is that when new books are received, they first go to a central area in the Madison Building where they are examined by librarians from the different reading rooms, to spot those titles or sets that should be flagged immediately for assignment to a particular reference collection. (It is most efficient to do the cataloging and labeling of the volumes *as* reference books in their initial pass through the system, rather than to have to add the additional cataloging and labeling data as a second operation.) In past years, before the reorganization, the librarians who examined these new titles could also slip them “for examination”—i.e., to be sent for review by the various subject-specialist Recommending Officers. That way the ROs could physically examine interesting new volumes within their subject areas—even those that were not routed for formal assignment to the reference collection in their Division. In the new workflow, however, the slips “for examination” are now being discarded, and only those “for reference assignment” are attended to. What this means is that many new books of interest are now *not* brought to the attention of the Library's subject experts; and it also means that many volumes which ROs would assign to reference collections (if they inspected them personally) wind up in the general bookstacks rather than in the reading rooms. This is a problem that would be largely solved if ROs spent time in the bookstacks themselves, directly examining everything there—they could decide not only which books should be yellow-slipped to go to remote storage, but also which ones should be re-assigned to reference collections. Better reference collections would be a benefit to reference service throughout the entire Library.

Let's say that every RO would be required to spend, say, three hours per week in the stack areas for which he or she is responsible over the next three years. (The number of hours cannot be firmly determined at this point.) If each RO had the time to decide, at the level of individual volumes (i.e. not just long runs of serials), what can be weeded to storage, with a professional judgment of how easily each could be found in storage, *we could still maintain the classified shelving needed to answer those questions of unusual depth (that cannot be answered by digital sources) while also eliminating the next round of the "books on the floor" problem.* Once it is slipped, this material could be removed very quickly to Fort Meade when the Module 5 becomes available. There are undoubtedly "problems to be solved" here, too; but, given the *access of unusual depth* that is at stake, such a project is worth the Library's effort.

One of the "problems to be solved" is of course limited staff time. There are only so many more things that can be done by people who already have full-time jobs. What activities need to be sacrificed when push comes to shove? In this regard, Dr. Marcum says the following in a recent memo to LC staff ("Friday's News – September 18, 2009"):

We expect to know relatively soon exactly what [budget figures] we have to work with, but I shall be asking all of the divisions to trim their budget requests to the amount they had in 2009. *Doing new things inevitably means cutting back on existing activities.*  
[Emphasis added]

We need to step back a moment and really examine that last sentence. When any group of people, from a family to a large corporation, is faced with the need for belt-tightening, what should determine its priorities? Is it at all normal, or prudent, to cut back on the essentials of their operations in order to "do new things"?

I submit that organizations should first seek to protect those things that they are *responsible* for, and which most directly effect the *mission* (or even the life) of the group. A parent who is faced with less income but undiminished mortgage payments and food bills will not say, "Let's stop eating three times a day so that we can get a *new* video game system." A soft-drink company that jettisons its tried-and-true product for something *untried* but *new* (think of the debacle of "New Coke") will find that it has acted foolishly—not only against the interests of its clients but contrary to its own best interests. In the tough economic times that all institutions are facing, the fiscally prudent response of any organization is to *first* protect the functions that define its core mission, and to provide the services is *responsible* for, and which its clients *rely* on it to provide. What that means, then, is "protecting the functions that serve our core mission is in fact more important than 'doing new things,' especially if the new things that are being pursued undermine that very core mission." Again, I submit that LC's mission is to *promote scholarship of unusual scope and of unusual depth.* We cannot continue that "existing activity" if we abandon

either the system of LCSH cataloging in our OPAC or the system of LCC classified shelving in our bookstacks. These are the very mechanisms that enable the Library of Congress to provide that *unusual access* to its unique, publicly-funded, legal-deposit-mandated collection—access that cannot be matched or even approximated by Google or Amazon. And keep in mind, further, that neither Google nor Amazon (nor OCLC nor the ARL) has LC’s responsibility to serve the information needs of Congress, the Supreme Court, or any federal agency. LC is indeed very distinctive; in Dr. Billington’s words: “The Library of Congress is the authoritative, responsible knowledge institution for the Congress and the United States government.” The access mechanisms provided by Google, Amazon, and WorldCat are not adequate for the kind of work we are required to do here. This is not to say the latter are useless—the reverse is true—but it is to say they are *not nearly sufficient* for what the Library of Congress needs to be able to do, especially for its local clientele, and especially on short notice. It is quite true that this local clientele itself, including Members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, Kluge and NEH scholars, and Muslim researchers among others, forms a “very small number” of people compared to the universe of those relying on Google and Amazon. But then the latter group of researchers will never find all that we can discover at the Library of Congress. They do not have our means of access.

*Priorities in regard to cooperative agreements with other libraries*

In regard to providing services to outside libraries, I believe LC needs to respectfully disagree with two statements in a recent report, *Transformational Times*, from the Association of Research Libraries (<http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/transformational-times.pdf>). One is that “If libraries turn inward and focus on protecting local resources, they could pull back from essential cooperative work” (p. 6). The fact is, if local collections are not adequately cataloged and classified to begin with, then they cannot be *found* within any merged pool of collective resources, such as WorldCat. (Indeed, WorldCat’s search software is almost as bad as Google’s or Amazon’s, in that it, too, effectively precludes the possibility of researchers’ gaining the overview-perspectives, as with **Afghanistan** [above]. The OCLC system cannot display either browse-menus of precoordinated headings *or* cross-references among broader, related, or narrower subject terms.)

Further, LC’s cataloging of its own, unique copyright-deposit collection is becoming even more crucial to the operation of other research libraries, which are facing draconian State-level budget cuts that LC is protected from. The unique extent of the material that we get *here*—the scope of our book acquisitions that Dr. Billington rightfully insists on maintaining—is becoming more, rather than less, important to other libraries because they can no longer spend as much for cataloging the same titles first, when their own budgets are being cut in ways that LC’s is not. They need, because of increasingly stringent cuts to their own cataloging operations, more than ever to utilize the cataloging data for the same books provided by the Nation’s copyright-deposit library. The new (October, 2009) *Library of*

*Congress: Study of the North American MARC Records Marketplace* from R2 Consulting ([http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/news/MARC\\_Record\\_Marketplace\\_2009-10.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/news/MARC_Record_Marketplace_2009-10.pdf)) states clearly:

**Library of Congress cataloging continues to be widely valued:**

Libraries, vendors, and cooperatives speak with their actions. There is heavy reliance on LC's output throughout all segments of the profession and industry. [p. 4]

LC records are the most highly sought, period. [p. 12]

The best thing that LC's management can do for the cooperative benefit of other libraries is to increase the level of book-cataloging that we do here, precisely so that hard-pressed libraries in all other Congressional districts can rely *more* on what we do locally.

The second misleading statement in the ARL report is that "Special collections distinguish a major research library from all others, and provide incomparable value to graduate and faculty research and teaching" (*ibid.* p. 16). While there is some truth to this regarding most ARL libraries, the fact remains that LC has both privileges and responsibilities quite unlike those of any other ARL facilities; and as Dr. Billington pointed out, it is the unparalleled scope of LC's *general* collection that *most* distinguishes us from other research libraries. Indeed, it is our general collection itself that forms the single most "special" collection we have, thanks to our unique copyright-deposit privilege. Further, the mechanisms of access that we provide to *this* collection—i.e., the professional cataloging and classification (with full Cuttering of class numbers) that we create here—have the greatest effect in generating cost-savings for other libraries. That fact needs to be kept clearly in mind in evaluating statements such as "Doing new things inevitably means cutting back on existing activities."

*Conclusion*

The Library cannot solve its space problems by adoption of a "digital strategy" without seriously damaging our larger mission to promote scholarship of unusual scope and depth. If the Library's own access to its own general book collection were to be dumbed down to only the levels of subject access provided by Google, Amazon, or Internet search mechanisms, we would effectively be endorsing, and institutionalizing, the level of ignorance exemplified by the Six Blind Men of India. We would no longer be able to satisfy the information needs of Congress or other federal agencies, or those of advanced scholars, in a timely or efficient manner. It is not enough simply to have comprehensive collections; we must equally have *efficient access* to them. While the subject access-mechanisms (LCSH cataloging in our OPAC and LCC shelving of books in the stacks) needed to provide unusual comprehensiveness and unusual depth of scholarship, here, are themselves expensive to maintain, they are the very things that

enable us to realize our distinctive mission, to provide our distinctive services, and to discharge our distinctive responsibility to provide maximal access to the Nation's unique copyright-deposit collection, while simultaneously enabling other research libraries in hundreds of Congressional districts, which copy our systems, to achieve substantial cost-savings themselves.

To deal with the problem of books-on-the-floor, what we need is a systematic, professional weeding of our Capitol Hill collections to determine which volumes will next go to remote storage in Module 5 at Fort Meade; and Recommending Officers must be given the necessary time on an ongoing, weekly basis to undertake this huge task. Because of the delayed funding of that next module, however, we now have just the time we need in order to undertake this systematic examination and weeding of the general collection. This option is much preferable to that of relying on wholesale digitization of our books, especially since the latter process (as in Google or Amazon models) could never extend to our entire collection (for copyright reasons alone), and because it would simultaneously create more problems of access than it would solve, in ways that would directly and severely undercut our distinctive mission.

## BRAVERMAN PRIZE

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### MARKETING THE LIBRARY? WHY LIBRARIANS SHOULD FOCUS ON STEWARDSHIP AND ADVOCACY

by Sarah Clark

*Attention all library customers: do you have a child who is bored and looking for fun and entertainment? Come check out the ten o'clock storytime! Every morning at ten one of your favorite information professionals entertains and wows with stories galore. Don't miss it! Come to the Starbucks room, buy some coffee, sit back and enjoy!*

*No time for stories today? Don't worry! You can download any of our storytimes to your home computer at any time for just \$0.99 per session.*

*And remember: today's storytime is made possible in part by support from Pepsi Cola—Refresh everything!*

When discussing the future of libraries, there is frequently clamor about how to stay relevant in changing times. Technologies get more sophisticated every day, and the library struggles to keep up. Libraries are warned to “adapt or die,” to “give ‘em what they want,” and to keep ahead of competition from bookstores and the Internet. In this anxiety-filled environment, many professionals propose adopting strategies from successful businesses. Many fear the library is becoming a “bricks and mortar” dinosaur in these digital times. To counter the library’s certain demise, many libraries today are adopting marketing strategies and customer-oriented practices to secure their future.

Scrambling toward the future without pausing to reflect on the library as an institution is a mistake. The goal of this paper is to consider what it means to “market” the library, and what implications marketing have on the future of the library. By examining the tension between the public sphere and a world driven by economics, my goal is to examine how libraries should market themselves, or better how they should advocate for themselves, without jeopardizing the library’s unique status as a public institution. Rather than focus simply on moving forward and on innovation, the aim of this paper is to reveal the importance of stewardship of the library and the preservation of its democratic roots.

### *What is marketing?*

Most literature dealing with libraries begins by stating that marketing is not just promotion. Many look to Philip Kotler for a more sophisticated definition (see de Sáez and Weingand). Kotler defines marketing as "...the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives" (qtd. in Weingand 4). In other words, marketing is *much* more than promotion; it is a driving force within a business. Eileen Elliott de Sáez—a "Chartered Marketer" in the UK who has written about marketing for libraries—notes that marketing involves the following: collecting information, forecasting trends, consulting everyone, planning, creating objectives for the future, strategizing, evaluating and communicating a message. She also defines marketing as a "management discipline;" and rather than a branch of an organization, marketing is the philosophy that permeates the organization's goals and practices (de Sáez 2).

Viewed through the lens of marketing, every organization must create a mission statement that answers the following question: "What is our business?" Management strategist Peter Drucker notes that this question "can be answered only by looking at the business from the outside, from the point of view of the customer and the market" (qtd. in Weingand 32). De Sáez answers the question about the business of libraries in the following way:

The core business of the library and information services is the range of products and services that provide benefits for users that answer users' most important needs, whether for commercial intelligence, or education, leisure, recreation or social needs. That core business is information (7).

De Sáez notes that information in the 21st century "is now recognized as a commodity to be valued in all spheres" (3). Rather than see this as a threat, she notes the opportunity for librarians and information professionals to finally get the respect they deserve.

At first glance, it appears logical to apply marketing concepts from the for-profit world to non-profit and government organizations. While promotion is a topic that has been explored consistently over the past fifty or sixty years, "systematic marketing and planning are the two processes that, until recently, have been largely overlooked as managerial tools," according to Weingand (1). The promises of efficiency, better use of funds, and more satisfied "customers" attract even the most reluctant librarian or "information professional." But applying marketing concepts to libraries as a "managerial tool" is not as benign as the language would lead one to believe.

*Marketing and the public sphere—why it won't work*

Before looking too far into the future, it is important to step back and reflect on the origin of public libraries in the United States. The American Library Association (ALA) offers a set of core values of librarianship. Those values are the following:

- o Access
- o Confidentiality/Privacy
- o Democracy
- o Education and Lifelong Learning
- o Intellectual Freedom
- o Preservation
- o The Public Good
- o Professionalism
- o Service
- o Social Responsibility

From these values, one can see that libraries are about more than efficiency and happy customers. Libraries are fundamentally democratic institutions committed to keeping all citizens informed and educated by providing free and easy access to a wide variety of materials and by promising to preserve those materials for future generations.

In the United States, public libraries became institutionalized for the democratic reasons cited above. Just as arguments for mandatory public education were grounded in the idea that democracy depended upon an informed citizenry, so too were the arguments for free public libraries. Frederick Stielow wrote that "...proponents still had to democratize the image of the library away from an elitist and academic bastion. Instead, it was to be reinvented as a place of advancement for all the people—a physical confirmation of the values of the Revolution" (4). The same dedication to equity and to education continues to permeate the library world and the discussion of libraries today.

Library literature and rhetoric often invokes these democratic roots, but critics argue that libraries and their role in democracy is rarely discussed in a serious way, and "the vast portion of this literature merely rehearses and repeats the basic ideas of Jefferson and Madison from 200 years ago" (*Dismantling* 1483). Libraries may be champions of democracy, but today there is pressure to argue for the library's existence in economic rather than democratic terms. John Buschman ("Democratic Theory") traces this trend through political theorist Sheldon Wolin's discussion of the policies of the Reagan administration in the 1980s. Tax cuts, deregulation, and the reduction of public services led to a new way of discussing the country in purely economic terms. Wolin wrote that in this environment, "that all public questions can be converted into economic terms has no doubt" (Wolin 28). The language of economics is now so predominant that it seems natural to discuss libraries in business terms.

Over time, libraries have gradually shifted focus from the fulfilling a social role to the growing importance customer service, user needs and public relations. In a digital world, libraries are seen as “dinosaurs” and slaves to the outmoded preservation printed materials. Decreasing budgets mean librarians must fight for each tax dollar and then prove to the public that the money is spent wisely. The variety of formats modes of delivery that libraries provide today has exploded (e.g. electronic databases, virtual reference, DVDs, digital audiobooks, etc.). Because budgets don’t grow with each new format added to the collection, librarians necessarily cut staff and materials (i.e. print collections) to compensate. With funds shrinking from every direction, many librarians advocate for entrepreneurship and court corporate partners to increase budgets and enliven services. Examples of revenue-generating activities include the following: renting conference rooms; providing passport services (and thus getting a commission fee); renting new, popular books for a fee; providing business research for a fee (P. Block 106-107).

What’s so bad about a little extra money? Critics like John Buschman argue that taking on business roles and strategies are not only inappropriate to a government institution, but more importantly a business approach to libraries will invalidate the library’s role in the public sphere and ultimately undo its reasons for being. In his book *Dismantling the Public Sphere*, Buschman looks to managerial guru Henry Mintzberg to support his claims. Mintzberg presents a compelling argument against the truism “Capitalism has triumphed” in reference to the toppling of communism. In fact, Mintzberg maintains, “Capitalism did not triumph at all; balance did” (Mintzberg 75). In the United States and in other democratic nations, there is a balance between four types of institutions, each of which play a unique role in society: private organizations; public (or state-owned) organizations; cooperatively owned organizations; and non-profit organizations (which Mintzberg calls “nonowned” organizations) (76). While many call for the government to be “run more like a business,” Mintzberg states, “I am not a mere customer of my government, thank you.” He prefers the term *client*, and goes on, “But, most important, I am a citizen, with rights that go far beyond those of customers or even clients” (77). Just as a citizen has certain rights, he also has certain duties: to pay taxes and to respect the laws of the government for the common good.

Mintzberg also argues that the trend towards accountability for public institutions rests on the “myth of measurement.” Since the passing of the Government Performance and Results Act in 1993, libraries and all other government agencies are now required to show measurable results for their performance goals (P. Block 108). Today it is standard for libraries to use outcomes-based evaluation methods to secure government and grant funding. While systematic evaluation of success does have benefits, the constant need to validate the library’s purpose for economic reasons is troublesome. The real benefits drawn from public institutions, Mintzberg argues, cannot be measured. If the benefits were so clear-cut,

“those activities would have been in the private sector long ago” (79). In short, public institutions are public for a reason. Before rushing to mimic successful private companies, libraries should consider the appropriateness and the implications of such actions.

*Solution: Advocacy over marketing*

Recently, many librarians have focused on marketing as a solution to the perceived irrelevance of the library. Within the marketing framework, librarians work to secure funds, argue for the library in economic terms, and often showcase their adoption of new technology as proof that they are not obsolete. While there is much pressure to discuss the library in economic terms, this model of discussion is not only incomplete but also undermines the library’s democratic underpinnings.

The solution for the future of the library does not lie in marketing, but in advocacy. Advocacy for the library means doing the following: creating a message that shows why the library is important to democracy; sharing that message; reflecting the democratic and educational mission in all library collections and services; forming partnerships with institutions with similar missions; and reestablishing the library both symbolically and physically as a central locus in the community.

1. *Create the message.* Libraries need to present themselves to the public and to stakeholders as “cornerstones of liberty,” to quote the subtitle of a collection of essays edited by former ALA president Nancy Kranich. Librarians are much more than “information professionals.” Robert McCabe’s compelling essay on civic librarianship discusses the role of libraries not just in the lives of individuals, but in communities and in society at large. In the 1970s, McCabe maintains, revisionist historians criticized the public library’s traditional mission of providing a place for lifelong education as being an elitist affront to immigrant communities (McCabe 66). Instead of providing education, libraries now provided “information,” and focus turned to individuals instead of groups. McCabe’s call for civic librarianship includes a reestablishment of the library’s educational (and therefore democratic) role. Sally Gardner Reed also argues for the importance of political involvement and advocacy for libraries in democratic terms. She states:

If we fail to make the case that libraries are central to a democracy, to individual learning, and ultimately to our future well-being as a nation, then access to knowledge may well become not an entitlement, but a privilege for those who can afford it (xiii).

Reed argues that good library promotion involves communicating not only what the library does, but also *why* it matters. Creating support for the library is crucial not only for funding, but also to “influence information policy and legislation at the state and national level” (xvi). A good

message will be politically powerful, focused, repeatable, and adaptable to a variety of audiences. It shows how the library's services are both unique and critically important (3). The message should center on the library's contribution to democracy and education rather than focusing purely on economic arguments.

2. **Share the message.** Messages need to be tailored to a variety of audiences: stakeholders, patrons, board members, Friends of the library, and staff. Staff should be included and encouraged to be vocal advocates, too. When networking, librarians should not whine about lack of funds, but instead focus on the positive contributions of the library to the community, and why those contributions matter (Reed 12).

3. *Reflect the educational and democratic mission in the library services and collections.* When making decisions, democratic and educational values should always be considered as critically important. Randy Pitman warns of the importance of sticking to the mission:

People's perceptions are shaped by expectations: If you advertise your establishment as an entertainment center, people will come to you looking for fun; if, on the other hand, you tell your patrons that you are here to help serve the community's educational, informational, and recreational needs, they will cross your threshold with very different expectations (Pitman 117).

If libraries rely too much on economics or on popular demand when making decisions, they risk moving away from the core values that form the base of the institution and validate its existence.

4. *Form meaningful partnerships.* Libraries have always known that partnerships are important for building support, sharing labor, and diversifying what the library can offer. Public libraries should form strong bonds with schools. Schools and public libraries both developed in the same historical moment and both are grounded in the idea that democracies can thrive only when there is a well-informed citizenry with free access to information. In addition, libraries should partner with other like-minded, non-profit entities, including cultural and arts institutions.

5. *Make the library part of the community.* Finally, the library should devote itself to being an integral part of the community's fabric, both physically and in spirit. Librarians need to be active and vocal members of local politics and community organizations. The physical library should be valued as a public space that both draws from and adds to the organizations and businesses that surround it. A good model to follow is the non-profit organization Project for Public Spaces that lists four qualities of a good public space: access and linkages (i.e. it's easy to get to), comfort and image, uses and activities, and sociability (M. Block 73). A good library provides both a physical and intellectual commons.

Advocating for the library is the solution to the supposed lowly status of the library in the eyes of the public. By reaffirming the library's unique contributions to society and by stressing its importance in democratic and education terms rather than economic ones, the library not only maintains its historical roots but also stands a stronger chance of surviving as a public institution.

*Priorities for the future: focusing on stewardship*

If I had to end this paper with one word, it would be this: stewardship. There is so much pressure to innovate, both technologically and in spirit, that the public library has reached a critical moment. While words like "information," "customer," and "accountability" sound benign, they indicate deep shifts that, if left unchecked, threaten the longevity of the public library. Buschman writes, "...without a public, democratic purpose for librarianship, there is no compelling reason/argument in the long run to continue libraries" (*Dismantling* 176). Furthermore, if policy decisions are based on pure economics, Buschman contends, the values of the library, like equal access, also vanish. A library without a democratic foundation would "...further the consumer model of education and learning—where notions of ease and convenience replace democratic notions of inquiry, knowledge and informed decisions" (*Dismantling* 176). Adopting business models and attitudes puts the library's democratic mission at risk, and without a democratic mission, the reasons for a library's existence vanish. For libraries to survive as public institutions, librarians must advocate for the library in democratic terms.

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## DOCUMENTS

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### **Resolution on Libraries and the Continuing Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan**

WHEREAS, The American Library Association has called for the withdrawal from Iraq of all U.S. military forces, and the return of full sovereignty to the people of Iraq (2004-2005 ALA CD#62); and,

WHEREAS, The American Library Association has urged the United States government to shift its budgetary priorities from the occupation of Iraq to improved support for vital domestic programs, including United States libraries (2004-2005 ALA CD#62): and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association has called upon the United States government to provide material assistance through the United Nations for the reconstruction of Iraq, including its museums, libraries, schools, and other cultural resources (2004-2005 ALA CD#62); and,

WHEREAS, The occupation of Iraq continues, U.S. military forces have not been withdrawn, U.S. and Iraqi soldiers and civilians continue to die everyday; and

WHEREAS, although the Obama Administration plans to withdraw some U.S. troops from Iraq, it also plans to maintain U.S. military bases and thousands of U.S. troops there indefinitely; and

WHEREAS, The Obama Administration is escalating the war in Afghanistan, sending more U.S. troops and supplies, and U.S. and Afghan soldiers and civilians continue to die everyday; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association:

1. Reiterates its call for the ending of the occupation of Iraq and the withdrawal of all U.S. troops; and
2. Calls for the withdrawal from Afghanistan of all U.S. military forces, and the return of full sovereignty to the people of Afghanistan; and

3. Urges the United States government to shift its budgetary priorities from both wars to an improvement in support for vital domestic programs, including United States libraries; and

4. Calls upon the United States government to provide material assistance through the United Nations for the reconstruction of both Iraq and Afghanistan, including its museums, libraries, schools, and other cultural resources; and

5. Sends this resolution to all members of Congress, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the President of the United States, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and the press.

Moved by Al Kagan. Seconded by Tom Twiss.

Adopted by SRRT Action Council, July 11, 2009

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Slow Reading*, by John Miedema. Duluth: Litwin Books, 2009.

reviewed by Erik Estep

I tried writing this review with my facebook account open; after a few sentences, my eyes would drift and I would find myself checking to see what my friends had for lunch and if they found it appetizing. Later, after logging out of my facebook account, my concentration improved and the pace of my writing improved. Still, I needed a little something to inspire me to finish and listened to the Smiths to get the job done. John Miedema, the author of the excellent *Slow Reading* might argue that I'm writing a "fast" review.

In fact, Miedema, writes that "the act of writing a review is itself helpful to me as a way of deepening my understanding of a book, committing it to memory, and bringing closure to it" (65). In this age of information overload, Miedema argues for a slower, more meditative pace; best to savor every word to enjoy a good novel in the same way you enjoy a meal at a fine restaurant. *Slow Reading* comes to the reader at a slim 80 pages but is intellectually hefty. Miedema cobbled the book together from his graduate school research, and while the seams sometimes show, this a serious work that moves beyond the ivory tower.

Miedema has many interesting, if familiar, things to say about how Web 2.0 has given us information overload and how it works against slow, careful reading of texts. With the benefits of wider access to information comes the cost of a diminished attention span; the very pace of the information cycle does not allow for contemplation. More than any other reason, this speed of information has not allowed for reflection and thus reduced reading to an intellectual track meet. Miedema also carefully traces the history of reading in its many varieties.

However, Miedema is on slippery ground when he takes the leap and links slow reading with the slow eating movement. Eating is very different than reading. Essentially, the slow eating movement is against the mass consumption of fast food; it is better to organically grow your own food. Eat locally, think globally, or something like that. That is good as far as it goes, but it doesn't address poverty in an intelligent way. It is true that a lot of fast food is bad for you; high in calories and artificially sweetened but it also very cheap. McDonald's has been very smart and lowered the prices of their products in response to the recession. If you are poor, slow eating is a luxury.

Reading is less necessary than eating, but no less a luxury for those in poverty. Miedema doesn't explicitly address the issue of poverty but his tone can be patronizing, especially when he gives guidance to readers on how to slow read; when he does this it sounds remarkably close to an insipid self help book (which doesn't usually require slow reading). And when Miedema talks about his own experiences reading it doesn't fit in well with the more scholarly chapters in this book.

Still, this is a very good and useful book. For a book that is short in length, it packs a hefty intellectual punch. Tone aside, Miedema is also a very good writer; his synthesis of his sources is elegant. *Slow Reading* would have been even better had he addressed class and poverty. Also, it would have been interesting to see his analysis of the very popular "one book, one city" programs. Are these large book clubs an example of slow reading? Or is it just part of a consumption model of mass reading? *Slow Reading* should be read by slow, fast, and medium readers. Recommended for Academic and Public Libraries.

*The Prison Library Primer*, by Brenda Vogel, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8108-5403-1.

reviewed by Kathleen de la Peña McCook

“Prison libraries at the nexus of exile and enlightenment must endure.” (Vogel, vii)

In a compelling 2007 essay about public library outreach to ex-offenders Brendan Dowling sought the counsel of Brenda Vogel, retired Coordinator of Maryland Correctional Libraries from 1974-2000. It is good news for librarians that Brenda Vogel, 1989 *LJ* Librarian of the Year, has written a new book, *The Prison Library Primer*, which provides instruction and guidance to working with prisoners in an era that no longer favors prison reform. It is a revision and up date of her classic *Down for the Count*.

There are nearly 3 million people in correctional institutions in the United States at the time I am writing this review. In 2009 the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that state and federal correctional authorities had jurisdiction or legal authority over 1,610,584 prisoners and 785,556 inmates were held in custody in local jails. (USBJS, 2009) In 1979, there were 855 state and federal adult correctional prisons. By 2000, the number of prisons had almost doubled to 1,668. (Useem and Piehl)

What Vogel makes very clear is that this population affects *every single librarian* in the United States. Most offenders are eventually released from institutions. On re-entry to the general population these offenders become a part of the public. They should then be encouraged and supported in the use of public libraries. Families of offenders may need specialized services during the incarceration and after. Think of families traveling many miles to visit someone in prison or jail. Librarians in the general population can assist people when they get out of jail or prison; they can help the families of people in jail. By extension we are all prison librarians.

If we assume a general recognition that library service to incarcerated people and their extended families is the responsibility of all librarians, then we engage *The Prison Library Primer* with a resolution to incorporate its tenets in our work. Of course the book is aimed primarily at people who actually work in correctional institutions, but the lessons and guidance are of great importance to all librarians who care about social justice and human rights. Vogel credits Bruce Jensen’s “The Cárcel and the Biblioteca” for insight on serving Spanish-Speaking prisoners.

The book begins with a chapter on the history of prisons and libraries (starting in 1798) that was co-written with Larry E. Sullivan. A highlight is a discussion of the Supreme Court decision *Bounds v. Smith* (1977) that found that all state prisons must provide access to the courts through people

trained in the law or through law library collections. After *Bounds* general prison library programs were often overshadowed or neglected (p.11).

The quality of library service to the prison community is discussed in chapter 2 and Vogel views prison service as not different in motive from general library service. She states that a committed librarian will speak on behalf of the silent constituency to protect the promise of the library as a place where powers of the law and the written word bring relief. In chapter 3 the physical library and access are discussed and described...

The “eternal debate” (p.43) between books the incarcerated want to read and those that are rehabilitating is discussed in chapter 4. Vogel is keenly sensitive to the need for prison librarians to be tuned to the current mode of management and to work within that sensitivity to provide service that ideally would parallel service to the public at large.

In chapter 5 Brenda Vogel bears witness Lewis v. Casey arguments and it will break your heart. In this chapter she extends her discussion on the role of the law library in prisons. There is an excellent summary of the Library Assistance to State Institutions (LASI) project, a cooperative library networking service funded by LSCA funds in 1978 and based at the University of Maryland School of Law Library. The project was “librarian-managed, holistic, flexible and evolving (p. 63). It provides librarians with a model of expansive service and access to the courts. She analyzes the issues surrounding prisoner use of computers. But the heart of the chapter comes when Brenda Vogel details the effects of Lewis v. Casey as a major defeat for prisoners seeking to petition the courts for the redress of grievances and sees the decision as one of return of control of the prison to the state. She was present in the courtroom and points out that *no library association had filed a brief of amicus curiae on behalf of the prisoners* (p.65).

“Fahrenheit 451 on Cell Block D,” a reprint of a *Yale Law & Policy Review* article by Evan R. Seamone comprises chapter 6. It is a history of the prisoner and the law and examines the role of jailhouse lawyers. The 346 notes to this chapter are extensive and informative. The importance of networking to the often solo prison librarian is the topic of chapter 7 with suggestions for advocacy for prison libraries within the larger library community (pp. 151-152). Lack of access to the Internet and technology is addressed in chapter 8. Vogel provides options for technology planning and digital literacy. Contraband is the focus of chapter 9 and Vogel explores the demeanor needed to navigate in a prison environment.

“Making a Difference” in the lives of prisoners is the focus on chapter 10 and this short chapter is inspiring and pragmatic. Chapter 11 assesses the library as a force in human reclamation during reentry to the larger society. Chapter 12 advises those who decide to work in correctional settings. Chapter 13 is a list of FAQ such as “Will the Correctional Library Ever Be Recognized as a Service Essential to the Incarcerated?”

The book concludes with “Recommended Readings,” “Sources for Advocacy,” an “Information Skills Training Curriculum,” “Library Assistance to State Institutions: Legal Information Packets,” Colorado Department of Corrections Administrative Regulations on Offender Reading Material and Library Services and “Criteria for Evaluation Corrections Libraries” from the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Caleb Smith’s 2009 book, *The Prison and the American Imagination*, shows how alienation and self-reliance, social death and spiritual rebirth, torture and penitence came together in the prison. Brenda Vogel shows how lives can be reclaimed. If you work in a correctional institution or are considering a job switch, *The Prison Library Primer* should be in your backpack. If you work in a public library this book will give you the motivation to commit to extend services either through supporting prisoner’s families, organizing resources to enhance prison collections, or working as an advocate to increase support for prison library services.

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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**Sarah Clark** graduated with an MLIS from UCLA in Spring of 2009. She currently works at Windward School, an independent school in Los Angeles serving students in grades 7-12. Her goal is to encourage students to become advocates for their public libraries by introducing them to the resources and services those libraries provide and by forging partnerships between schools and public libraries.

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