

PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIAN

A Journal for Critical Studies & Progressive Politics in Librarianship

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“WISHES” AND WORKERS IN WISCONSIN
RESEARCH EVIDENCE FOR EARLY LITERACY
THE POLITICAL LIBRARY IN A 2.0 WORLD
ECONOMICS OF INFORMATION
RADICAL ARCHIVING IN 21ST CENTURY
PROGRESSIVE PUBLIC LIBRARIANSHIP
BRAVERMAN PRIZE ESSAY
REPORTS, BOOK REVIEWS AND DOCUMENTS

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COVER IMAGE: Wishes in the Wind – this painting by artist David Lenz hung in the Wisconsin governor's mansion until Gov. Walker took it down.

It is now on display at the Wisconsin State Library.

Photo from: http://www.annalsofamericus.com/wp-content/uploads/david-lenz_wishes-in-the-wind.jpg, 3 Sept. 2011

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WALKERVILLE, NEW DEMOCRATS & “WISHES IN THE WIND”: ROLLING BACK THE 20TH CENTURY IN WISCONSIN

by Joyce M. Latham

[I]t does no one any good when public employees are denigrated or vilified or their rights are infringed upon... We're not going to attract the best teachers for our kids, for example, if they only make a fraction of what other professionals make. We're not going to convince the bravest Americans to put their lives on the line as police officers or firefighters if we don't properly reward that bravery. Barack Obama

W*ishes in the Wind* is a painting commissioned by the Executive Residence Foundation to hang in the Wisconsin Governor's mansion outside of Madison. David Lenz, the artist, painted three children – an Hispanic, African-American, and Causcasian – playing with bubble wands on a Milwaukee street. Lenz said he carefully selected the three children portrayed in “Wishes in the Wind” as representatives of marginalized populations in the state who benefit from state social services. The intent of the commissioned artwork by Wisconsin artists is to remind politicians of the people they were elected to serve. Governor Walker and his wife, as they redecorated the Maple Bluff residence, decided to replace the painting of Milwaukee children with “Old Abe,” a representation of a Wisconsin bald eagle from the era of the Civil War. For many, as they learned of the swap, it was a telling replacement. Walker's office indicated that the decision was intended to highlight the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.¹

Given the economic and political battle underway in Wisconsin, it is understandable that residents would see a symbol of rejection in Walker's removal of the vibrant painting that had hung over the fireplace mantle. While it may have been a sign of the social progress this country has made that an inter-racial image would hang in a Governor's mansion, Walker is not a progressive governor. His focus is on corporate America.

As many historians have revealed, the denial of equal opportunity has not only been race-based in the United States; ethnicity, nationality, religion and sex have also defined social value and so, levels of participation in the American democratic experiment. The levels of participation granted the general population could define a class structure, but, as it is possible to move into a higher level of participation through capital acquisition,

education or political activism, there is a general disinclination to define U.S. social stratification as class-based, beyond the broad scope of lower, middle and upper class. But as Alan Dawley has written, “the image of America as a classless society was dealt a heavy blow by the rise of a capitalist elite” at the end of the 19th century, the era of the Gilded Age. As the “robber-barons” – Carnegie,² Rockefeller,³ Duke,⁴ and Morgan,⁵ among others – celebrated the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few, the “labor question”⁶ emerged in a wave of organizing and a series of “great strikes.”⁷ The foundation was laid for the class, race and gender battles of the twentieth century.

The Twentieth Century

The path of participatory progress in the twentieth century was narrow, muddy, convoluted and, while paved with many good intentions, often hedged by compromise. As the economy transitioned from agricultural to industrial and then to digital, the country developed various strategies to mesh the right of individual identity with broader social needs. U.S. citizenship itself, which was initially awarded to propertied white men, expanded as barriers to the ballot box fell bit by bit. Women earned the right to vote in 1920, while Native Americans earned citizenship in 1924. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 addressed voter suppression in the southern states, as false barriers to democratic participation such as the poll tax, literacy tests and private primaries were eliminated. In many states, public libraries served as voter registration centers. The Motor Voter Law, national legislation passed in 1995, made it even easier to register to vote by pairing it with driver license or motor vehicle registration.

Public school integration was required in 1954 by the Supreme Court’s *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, as it overturned the “separate but equal” segregation strategies then in effect. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 restricted discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion or national origin and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. While sex discrimination had been added to the Civil Rights Act at the last minute, in 1971, Title IX of the Act was expanded to ensure that no one would be excluded from any educational activity receiving federal aid. The U.S. government passed legislation banning age discrimination in 1967, and required accommodations for the disabled – the Americans with Disabilities Act – in 1990.

Women struggled to gain a voice across multiple venues. The Women’s Trade Union League was established in 1903, early in the history of labor organization. The Women’s Bureau was established within the Department of Labor in 1920 and played a significant role in promoting women’s roles in the workforce during World War II. In 1921, Margaret Sanger established the American Birth Control League, which later became Planned Parenthood, active in sex education and the dissemination of information about family planning. In 1961, John F. Kennedy established

the President's Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The National Organization of Women was founded in 1966, and continues to sponsor the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which has never been passed. The Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 finally allowed women control over their own bodies, and the decision has so far withstood relentless attack since being decided. Gender issues expanded with the establishment of the gay male Mattachine Society in 1950, and the Daughters of Bilitis lesbian organization in 1955. The Human Rights Campaign launched in 1980, as gay and lesbian activists began to support political candidates who supported their own open participation in society. The Supreme Court decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* in 2003 eliminated state laws restricting consensual sex acts between adults, addressing both homosexual and heterosexual practices. Sex itself was freed in the early 21st century as a result of the activity in the 20th.

The labor movement has roots in the 19th century, when the Knights of Labor organized male and female, black and white workers, regardless of skill level. Their values later influenced the International Workers of the World (IWW), who, unlike the American Federation of Labor (AFL), believed in an inclusive organization, rather than a craft-based, guild like structure. As the 19th century had ended with a raft of strikes, labor began to enjoy some protections in the early 20th century. The Clayton Act was an early stab at providing some protections to labor organizations, and the 1926 Railway Labor Act protected those workers engaged in rail work, as it involved interstate commerce. The 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act was a significant stimulus to labor organizations, but not as significant as the law which became known as the Wagner Act, passed in 1935, officially known as the National Labor Relations Act. The Wagner Act fostered employee unions in the private sector, but not public sector employee unions. While public employee unions did organize in the 1930s and 1940s, they were never officially recognized as collective bargaining units.⁸ Wisconsin, in 1959, was the first state to recognize the rights of government workers to bargain collectively, as the American Bar Association had argued in 1955 that equal access to collective bargaining was a civil rights issue.⁹ Kennedy extended a measure of bargaining rights to federal employees in 1962, and President Richard Nixon strengthened those rights in 1969. When President Ronald Reagan broke the wildcat air-traffic controllers strike in 1981, however, public employee unions experienced an erosion of political power, which has continued into the 21st century.

In 1938, with the passage of the Fair Labor Standard Act, the country finally accepted the regulation of child labor. The law passed almost 20 years after all the states had established compulsory education. Both women's and labor groups supported the restriction of child labor, one to protect the child and the other to protect jobs. Education became the primary focus of childhood during the rest of the 20th century, and the United States witnessed an incredible expansion of high school participation during that

period.¹⁰ Colleges grew as well, with the passage of the GI Bill after World War II, and the provision of education access funds such as the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. The focus on access to education was accompanied by increased funding for libraries, first addressed at the national level in 1957 with the passage of the Library Construction Act, and later extended to include library services and a broad range of technologies.

Government initiatives enacted this social progress, without a doubt. The groundwork for systemic change was either legislated or litigated. The New Deal, sponsored by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in response to the extensive failure of the economy in 1929, pursued policies to make capitalism “fair.”¹¹ While the unions which emerged from this process actually protected the capitalist underpinnings of U.S. culture, Social Security offered the first measure of social protection, and was the crowning legislation of the New Deal. The “Great Society” initiatives of President Lyndon Baines Johnson promoted education and equity and a “war on poverty,” unfortunately, undermined by the national conflict over the Viet Nam War. However, the domestic program delivered Medicare and Medicaid, environmental protection and cultural institutions like the National Endowment for the Humanities and public broadcasting.

These programs, spearheaded by two flawed but visionary presidents, provide the targets for the current wave of rightwing rollbacks of social justice earned bit-by-bit through the 20th century. The “Gilded Age” of the late 19th century was an era dominated by capitalist elites that was, in short, a “white man’s democracy.” The United States at that point was a liberal democracy that gloried in a competitive marketplace, a taste for imperialism and a disregard for the common worker.¹² The Wisconsin budget battles of 2011 represent a concentrated view of the rightwing strategies to drive a radical reshaping of American society that would reinstate the “Gilded Age” and dismiss the progress of the 20th century.

“A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.” Paul Romer, Stanford¹³

The 2010 election was the best election for Republicans in Wisconsin since 1938. Ron Johnson, a successful businessman associated with the Tea Party movement, defeated incumbent Russ Feingold, an independent Democrat in the U.S. Senate. Scott Walker, the Republican County Executive for Milwaukee County, defeated Tom Barrett, the Democratic mayor of the city of Milwaukee for the position of state governor. Republicans also gained control of the state legislature, with two brothers, Scott and Jeff Fitzgerald, taking over control of the Senate and Assembly, respectively. Alberta Darling, viewed as a moderate Republican by her constituents, became co-chair of the powerful legislative Joint Finance Committee. No one was actually prepared for the tsunami of social change pushed by the Republicans in the guise of two budget bills; the Republicans were not prepared for the wave of protests that met the agenda.

The first bill is known as the Budget Repair Bill. Wisconsin works with a two year budget, and the repair bill represents any amendments that need to be made to the operating budget at the mid-point of the budget cycle. Usually a boring document, Governor Scott Walker used it as the introduction to his ideological agenda. The bill attacked social justice accommodations on many fronts, but the most visible was the extreme restriction on collective bargaining and the legitimacy of public employee unions in the state.

Dismissing the history of worker rights in the state, Walker had originally planned to end all public employee collective bargaining rights except for firefighters, police and state troopers. His own party advised against such a radical measure.¹⁴ As introduced, it prohibits *any municipal employer in the state* from bargaining collectively with a collective bargaining unit that includes a general municipal employee concerning anything other than base wages; it eliminates overtime, premium pay, merit pay, performance pay, supplemental compensation, pay schedules, and automatic pay progressions from negotiations and restricts negotiations on base pay to a ceiling tied to the cost of living. It requires an annual re-certification of unions, eliminates “fair share”¹⁵ and check off provisions. The bill specifically repeals legislation that provides faculty and academic staff of the University of Wisconsin System (UW System) with the right to collectively bargain over wages, hours, and conditions of employment. Tom Barrett, the Democratic mayor of the city of Milwaukee, observed that Walker was “intentionally pitting middle-class librarians and nurses against middle-class firefighters and police officers by not including the latter in his austerity measures.”¹⁶

It did not work, as firefighters and police showed up in the capital to participate in the demonstrations in Madison which began immediately in response to the release of the bill. As a result, the Republican legislature introduced an amendment to the biennial budget bill proposing newly hired police and firefighters pay more for their health insurance and pension benefits. The change would require some police and firefighters to make the same contributions toward their benefits as required of other public workers under the budget repair bill. State Senator Alberta Darling said the intent was to “alleviate some of the morale problems that were created with the uneven application of these new policies.”¹⁷ The uneven policies emerged as the budget repair bill requires state, local and school employees to pay half the costs of their pensions and at least 12.6 percent of their health care premiums; again, police and firefighters were exempted. Walker purportedly presented the proposal as an attempt to bring public employee “sacrifice” in line with private employee “sacrifice,” not even acknowledging the unfunded salary and merit increases over the previous three years, and extensive furlough days public employees had already contributed to the state fiscal “crisis.”

Walker released the budget repair bill on February 11, 2011. He briefed the Democratic minority leadership, Mark Miller of the Senate and Peter

Barca of the Assembly, the morning of the 11th. While Barca advised Walker he was making a huge mistake, Walker assured Barca he had been consulting with the National Guard while drafting the bill.¹⁸ There was some debate about Walker's intentions relative to the use of the National Guard – whether to suppress resistance or replace public employees – but neither need emerged in the conflicts over the bill. Union members and their supporters refrained from negative confrontation, however they did immediately organize coordinated efforts to meet the challenge. The Wisconsin State Employees Unions, Wisconsin Educators Association Council (an arm of the National Education Association), the American Federation of Teachers and the AFL-CIO arranged lobby days at the Capitol and free buses running from multiple corners of the state. They brought in multiple unions, community groups and citizens to join the demonstrations. Churches with active social justice committees also joined the protests.

Mary Bell, President of WEAC and a school media specialist, announced via video that “Governor Walker said he doesn't want educators at the table, he doesn't want collective bargaining for [WEAC] members across the state, he doesn't want them engaged in discussion about quality [education]....The people of Wisconsin did not elect Governor Walker to undermine public education – but that is exactly what his extreme attack on worker rights' proposal will do. He's about to hurt really good people, their kids and families.”¹⁹

The initial demonstrations began on Sunday, February 13, with small groups of protestors at the capital building in Madison and the governor's mansion. The protests expanded on Monday, February 14, as college students responded to the radical nature of the bill. Protestors who could not travel to Madison demonstrated at local sites, such as town halls and representatives' homes or local offices. Union leaders held a press conference to denounce the bill that afternoon.

A large rally developed at noontime on the 15th, numbering approximately 10,000, as the Legislative Joint Finance committee began holding hearings on the bill. Hundreds signed up to testify about the effects of the bill and demonstrators began camping out in the building. Classes were cancelled in the Madison School District as John Matthews, executive director for Madison Teachers Inc., called for the membership to rally against the collective bargaining proposals in the repair bill; approximately 40% called in sick to participate in the protests.²⁰ Despite the obvious public objection and without hearing all the testimony scheduled, the Joint Finance Committee advanced the bill to the Senate on the 16th and on Thursday, February 17th, fourteen Democratic Senators left the state to block the vote on the bill, stoking an already heated environment and bringing the Assembly to the brink of “chaos.”²¹

By leaving the state, the Democrats bought some valuable time to study the document itself. Mark Miller, Senate Minority leader reported “There

was a real sense of injustice being perpetrated on workers in our state, and it was so obvious it was railroaded through before people had a chance ... We needed to do something responsible in order to be able to slow the bill down.”²²

The “flight of the fabulous fourteen” did allow time to review the other elements of the budget repair bill and it was an important piece of expanding awareness within the affected populations and increasing the momentum of the protests. The bill aimed to accomplish even more than the spaying of the unions. One obvious target was Badgercare/Medicaid. The repair bill proposed that the Department of Health Services (DHS) could promulgate any rules, such as requiring maximum cost sharing by recipients; modifying existing benefits or benefits packages for different groups of recipients; restricting access to non-citizens; creating standards for establishing and verifying eligibility requirements; reducing income levels for participation; permitting DHS to promulgate any rule under this provision as an emergency rule.

The “emergency rules” would be subject to review by the Joint Committee on Finance under a 14-day passive review process, which removes the review process from the more politically accountable full legislative review process. According to David Wahlberg “Walker’s budget repair bill ... would give the state Department of Health Services the authority to restrict eligibility, modify benefits and make other changes to Medicaid with less legislative review than required now.”²³ The new head of DHS, Dennis Smith, brings strong conservative credentials to the job. He has served as a senior fellow of the conservative Washington, D.C., think-tank The Heritage Foundation, since May 2008. He is a fervent critic of the very programs he is now in charge of running, even suggesting in a December 2009 essay for Heritage that states walk away from Medicaid completely rather than comply with the new healthcare law, which he calls a “federal takeover.” (Shawn Doherty, *Capital Times*, January 2011).

The repair bill also called for the release of 35 classified positions covered by civil service, and redefined “administrators” to include other managerial positions determined by an appointing authority. While in many ways the least noxious of the “repairs” Walker included in the bill, it reveals the vulnerability of the civil service system to political manipulation. This is significant because Walker used the presence of the civil service system to argue against the need for unions in the public sector. In effect, his bill argued against itself.

On February 18th, the public employee union leadership announced it would accept the increases in health care costs and pension contributions required in the bill if Walker would surrender the reduction in collective bargaining authority. Walker argued that the strategies included in the budget repair bill were necessary to the success of the biennial budget, and so rejected the offer. On the same day, the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) urged members to contact legislators and press for a “No” vote on the repair

bill. Lisa Strand, executive director of the WLA, wrote on the “WLA Blog” that “Walker’s Budget Adjustment bill ... seeks to end collective bargaining as we know it and decimate public employee unions.” But, as the demonstrations grew in size and intensity in Madison, WLA decided to postpone the annual Library Legislative Day, originally scheduled for February 22. They felt they would not be able to address their own agenda, which was the biennial budget bill and funding for library services. Sandy Heiden, president of the Wisconsin Educational Media Association, noted that school librarians were involved in the “organized rational protesting” going on in Madison as they too would be affected by any reduction in bargaining rights.²⁴ Roberta Stevens, president of the American Library Association, released a statement on February 24, affirming that: “The ALA supports library employees in seeking equitable compensation and recognizes the principle of collective bargaining as an important element of successful labor-management relations. We affirm the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers, without fear of reprisal. These are basic workers’ rights that we defend for thousands of academic, public and school library professionals.”

Librarians did join the large march of February 26th, when over 100,000 swarmed the capital to march in the snow. Demonstrators at the “Rally for Workers Rights” marched through the winter weather in the largest demonstration in Madison since the Viet Nam War protests.²⁵

There were negotiations occurring between the Democratic and Republican senators in the meantime, and at one point there was a meeting with Walker staff members, but, collective bargaining itself was never back on the table, said one source in Walker’s administration.²⁶ That was the main problem for the Democrats and the labor leadership. While Republicans were fighting an ideological battle, the Democrats were fighting to keep an arrow in the quiver of the working class.

The Republicans grew frustrated with the delays, and the force of the resistance. According to one legislator, they were not prepared for the intensity of the response. In order to escape the trap of the debate, they attempted to pass the legislation without the 2/3rds majority necessary for a fiscal control bill by pulling the collective bargaining measure out of the budget repair bill and passing it separately. In a noisy, undisciplined and hastily called meeting on March 9th, the Senate passed the collective bargaining bill, but failed to provide adequate public notice. The following day the Assembly also passed the bill, and Democrat Barca filed a complaint with the Dane County district attorney alleging a Republican violation of the Wisconsin open meetings law. While Walker believed he signed the bill into law, the restraining order against the implementation of the bill was eventually granted by Judge Maryann Sumi. The Democrats returned to Wisconsin on March 12, with the biennial budget now also to address.

The Biennial Budget

Walker's budget repair bill was just the setting of the table. The full scope of his reach became apparent in the biennial budget. While their own document admitted that the state economy was in a state of recovery, Republicans still pursued budget cuts of 43.4 billion, while expanding tax cuts by \$200 million to businesses. While the administration argued there were no tax or fee increases, in fact the reductions in tax credits, such as the earned income credit and homestead exemption, amount to tax increases on the working class.²⁷

The programs targeted for extensive cuts include the public school systems in the state, the higher education system, local government agencies themselves, health care, transportation services and the environment. The K-12 schools alone will lose \$834 million, the UW system \$250 million and the technical colleges \$72 million. The K-12 funding cuts eliminate such programs as: aid for advanced placement classes; aid for gifted and talented; aid for at-risk children; P-5 class-size reduction programs for urban communities (Milwaukee, Kenosha, Beloit and Racine); grants to advance science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The budget reduces funding for food and nutrition programs, bi-lingual education, transportation, and Head Start. It establishes a 14-member task force for "Read to Succeed"; as currently configured, the Task Force does not include a librarian.

The budget promotes public charter schools, managed under the direction of a statewide Charter School Authorization board with politically appointed members. The board would collect fees from charter schools. The budget eliminates the need for teacher certification in the charter schools and will not require the schools to serve disabled students. The budget also expands the use of virtual schools in the state by lifting the cap on the number of virtual students and allowing service through private companies. WEAC estimates it will potentially cost 5,000 teaching positions. The budget also calls for a decrease of 10% in library funding and the elimination of the "Maintenance of Effort" (MOE) requirement in public library funding, which will then threaten federal funding. The eradication of MOE will in all likelihood lead to the dissolution of the state interlibrary loan program. The state also rejected \$23 million in federal subsidies for statewide bandwidth expansion, as AT&T complained about the paperwork involved in filing for the federal reimbursements.

Budget cuts to the Corrections Department, funding for childcare, senior citizens, and transportation services for people with disabilities further demonstrate the utter immorality of the Republican budget. The plan completely eliminates funding for Title V, the only state-funded family planning health care program. Senator Alberta Darling, who once served on the Planned Parenthood Board, authored the bill that eliminated these services. The legislature has introduced an amendment to investigate funding for the statewide educational network WISCNET, and, in response,

the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin system, the Wisconsin Library Association, Council of University of Wisconsin Libraries, and the School of Information Studies, among others, issued statements informing the legislature of the scope of their recommendation and urging them to reconsider. As a result, the state will allow WISCNET to continue for two years while a privatization model is under investigation.

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO believes that Scott Walker is advocating a broad-based privatization agenda to eliminate all but the most necessary government jobs. Stephanie Bloomingdale, spokesperson for the union, believes that Walker's agenda to weaken the unions, paying back political backers like the multi-billionaire Koch Brothers, will generate a broader divide between rich and poor. "We understand it is a last stand for the middle class ... but we'll keep fighting for a fair democracy and a fair economy. The 'sleeping giant' is now awake and prepared to reclaim power for the working people."²⁸

Kathy Rohde, an organizer for WEAC, expresses confidence about the viability of the public employee unions, regardless of what the legislative actions ultimately address. "We currently operate as a service model union, under the 51-year-old collective bargaining law. If a member has a problem relative to the contract, they contact us. We'll help them with it. We provide training for members, but up to this point, we haven't done a good job of engaging our membership. Without the right of collective bargaining, we'll move to more of an organizing model. We'll be more engaged in active mobilizing and affecting change. We could well come out stronger as a union."²⁹ WEAC, along with Madison Teachers Inc., has filed a challenge to a law granting Walker the power to veto administrative rules written by any state agency. According to the Wisconsin constitution the Department of Public Instruction, headed by state schools superintendent Tony Evers, retains administrative autonomy in the state. (*Journal Sentinel*, "WEAC sues over law giving Walker power over DPI rules," June 30, 2011.)

The Democratic party of Wisconsin also claims to be re-invigorated. Senator Spencer Coggs, a former union organizer himself, spoke at a dinner for the Milwaukee Innerscity Congregations Allied for Hope on June 4, 2011 and said "Yes, we ran away to Illinois ...and we bought us all some time ... but we came back and we came back as new Democrats, empowered Democrats, and we believe as we have not believed in a long time that 'The people, united, can never be defeated!'"

The energy stirred by the weeks of demonstrations did not dissipate, but was re-directed. Former protestors, union members or not, became grass-roots organizers who mounted recall campaigns in senatorial districts across the state. Six Republican senators are confirmed as facing a recall election in July and one of them is Alberta Darling. Three Democrats also face recall campaigns for "running away." While teachers and the students led the charge back in February, now it is truly a collective effort. The first week of June 2011 protestors literally camped out in Madison, obviously present

as the legislators voted on the Governor's budget bill. The designation of "Walkerville," served to recall the "Hooverilles" that grew up in the cities during the Great Depression.

On June 6, the Supreme Court of Wisconsin heard the arguments against the stay on the implementation of the Budget Repair Bill issued by Judge Sumi. The very same day, the Supreme Court issued its decision. According to Chief Justice Shirley A. Abrahamson, who dissented from the Court's decision, "In hastily reaching judgment, Justice Patience D. Roggensack, Justice Annette K. Ziegler, and Justice Michael J. Gableman author an order, joined by Justice David T. Prosser, lacking a reasoned, transparent analysis and incorporating numerous errors of law and fact. This kind of order seems to open the court unnecessarily to the charge that the majority has reached a pre-determined conclusion not based on the facts and the law, which undermines the majority's ultimate decision."

The decision by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court that a committee of the legislature is not subject to Wisconsin's open meetings law requirements creates a transparency challenge for the public in the face of a controlled legislature. The choice to rush the release of the decision on the part of the court's Republican majority in order to enable the state's budget process to go forward without further accountability – such as voting *with* appropriate public notice – suggests collusion among members of the court and the legislature. Given the alliance among the Republican majority on the Supreme Court, the Republican legislature and the Republican Governor, there is no protection of the people's rights in the state of Wisconsin. It challenges the very concept of democracy; the only recourse is to attempt to recall the unresponsive parties.

The painting of the three children, representing the diversity and possibility of this state and this country, will be hung in the Milwaukee Public Library main building. It's true that more people will see it there, but they are not the people who need to see it. They already understand economic marginalization. It needs to hang in the Governor's residence.

Footnotes

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UNDER OUR OWN UMBRELLA: MOBILIZING RESEARCH EVIDENCE FOR EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

by Rosamund K. Stooke
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A critical perspective on evidence is taken as axiomatic in the practice of librarianship. MLIS students are schooled in techniques for evaluating information sources; policymakers, program developers, practitioners, and LIS educators are encouraged to base decisions on a solid foundation of research evidence; practitioners are urged to provide library users with a range of sources from which to choose. Rarely, however, are critical questions asked about the nature of research evidence, the purposes for which research evidence is mobilized and the political, economic, social, and material consequences that may attend privileging one form of evidence over another.

The article seeks to raise such questions. First we discuss how research and evidence have been mobilized in professional literature for children's services librarians working in public libraries and in children's services librarians' actual activities and talk about their support of children's early literacy. We then consider the forms of evidence being used by children's services librarians and ask what interests are served by the use or non-use of particular forms of evidence. Finally we identify implications of our findings. We argue, as does John Budd (2006), that more is at stake than which methods or studies are most effective. We argue too that consequences attend the selection of research evidence, and that the choice of research evidence has implications – often unexpected and sometimes negative -- for public libraries and for their users and staff. Indeed, we seek to demonstrate that the privileging of one form of evidence over others does not further the public library's democratic mission and may well undermine children's services librarians' efforts to advocate for library services.

Evidence-based Practice

Originating in response to calls for evidence-based health care (Cohen, 2004), the evidence-based practice model (EBP) has spread within other disciplines, including library and information science (Marshall, 2006) and

education (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, [NICHD], 2000). A strong evidence base promises to elevate the idiosyncrasies of practice to a set of rigorous, systematic findings that may be evaluated, compared, and generalized.

In its purest form, EBP mandates that practice decisions be based on a systematic critical appraisal of the research literature according to an established hierarchy of evidence (Marshall, 2006). In practice, there is great variation in how the model is implemented. Many argue, for example, that practitioners should not simply rely on research, but “mesh... research-based evidence with professional knowing and experience to make professional decisions and implement professional action” (Todd, 2008, p. 17). Orthodox formulations adhere more tightly to a rigid hierarchy of forms of evidence. At the apex of this hierarchy sit randomized controlled trials: studies that are “well designed and implemented, that demonstrate the absence of systematic differences between intervention and control groups before the intervention, and that employ measures and instruments of proven validity” (pp. 17-18).

EBP is not without its critics. One of the most significant concerns is that EBP’s strong commitment to a positivist empirical paradigm often corresponds to a very narrow understanding of the nature of good evidence as that derived from controlled experimental methods. This means that, in disciplines outside of clinical studies, little research makes the grade so there is little evidence on which to make decisions (Todd, 2008). Second, a narrow framing makes it difficult to ask the broad, contextual questions (LaFlamme, 2007) needed to understand the “the non-random reality” of real social settings such as libraries (Todd, 2008, p. 18). Third, a narrow definition devalues information important to professionals (Cohen, 2004; Bogel 2008), including information derived from qualitative research (Given, 2006) and, importantly, from practitioners’ own professional expertise and judgement (Todd, 2008). Finally, studies that focus exclusively on experimental research risk losing sight of the social and economic contexts and may run the risk of privileging the efficient administration of the library over the broader needs of the community (LaFlamme, 2007).

The implications of EBP go beyond choosing from a simple hierarchy of research methodologies. Research studies are implicitly or explicitly situated within paradigms that may determine which phenomena are of interest and what kinds of questions are askable and answerable (Blaikie, 2010). Choosing research evidence on which to base practice decisions is therefore not a neutral act, and may commit practitioners to a set of values and priorities that are at odds with professional goals.

Methodology

The evidence that we present here comes from three independent but interrelated studies of the work of children’s services librarians in public

libraries and an analysis of professional children's services texts. All of the studies share an institutional ethnography (Smith, 1987, 2005) orientation, which requires starting from individual instances in participants' everyday/overnight life and untangling and following the institutional threads made visible in those instances to uncover the social organization of that life. Our data come from an interview study of Canadian public librarians' work in support of children's early literacy (Stooke, 2004), an observation study of ten Book Buddies programs for school-age readers (Stooke, 2007), and an ethnographic observation of multiple sessions of eight public library-based infant and toddler programs in two Canadian provinces (e.g., McKenzie & Stooke, 2007; Stooke & McKenzie, 2009). As we worked through our analyses we were struck by the similar ways in which librarians across the three studies talked about research and mobilized and deployed research evidence in their practice. These reflections led us to look at the data from all three studies together, and to complement it by turning to the professional literature for children's services librarians.

Our full data set therefore consists of numerous forms from the four sources. First are transcripts of in-depth interviews with 25 professional librarians from two Canadian provinces about their work in support of children's early literacy. Second are field notes from our observations. At each location, a research team including one or both authors and sometimes additional research assistants observed a number of consecutive program sessions. Observers were placed as unobtrusively as possible and observed program sessions and hand-wrote field notes. Both observations and interviews focused on concrete details; that is, on what participants were actually doing or on what they said they did, rather than on their subjective experiences or views about the work. Third is the contemporary and historical professional literature for children's services librarians, including professional guidelines (e.g., Association for Library Services to Children [ALSC] 1999/2009), books, and articles in journals such as *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, *School Library Journal*, *Knowledge Quest*, and *Children and Libraries*. All data collection conformed to Canadian research ethics guidelines (Canadian Institute of Health Research, [CIHR], 2003). Informed consent for participation was obtained; all participants are referred to using pseudonyms; institutions, program names and locations have been anonymized.

Our analysis is informed by a social constructionist epistemology (Burr, 2003) that considers all knowledge claims to be rhetorical. A social constructionist approach enables researchers to critically examine the strategies employed and the evidence used to support knowledge claims or theoretical allegiances (Potter, 1996; Budd, 2006). We view both the printed texts and the field texts (our field notes and transcripts) as products of discursive processes, what Fairclough (2003, p. 3) calls "actual instance(s) of language in use." The goal of our analysis is to uncover how these instances of "language in use" are constructed and to suggest how they might be mediating social life in local sites of institutional activity.

We employed discourse analysis (Potter, 1996) as the primary method for examining ways that members of the children's library services community deployed particular framings of research in their work as authors of professional texts or as practitioners. Discourse analysis (e.g., Talja & McKenzie, 2007; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001; Budd, 2006) focuses on "the study of language in use" (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001, p.2): the understanding of language as constitutive and constructive and of meaning as emerging from complex social processes. Potter's (1996) approach to everyday fact construction is concerned with the ways that accounts are structured to appear factual (the epistemological orientation of discourse) and the rhetorical purposes to which accounts are put (the action orientation of discourse). Because it focuses on the ways that speakers and writers assemble their versions of the world and on the social functions those versions perform, this approach is particularly well-suited for analyzing the ways that evidence is mobilized and presented.

The analysis focused less on individual texts than on the connections among texts and between texts and observed practices. For example, professional texts that discussed children's librarians' roles and responsibilities with respect to early literacy research were examined in relation to librarians' talk about their work and researchers' observations. Historical sources that traced the development of public-library learning support programs for young children helped to contextualize the advice provided in the current sources. Analyzing these data in relation to one another reflects the goals of institutional ethnography by showing how things happening in one place, like a public librarian's decision to mention a research study to parents at her baby storytime, might be serving institutional goals such as library advocacy. The intention of the study was not to produce a definitive or generalizable analysis, but to explore how certain things came to be said or done and to identify potential consequences, including those consequences that fall most heavily on vulnerable groups.

We present our findings under three broad themes. First, we consider *how* research evidence is used. We begin by sketching the recent history of children's library services in North America. We show that educational policies aimed at enhancing school readiness have prompted public libraries to compete with other social agencies for scarce resources and we show how research evidence has been mobilized by the American Library Association (ALA) to do this kind of advocacy work. Second, we consider *what* kind of research is elevated to the place of best evidence. Specifically, we argue that the emphasis on public libraries as places for early childhood education increased the value of scientifically-based reading research, in particular a groundbreaking meta-analysis conducted by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 2000) whose findings underpin the ALA's most ambitious initiative for young children's literacy, *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library* (ECRR). With reference to ECRR, we discuss some of the unintended consequences of using a narrow definition of research for public libraries, their users, and their staff. Finally we suggest

strategies for broadening the lens through which research is evaluated to inform public library programs.

Mobilizing Research for Practice and Advocacy

The Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC)'s *Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries, Revised Edition* (ALSC, 1999/2009) makes clear that a competent children's librarian "[s]tays informed of current trends, emerging technologies, issues, and research in librarianship, child development, education, and allied fields" (Section VIII.2). It is expected, then, that the children's services community would pay attention to highly publicized neuroscience research and scientifically-based research on reading.

[As] remarkable research on early brain development was finding its way into the mainstream news, the Public Library Association (PLA) and the ALSC both took note. (Ash & Meyers, 2009, p. 3)

Our interview data also provide examples of librarians mobilizing neuroscience research to plan and advocate for services.

Dana: I think the brain research is fabulous. My huge focus at the moment is the zero-to-two age group. . . . And [the report] gives me a tool to say to staff, "A Babytime is something that you need to offer." And a staff person might say, "Oh, they're just babies." And now I've got empirical research that says, "This is when the pathways are growing, and this is when the synapses are being formed and this is when the brain is actually being formed."

Practitioners are encouraged to mobilize research in incidental ways too. A companion book that expands the ALSC's *Competencies* (Cerny, Markey, & Williams, 2006) advises librarians to "have a few ready remarks and some basic facts . . . How does reading during the summer vacation encourage children's reading ability overall? How does free voluntary reading improve their ability to do well on standardized tests?" (pp. 72-73).

Field note: Janet's storytimes always seem to involve a discussion of some kind of research or 'expert opinion' on some topic related to child rearing. . . . It must involve some prior thought or research on Janet's part, since she always seems to know the source of the information and some details about it.

When public libraries in North America began serving children more than a century ago, they did not view themselves as parent educators or reading teachers. Reading as a field of study was in its infancy (Gillen & Hall, 2003) and for much of the twentieth century, librarians viewed children not as students, but as readers with their own reading tastes (Walter, 2001, p. 13). They were unperturbed that schools and libraries approached children's

reading differently and took pride in the differences (Ziarnik, 2003). At the same time, children's librarians struggled to be taken seriously by their colleagues in the LIS community (Hildenbrand, 1996). Wilson (1979), for example, admonished them to host fewer author visits and to attend to research in the field of child development. As the following excerpt from an interview demonstrates, some children's librarians even admonished themselves.

Pat: You know, there was just nothing happening and the administration was not happy with our progress either, but I wasn't able to dedicate myself to it. So . . . I went to my CEO and luckily he's very approachable. . . . And my CEO said, "We must do a study. You know, you have to do research. . ."

In the late 1970s, the emergent literacy perspective displaced reading readiness as the dominant model for thinking about beginning reading. Emergent literacy researchers promoted the use of high-quality children's literature in schools and identified storybook reading as the most important early literacy experience for young children (Gillen & Hall, 2003). For a short time during the 1980s and 1990s, kindergarten and primary teachers' reading lessons resembled traditional public library preschool programs. Librarians were pleased to see their work validated by educators and began to construct new professional identities as early childhood educators with specialized knowledge of books.

When early child development issues became a topic of for social policy makers during the 1990s, the public library community enthusiastically embraced "the discourse of shared responsibility" for preparing children to be "productive members in a global society" (Griffith & André-Bechely, 2008, p. 49). The children's services community nevertheless faced challenges. First, in order to position themselves as educational resources for young children's literacy, libraries were required to compete for funding with a plethora of new community-based programs. Library advocates, Feinberg and Rogoff (1998) wrote, "Not since the launch of sputnik has there been so much anxiety about improving education" (p. 50) and yet "in the search for community assets . . . public libraries are frequently overlooked" (p. 50). Second, by the year 2000, the emergent literacy perspective had been successfully challenged by advocates for scientifically-based reading research (SBRR), in particular the National Reading Panel (NRP). In preparing their famous report, *Teaching Children to Read*, the NRP employed only experimental or quasi-experimental

¹ Once it selected the topics for review, the Panel also decided how to choose which studies to include in its analysis. To ensure the quality of the work, the Panel agreed to base its conclusions only on studies that had appeared in English in a refereed journal. The Panel limited its review to studies that focused directly on children's reading development from preschool through Grade 12. The Panel also concentrated only on studies that were experimental or quasi-experimental in design. These studies had to include a sample size that was considered large enough to be useful, and the instructional procedures used in the studies had to be well defined.

studies with sample sizes “considered large enough to be useful.” Finally, the studies only assessed instructional interventions whose instructional procedures were well defined.¹ The voices of SBRR researchers quickly came to dominate educational policy conversations in the United States and evidence-based practice was firmly entrenched in educational policies.

In the area of literacy, both federal and state expectations have emphasized EBP to guide curriculum adoption and the evaluation of curriculum effectiveness. Evidence must be grounded in scientifically based research, a term used across a variety of fields that requires the application of systematic and objective procedures to obtain information to address important questions in a particular field. It is an attempt to ensure that those who use the research can have a high degree of confidence that it is valid and dependable. (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2005, n.p.)

The effects of the new educational policies have been felt intensely by school librarians. According to Todd (2008), school librarianship “is . . . driven by trends and requirements in education, particularly its focus on data-driven decision making, accountability, and measurement of outcomes” (p. 19). Public libraries, by contrast, are not directly accountable to educational policies. Traditionally they have aimed to provide opportunities for recreational literacy practices and self-directed learning along with support for school curricula. However, the drift toward school-style literacy practices is changing the nature of public library services too.

Now, as the research into early literacy is growing daily, it becomes important for these skills to not only be brought to library storytimes, but for them to be presented to the caregivers as something important to know and use with young children on a daily basis. (Albright et al., 2009, p. 15)

Both EBP and school learning have attained the status of “consensus vocabularies” (DeVault, 2008, p. 293) among community organizations. Their claims and directives “are woven into political discourse, budgeting, policy implementation, media reports, and so on, in ways that give them purchase with different audiences; as people take up these vocabularies, they take up beliefs on which they rest, which come to be widely accepted” (p. 293).

The discourse of school learning is hard to avoid, and has come to seem natural to community organizations. The more neutral role of the library as a place where self-directed literacy learning might occur is likely to be replaced by a view of the library as a place where parents take their children to reinforce school success. (Ward & Wason-Elam, 2003, p. 20)

It is against this backdrop that public librarians’ use of research evidence for young children’s literacy must be understood. With public library

programs for young children situated in relation to educational programs, it is not at all surprising that librarians are advised to – and do – turn to educational research literature as a source of evidence to support practice. We question, however, the extent to which one body of research has informed recent initiatives on behalf of young children’s literacy.

*Choosing the Evidence:
The Case of Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library*

As noted above, the NRP analyzed a large body of experimental and quasi-experimental research to establish a set of best practices for early literacy instruction. Of particular relevance to public librarians was the finding that it is unnecessary to delay intentional literacy instruction until first grade. In response to this finding some library programs for young children are now more didactic than in the past and some librarians have even described themselves as parents’ “first literacy coaches” (Albright et al., 2009, p. 16). For example, library programs for young children have always included language play that emphasized the sounds in words (for example in jokes, rhymes and tongue twisters), but some library preschool programs now explicitly teach phonemic awareness. The NRP also recommended that book sharing activities should include dialogic reading, a teacher-centred routine (Teale et al., 2009, p. 80) in which adults pose literal comprehension questions to children as they share a book. A librarian called Suzanne demonstrated dialogic reading as follows.

Librarian: What do you see in the picture?
Child: I see a mouse.
Librarian: Oh and what color is the mouse?
Child: It’s a GREY mouse.

The NRP’s recommendations have been highly influential and hotly contested in educational circles (see Purcell-Gates, Jacobson & Degener, 2004). They have not been imposed on public library systems, but in 2001 the Public Library Association (PLA) and the Association for Library Services for Children (ALSC) forged a partnership with the NICHD to develop a preschool literacy initiative (Ash & Meyers, 2009) that evolved into *Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library* (ECRR). Background information on the initiative and its research base is posted to the ALA’s ECRR webpage along with ordering information for “posters and handouts and scripted workshops for libraries that could be presented to parents and caregivers” (Everhart, 2004, p. 77). ECRR is the North American children’s services community’s most coordinated and most successful effort to mobilize research-based practices for library advocacy. Indeed, an article published in the prestigious education journal, *Language Arts* (Ward, 2007) states that ECRR has helped to turn public libraries into “21st Century Learning Places” (p. 269).

Recognizing that the public libraries have the ability to reach
thousands of parents, caregivers and children, and to greatly

impact the early reading experience, the PLA and ALSC contracted educational experts in emergent literacy to develop a model research-based programme for parents and caregivers. The promise of these research-based materials is to enlist parents and caregivers as partners in preparing their children for learning to read and to provide the most effective methods to achieve this end (Ward 2007, 269-270).

We draw attention to ECRR for several reasons. First is the extent to which it has been employed as a tool for library advocacy. The uptake of ECRR resources in and beyond the LIS community is unprecedented. Second is the children's services community's uncritical adoption of recommendations derived from studies that frame research and literacy so narrowly. It is worth noting that some educational researchers who strongly supported NRP-informed programs in schools now voice concerns about a lack of results (Manzo, 2008; Allington 2009; Teale, 2008; Teale et al. 2009). For example, Teale (2008) questions the NRP's wisdom in excluding so much research from its analysis.

The ways in which the NRP findings have been applied to the practical questions have resulted in severely restricting the research evidence that is viewed as contributing to current knowledge about early literacy. Information from rigorous, systematic, objective case studies, correlational research and observational studies that have been accepted by peer-reviewed journals contribute substantive research knowledge that should also be used to draw policy and instructional implications in the field of early literacy. (Teale et al., 2009, p. 87)

Teale is concerned that the narrow framing of research by SBRR excludes widely-employed methodological approaches such as correlational studies and case studies. We note it also excludes without exception contributions to the knowledge base of early childhood literacy made by sociocultural research (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003, p. 35). Sociocultural research foregrounds the roles played by language and culture in literacy learning. Learning and development in sociocultural research are viewed in terms of participation in a community and the appropriation of the valued practices of that community.

A coherent understanding of the cultural, historical nature of human development . . . builds on a variety of traditions of research, including participant observation of everyday life from an anthropological perspective, psychological research in naturalistic or constrained "laboratory" situations, historical accounts, and fine-grained analyses of videotaped events. Together, the research and scholarly traditions across fields are sparking a new conception of human development as a cultural process. (Rogoff, 2003, p. 10)

A lively and ongoing debate about the value of sociocultural research for language and literacy education has permeated both the research and the professional literature in the field of education. The school library community attends to this debate by calling on both cognitive and sociocultural research evidence (e.g., Shannon 2004, Coles 2004). Surprisingly, however, this debate is entirely absent from the professional literature for public library children's services. In fact, the question of how best to support early literacy has more than once been declared closed: In 2001, Virginia Walter declared that the NRP study had resolved struggles among educators about the best way to teach beginning reading "once and for all" (p. 63). More recently, Albright et al. (2009) described the NRP's findings as "the latest emergent literacy research" (p. 17).

Consequences of the Choice of Evidence

We argue that the narrow framing of research in children's services professional discourse could undermine the public library's ability to achieve important goals with respect to social inclusion, and that it works to position children's services librarians as educational technicians rather than professionals. We discuss each of these claims in turn.

An important goal for early literacy reforms in libraries is to promote social inclusion by helping to prepare all children for school. Privileging findings from experimental and quasi-experimental studies may seem like the best way to address this goal, but, as Emson (2003) observes, the success of community literacy programs "depends on two elements – personalized service and flexibility" (p. 27). Moreover, even the most carefully planned program may fail to meet the needs of the people it intends to serve (Willinsky, 2001). Practical problems in the social world are messy and may be better understood by broad questions to which only approximate answers are possible. Although those questions and answers are not considered "good evidence" in narrow formulations, they sometimes help people make sense of the uncertainties. Any attempt to address problems in the social world should also take into account the central role played by social and cultural factors in the production of problems and solutions. As do Razfar and Gutierrez (2003), we argue that literacy practices derived exclusively from cognitive research cannot be responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity that characterizes Canada and the United States.

Observational data from a public library Reading Buddies program for school-age children illustrates these points. The program we observed was informed by a robust research finding that the amount of time spent on independent reading at school is not enough for all children to become fluent and accurate readers (Rasinsky & Padak, 2004). The program aimed to support developing readers by pairing them with volunteers who would listen to them read aloud. It was a low-cost initiative and easy to implement. It was potentially helpful too – as long as the children who attended the program actually needed to practice reading aloud and as long as they were sufficiently like the children who had participated in the original research.

Unfortunately, neither was the case. Many of the children who attended the program were beginning readers. Finding materials that were easy enough for them to read aloud proved to be a challenge for the volunteers who often resorted to reading to the children instead. But more important, about 80% of the children who attended the program were English language learners whose primary need was for language support. While a few volunteers improvised support for vocabulary development, they had not been trained to do so and did not have access to the potentially helpful, dual language book collections owned by the library system. The following, poignant field note suggests that the program we observed, in spite of its strong research base, was far from flexible and could have offered more personalized service had planners attended to recommendations from sociocultural research.

Field note: Courage is about twelve years old, tall and willowy. He's African, maybe from Somalia. . . . He walks slowly but purposefully to the far corner of the meeting room where the coordinator greets him enthusiastically. He half smiles in reply, then goes to the display table and picks up an easy reader. Not much time choosing. He sits beside his Buddy and without any preamble opens the book and reads in a low monotone voice, a little haltingly. There's no chatting. When he's finished the book, the Buddy says, "I think we need a funny book, don't you?" She gets up, walks to the display and picks up a popular book of fractured fairy tales. Does Courage know the actual tales? What sense will he make of the wacky illustrations? He takes the book, opens it to the first page, and begins to read from the top. But the text in this book doesn't follow the expected pattern. Sometimes it starts at the top left, but sometimes the whole page is upside down and you need to turn the book around to read it. The Buddy tries to help Courage with the jokes, but he just keeps reading. It is as if their meanings are of no consequence.

Our second argument is that a narrow framing of research undermines children's librarians' professionalism. Framing research narrowly obviates the need for practitioners to critically reflect on the consequences of their actions. They need only to follow guidelines for best practice and adopt the research-based handouts and scripts developed by agencies such as the ALA. A narrow framing of research limits acceptable research findings to those derived from experimental and quasi-experimental studies, thereby making it difficult for librarians themselves to conduct research that would count. Consequently, children's librarians come to rely on the expert opinions of others rather than on their own professional judgment. It is salient to this argument that almost all participants' comments about research referred to research from fields other than LIS. The following comments made by a librarian called Chris are an exception. Chris bemoans the fact that librarians do not have research "under our own umbrella."

Chris: [Finger plays are important for making] essential brain connections and motor skills that are being developed that will develop into writing skills, which is something that was made

very apparent when we had our guest speaker. But it's almost as if we don't have the literature under our own umbrella to be able to advocate in that way.

To sum up, we have argued that the public library community's uncritical commitment to a narrow framing of research in the field of early literacy has constrained practitioners' access to important literacy research and discouraged them from drawing on their own professional wisdom. Hence we assert that an uncritical application of EBL can promote the adoption of the "implicit and naïve rhetoric" alluded to by Budd (2006, p. 221) and we concur with commentators such as Dennis et al. (2007) "that uncritical application of EBL [evidence-based librarianship] can lead librarians to suspend professional judgment in the name of following evidence" (p.118).

Conclusion

Children's services librarians in public libraries are expected to – and do – attend to research. They do so for practical purposes – to support children's literacy and for rhetorical purposes – to advocate for the public library as an educational resource. We have shown that reliance on a single set of standards for judging knowledge claims mediates an uncritical adoption of certain practices and an equally uncritical rejection of others. Concern about the lack of debate in professional literature for children's librarians led us to examine ways in which research was being taken up in librarians' practice and in their talk about practice. We concluded that adopting a widened lens on research, one that is a more inclusive understanding of what might count as research and evidence, opens up new questions and new understandings about early childhood literacy.

By employing a widened lens, questions important to children's services staff could be addressed in ways that illuminate rather than denigrate the unique learning opportunities afforded by public libraries. The provision of access to learning resources, including games in digital formats, is a library literacy practice that embeds myriad learning opportunities. Attention to the physical environment as demonstrated by Family Place Libraries, attention to children's reading tastes and the public library's traditional focus on children's engagement are all areas of librarians' expertise that should not be overlooked.

It would be disingenuous, of course, to single out public libraries for criticism. Healthcare professionals, teachers, school librarians, and community workers all routinely expose their practices to "the glare of enlightenment science" (Bowker and Star 2000, 249) and sometimes find them wanting. What is missing from the children's services professional literature, and from much of the research literature, however, is a counter narrative. Many healthcare professionals are encouraged to engage in reflective practice, an activity that validates and supports experiential learning and situated problem solving (for example Gunn & Owen, 2010). Professional literature for teachers encourages them to be discerning

consumers of educational programs (Hibbert & Iannacci, 2005; Coles, 2004). School librarians too are encouraged to integrate the best empirical research evidence with “knowledge and understanding derived from professional experience, as well as with local evidence” (Todd, 2008, pp. 19-20) and community development practitioners are told to seek out new sources of evidence.

The effort will require different ways of doing business and different ways of conceptualizing evaluation on the part of funders, practitioners, public policymakers, and researchers. Across the field, we need to dig deeper around some key questions, draw on different sources for evidence, and develop a broader knowledge base. (Auspos and Kubisch 2004, p.6)

Following Auspos and Kubisch, we suggest only that the children’s services community (including practitioners, researchers, and educators) dig deeper around key questions about early literacy and advocacy. It is in librarianship’s long-term interests for members of the LIS community to contribute to the knowledge base on which the profession draws. As Chris wisely pointed out, to advocate successfully, children’s librarians need a literature under their own umbrella.

Finally, the benefits of a widened lens extend beyond the improvement of early literacy programs (Budd, 2006; Given, 2007). Talja, Tuominen, and Savolainen (2005) observe that social practice approaches have been taken up in LIS research more broadly, with the consequence that new questions are opened up for information researchers. Unfortunately, although LIS educators have made sociocultural contributions to other aspects of literacy (e.g., Mackey 2007), the openness described by Talja et al. has not so far informed framings of research in the field of early literacy. To be effective, EBP must go beyond a critical evaluation of the evidence it calls on to take an equally critical look at the universe from which it draws its evidence.

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REVISITING THE CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL LIBRARY IN THE WORLD OF WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES

by Leif Kajberg

In the present age of neoliberalism, late globalisation, faltering economies, retrenchments, and New Public Management, current discussion concerning the role of the public library within society is far distant from library debates and librarians' thinking in the 1970s and the early 1980s. At that time, within public library circles a considerable amount of interest was focused on political and social priorities. Over the years, social and political issues, however, have become less prominent discussion points and have almost disappeared. However, in the early 21st century, new challenges and problems have manifested themselves which justify reconsiderations of the purpose of the public library, the library as an institution in support of democracy, and perhaps a revival of the concept of "the political library."

A major challenge to public library service provision stems from digitization of information and the increasing growth of electronic networks, which have created new opportunities for providing information resources and services for citizens. Thus, harnessing the benefits and challenges of Web 2.0 and new services and networking forums such as Facebook, Flickr, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube and social tagging remains a major challenge to public libraries today.

But at the same time library funds are dwindling, branch libraries are closing down and staff are being fired. No wonder that public libraries, many of them, find themselves in a phase of crisis and reorientation.

Methodology

The study presented here aims to analyse ways in which public libraries can strengthen their survival capacity by drawing upon the new Web 2.0 technologies and developing new community-oriented roles including that of serving as a resource centre for democratic processes. This article will review selected writings covering such key notions as public libraries, the nature and development of democracy, and social software applications. Also revisited is the dated concept of the "political library." Based on observations emerging from this analysis, a revised role is outlined for public libraries in the era of digital information and Web 2.0 with a special

focus on the library's role in support of democracy, serving as a democratic agora. Thus, part of the analysis consists in shedding light on the nature, viability and conditions and opportunities of information democracy within the framework of today's social networking media.

Literature Review

The theoretical framework provided for the present study draws on inspiration from Doctor's piece on justice and social equity in cyberspace (1994). This article was published in the early days of the internet, a time characterised by enthusiasm, euphoria, and a fascination of the promising new potentials and possibilities represented by the new global medium and utility.

It is noted that current professional literature on the implications of Web 2.0 technologies for libraries and their service provision tends to emphasize the new social software tools and media as information assets to be integrated in existing service offerings. The Web 2.0 social media are typically seen as opportunities and means for supplementing, enhancing and enriching the existing mix of library-related services and facilities. Briefly, Google and interactive technologies such as wikis and blogs are considered new devices in the library service provision toolbox.

However, there are signs that a more critical awareness of the Web 2.0 phenomena is beginning to gain ground. Brabazon (2006) has some serious reservations about the whole ideology behind (and peer production practices of) *Wikipedia*, and she is very concerned about Google's impact on student study habits, projects, and assignments. In a very thoughtful piece, Waller (2009) takes a close look at the relationship between Google and public libraries and explores similarities and differences. On the surface of it, Google seems to pursue goals and offer services and products that are parallel to or overlap the kinds of searching assistance and information provision that are core activities in libraries, but in the end the two players in the information arena deviate markedly from each other. The author demonstrates that the *conceptions of information* inherent in (1) Google as a commercial firm and (2) public libraries as providers of balanced and consolidated information are fundamentally different. The commercial firm and the public agency simply do different things. Waller's reflections on the democracy-underpinning role of public libraries in maintaining a balanced and non-commercial information provision are very central to the observations on a redefined role for public libraries in the present paper.

A decidedly pessimistic view of Web 2.0 and interactive social media can be found in Keen's book *The Cult of the Amateur* (2008). The book embodies a frontal attack on what the author sees as a frightening regime of amateurs and a pervasive culture of narcissism resulting from the Web 2.0 revolution. Keen provides a coherent and very critical perspective on the Web 2.0 tools and phenomena and demonstrates their manipulative potential and how

they erode expert knowledge and expert performance, gradually bringing about de-professionalization in some respects. Professionals replaced by noble amateurs. Keen explores the seamy side of blogs and blogging, and addresses the problem of tricksters and their fraudulent behaviour. He provides examples of dubious editorial practices characterizing *Wikipedia* and the mediocrity of content provided by contributors. Above all he laments the downgrading and dismissal of experts and the devaluation of expert knowledge. Sounding a bit like an old moralizing culture critic, Keen draws attention to a range of critical and pertinent issues affecting all web users. Related problems – the spread of obscurantism, the crumbling status of scientific evidence and research-based knowledge along with people’s increasing difficulty in making informed selections from the endless mass of garbage and more reliable sources available pell-mell on the internet – have been dealt with in a recent monograph by Michael Specter (2010).

Published literature on the implications of Web 2.0 and social networking for community involvement in public libraries is very sparse. Actually, very few contributions address the role of libraries in maintaining freedom of information in the Digital Age along with their supportive role in relation to campaigning initiatives, local grassroots activities, the organisation of political debates, as well as the provision of alternative, anti-mainstream and anti-elitist information, etc.

In contrast, library literature, especially that part of it which covers 20th century developments in libraries and librarianship in Australia, UK and USA, provides considerable coverage of the role of libraries in promoting and consolidating democracy. For instance, Waller (2009, p:6) refers to what she calls the “grand tradition” of public libraries in the 1950s describing Lionel McColvin, of the UK, as one of the leading figures. For McColvin public libraries would have a leading role in advancing democracy, in knowledge building and dissemination, and in empowering citizens through the possibility for self-education. More recently similar ideas have been expressed regarding libraries and democracy, and the societal role of libraries. In his monograph, *Civic Librarianship*, McCabe explores the concept of civic librarianship and develops a vision for the mission and purpose of the public library. Civic librarianship differs markedly from the notions of public library as agent for liberation, and it is also very different from the public library of the traditional type, which has often fallen short in fleshing out its basic mission into effectual and tangible strategies for action. McCabe (2001, pp:78-79) sees a broadened role for public libraries and identifies a number of areas where strategic action is needed:

- Restore the confidence of public librarians and trustees in exercising social authority.
- Renew the public library’s historical mission of education for a democratic society.
- Develop the public library as a centre of the community.
- Develop strategies to build communities through public library service.

- Use services and collections to meet social as well as individual needs.
- Strengthen the political efforts of public librarians and trustees.

As can be seen, the suggestions for reforming public libraries in line with the conceptual framework of civic librarianship are of a more general nature and because the book appeared in 2001 there is no treatment of the challenges of new technologies (social networks for instance) and the way people communicate and organize information-related activities *outside* the library.

Clearly, civic librarianship was meant as an effort to update and expand the role of the public library while keeping the library's historic mission of education for a democratic society. The author's insistence on civic dialogue and social interaction is certainly of relevance when discussing and defining the role of the public library in times of web 2.0.

Kranich (2001, 83-95) explains how libraries help reduce the digital divide, increase access to government information, and fight against both censorship and private interests to ensure that access to information is as free as possible. The library as civic space creates opportunities for community and dialogue, which she considers a very important democratic function supplementing information-related and education-centred services. In their joint article, Canadian library researchers Alstad and Curry (2003) describe how squares and other public spaces are increasingly replaced by corporate-owned areas such as shopping malls, where people no longer act as citizens, but are primarily consumers. In order for libraries to support democracy and serve as a public space they should, among other things, take a more proactive stance making room for lectures and discussion groups. A Danish perspective is provided by Skot-Hansen and Andersson (1994) who carried out a study of libraries as a resource in the local community. As pointed out in the study, for a library to serve as a local driver it should relate actively to the community it belongs to and sharpen its profile in interaction with other institutions, associations and groups. In a contribution in the anthology entitled *Libraries and Democracy: the Cornerstone of Liberty*, Durrance and others (2001, 49-59) explore several American library projects that address web-based community information, which are considered as a possible aide in strengthening civil society.

Issues in and requirements for theory-building in civic librarianship are also addressed by John Budd (2008, 147-223) who takes a fresh look at (public) library purpose and sets the scene for a fundamental re-examination of the social foundations of librarianship. What Budd offers is an intriguing in-depth analysis of the interrelatedness and interplay between the vital concepts of social responsibility and intellectual freedom. Based on extensive reading of academic texts in disciplines such as philosophy, political science, public sphere theory and democracy research, new light is shed on basic ideals and tenets in library service provision including, for instance, value neutrality (controversial as this is). Concepts are

critically examined and typically given a philosophical twist that facilitates identifying new and unorthodox facets and perspectives. In exploring the place and role of (public) libraries in a democracy society, Budd starts right from the beginning and embarks on a conceptual analysis in order to come to grips with democracy as an entity. In carrying out this mapping exercise, Budd focuses special attention on the notion of deliberative democracy, which has a parallel on Danish ground. Danish theologian, professor and folk high school principal Hal Koch can be said to be the founding father of a conception of democracy termed *samtaledemokrati* (“conversational democracy”). According to Koch the essence of democracy is conversation and dialogue and not just a form of governance. Budd thoroughly explores how deliberative democracy relates to libraries and librarianship and the extent to which these practices actually inform specific library-related contexts. Fairly detailed coverage is given to the phenomenon of neoliberalism and the way this ideology leaves its stamp on current library policy-making and rhetoric. Budd’s approach, his painstaking analysis of the democracy sustaining and supporting role of librarianship, is very refreshing and stimulating, and is matched by very few contributions in the field.

John Buschman (2003, 120-121), cited by Budd, strongly disputes one-sided economic logic, customer-centeredness, marketplace thinking and value-added, fee-based regimes in (public) librarianship. Reservations about the risky elements of such business strategies are voiced as follows:

The democratic public sphere roles of libraries as disseminators of rational, reasoned, and organized discourse, as a source of verifying or disputing claims, and as a space for the inclusion of alternative views of society and reality have no place in the vision of the library as the instant-satisfaction, fast-food equivalent of information.

The Political Library: Revival of a Concept?

In her thesis, *Political Library: Public Library as a Space for Citizens’ Participation and Public Discourse*, Jadinge (2004) discusses the potential public libraries have for actively supporting civic participation and public discourse. The study seeks to explore the origin of the idea of the political library in a Swedish context in the mid-1970s. The author observes that the idea of the political library deserves to be taken out of oblivion for two reasons. First, it is an idea that is quite radical (in the general sense of the word!) by today’s standards, and should therefore serve as fuel for a renewed discussion of library ideology and democracy, in practice as well as in research. The concept of a political library is interesting because it affects some fundamental aspects of library and information activities, such as the neutrality/objectivity issue and the relationship that libraries have to civil society. Secondly, it is relevant in offering a historical perspective on today’s library debates. The author’s view is that undertaking a comparison

between the context of the 1970s and the situation and conditions of the 2000s can be fruitful. As is the case today, problems regarding democracy were frequently and sometimes heavily discussed in the 1970s, but the atmosphere and context was different and attention was focused on how the political library should act so as to maintain the library's neutrality. To be neutral may nevertheless often involve some sense of commitment.

The results of the Swedish study prompt further analysis of the notion of the political library, its relevance today, along with its potential for renewing the role of a public library in transition. Today, appraising the generalizability and pertinence of the political library and giving the concept a much needed brush-up demands an awareness of the opportunities of Web 2.0 tools and applications.

Access to Alternative Information

Access to alternative and independent information resources is seen by Robert Dahl (2005, p.189) as a hallmark of democracy in a comprehensive sense:

Citizens have a right to seek out alternative and independent sources of information from other citizens, experts, newspapers, magazines, books, telecommunications, and the like. Moreover, alternative sources of information actually exist that are not under the control of the government or any other single political group attempting to influence public political beliefs and attitudes, and these alternative sources are effectively protected by law.

Given the extent to which public libraries take their function as provider of alternative, non-elitist and non-mainstream information seriously, there are many situations where the active involvement and service provision of libraries would be relevant and desirable. Illustrative examples are the campaigns and debate sessions preceding elections, referendums, etc. Typically, and this observation could be generalized to many countries, the official information presented to the electorate is biased. Thus, for instance, in Denmark the many referendums relating to Denmark's entry into the Common Market and the EU, as well as Denmark's accession to the EU treaties, etc., constitute an illustrative example: there is unequal access among Danish citizens to information and lack of funds for distributing alternative information. Frequently, there is a marked lack of alternative information resources reflecting positions other than those held by the establishment and those possessing the political power and the money. Kajberg (1999) provides a striking example of inflexible and restrictive attitudes toward alternative and unofficial materials on EU matters and similar political topics held by some Danish public libraries. There is a great need for information that provides alternatives and challenges the official and dominating messages and viewpoints. The new social network media have partly remedied this situation, but libraries could still play a

more active role here. Thus, scanning shelves and displays for brochures, etc. on national and local government information and similar kinds official information sources in printed formats in an average Danish public library reveals that problems of bias and exclusion of alternative opinion, insights and perspectives still exist.

*Facebook as an Information Tool for Local Protest Actions:
a Danish Example*

In Denmark the controversy over and the fight for the survival of a local railway in a thinly populated area provides an illustrative example of the involvement or lack of involvement of the local public library in a much discussed local matter. The Western railway, a local railway line in the western part of Denmark, is at risk of being closed down because a majority of Regional Council Members consider it loss-making; they argue that it is too expensive in terms of operational and maintenance costs, and the case is made that buses are a better solution. The prospect of a rural railway line ceasing to exist because of a Regional Council decision evoked strong protests from parts of the local population, created a heated debate, and led to the formation of railway protection initiatives. Also, a group on Facebook named "Save the Western Railway" was set up. However, the local library adopted a fairly passive role in relation to the railway issue. No meetings have been hosted by the library and the only activity organized by the library was the setting up of an exhibit featuring the railway and its history. The citizens' initiative to protect the Western Railway represents an interesting case illustrating how Facebook can be used by politically articulate and engaged individuals and groups. There are tens-of-thousands of examples of this nature on Facebook. These grassroots activities, campaigns, protest groups and unofficial networks confronting decision-makers and those in power provide examples of how initiatives are born, strategies developed, individuals involved becoming members of groups, how communication takes place, how various types of information and views are presented and exchanged, and how decisions are made, etc. Also illustrated are the exchange of information, views, advice, and know-how between bodies of varying expertise and those who maintain grassroots initiatives. And last, but not least: studies of the emergence of grassroots initiatives in a Facebook context – or as they develop within other social networking media – could be designed so as to explore the ways in which libraries respond to, support, or ignore groups and initiatives arising and developing within the social networking media.

There are various ways in which public libraries could adopt a more proactive role in relation to Web 2.0 and citizens' campaigns and initiatives. Thus, a Danish project, outlined on the web pages of the Librarians Union, addresses the role of the public library as a moderator of current political debates, etc. going on in the local community. The library could provide balanced subject-specific input for discussions progressing in social network media of the Web 2.0 type. People could debate current and crucial topics

and issues on the web. But the prerequisite is that the library prepare solid background information and dare to raise controversial questions, tender subjects and sensitive issues for discussion. Also, be ready to interact with other media. On the whole, libraries could adopt a more active democratic role.

Libraries as Democratic Agoras

In the municipality of Odder (Denmark) it has for several years been natural for citizens and politicians to engage in discussions on a variety of issues using web-based discussion forums. According to Claus Buur Rasmussen (2009), the previous year's municipal elections in Denmark provided an example of the electronic communication between citizens and local politicians in that more than 400 comments were posted as part of a lively debate between citizens and those standing as candidates for the Odder Town Council. One of the reasons for the success in raising and maintaining e-debates is that those responsible for hosting and maintaining the debate invest quite a lot of effort in furnishing people with background knowledge on a specific topic or issue. For instance, all town council decisions are described in a journalistic vein on the commune homepage. In addition, video transmissions of sequences selected from, among other things, town council meetings and local civic meetings on key issues are available. It is crucial to bring up sensitive issues for discussion. If you dare not put matters on-the-line and raise controversy regarding areas and issues people are eager to engage, they tend to drop out and ignore debates.

Unfortunately, most local authorities and councillors tend to avoid conflicts and shrink from raising sensitive subjects. Thus, it is obvious that the initiative rests with the libraries when it comes to providing local residents with opportunities for making themselves heard in public life and as part of a functioning democracy. Public libraries could take a role in fostering active democratic communications in matters and issues that are of concern to citizens. However, a task like this cannot be reduced to acquiring and having district plans ready for examination or distributing election campaign material (flyers, brochures, etc.). It is much more than that. Libraries must dare to act as initiators and take the lead. What must not be forgotten in this respect is the interaction with other media. Consideration must be given to involving several target groups and communities. In the context of the 2009 municipal election, video-based profiles and portrayals of the candidates for municipal election were made available. At the same time, a group was set up on Facebook in the hope that in relying on this vehicle, there would be better possibilities for appealing to and attracting the interest of younger target audiences.

Digital debate is not better than analogous debate, and it is a mistake to say that discussion on the web is better than conventional discussion, letters in newspapers, or exchanging questions and views at civic or election meetings. But e-debates facilitated by forums such as the Odder Net in the

time before and in the run-up to the municipal election could be instrumental in helping citizens make informed decisions when casting their votes. At the same time, it must be noted that quite a few citizens express themselves only on the web. Obviously, a certain amount of resources are required for setting up an adequate framework for a debate. Thus, the role of the library/librarian is primarily that of a mediator.

Another example, considerably broader in scope, is a draft development project presented by the Aarhus Municipal Libraries and entitled *demokrateket* (2010). The vision underlying the concept of *demokrateket* is to vitalize societal and community-related challenges to citizens and to create physical and virtual fora that allow citizens to be involved in shaping the political agenda. *Still in a preparatory and pilot project phase*, *demokrateket* is intended to develop innovative approaches to the library's communication and mediation of community information as a proactive and interactive activity, which would include users and political players in the physical library environment along with web pages and social and mobile fora. The final project will be unique in that it envisages a shift of the library's role in providing democratic (physical and virtual) spaces from a reactive and communication-centred role towards a proactive, front-edge and staging role. In assuming this new role, the library would establish and facilitate interactive, independent and direct channels of communication between citizens and their political representatives. In doing so, the library would support free opinion building and active citizenship. The library staff's competencies in terms of serving as trend-spotters, identifying social and political issues, and performing the function as moderator of debate-prompting and democratic processes, become of central importance in implementing the *demokrateket*. The project was initiated by the Aarhus Municipal Libraries and a local adult education association. Potential partners for the project include media houses in the Aarhus area, a folk high school (Thestrup), political parties and social science departments (e.g. political science) at Aarhus University. The intention is to create a forum for Aarhus as a whole. Modeled after popular reading clubs, which functioned successfully for many years, are a range of debate clubs which would be set up to operate digitally as well as physically. Opinion formers, experts and politicians will be invited as contributors and presenters. An essential principle is that the library should act as facilitator, while content will be provided by others, but the library system could support and qualify debates on varying themes, local as well as national. An interesting new informational role is envisaged for Aarhus librarians in that library professionals could compose "information packages" covering specific themes and thus tailored to the needs of debate clubs and those actively participating in debates. These theme-specific information packages could be downloaded for use either in the library or in private homes. Social media like Facebook might, in spite of their quick, flickering, elusive and somewhat superficial nature, have a curiosity-raising effect and could serve as a vehicle for highlighting and spreading information on *demokrateket* and ongoing public debates.

Related to the Aarhus project is a previous project undertaken by the public library in Frederikshavn and supported by a grant from the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media. The project, which is completed now, was entitled “The Library as a Democratic Agora” and had as one of its objectives the exploration of the role of the public library as a “third place (space)” and as one of the cornerstones in Danish democracy. In examining and further developing this role, which included facilitating democratic discourse, a challenging and slightly more provocative approach could be adopted. Critical analysis of the findings of the Aarhus and Frederikshavn projects and output from similar democratic discourse projects conducted in library contexts is essential in defining a new role for the public library.

A Danish report on the future role and services of public libraries in the knowledge society appeared last year (2010). The report is structured in five parts under the following headings: Open Libraries, Inspiration and Learning, The Danes’ Digital Library, Partnerships, and Professional Development. Unfortunately, the report is almost silent on the role of public libraries in democratic processes, in enhancing participatory democracy, and in the establishment and monitoring of discussion fora. Occurrences of the term “debate fora” *can* be found and partnerships within the framework of civil society are touched upon as well, but there are very few concrete examples of partnerships representing the civil society and there is no mention whatsoever of groups of citizens committed to specific issues, associations, grassroots initiatives, political groups, political parties, NGOs, etc. Unimpressive and not particularly ambitious as the publication is it can be said to slightly mirror what John Budd calls neoliberal consumerism.

Concluding Observations

For quite a few years basic public library roles and tasks tended to include such service areas as provision of books and other materials, information services, reference work, supporting learning activities, organizing cultural activities and promotion of reading. However, during recent years in some countries efforts have been made to redefine public library purpose – the mission of public libraries – with a view to the role of supporting political debates, campaigns, citizens engaging in social and grassroots issues, “activism,” etc. But assuming a sharper role in relating to and supporting citizens’ political and community-related activities is not a new phenomenon. Actually – as shown by an illustrative case from the Swedish public library history summarized earlier in this article – in some countries there has been a tradition of public libraries committing themselves to making information resources available in connection with community action and citizens’ initiatives of various kinds, and by hosting discussions and meetings. In this context it is worth referring to the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, which supports the participation of citizens in civic life as an overall aim of public libraries.

The findings and reflections embodied in the Swedish study of the political library and the results of McCabe’s analysis of the concept of

civic librarianship provide good starting points for further analytic work. In defining an appropriate role for the public library in the Age of Web 2.0, there is a need for re-examining and partly reviving thoughts and ideas regarding how libraries could support grassroots initiatives and alternative political viewpoints and analyses. Hence, libraries and librarians need to discuss and clarify their stance towards key issues such as participatory democracy, political participation, empowerment and emancipatory roles.

One can imagine that libraries are keen not to become completely left behind now that e-democracy is taking root in many contexts and environments. Here, the libraries' role can be – as an extension of efforts geared to reduce the digital divide – to provide part of the community dialogue that is undertaken in municipal websites as “real-life” physical sessions (by organizing such activities as politicians' cafés and the like). Still many people do not use or have access to computers and the internet, and clearly this situation somewhat limits the suitability, performance and impact of internet-driven social media as a tool of democracy.

The interesting question here is: Can the public library redefine its mission and will politicians and decision-makers be willing to shift in this direction? Our review of selected readings on Web 2.0 and social media, on the role of libraries in enhancing and consolidating democracy and the need for relaunching the political library indicates a fruitful direction for further discussion regarding a new social role for the public library. But can the public library be transformed into an agency that capitalizes on the social media and their innovative applications in supporting democracy, citizen participation in community development and political processes, multiculturalism, etc? To shed light on this issue more explorative efforts are needed. Thus, in carrying on with the analysis of an updated role for public libraries, it seems obvious to conduct an empirical study that might be approached as interview-based analysis. For example, a study could be designed that aims to identify selected librarians' views of public library roles in light of Web 2.0.

In discussing new roles for the public library, there are classic library virtues that should be safeguarded including the library's position as a recognized and trusted repository of information and public knowledge. In times of booming web technologies, social media, and commercialization of information and knowledge, there is a need for an agency of neutrality and credibility that helps users discover and unmask the increasing amount of bias, distortion, fraud, misuse, cheating and manipulation within the complex world of new web-based media, and assists them in navigating today's information universe, which may be less smooth than imagined. A new user educational perspective would certainly be relevant here.

In analysing the conditions and opportunities for information democracy in the context of Web 2.0, explorative studies are needed to map politically-related information universes, information transfer, and information use. The Digital Age with its new social media invites political engagement,

but the era of digitization is also an age of despotic political leadership styles, persistent and entrenched power structures, spin doctor-driven politics and infotainment. These features seem a growing part of the reality in many countries. Power structures are opaque and various sorts of extra-parliamentary opposition groups, NGOs, and grassroots initiatives in specific areas face barriers and difficulties having their messages heard. As is well known, because of failures, backlashes and disappointed expectations, situations arise that eventually lead to frustration and apathy. The more than meagre results of the United Nations' Climate Change Conference 2009 (COP 15) in Copenhagen on the risks and dangers of climate change and global warming, and the predictable failure of COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, are illustrative of the powerlessness of those outside the sphere of power wanting a say in these crucial matters.

Thus, libraries need to rethink their role and mission in a democratic society and the way they support and catalyse democratic processes.

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ECONOMICS OF INFORMATION: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

by Will Wheeler

Editors' note: This essay was originally prepared for an encyclopedia in the LIS field several years ago, but was for some reason not included in volume. The essay more clearly than any other source we have read, briefly delineates the intersections between economics and LIS, its history, and those particular areas of LIS that economics shapes-by-measuring or simply elides. Wheeler was invited to read Braman's more recent contribution to the field and reflect on the intervening years and his experiences during that time. Thus the piece PL publishes here includes an epilogue and a few very recent sources to reflect on the continuing gaps in our understanding – and economists' understanding of us. For a complete and more recent set of background sources we would direct readers to the bibliography here along with those in Braman's two works noted therein.

Researchers in the economics of information come from a variety of disciplines. While most economics of information research appears in economics and in library and information science, Machlup and Mansfield in *The Economics of Information: Interdisciplinary Messages* note contributions from other fields including psychology, sociology, linguistics, communication, engineering, computer science, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and cybernetics. Issues raised touch on additional fields including especially philosophy, political science, government, and policy studies. Within economics, the economics of information can be seen as a critique of classical models with implications for almost every kind of economic inquiry, especially decision making, forecasting, uncertainty, equilibrium theory, rational choice, and game theory.

Economics of information per se first emerges as a field of inquiry in the 1960s in response to a growing awareness of fundamental changes in world economies driven by the emergence of computer technology increasingly allied with telecommunications. Mid-century concerns with the changing roles of computers, mass media, publishing, R&D, patents, education, and libraries dovetailed with previous work on the role of knowledge in economic models. Researchers at this time also began to recognize growth in information industries, growth in the commodification of information, and growth in the information sector as percentage share of the general economy. Central issues arose about the nature of information itself and its economics.

Economics of information is distinguished from other economic inquiry by concerns with and the inclusion of information processes in economic models, the difficulty of measuring information and its subjective aspects,

and the unique characteristics of information as a commodity. Economics of information researchers have spent the majority of their time identifying the parameters of these concerns, refining the ways we understand what information is, and modeling how it affects economic transactions. One fundamental distinction is between information as an aspect of any exchange and information as a thing exchanged. Other distinctions emerge.

The two main sets of researchers, economists and library and information scientists, approach the economics of information from different perspectives. Library and information scientists, informed by economic theory but immersed in information as their primary “commodity,” have tended to look at notions of what information is and at information products as items bought, sold, used, copyrighted, made public, or provided, particularly in libraries. Economists have tended to study the nature of decision making, the distribution of information, imperfect knowledge, the flow of information, and the role of the “information sector” in a market context. Both sets of researchers attempt to refine models to account for price, costs, benefits, values, and economic impacts.

Basic terms for economic transactions remain the same for information as for any other commodity, but researchers agree information has special characteristics that make it more difficult to work with. Definitions of price, cost, benefit, value that can be found in any introductory economics text apply here as well. Price is simply the amount charged in dollars, but how a market price is arrived at in terms of competition and distribution is more complex. Costs are also complex including costs of production, costs in time, cost in wages, and costs in terms of alternatives that might have been purchased or time that might have been spent in other ways than the consumption of an item. Benefits are complex as well including benefits to the consumer, benefits to the producer and the seller, and benefits to society as a whole. The concept of value is the most difficult; some economists believe it can only be known subjectively, others have attempted complicated models of utility to account for value. In any case, value to whom and in what circumstances is a few of the complicating variables.

The Nature of Information: Library & Information Science Views

Sandra Braman in “Alternative Conceptualizations of the Information Economy” provides a detailed exposition of the nature of information that falls into a number of larger categories including: creation, time, space, intangibility, heterogeneity, and public good. In these categories we see “information” as different as other commodities: information is created for reasons beyond the market (self expression, for example) and production can be widely distributed to the point where space difference between producer and consumer disappear. Information is intangible with no set unit of measure and very heterogeneous having no set kind (conversely a single kind of information can have more than one form). Time is the most complex aspect of information: information is highly perishable

(stock reports, for instance) and can be nearly simultaneously consumed and produced (for example, live news), however, it is not predictable how information may be used by different users, which brings into question not only its perishability but also its value. (p. 101-102) Braman points out that information is difficult to define, that it is “valued differently by different people” (p. 105) and that “the same information product can serve multiple functions. (p.106)

Taylor in “Value-Added Processes in the Information Life Cycle,” provides a useful schema for the information life cycle as it moves from “data” to “information” to “informing knowledge” to “productive knowledge” to “action.” (p.342) Taylor goes on to describe elements of the processes by which data gets moved to action including “organizational processes” such as “grouping, classifying, relating, formatting, signaling, and displaying”; “synthesizing” processes including “selecting, analyzing, validating, comparing, and interpreting”; “judgmental” processes, including “presenting options, advantages, disadvantages” where the user makes choices about the most advantageous information to use; and “decision” processes where the user is “Matching goals, compromising, bargaining, and choosing.” (p.342) Taylor goes on to note that “Value is not inherent in nor is it carried by a message,” that “a message has value only in context”, that “A message is given value by a use ... in particular environment,” that “messages therefore carry (only) a potential for value,” and that “(therefore) value added processes are ... those that ... signal this potential, and /or can relate the potential to the needs of a specific environment.”(p. 343).

Jose-Marie Griffiths in “The Value of Information and Related Systems, Products, and Services” reviews a wide range of articles and theory related to the economics of information. Griffith’s notes as others have that it has no unit of measure, that pricing, value, costs, and benefits are complex. She also argues that “When obtaining information, it cannot be assumed that the whole price is a measure of the value of that information to the purchaser” that “Benefits and costs may not be fully obtained and borne out by the consumer and producer,” and that “The individual who decides whether or not to use an information service is not necessarily the one who is affected by that decision.” (p. 280).

Other Library & Information Literature

A number of very useful reviews of literature on economics of information appear in the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST)*. At least five annual issues have articles that deal explicitly with the development of the field between 1973 and 1987. Two more current issues of *ARIST* have moved on to simply review information product pricing. These articles show that, in general, library and information science research on the economics of information has concentrated on understanding the economics of information products and services. Repo, for example, notes issues of evaluating products and services (cost-benefit analyses) to determine how libraries should allocate expenses and

determine usefulness for library users, the complex costs of information products (like databases) for libraries, price comparisons for producers, effectiveness of products for users, budget impacts on libraries, and value to researchers in saved time or enhanced decision making. Lamberton's 1984 *ARIST* review, however, is devoted to the pioneering economics work of Marchak and Machlup. Spence 1973 provides another historical survey of economics of information literature. Hindle & Raper, Griffiths, and Cooper provide reviews of library literature on the economics of information while also touching on their underpinnings in economics research. Another important compilation of work in the economics of information is King, Roderer, and Olsen's *Key Papers in the Economics of Information*. Here are represented and reprinted a wide range of articles on economic issues of costs, value, and pricing, but also specific articles that speak to library issues such as school media program budgeting, user fees, computer service marketing, national policy, and the benefits of scientific information.

The Economists View: Information in Decision Making

George Stigler in "The Economics of Information" investigates the nature of information in a market. Using the example of car sales, he notes that the savvy buyer will know that prices are not distributed evenly and therefore will invest in "search." Stigler provides a number of scenarios and equations for how the cost of searching for the best price interacts with the prices likely to be found in a market. Complications to this are the kinds of search producers engage in to know what prices they can charge and their costs in searching for buyers (advertising). An important article that extends Stigler's model of the market into issues of "value" is Akerlof's "The Market for 'Lemons': Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism." Akerlof also uses the car market to illustrate features of information. Used cars, for example, display interesting features because the used car owner will necessarily have more "information" about the car s/he trades and therefore one might expect only bad cars will be traded. Akerlof goes on to explore the effects of dishonesty in a market and the tendency for "information asymmetries" to drive out legitimate trade. Implications extend to insurance, health care, government policy, and consumer protection.

An influential interdisciplinary economist often cited by economics of information researchers is F.A. Hayek. In a 1936 address entitled "Economics and Knowledge" Hayek notes the essential connection between economic analyses and notions of how knowledge is acquired and communicated (p. 33). He refers to the work of F.H. Knight on "risk" and the work of Irving Fisher on "anticipations" as precursors to his discussion. He also notes problems with the term "data" in connection with equilibrium models in economics. In a later article, "The Uses of Knowledge in Society," he explores notions about the decentralization of information arguing that a centralized (policy) body can never know the on-the-spot details necessary for making correct economic decisions and therefore modeling from a

centralized mode will simply not work. Economic decision making must be seen as a widely dispersed and decentralized process. Conversely however, there are market mechanisms, especially the price system, which act as a centralizing function. An individual economic actor can act to economize (or not) without having perfect knowledge of the causes behind price increases or decreases. The market itself, through the mechanism of price, acts as a central information distributor. Interestingly Hayek explores in later work in the field of psychology, the paradox of the human ability to act and make “rational” choices on information that we do not completely understand. This kind of cross-disciplinarity continues to be reflected in such instances as the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* whose entry on “Decision Making” is divided into psychological, economic, and political science aspects and in the interdisciplinary work previously mentioned.

In a key article “The Economics of Knowledge and Knowledge of Economics.” Kenneth Boulding notes a number of difficulties with the concept of knowledge in economic models. Confining his area of study to the “ecosphere,” Boulding points out three areas of economic inquiry that have been adversely affected by ignoring knowledge in the equation. Market analysts make the mistake of assuming perfect knowledge. Development economics relies on mechanical models of technological development without noting the importance of education and training. Decision models do not account for the complex interactions of images of the future (on which people decide what to do) preferences (that are learned, not innate), and the effects of pricing on preferences.

While there is growing acceptance of the notion of an information economy, issues of imperfect knowledge in decision making continue to plague economic analysis. Brian Loasby in *Knowledge, Institutions and Evolution in Economics* (1999), following on Hayek and others, notes (still) the tendency for simplifying conjectures in economic models. There are (according to Loasby) at least six obstacles to our understanding of the world, perhaps the most important being the constancy of change. A paradox emerges: “our ability to predict the future depends on its similarity to the past, but our need to predict the future results from our belief that it will be different from the past, in ways that are excluded from the definition of rational expectations.”(p.5) Loasby points to flaws in rational choice models of economics, especially with respect to complexity, time, purposeful change, and the costs of decision making.

The Information Economy

Fritz Machlup in his seminal *Production and Distribution of Knowledge* (1962) provides the kind of detailed exposition that defines his works as a seminal text. While noting economists have tended to ignore the process of information, especially time factors, in market models, he goes on to identify features of information as process (becoming informed) and as content. Starting at the broadest level Machlup suggests five kinds of knowledge –

practical, intellectual, pastime, spiritual, and unwanted. (Miksa argues that these categories cannot be seen as attributes of information, but rather must be seen as attributes attached by the information user.) Machlup goes on to describe various information industries (including education, research and development, media and communication, information machines, and information services) and projects the relationship between knowledge production and the gross national product.

A landmark study is Marc Porat's 1977 attempt to quantify the United States information economy. Porat defined his question as "What share of our nation's wealth originates with the production, processing and distribution of information goods and services or what is the extent of the information activity (as opposed to agriculture, services, or industry), as a portion of the total U.S. economic activity?"(p.1) Porat provided the following definitions: "Information is data that have been organized and communicated. The information activity includes all the resources consumed in producing, processing and distributing information goods and services." He identifies two key components to the information sector: the primary one which exchanges information goods in a market context, and a secondary one that exchanges information goods in a non-market context, such as government agencies, internal organization information exchange, and various other kinds of bureaucracies that create and distribute information. Porat is unique in providing very fine-grained definitions and distinctions for information processes in the economy. He finds that primary and secondary information sectors account for 46% of the 1967 United States economy and that 53% of all (1967) labor activity was information related.

Summary

Long before the emergence of machine computing, telecommunications, and the Internet economists were trying to account for the role of information/ knowledge in their models. The problem continued to grow in importance in the post-industrial age and information society where the sheer amount of information and speed of transfer has changed the nature of economic transactions. Current work in this area is best seen in game theory. Information science emerges because of developments in computing; the Internet has added further complexity. Its main economic concern has been with information organization and packaging, especially for and in libraries that provide information services. Pricing, costs, and benefits associated with complex electronic databases, web development, and information technology are their current concern and this work can be seen as another extension of the economics of information.

Epilogue

A more comprehensive and elaborated review of the information economics is Sandra Brahma's recent "The Micro- and Macroeconomics of Information," (see below), but even there, in a journal one might hope

could offer some practical advice there is nothing to help the practicing librarian or other information specialist. The answer continues to be fascinatingly complicated, but practical advice remains ineluctably elusive. I argue that the primary need – for an economics of information theory that can be applied to daily practice – is not met, and what I would like to see is some reasonable attempt at a model that would combine decision-making issues with information product issues. This would be a useful beginning of a theory that librarians could apply in everyday decisions (like e-resource costs and value).

Even with all the developments of the web and the internet, even with ever wider variety of data gathering and manipulation and the seemingly ever growing amount of information that might be applied in an economics equation or a library decision, neither economists nor librarians seem to have gotten much further in reckoning or including the value of information in their thinking. Books like *The Wal-Mart Effect* and movies like *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* raise fundamental questions about the centralizing function of “price.” Articles like the Economist’s special report on (the failure of) democracy in California, that discovers more educated voters in the complex California information landscape often vote against their self-interest (“What Do You Know” p. 14) raise fundamental questions about decision making. From these we can begin to grasp the serious limitations of theories so far proposed for information economies in practice. It seems to be too complicated for modeling anything usefully less complex than real life. The theory doesn’t yet facilitate understanding.

We seem to be stuck in a mode where we continue to unpack the complexity of information theory and information economics, but still rely on simple comparisons - letting people draw multiple un-testable conclusions. A good theory might correlate a wider array of variables across decision making and commodities to get us somewhere interesting, unexpected, and useful. And it’s not just us: all sorts of complex information gathering now possible via the internet has not resulted in better understandings of information economies, rather they have fallen into a similar trap where common sense theory can’t handle the complexity. Consider the recent *New York Times* article and graph about public opinion regarding Bin Laden’s death – it’s a simple correlation with no indications (other than geo-location) of the other factors affecting opinion. We information specialists ought to lead in this area, not follow what happens to be do-able.

If we think for a moment about Stigler’s work or Akerlof’s “market for lemons” or in the related context on information networking of Granovetter’s “strength of weak ties” – these theoretical papers, through examples, give insight to regular practitioners and provide useful instruction while sparking interest in theoretical issues. I think we need something like that for our situation regarding the economics of information – something like “the market for bad database in the scant comparative information landscape” or “the strength of e-journal access in time savings even though weakly consumed on the package level.” This is the kind of sophisticated

thinking I'd like to find to help me decide what to do and to help me think about the issues. An information science economist, by studying our case and providing a crosswalk from economic information theory to a complex information commodity practice, just might usefully inform the "real" politics and the "real" economics of information, knowledge, and society.

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ANOTHER WORLD POSSIBLE: RADICAL ARCHIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by Kim Schwenk

In 1977, noted historian Howard Zinn offered a controversial opinion about libraries and archives, some archivists probably did not want to hear. He noted, “that the existence, preservation, and availability of archives, documents, records in our society are very much determined by the distribution of wealth and power. That is, the most powerful, the richest elements in society have the greatest capacity to find documents, preserve them, and decide what is or is not available to the public.”¹ Essentially, Zinn mused on control and the possible misappropriation of culture in our effort to sustain historical legacy. The statement actually inspires many questions such as, are we bound by ethics and morals? Or are we neutral wardens, fighting for representational equality in the face of censorship, marginality, and exclusiveness? According to Zinn, archivists wield power, as dictated by conformity to institutional rules and regulations, and inherent information dissemination “is not neutral either in origin or effect. It reflects the bias of a particular social order; more accurately, it reflects the diverse biases of a diverse social order....”² His thoughts extend beyond just dissecting the political legitimacy of the archivist, but rather constitute a call to archivists to reassess their position as activist information gatherers. It was time to go beyond the margins and not just conserve the past, but to also inform and document the present. Certainly a community presence, an academic curriculum, or a mission statement dictates the collection policies of an archive or repository, but what constitutes a notion of history? Kwame Nkrumah³ wrote “the history of a nation is, unfortunately, too easily written as the history of its dominant class.” (Or its victors, as Napoleon said.) This is a practice archivists have grown to question and decipher, as ‘history’ now is writing itself through the voices, clicks, and tweets of not just scholars and researchers, but also activists, day-laborers, and citizen journalists. As John A. Fleckner, Chief Archivist, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution said, “As archivists who maintain the integrity of the historical record, we guard our collective past from becoming the mere creation of “official history.”³ While this idea might seem inherent or presumptuous, is it radical?

In order to characterize ‘radical’, it is within reason to define and contextualize it for an archives perspective. The word ‘radical’ means

³ Kwame Nkrumah was the first President of Ghana and the first Prime Minister of Ghana, also an influential 20th century advocate of Pan-Africanism.

“fundamental, of or going to the root or origin.”⁴ It can also mean “thoroughgoing or extreme, especially as regards change from accepted or traditional forms.”⁵ As a basic principle, though, applied to an archivist methodology, the word reflects an essential reason to collect and preserve history and memory, as a means to represent equality, integrity, and justice by the people who create it. It is a fair assessment to appease, yet collective memory is a complicated paradigm to stand for. “Archival memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change. What changes over time is the value, relevance, or meaning of the archive, how the items it contains get interpreted, even embodied.”⁶ The concept of memory signifies different values for different systems of communities and individuals, including ethnic backgrounds, class, and gender. To some, the efforts to which we choose to document history are as much a part of the process, as the actual material itself. Who decides what is important, what is ephemeral, and what is “worth” saving? For posterity’s sake, the idea is a basic human instinct because “we are all living history...One thing’s certain, though: if we throw it away, it’s gone.”⁷ Ethically speaking then, it points back to Zinn’s message of selective archiving, as the custodians of history decide on the relevant and infinite virtues of time. By taking a stand for comprehensive collecting or valuing the underrepresented against a conventional standard of archiving, the method of preservation adopts its own standard of responsibility and consciousness. Frankly, it becomes radical.

Bakunin, Roll Over

The 1960s proved a pivotal instance in the history of active librarianship and public service management in the United States, reflecting the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and anti-war protesting, and women’s rights. There was the progressive movement in the professions to reduce the authoritarian character of the professional-client relationship; the concept of alternative institutions to pick up where traditional institutions fail, breaking their monopoly over the provision of vital services; the realization, gained in social action that people working together can bring about change.⁸ Librarians and archivists within their respective institutions, repositories, and culture centers demonstrated the need to look from inside the profession, as well, challenging their affiliations and education status quo. They started to realize their importance as information professionals to reveal “the possibilities of information in social action, while the whole country learned how the government manipulated information to maintain and misuse its power...”⁹ Beginning in 1969, the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) of the American Library Association was established to make ALA more democratic and also worked to promote a more progressive agenda.¹⁰ The subgroups of SRRT are charged with promoting collecting disciplines such as feminism; alternative media sources, Martin Luther King Jr., and the environment, keeping in mind that, “librarians are obliged to serve the public rather than the information industry.”¹¹

While efforts in the public sphere have modeled social responsibility and equality, many archives in academic environments traditionally, have maintained exclusive relationships with scholarship and bureaucratic interest. Archives often struggle with “hidden collections” or “materials held by libraries that, due to constraints on resources or a lack of institutional commitment, remain under- or unprocessed and therefore inaccessible to users.”¹² Such collections are not only inaccessible, but often scholars and researchers are completely unaware of their existence; hence their status as hidden collections.”¹³ Archivists and libraries are turning towards collaborative efforts with communities and other institutions, much like the charge of grassroots organizing in activist circles, to undertake backlogs so collections “sidelined for their purported lack of research value in years gone by are now the rediscovered cultural treasures...”¹⁴

This direction of radical archiving doesn’t necessarily apply just to the living persons of our time. To establish research and context for current radical collecting endeavors, libraries are assembling materials from marginalized individuals and movements in past history. From the inspiration of librarian John Cotton Dana, who in 1896 collected progressive pamphlets and leaflets from civic organizations to the Joseph A. Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, time-honored institutions are realizing that “by preserving records that can provide evidence of injustice, archivists can contribute positively to attempts to overcome past uses of archives and records by elites to secure power”¹⁵ and stabilize socially challenging material culture and primary sources for the succeeding posterity.

A few prominent archives have built substantial collections on the labors of disenfranchised peoples, including the Emma Goldman Paper’s Project at the University of California, Berkeley. This small, cluttered site of accumulation represents a different kind of archive, a deliberately counter-hegemonic collection centered on a radical critic of the status quo.¹⁶ Interestingly enough, the irony behind the archive, Goldman was not only a feminist, but an outspoken anarchist and like Alexander Berkman, Mikhail Bakunin, Ricardo Flores Magon, and other well-documented and studied anarchists, the papers live comfortably behind institutional watch. The difference, though, is the impetus for control. The materials are safeguarded for social representation and full access for documentary and active scholarship purposes.

Likewise, the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA), established in 1972, transformed the notion of “silent history” documenting the lives and experiences of lesbians, previously ignored by traditionally patriarchal institutions. Unlike many historic collections, the LHA provides radical, inclusive principles of access and public service:

- All Lesbian women must have access to the Archives; no academic, political, or sexual credentials will be required for use of the collection; race and class must be no barrier for use or inclusion.

- The Archives shall be housed within the community, not on an academic campus that is by definition closed to many women.
- The Archives shall be involved in the political struggles of all Lesbians.
- Archival skills shall be taught, one generation of Lesbians to another, breaking the elitism of traditional archives.
- The community should share in the work of the Archives.
- Funding shall be sought from within the communities the Archives serves, rather than from outside sources.
- The community should share in the work of the Archives.
- The Archives will always have a caretaker living in it so that it will always be someone's home rather than an institution.
- The Archives will never be sold nor will its contents be divided.

Both of these archives, while individually specific, are working towards a collective project, an aspiration of memory rather than a recollection. Yet while material culture continues to symbolize the need to educate, document, and represent, a virtual and fleeting mass of information demands the same attention. Documents do not have to be tattered manuscripts or government correspondence, to be "official history." Furthermore, records and papers not placed in a temperature controlled building for eagle-eyed archivists to police can easily represent an archive as well.

Just a Click Away From the Truth

The archive is an everyday tool. Whether physical or electronic, archives can narrow the gap between the exclusiveness of knowledge and the 'common' voice in history. The Society of American Archivists reminds professionals about ethical responsibilities concerning access to materials, but SAA also asserts the need to foster individual and organizational rights and interests. Certainly, government legislation threatens to manipulate civil liberties towards a vested interest of secrecy, confidentiality, and to some, the maintenance of the status quo. Before the days of digital approaches, the authority for archival control and selection remained with the archivist or whoever dictated institutional policies. The initiative of the 'open source' archive has allowed another facet to access, preservation, and public service beyond the design of a traditional repository. Because the archive encourages collective memory to the extent of sustainability and continuity, the 'living history' or the 'living community' transcends hierarchy, promotes accountability, and extends an invitation to those creating and experiencing history on a perpetual basis without the need for censorship. In an ideal situation, a well-maintained safe house for every

progressive newspaper, radical feminist, freedom fighter, or marginalized peoples histories ever created would exist. Although radical archiving isn't an exercise on authority or how one should represent another person's history, it is a model for institutional collaboration with communities and the realization that history has the potential to be commoditized and engineered, if not allowed the autonomy and inventiveness with information, all the while respecting the rights of an individual, as a creator or maker.

Grassroots activist, songwriter, and hobo historian, Utah Phillips said, "Yes, the long memory is the most radical idea in this country. It is the loss of that long memory which deprives our people of that connective flow of thoughts and events that clarifies our vision, not of where we're going, but where we want to go." Phillips was a peace activist and Wobbly supporter who hopped trains and sang songs about train tramps and the American West. His music narratives are collected and available as audio clips or audio streams, redefining the notion of a music archive through a citizen activist's perspective, not dominantly represented in mainstream scholarship. The intellectual rights of the material remains with the family (the creators of the online archive), yet the files are available for listening use. The person may not be present, but the archive is a resilient resource, contrasting the static tomb of many archives.

While the technologies rapidly developed and certainly supported "do-it-yourself" archiving, sharing and copying licensing, along with copyright issues, created obstacles impeding open access. Even large institutions like the Smithsonian Institute and the Library of Congress are utilizing image and content hosting like Flickr and JSTOR, both pressured by the demands of public access, but also preservation concerns. Undoubtedly, the open content movement, an alternative paradigm to the use of copyright, facilitates the democratization of knowledge,¹⁷ but also challenges pre-disposed opinions of ephemera, cultural scholarship, and, essentially, "what is worth saving?"

The primary initiative for the Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP) is to establish a "living history" archive of past and present queer zines and to encourage current and emerging zine publishers to continue to create. "In curating such a unique aspect of culture, we value a collectivist approach that respects the diversity of experiences that fall under the heading 'queer.'"¹⁸ The archive also subscribes to fair use policies for the collections, as deemed by the Copyright Act of 1976, for the purpose of digitization and reproduction. Equally as important, the archive is tracing and documenting queer history, but treating "ephemera" as notable forms of media and collective history, where some archives with academic institutions, regardless of represented queer studies programs, have failed to collect. History isn't always filtered through published academic theory. It can also subsist as a personal narrative, reaction, or an explosive rant from a source not recognized within the scope of historical context. Living history, as a social proponent of social justice archives, is the dynamic

construction that can build upon the mundane policies of the post-modern archive. Without it, archivists fail to comprehensively fulfill their charge to represent history and our contemporary functioning society.

Many projects are in transition as well, as reflective of the ever-changing nature of digital surrogates and digitally born materials. The Open Archive Initiative (OAI) operates with efficiency and the function of information in mind. OAI is an effort explicitly in transition, and is committed to exploring and enabling this new and broader range of applications. The project understands the structure and culture of the various adopter communities, and continues evolutionary changes to both the mission and organization.¹⁹ Collaboration between organizations whether print based or not, is fundamental. While obvious to socially conscious working groups, collaborative skills are often taken for granted in professional circles, favoring selective decision-making and administrative biases. This hegemonic practice of hierarchy is archaic and counter-productive to the principles of an archive. Without collaboration between material culture and virtual content management, the archive will remain cryptic and lost to future information seekers.

Not So Radical After All

Author Siva Vaidhyanathan describes the perfect library as “more than a repository for information. It would be a communication medium as well.”²⁰ The struggle always is and always will be, how can libraries and archives uphold the statutes of liberty, in addition to observing professional ethics and standards, all the while providing the essential services our public, our constituents, and our past deserves? The commitment is already there by radicals and non-radicals alike. Many public libraries offer non-filtering options for Internet users, circulate zines and other alternative publications, and allow grassroots, social justice community meeting spaces and workshops. Some small town librarians have even challenged the government. What is presenting itself is the idea that ‘radicalism’ isn’t unapproachable; it is inherent, practiced, and natural for libraries and archives, regardless of political affiliations or belief systems. To defy this, is to defy history, culture, and the community of people who shape and contribute to the aspiration of memory. Noam Chomsky was not far off when he stated: “for the radical imagination to be rekindled and to lead the way out of this desert, what is needed is people who will work to sweep away the mists of carefully contrived illusion, reveal the stark reality, and also to be directly engaged in popular struggles that they sometimes help galvanize.”²¹ It is possible to imagine, to reveal, and to represent the truth. What it will take is some unlearning, relearning, and revolution, using tools earthed in the roots of existence. The archive symbolizes the fruits of our labors and has the will; we just have to make happen.

Resources

In order to learn from radical archiving, here are a few other organizations working towards open access and representing social history. (Please note these are United States based archives)

Primary sources (print-based)

University of Michigan, Joseph A. Labadie Collection

The oldest research collection of radical history in the United States, documenting a wide variety of international social protest movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is named for anarchist and labor organizer Joseph Antoine Labadie (1850-1933). <http://www.lib.umich.edu/labadie-collection>

California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives

These unique collections document the lives and activities of African Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicanos/Latinos, and Native Americans in California. The collections represent the cultural, artistic, ethnic, and racial diversity that characterizes the state's population. <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/collections/cema/index.html>

Southern California People's Library

The Library holds collections that span the breadth of social and political movements in Los Angeles--from labor, civil rights, education, and housing, to immigration, war and peace, and civil liberties. These collections include over 400 manuscript collections, as well as books, periodicals, subject files, pamphlets, posters, photographs, films, audiotapes, and more. <http://www.socallib.org/collections/index.html>

Freedom Archives

10,000 hours of audio and video recordings documenting social justice movements locally, nationally, and internationally from the 1960s to the present. The Archives features speeches of movement leaders and community activists, protests and demonstrations, cultural currents of rebellion and resistance. <http://www.freedomarchives.org/>

Barnard College Zine Collection

Although zines, a rich and democratic form of self-expression that range from scholarly treatises on diverse issues to wildly creative artworks, have been around for a long time, few libraries have yet begun collecting and preserving them. Our collection development policy provides both contemporary and future researchers a unique insight into today's feminist culture. <http://www.barnard.edu/library/zines/>

Online Sources

Documents for the People
<http://www.docspopuli.org/>

Zine Library
<http://zinelibrary.info/>

Prison Radio Mumia Abu-Jamal essays
<http://www.prisonradio.org/>

Roz Payne Archives – Black Panther
<http://www.newsreel.us/>

Scarlet Letter Archives
<http://www.waste.org/~roadrunner/ScarletLetterArchives/>

Anarchy Archives
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/

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STUDIES IN PROGRESSIVE PUBLIC LIBRARIANSHIP: TRAINING FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

by Shiraz Durrani

In 2003, Charles Leadbeater (2003) warned that public libraries in UK are “increasingly marginalised”, are “in serious trouble”, and that their “decline could become terminal”. Almost a decade later, Leadbeater’s warning sounds even more urgent. His solution that libraries “need to respond by offering a distinctive service and experience, which builds upon their historic strengths” (p. 13) remains largely ignored and no meaningful changes have been made.

Today, a large number of libraries in UK and USA face closure allegedly caused by the current capitalist financial crisis, with thousands of libraries facing closure and many library staff, professional as well as non-professional, losing their jobs. The threat to libraries is not only closure – many are being privatised, overtly or covertly. At the same time, there appears to be a lack of seriousness among professionals and their organisations to take up these issues seriously. More damaging, information about closures and impact of privatisation is not systematically collected and analysed. It is left to progressive librarians and their organisations to highlight the reality of what is happening to libraries. The Outsourcing and Privatization wiki, for example, highlights the reality of privatisation in USA today:

The issue of privatization in libraries generated a large body of literature during the years 1996-2002. There have been considerably fewer articles written since 2002. By 2002, the issue seemed to die out, with the American Library Association never updating its policy to reflect the current realities in which extreme budget cuts have left libraries with the choice of either outsourcing or closing. Since the early 2000s many more libraries have fallen victim to the outsourcing and, while the data was sparse in 2000, data on the actual effects should be plentiful given that 10 years have passed. A recent unpublished dissertation by Hill (2009) on the increasing trend to outsource public libraries is disturbing in that no real research has been done to show what outsourcing is actually accomplishing. The biggest hurdle will be getting insight into the business practices of library service

providers. Without this visibility, there is no way to determine how much money was actually saved and even more importantly, how outsourcing has affected the mission of libraries to provide any and all information free of cost with the guarantee that First Amendment rights are protected.

The situation in UK is fast catching up with that in USA, and here also the professional body remains silent on the political trends threatening the very existence of libraries as a free, public service. Nor are there sufficient numbers of individuals who take up the challenge facing libraries today. In addition, there is no institution in UK similar to the Social Responsibilities Roundtable of ALA which

works to make ALA more democratic and to establish progressive priorities not only for the Association, but also for the entire profession. Concern for human and economic rights was an important element in the founding of SRRT and remains an urgent concern today. SRRT believes that libraries and librarians must recognize and help solve social problems and inequities in order to carry out their mandate to work for the common good and bolster democracy.

Such a progressive mandate remains beyond the scope of Chartered Institutes of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the UK professional body, although there are smaller organisations which share SRRT's concerns for human and economic rights. However they are, at present, not in a position to take up the challenge facing libraries. Indeed, the threat of library closures, privatisation and job losses, rather than galvanising the profession into openly challenging the Government's hidden agenda of reducing the public sector and handing it over to the private sector, appears to have given up the fight. Perhaps one of the reasons for this may be that the aging senior professionals – so-called “leaders” of the profession – are approaching retirement and have no enthusiasm for the fight to save libraries as they approach retirement and look forward to their peaceful, pensionised lives. Many of them also agree with the Government's privatisation agenda and are happy to support it. It remains for the younger generation to take up the challenge. They will need to link their professional demands with the wider social and economic demands of people. Here they have a good example in the resistance in Tunisia and Egypt where all professions joined the working people – young and old – in their common struggle for equality and justice.

At the same time, the situation in libraries needs to be seen in its global context. Momentous changes in global economies and, with it, global politics are taking place today. Free market capitalism has been clearly exposed for what it is: a “free” market for global financial and linked interests to control the lives and resources of the people of the world in order to maximise profits. At the centre of globalised capitalism is the banking sector whose actions have adversely affected the lives of

millions of people around the world. While this aspect of capitalism is becoming obvious to people in the West (only) over the last few years, the countries of the South have been victims of the same manipulation and massive systematic siphoning off of resources from the poor to the rich for generations. But this was not on the conscience of the world as the victims were poor, powerless – and far away. Unemployment is rising at an alarming rate, food prices have soared, industries and agriculture are suffering. This vicious circle of lack of production and employment is then feeding yet another round of poverty and unemployment for the majority of people. At the same time, the armament industries are prospering with wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and new ones being planned.

The academic context and approach to teaching and learning

The above provides a very brief picture of the challenges facing the profession and LIS as a whole. A related issue is whether recently qualified professional staff have the necessary skills and experience from their training programmes to understand and respond actively to the above situation. It is the contention of the writer that they are not exposed to relevant ideas and experiences to meet these essentially political and economic challenges. Library training programmes do provide a number of key technical skills but lack appropriate curricula to provide a wider understanding and tools to deal with the social and political reality of the new century. Thus a “traditional” teaching programme reproduces a “traditional” public library sector which in turn reinforces the traditional academic approach – a Catch 22 situation that urgently needs to be resolved.

One of the key aspects of teaching social aspects of library and information work should be to investigate what knowledge, skills, awareness and experiences are needed to meet challenges in today’s increasingly globalised world. The challenges includes working out how to meet the professional and work needs of library students and, in the process, expand their horizons and broaden their world outlook. An important aspect of this work is to explore alternative models of public library provision and to provide opportunities to innovate and take risks in finding a suitable model to meet local and national needs.

The search for relevance of public libraries, and its related teaching and learning requirements, took a number of forms at London Metropolitan University during the period 2005-10. At one level, this involved the development or revision of teaching Modules related to social aspects of information available for MA in Information Services Management. Such Modules included “Society, Information and Policy” (a core Module) and the optional Modules “Innovation and Development in Information Services”, “Information and Social Exclusion” and “Information for Development”. It is not within the scope of this article to examine further the development of this aspect, but this is covered in Durrani (2006-07, 2007a and b, 2008).

At another level, the learning needs of library staff at all levels were addressed by the Quality Leaders Project, Youth (QLP-Y), a work-based programme delivered at the University. This sought to develop LIS staff skills to meet needs of young people. The Project aimed to “create opportunities for young people to participate in society and to develop their creativity, reading and life skills, through developing staff skills and innovative services responsive to the needs of young people” (QLP-Y).

A follow-up of the QLP-Y was the Project, “Skills for a Globalised World: Relevant Skills for Public Library Staff” (the Skills Project). It started in June 2010 and was completed in December 2010. It provided the syllabus and Module Specifications for three Modules, linked to a “Library Skills Chart” (Library skills for a globalised world chart, 2010) which set out key skills that the Project leaders considered essential for library staff in the current global and national situation. The three Modules developed by the Project are:

1. Public libraries, policy and equality
2. Leading and managing change, innovation and development in public library services
3. Aspects of public library service design and development (Durrani and Smallwood, 2010)

The overall approach and aims of the recommended teaching and learning programme can be seen in the Module aims for the third Module, with its emphases on “critical awareness”, “developing skills” and “provide experience”:

1. To raise critical awareness of various aspects of service design and development relevant to public library services in Britain
2. To develop skills in designing and developing library service using tools appropriate to the specific aspects studied.
3. To provide experience in managing organisational issues arising from implementing a new approach implied in using these tools. (Skills for a globalised world, 2010).

Durrani and Smallwood (2010) provide an overview of the Project, the key aspects of which were then transferred to the “Studies in Progressive Librarianship” programme developed at the University of East London. This consists, at present, of two Modules, the first of which, Change Management and Leadership in Public Library Services, states that:

... the project has focused on developing a number of outline modules that can be used as stand-alone modules or as part of short courses to address specific skills gaps or used as part of a wider programme of training. However, a key component of outline module development has remained a focus on developing students as reflective practitioners within their local context, an approach that is particularly suitable for the vocational learner;

by developing skills within the workplace, supported by both employer and university, the aim has been to develop outline modules that give students the opportunity to develop the key management skills necessary for operation in a globalised public library context and thus for progression within that context.

The authors stress “that it [the skills chart, located at http://www.seapn.org.uk/content_files/files/final_skills_report_mar_2010.pdf] focuses on those areas that the authors feel are not currently widely addressed and is not a complete programme of training” (Durrani and Smallwood, 2009). As for the recommended Modules, they “focus on developing critical awareness of trends driving services and of organisational culture and factors helping/hindering the change process as well as “social aspects” of information and library work. It is assumed that technical aspects teaching (cataloguing, information retrieval, information literacy, ICT applications etc.) already provided in library and information studies courses will continue to be delivered by other modules”. The Change Management Module also needs to be seen in this context of “social aspects” of LIS work. It is sufficient here to emphasis some key aspects of the Skills Chart which are considered essential for staff at all levels in LIS. These are “critical awareness of global, local and national trends driving service change”, “critical awareness of helping/hindering organisational change”, and “management effective leadership and innovation”. We shall return to these three aspects later. The Skills Project ended at London Metropolitan University in 2010 in the expectation that University of East London would take up the pilot phase:

As indicated earlier, London Metropolitan University was unable to deliver the programme developed by the Skills Project. However, a positive development is that the University of East London (UEL) and Barking and Dagenham Library Service (B&DLS) are keen to implement the modules and the teaching and learning programme developed by the Skills Project. UEL and B&DLS are proposing to deliver a pilot module programme developed as part of the Skills Project and are, at the time of writing, in discussion with the Linking London Lifelong Learning Network on various aspects of module delivery (Durrani and Smallwood, 2010)

Development of Studies in Progressive Librarianship Programme

The first, pilot, phase of the programme was the Module “Change Management and Leadership in Public Library Service” which was developed under University of East London’s UELConnect. The pilot phase developed and delivered one Module - Change Management and Leadership in Public Library Services - from the Skills Project recommendations and was delivered to staff of London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Library Service (LBBD). It was sponsored by Linking London Lifelong Learning Network which had also sponsored the Skills Project at London Metropolitan University.

UELConnect set up a Project Team to oversee the project. The Team approved the programme in September 2010. This provided for a 10-week teaching programme with each week divided into three one-hour sessions: a lecture, a student debate and workshop session, and a “learning by doing” session. The assessment was also agreed with the submission date of 29 November 2010.

The programme and some initial achievements

The teaching programme started on September 6, 2010 with 11 students, all fulltime staff in the LBBB Library Service. One subsequently withdrew for personal reasons. At Week 5 (4 October) it was decided to add an extra week (Week 11) to be held on 15 November to allow for the fact that one lecture had to be cancelled due to transport difficulties. This also allowed for a full lecture by the Associate Director of UEL University Library. The opportunity was also taken to include additional support for students on the extra day.

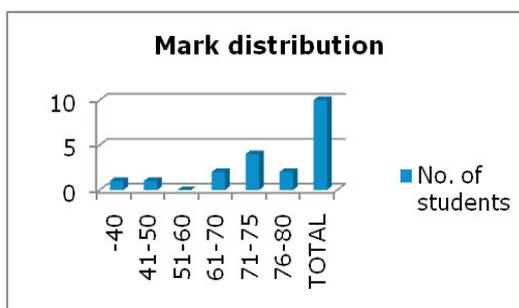
An overview of the Module was presented in the final lecture on 15 November 2010, entitled “Change management and leadership in public library services, Review: what we have learnt, what remains”.

Important features of the programme were the participation of policy makers at national and local levels in the programme, visits by students to other institutions, including the University Library at the University of East London Library in the Docklands and an “investigating communities” bus ride within the Borough as part of building up local community profile.

Outcomes and evaluation: Student achievement

Ten students participated in the programme with all completing the Module and handing in their final assessments reports. Nine achieved the required pass marks of 40%. 6 achieved marks above 71%. Mark distribution was as follows:

Marks	No. of students
-40	1
41-50	1
51-60	0
61-70	2
71-75	4
76-80	2
TOTAL	10



Student evaluation

The programme started with students indicating their expectations of the Module on how they feel the Module would help them in their work, in their personal development. They also indicated three areas they would like included in the Module. These helped to plan the teaching and learning programme within the scope of the Module. While it was not possible to include everything the student desired, their views will help any follow-up programmes.

The end-of-the-Module student feedback took the form of a four-page questionnaire.

Student and mentor/management evaluation

Nine students returned the questionnaire. All were, in general, happy with the Module, with comments such as “very good for library staff and managers”. Among recommendations for work after the Module ended included the setting up of a focus Group made up of Module participants so to continue the learning process started at the Module. Management comments included the observation that this was an “excellent opportunity for our staff to work with a highly experienced tutor in this field as it opened up their minds to libraries in a global context. This knowledge could then be used to understand and improve their own, local service”. They noticed that “all ten of the students have gained in confidence and skills in the areas covered and they have already contributed to the service developments in such areas as community profiles and Equalities Impact Assessments”. They further observed that the students were “not only being role models to their fellow staff but want their colleagues to have the same opportunity to attend as it was such an invaluable experience for them”.

Resources generated by the programme

A website carrying all documents, lecture notes and resources from the Module has been set up as part of the Skills Project. It is available to the general public at: http://www.seapn.org.uk/editorial.asp?page_id=69. Included are lecture notes, presentations by guest speakers and handouts.

Review and achievement of project aims

The Skills Project “sought to develop a relevant learning programme that meets the needs of learners and employers in programmes at universities, with the specific aim of developing relevant learning opportunities for public library staff”. (Skills Project 2010). The Skills Project had two key outcomes: the Library Skills Chart (2010) and specifications for three Modules:

- Public Libraries, Policy and Equality
- Leading and managing change, innovation & development in PLS
- Aspects of public library service design and development

This plan had to be altered to meet the financial constraints of the programme at UEL. The three were reduced to just one and it was felt that key elements from all three Modules needed to be included to provide an overview on public library service. While the final “Change Management” Project did manage to include these key elements, it did not allow for an in-depth understanding that would have been achieved had all three Modules had been offered. This was confirmed in student feedback.

Another challenge was to provide a balance between theory and practice, between an academic approach and a professional perspective, as well as between class learning and work-based learning. The approach taken was to include theoretical work in lectures which covered key national, international and local policy documents and practices. The link to work-place was provided at a number of levels. One was the establishment of senior management team members from LBBB Library Service as mentors to each student. Another was to make the coursework relevant to local situations. This was for students to “prepare a proposal for a pilot project to deliver a new library service as a way of meeting new or unmet needs”. The students were expected to discuss the project proposal with their mentors to ensure they took on a project which had local relevance. The high marks achieved by students indicates that they fulfilled their coursework requirements to a high standard. Yet another approach was to get key local and national policy decision makers to present their perspectives on change management in public library service.

At the centre of the programme was an aspect highlighted in the Skills Project final report: The need for innovative thinking – and its implementation – is perhaps the greatest challenge facing the information and library profession in the public library context in Britain today...What is missing in the real world of public librarianship is a discussion – and implementation – of innovation based on clear analyses of the needs in communities. This aspect was emphasised through the lectures and in recommended readings. That the students engaged with this approach is evident from their feedback.

Another aspect that the programme aimed to address was again something highlighted by the Skills Project: “At the centre of this vacuum in ideas for public libraries and in discussion about staff/librarian development, is vagueness about the purpose and the role of information and public libraries in today’s world”. It was to overcome “this vacuum” that much attention was placed on theory and practice of working out what public libraries were all about. Thus the UNESCO/IFLA document “Public Library Service” formed the basis of discussions on the role of public libraries. This combined with an attempt to understand local needs and policies, and involved, among other areas, a bus ride through local areas to better understand local conditions, needs and people – something that proved extremely useful and popular with the students.

Overall the Project attempted to follow the approach recommended by the Skills Project:

The approach to public library staff skills development, as detailed in this report, is one way of bridging skills gaps in a changing situation. The strength of this approach lies in the fact that it does a number of things: provides academic credits; is a work-based programme; is linked to academic practice; is based on a partnership between professionals, academicians and service providers; provides a flexible learning approach for students so as to suit staff at different levels of qualification and experience; it offers a new approach to library authorities in developing staff; offers the opportunity to develop internal (within authorities) and external (with other authorities and organisations) partnerships; can be delivered in a flexible way (in individual workplaces if required) and provides a programme flexible enough to meet the needs of individual students and their employers. (Skills Project, 2010).

As a pilot project, the Change Management programme did not meet the first requirement – “provide academic credits.” However, the fact the programme was delivered under the University of East London rules and requirements provided a strong academic link and it is expected that this will be done for a more permanent programme.

As for the other requirements, the pilot project demonstrated clearly that all these are achievable with ample evidence provided by the students themselves and also by the confidence of the Management Team at the Library Service of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The achievement of personal development aspects of the programme is covered by student feedback mentioned earlier in this Report. The service development aspect is also an important area that was achieved. The innovative approach taken by students is evident from the coursework project proposals chosen by the students. It is noteworthy that all proposals include a resource plan as well implementation plan and timing. It is also important to note that all the projects relate to local needs and have been developed with a deep commitment to developing local services within limited budgets. This indicates that there is already a reservoir of innovative thinking among the staff in public libraries and this needs an avenue for creative thinking to be translated into project proposals – and implemented. The Module provided one such avenue. The student project proposals are listed below:

1. A proposal to set up a work club in the BLC Library
2. A library project to support the socialisation and education of new parents
3. Learning resource pack
4. A proposal for set up a magazine to support children’s reading group.

5. Pilot project to inspire local community access to the public library
6. Project to start a reading group for adult learners at Barking Library
7. ICT for older adults
8. Project to bring back the lost generations to Barking and Dagenham Libraries
9. Project to start a reading group for adult learners at Barking Library
10. Commissioning the delivery of story and rhyme time sessions to children's service.

*Alternative public library services:
meeting challenges, retaining public service ethos Module 2*

Following the successful conclusion of the pilot project, the staff group indicated their interest in continuing the course and decided to bid to Linking London for funds for a second module to take place later this year. In preparation for this, an outline programme was prepared, under the title "Alternative public library services: meeting challenges, retaining public service ethos". The content reflected the need to equip those who had successfully completed the first Module with additional skills to meet current challenges. The proposed lecture programme is as follows:

Week	TOPIC
1	Introduction to the Module
2	Public libraries in the globalised capitalist world
3	Are public libraries meeting people's needs?
4	Information for development or for profit?
5	Public or private? policies affecting libraries
6	People and power: creating a new world
7	New vision of public library service in a rapidly changing world
8	Meeting financial challenges
9	Staff, managers and public on board?
10	Communication for a new world & the role of ICT
11	Review & revision

Also proposed are a number of changes that reflect feedback received from students. These include the expansion of lecture time as well as the workshop and debates from one to one-and-a-half hours each while the Learning-by-Doing sessions are recommended to be half-day events to enable visits to other institutions.

The proposed coursework is now in the form of two options so that students can choose the option that best reflects their learning and work needs best:

Coursework

Complete EITHER Option A or Option B

Option A (2,000 words)

LBBB Libraries have been asked to make a 10% saving in the library budget. You have been asked by Head of Libraries and Leisure to prepare a plan to achieve this saving. Using publicly available statistics, set out your proposals which should include a well-reasoned case to justify your proposals, retaining a strong public service ethos. Your plan should include:

1. Overview on the effects of the proposals and how you intend to address these.
2. Staffing structure, setting out proposals for management, professional and other staff.
3. Service delivery aspects.
4. Managing public expectations while you meet national and international requirements on the role of a public library service.
5. Consultation, marketing and communication implications of implementing your proposals.

Option B (2,000 words)

Both the questions below are to be answered:

1. Critically assess the benefits and shortcoming of the three ways of providing public library service: public sector, private sector, voluntary sector. Give your preferred method, giving arguments backed by evidence as far as possible. (1,000 words).
2. Provide a case study of two public library services – in Britain or overseas - indicating how they have addressed the current financial and political situation facing public library service. Discuss critically the approach which you consider to be the “best fit” in meeting public needs. (1,000 words).

At the time of writing this, it is not clear whether funds will be secured.

Conclusion

The development and delivery of the Change Management Module indicates that the recommendations and proposals from the Skills Project are a valid approach to meeting the skills development needs of library staff while also meeting the service development requirements for public library service.

It is recommended that Barking and Dagenham Library service adopt the recommendations made by the students, as they have already indicated they intend to do.

Given the present situation of public libraries in England, it is necessary that all staff have the relevant competencies to develop and deliver a relevant service within reduced resources. The delivery of Modules such as the Change Management one (as well as others recommended by the Skills Project) is one way of developing such competencies. It is also

cost effective as it is delivered with fewer resources than sending the same number of staff to just one day each of “normal” professional staff training event. This Change Management/Skills approach, in addition, provides a wide range of skills, awareness and widening of outlooks together with practical experience and new learning opportunities. It is however important to base any such programmes within the scope of an academic institution, as was done by the UEL in this case.

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BRAVERMAN PRIZE

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS: HOW SPACE CAN TRANSFORM THE LIBRARY AND ITS PUBLIC

by Tiffany Chow

This past November, the city of Inkster in Wayne County, Michigan, passed a millage to keep its library operating (Leanna Hicks Public Library). Had this property tax not passed, Inkster would have lost its only library. In a city with a level one literacy rate of 38%¹ and unemployment rate of 16%, a library's fate is even more critical (U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2009). Community members depend on the library as a service-oriented space: Internet access, community programs, and a safe place to learn, exchange ideas, and explore the arts. A modern library's function is not to merely lend books but to be an active part of the information society. A library's purpose has long been intertwined with cultural and leisure roles, lifelong learning, and providing services such as health or career advice; recent investments in technology have further enhanced the library's role in keeping up with community demands (McMenemy xiv, xv).

Structure, design, and purpose must all intersect to serve the specific needs of a community. This essay will explore both the importance of a properly designed library, and the importance of assessing a library as a public space that can also support activism and specialized needs. This essay will focus on the benefits of maximizing library patron density by applying best practice models used in urban planning as a means for libraries to connect community members, foster activism, and offer a reprieve from the hustle of urban life or offer engagement for bored suburban youth.

Library as public space: design matters

Perhaps a good question to begin with is, "Why should library design matter?" That is, beyond a library's most obvious purpose of housing books and information materials, what can design offer? When properly utilized, a great deal. In "Planning and Design of Library Buildings,"

1. Level one literacy, or below basic reading skills indicate that a person possess only the "most simple and concrete literacy skills" but can range from non-literate in English to locating short, simple text and contextualizing it (Hauser 2005).

author Godfrey Thompson keeps in mind the psychology of the library user, concerning himself with accommodating various needs: quiet space, visual distractions, lighting, and even emphasis that all these qualities are without merit if lacking patronage (9, 99). Interestingly, Thompson approaches these topics with a lens similar to that of urban critic William Whyte, whose exacting analysis of spaces argued for freedom of choice and multi-functionality for the visitor. Much like Thompson's concern with comfort of library patrons, Whyte speaks of accessible seating as a critical component to the success of public spaces, noting in painstaking detail his guidelines on ergonomic features, such as sitting heights, psychology of people choosing seating (i.e. seating patterns of strangers sharing a bench), and the importance of choice (112-122).

An example where design has figured in impressive ways is in academic libraries, which in the past thirty years have shifted in focus from pure information service for consumers to encourage collaborative learning environments (Bailey and Tierney 5). Figuring into this equation is the increasing use of technology to help disseminate information quickly and more vastly than ever before. As a result, academic libraries have undergone drastic transformation in the past twenty years to include evolving technology and reflect the modern services they offer. There have been two major iterations of this phenomenon. In the 1990s, the term "Information Commons" was used to describe information service delivery workstations, "offering students integrated access to electronic information resources, multimedia, print resources, and services"; in essence, it provided a space where students could instantaneously access multiple resources (Bailey and Tierney 1). Yet, critics ask whether simply providing information services is enough. Scott Bennett, a Yale University Librarian Emeritus, asserts that planners ask the wrong questions in preparation for building a space. Instead of assessing "what" should be in a space, perhaps a more meaningful question might be, "what should happen in the space" (Bennett 183)? Bennett supports what are known as "Learning Commons"—a space that incorporates the features of Information Commons but also focuses on collaborative learning and hands the responsibility of information to its users. Information Commons enhance learning by providing a space and tools; Learning Commons (LC) create learning by integrating library services with non-traditional resources such as exhibitions, performances, forums, and specialized databases, and opportunities to collaborate across peer groups, faculty, and staff (Bailey and Tierney 3). A parallel situation is recent developments in educational technologies for learning, which has shifted much of its framework from user-centered design to learner-centered design to encourage students to actively engage with the teaching/learning environment (Quintana et al 271). In both cases, the infrastructure of environments have rapidly evolved to reflect the learner's needs, whether that is filling a gap in knowledge, space to collaborate with peers, or opportunity to receive aid from an expert. While learning technologies create "space" for their learners online, LC respond to learners' needs by physical design.

Good design should also support agency. City planner Kevin Lynch focuses on creating open spaces where people can be “free from many of the restraints of routine living” (405). The result is that social connections that may otherwise not occur—what Lynch describes as “unspecialized” or “unusual” may spring from and organically develop at a public nexus (405). Lynch’s concern with maintaining a public space full of potential is akin to Bennett’s proposition that space must represent potential, whether in facilitating or challenging social norms or providing alternative interactive environments. Specifically, Lynch urges public spaces to be physically accessible by a diverse population, where “recreation, meeting, and education” can take place (405).

Lynch’s design sensibility relates to frequent contact between space and people, and as such, also supports Whyte’s preference for high-density public spaces. Whyte describes the best plazas and open spaces as those that are sociable, as well as places that allow for premeditated meet-ups (4, 105). Recall the amount of detail that Whyte and Godfrey delve into something as trivial as seating options. To their credit, the authors have no strange unnatural obsession for chairs—they merely understand the importance of seating represents in allowing people to define social groupings and spatial arrangement.

Socializing in public spaces, such as libraries, is a major venue for information resources. We can examine it from two major camps. Passive engagement, as defined by the essay, “Public Space,” is described as potentially having a “relaxing” quality: “indirect or passive, because it involves looking rather than talking or doing” (Carr et al 105). In essence, passive engagement with the environment is one that does not directly impact the subject, a receiving state of mind. In contrast, active engagement involves what William Whyte calls “triangulation”—talking with others and forming social relations (Carr *et al.* 118-120; Whyte 154). Carr *et al.* describe it as “more direct” than passive engagement and stress the social component of active participation as a key difference (118-119). The assertion that active engagement is somehow “more” than passive engagement is an interesting comparison, as if the two forms are somehow evolved or premature versions of the other as opposed to separate methods of experiencing an environment. Both approaches can—and do—take place simultaneously, for individuals as well as groups use a space for a wide range of social and even anti-social purposes. The dichotomy between these behaviors, however, can be ambiguous, especially when considering that engagement is not a static quality. I will explore this later in more depth, but I first want to introduce the idea of trust in public spaces in order to make clear the behaviors of people within libraries.

Public spaces allow for a degree of anonymity even in the midst of others; although it seems implausible, urban critic Jane Jacobs argues that these brief encounters—passing strangers on the sidewalk, or observing a group of young schoolchildren hopscotch in front of their houses—are enough to develop “a web of public respect and trust” without any “private

commitments.” Without this trust, there is no responsibility for others and no aid given to those who may need it. An implicit public trust allows for safety and even public service (Jacobs 56). For libraries, the line between privacy and contact can be very important. The idea of anonymity is important in that it allows for library users to learn in a safe environment. Furthermore, anonymity may encourage people to “try out new social roles” (Lynch 405). Using LGBTQ library patrons, I want to consider how anonymity can reframe the scope of Carr et al’s idea of active or passive engagement in a space.

The LGBTQ community is unique in several ways. It is one of the remaining social justice issues that are unresolved in its relation to the government: can two same sex persons be lawfully wedded (and subsequently, the power to redefine American notions of marriage)? As a civil rights issue, the community spans across color lines, religious affiliation, and socio-economics. That is not to say the treatment of LGBTQ communities, or a minority group within a minority group, are intrinsically equal, only that its members are diverse. There is also the unique position in “coming out”—or declaring membership, either forcibly by others or by choice. It is this characteristic of learning to express an identity that libraries can play an important role. Indeed, the library has long been identified as a major resource to seek information about “what it means to declare an alternative sexual orientation or a nonmainstream [sic] sexual identity” (Buschman and Leckie 105). Gathering information about sexual identity “invites a private, anonymous encounter with the collection by people who are perceived to be at risk due to the potential stigmatization” (Buschman and Leckie 105).

Is it fair, then, to categorize patrons who wish to remain anonymous as passive engagers of a space and claim that active engagement “represents a more direct experience with a place and the people within it” (Carr et al 118)? In the case of libraries and other information centers, it may be wise to think outside normative definitions of engagement as a social force, and move its meaning toward towards self-awareness and consciousness. Engagement with a space should not be so handedly narrowed into two categories with comparative values. Rather, a subject’s encounters should be gauged on more fluid terms, so that an individual can take advantage of a wide range of experience with a space and its resources.

The library can be seen as a place where both anonymity and contact is needed and a smooth transition between the two states of being can help a community determine how to best integrate itself into a larger society. Libraries can best offer services to communities like the LGBTQ by providing a space for organic interactions. Formally institutionalized spaces, such as parks and public housing projects, Jacobs warns, forces people to share “much or nothing” at all, especially if they have no other casual meeting points (1961, 68). Physical spaces such as community rooms and unintentional comfort spots such as the nooks and crannies of bookshelves can provide a sense of anonymity without isolation. Furthermore, libraries

are able to provide another dimension for casual interaction by supplying diverse reading materials, creating support groups, and relating services to other organizations. In this way, libraries can both preserve its spatial duty as a refuge as well as its role as a social and cultural institution (Buschman and Leckie 1, 105).

Library as space for activism

As evidenced by the LGBTQ community, public spaces can come to represent more than a purely educational or social institution. Communities often use public spaces as a place to protest and conduct activism. In particular, marginalized communities may find public spaces the most economical and logical resource to create change. If the library “represent[s] the ideal that everyone within society deserves the right to access materials for their educational, cultural, and leisure benefit, regardless of their income level, political beliefs, race, creed or colour,” how can community members ensure these ideals (McMenemy xiii)? How can librarians aid community members in achieving this ideal and how can they effect structural change? Furthermore, a librarian’s social responsibility to disseminate culture and information is often influenced by his or her invested interests, resulting in a librarian that is as neutral as a journalist—an “impossible construct” (Samek 1).

First consider all the potential people that may occupy a public space like the library. Will their presence invoke the type of tension between different races and social classes that sociologist Richard Sennett finds so (optimistically) desirable (143)? Or would the space merely act as an access point that affords the communal anonymity and recognition that Jacobs describes in her Greenwich Village neighborhood (69)? Can the library space be claimed as a “turf” by a racial group, or can a diverse audience co-exist in a cosmopolitan canopy (Anderson, “The Cosmopolitan Canopy” 595; Anderson, “Streetwise”173)? All of these relations are possible, just as they are possible in public spaces everywhere.

In considering the public library as a space for social activism, the potential for discussion is infinite. We can consider its geographic and temporal accessibility to various social classes, its resources as either a reflection the community or colonial-like dictatorship of taste of the upper echelons of society, its services to its consumers, etc. Ultimately, libraries, their services, and their audience, reflect changing times. The idea of a librarian empathetically representing the needs of a community can be, unfortunately, a radical thought. The most recent American Library Association statistics in 2006 reveal that the workforce is 89% white, 4.5% African American, 3% Hispanic or Latino, 1.4% Native American, 2.7% API, while gender is 80% female and 19% male (Davis 10). How well are these librarians able to articulate the needs from the communities they serve? Are they able to bring in the materials (e.g. books, films, music) that the community wants and needs? Or do they project an ideal of what people should read or watch instead?

The modern library can also consider meta-space to be a resource in retrieving access to censored or alternative materials. While physical availability of controversial works can be seen as an important component in lobbying for intellectual freedom of the library patron, it is no longer the only way librarians bring attentions to controversial topics. Technology, particularly lower-cost mobile devices, is able to aid modern day activism, as we have seen recently in Egypt and Iran. For information activists, physicality is no longer a requirement. Rather, community members can use library resources such as Internet-access computers and other materials such as books and films to plan and advocate for a cause. Libraries are capable of encompassing more dimensions of activism than ever before.

Conclusion

As public spaces, a library's design and physical structure has helped inform libraries of their purpose and carry out their mission. The ways libraries are able to serve their communities is directly related to the agency patrons have in a space; furthermore, a library's physical space serves as a place for people to connect and rally for a cause. Even in the midst of advancing technologies that allow people to seek out information from the comfort of their homes, libraries remain a deeply embedded part of a community that is able to offer refuge, inspire activism and create learning opportunities

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REPORT

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS: ORGANIZE & ASSEMBLE

The First Symposium of the Edmonton Branch
of the Progressive Librarians Guild

by Stephen MacDonald

On Saturday, October 1st, the Progressive Librarians' Guild of Edmonton held its first symposium titled "Organize and Assemble" at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. The symposium covered a broad range of topics related to the important role that libraries, archives and information workers play in building a society that values greater social justice, equality and openness.

The day began with opening comments from Toni Samek, professor at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. Ms. Samek stated that this was the first symposium of its kind held in the Edmonton area and is a significant contribution to promoting social justice in the library and archives community in this community and abroad. During her brief introduction, she spoke about the history of the progressive library movement, the Progressive Librarians Guild, its new chapter in Edmonton and how it is contributing to this movement.

The first presenter of the day was Braden Cannon, archivist at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. His talk "The Canadian Disease: Re-Thinking LAM Convergence" focused on institutional integration in the LAM sector. This is defined as the merger of libraries, archives and museums one organization with a single administration. During this presentation, Cannon identifies the arguments that have been made to support the reorganization of libraries archives and museums as one organization, including the need for professionals in these organizations to "adapt to changing times and customers needs", they function in the same social, legal and economic contexts, the idea that users do not care how they receive information and services that these organizations offer, and the emergence of the digital landscape is driving the LAM convergence.

These arguments are problematic because they fail to take into consideration the unique characteristics that distinguish libraries, archives and museums from one another. In addition to this problem, employees in libraries archive and museums aren't always consulted before such mergers take place. As a result, the concerns of front-line workers aren't taken into consideration, increasing the possibility that the organizations can't properly deliver services. Also, by placing too much emphasis on delivering services that

the public wants, these organizations do not value the essential services these professions provide, such as preservation of historically-significant artifacts and archival papers.

Cannon argues that convergence is the result of the corporatization of libraries, archives and museums. These merged organizations adopt corporate business models where they are asked to demonstrate to their funders their value. Their funders see them as having social-historical value, but as a series of organizations in the cultural heritage sector competing for reduced cultural heritage funding, created by the public sectors obsession with fiscal constraint and taming deficits.

Cannon also describes the corporatization of library/archive and museum education programs, providing the example of the iSchool consortium. These schools place too much emphasis on information technology and library service-courses, decreasing the variety of courses for those interesting in pursuing archive and museum studies programs. Like LAM, they place too much emphasis on justifying their existence to their funders and not enough on providing future librarians, archivists and curators with courses that provide them with the education they need to take on these positions.

To prevent convergence from continuing, Cannon argues that we must encourage collaboration between libraries, archives and museums on specific projects, such as historical websites and digitization projects. These initiatives will only work if the various organizations work together and have an equal stake in the project they're working on. Integration fails to achieve this goal, which must be discussed more.

The second presentation was entitled "Lord Save Us From the Et Cetera of the Notaries" and featured Raymond Frogner, archivist at the British Columbia Archives in Victoria, BC. His paper focused on the juridical application of oral tradition and archival records as related to First Nations rights in Canada. Frogner noted that contemporary jurisprudence is premised on western principles of trustworthy evidence that relies on archival records to make informed decisions in legal cases. He argued that we are in a period similar to the Enlightenment, as new interpretive frameworks are challenging archival and jurisprudential convention and our understanding of authentic evidence and that new paradigms are required to address how multicultural societies, modern bureaucracy, and information technologies are fragmenting the concept of a reliable record and decoupling the record from the traditional provenance of a single, definitive creator. In fact, Frogner argued, even the notion of a single, definitive creator of a record is becoming an historical caricature. Nothing more completely encapsulates these contemporary archival challenges than protecting, over time, Aboriginal non-textual cultural heritage – the meaning of custody, instantaneous reproduction and distribution, fixity of form, stability of content, heterogeneous and collaborative authorship, authenticity reinterpreted. But unlike electronic records, this topic has

not received the same degree of study and so we remain posed with an ongoing problem: traditional concepts of trustworthy records, built on absolutist conceptions of sovereignty and textual paradigms, cohere poorly with the oral testimony of Aboriginal memory and the cultural history of apportioned governance in Aboriginal societies.

The presentation also focused on recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions on Aboriginal rights and examined how non-textual, Aboriginal custom becomes evidence in the Canadian court. Frogner drew a comparison between how contemporary Canadian courts are struggling with challenges similar to Enlightenment French jurists who transformed unwritten French custom into the Code Civile. Within this comparison the paper concluded that new paradigms are required to recognize evidence of Aboriginal custom and how this serves to provide support for Aboriginal rights in Canadian courts.

The third presentation featured Moyra Lang, project coordinator with the Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada at the University of Alberta. Her talk looked at how libraries have the goal of developing an inclusive environment for all, but fail to deliver adequate library services for transgendered individuals. This is because of their tendency to treat their information needs as the same as those of for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and those who question their sexual orientation.

After discussing her interest in this topic, she reviewed terminology she would be using in her presentation, making distinctions between sex and gender-based terms. This discussion also included terms associated with transgendered people, who are mistakenly labeled as part of a community with gays, lesbians and bisexuals. To demonstrate the difference between sex and gender, transgendered people and members of the former groups, Lang tells the story of an American swing bandleader who identified as a man but was found to have reproductive organs typically associated with men.

Lang argued that while libraries aim to be inclusive by developing library management and collections policies that acknowledge the importance of providing quality library services to all groups in our communities, some of their policies make transgendered individuals feel unwelcome. Lang discusses the public library's growing interest in creating LGBTQ collections. While this appears to be inclusive, these collections assume that all groups represented in LGBTQ have the same needs. Transgendered people have needs that greatly distinguish them from bisexuals, gays, lesbians and individuals questioning their sexual orientation. She argues that public libraries must address this reality and begin purchasing more books that satisfy the unique set of information needs that transgendered individuals have.

Lang then goes on to discuss the Edmonton Public Library's policy of asking patrons for their gender when they register for a library card. This

area of the registration form allows users to select male or female, or other. This discriminates against those individuals who are in the process of transitioning from male to female, or vice-versa. Lang mentions that trans individuals have been denied library cards because they are in the process of transitioning from male to female or vice-versa.

This discussion made it clear that in order for libraries to do a better job addressing the information needs of transgendered people and to make these community spaces more welcoming to this group, we must set aside our biases and outdated understandings of transgendered people and be willing to adapt our policies and service attitude to provide this group with adequate library services.

The fourth presentation of the day featured Kim Bewick and Amanda Bird, community librarians with Edmonton Public Library. Their presentation “Connecting with Communities: the Community-Led Service Philosophy at Edmonton Public Library” focused on the work that community librarians do in Edmonton to improve their relationship with the community and design library services and programs that meet the specific needs of marginalized groups in the community that have a history of not using public libraries. Inspired by the Working Together program, which created community librarian positions in socially-disadvantaged communities across Canada, Bewick and Bird explain that community librarians in the Edmonton Public Library system achieve these goals by going into the community and working directly with individuals and community organizations to learn more about how the branch library can best serve their specific needs.

After providing some general information about the role of community librarians in the Edmonton Public Library system, Bewick and Bird and provided examples of individuals and organizations that they work with in the areas of Edmonton they are assigned to. During this discussion, they discussed how they have developed stronger relationships with specific groups and individuals in the community and the social impact of their work in disadvantaged communities.

The presentation identified a series of challenges that most community librarians in the system face:

- Some of the individuals that community librarians have been working with have had negative library experiences (i.e. being banned for bad behavior, overdue fines, etc.), making it difficult for them to trust librarians and the institution as a whole.
- Community librarians have difficulty serving some members of the public because they are homeless and as a result do not have identification they can use to obtain a library card.
- Some community librarians feel overworked because most branches in the system only have one community librarian. This problem is being addressed by assigning Library Assistants to

help community librarians work on projects that they are involved with.

- Language barriers also make it difficult for employees to communicate with members of the public that could benefit from services that community librarians provide.

While these challenges exist, Bewick and Bird make it clear that community librarians have had a major impact on the community. Since community librarians began working for the library system in 2008, they have worked with over 260 agencies and organizations in Edmonton. Their efforts have also led to a 63% increase in the number of programs and outreach initiatives delivered by the Edmonton Public Library system. This demonstrates that public libraries in our city are doing more to be inclusive community spaces that provide for all Edmontonians, regardless of their socio-economic background.

The fifth presentation of the day involved Tanya Driechel, Moyra Lang, Liz Fulton-Lyne, and Kim Bewick, who are all members from the Greater Edmonton Library Association's Prison Sub-Committee. Their presentation "Books Behind Bars: Community Development in Prison Libraries" provided information about the committee's work to help build the library at the Edmonton Institution for Women, the only multi-level women's prison in Western Canada. During the presentation, they talked about the origins of the committee, as well as various projects that they have worked on to help improve the institution's library and the services they provide. The members of this committee identified a wide range of valuable programs that are enjoyed by many of the inmates at the institution. They include the library's book club, their collections management initiative, which involves weeding the collection and donating books to non-profit organizations in Edmonton, the library's writing circles and zine creation workshops, and the storybook project, which involves mothers in jail reading a book aloud and recording it to a CD so their children can read along to this recording. Although the committee has faced some challenges, including the institution's resistance to the committee bringing book readers into the institution for the inmates, the program has been a great success.

The presentation ended with a brief documentary that features inmates from the prison talking about their positive relationship with the prison library and the services it offers to them. The documentary helped conference attendees learn more about specific library programs that were discussed during the presentation.

In the final presentation of the day titled "Knowledge Mapping of Social Responsibility in an Information Intensive Society: A Proposed Taxonomy), Toni Samek and Ali Shiri, professors at the University of Alberta School of Library and Information Studies, discuss the work they have done so far on a taxonomy they are designing to classify library and information studies projects that are directly related to social justice issues. They strongly believe that all university students, including those studying library and

information studies deserve to be exposed to social justice issues during their studies. This taxonomy would be used as a valuable teaching tool that would help classify discourse on social action in the LIS discipline. They also noted that while there are taxonomies that are associated with human rights and social justice, there is no such controlled vocabulary that is designed specifically for LIS projects.

To develop the taxonomy, Samek and Shiri reviewed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for terminology they felt would belong in the taxonomy and other literature associated with social justice projects. This information was used to develop ten high level facets that would be used to classify such projects. These general headings included activities and operations, communities, issues, people and other related headings. Smaller, more specific headings that address certain types of LIS projects associated with social justice are being added to each facet.

While Samek and Shiri are the main researchers for this project, they clearly stated that they are interested in hearing from the library community about terms that could be added to this taxonomy or any suggestions they have to build upon this controlled vocabulary. This shows that this is a grassroots project and will reflect the collective knowledge of information workers.

Braden Cannon's closing remarks were a reflection of the excitement in the room created by the symposium's interesting presentations related to LIS and social justice. During his brief speech, he mentioned that the conference demonstrated that information workers in Edmonton and other parts of Western Canada are interested in using their positions to help bring about progressive social change in our own communities. It also demonstrated that our growing progressive library movement is becoming more organized and is developing the momentum needed to achieve this social change. Cannon closed by referring to the symposium's title, arguing that to be an effective social movement, we must continue to organize and assemble so we can come up with solutions that put an end to social injustice in our communities and beyond.

BOOK REVIEWS

“Government Secrecy,” edited by Susan Maret. *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, Volume 19 (2011).

reviewed by Peter McDonald

The French dramatist Jean Racine once wrote: “There are no secrets that time does not reveal.” Every historian since Homer has made this truism a cornerstone of their history lesson. For the story of our civilizations is nothing more nor less than the tale of secrets of statesmen and states revealed.

What becomes apparent soon enough in reading the edited work “Government Secrecy” in a new volume of the monographic series *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy* v.19 (*RSPPP*) is the startling fact that it is not always Racine’s historical time, per se, that is the crux of governments penchant for concealment but often ‘just enough time’ at which point a secret may be discarded and labeled ‘old news’ or leaked in bits for propagandistic purposes or conversely openly revealed. That secrets serve many purposes forms the key ingredient behind the success heads of states are able to wield to keep their actions for good or ill concealed. After all, the plans of the Japanese military to bomb Pearl Harbor in 1941 only needed to be kept secret sufficiently long for their planes and payloads to arrive over the coastlines of Hawaii without detection. In this their secret succeeded. Ironically it was a secret intended to reveal something important, exposed literally with a bang, by proclaiming in an act of war the rise of Japan’s imperial might. The rest, as they say, is history.

As is stated in the Introduction, what sets this volume of *RSPPP* apart from more traditional historical exposés of how nation-states shape geopolitics through secrecy, is this work’s stated goal to provide sufficiently broad underpinnings of scholarship, in a single edited volume, to help elevate government secrecy studies to a formal area studies in its own right, a first step if you will “toward actualizing a field of inquiry termed secrecy studies” (Maret xxii). A noble effort one might argue given how modern social media and communication has formed a worldwide network of citizens decrying government secrecy which pervades and jades our worldview. But perhaps it has always been so, it’s just today we have YouTube technologies to cut quicker to a consensual worldview based so often not on reasoned judgment, but visceral reaction.

“Government Secrecy” is edited by secrets expert, Susan Maret, a lecturer in information secrecy and freedom of information at the School of Library & Information Science at San José State University, and a widely published

author on the topic herself. In this current work of compilation, Maret does a masterful job of bringing together nineteen separate essays to examine the history of government manipulation of information while simultaneously delving into topics as diverse as information control, censorship, ethics, concealment, freedom of information and in the end, the universal obligations of governments to abide by efforts toward transparency.

With a stated purpose of focusing ‘on the analysis of the potential failure of public institutions to fulfill their obligations to the broader society’ in this regard, this particular volume of *RSPPP* on government secrecy succeeds in its obligation to discuss secrecy openly. Divided into four well-represented sections covering respectively the historical underpinnings of the evolving scholarship, a global exploration on national security, the current status of government policies related to state secrets, and finally, on the ethical tensions between an increasingly ‘open source’ society and the closed circuit business-as-usual governance we have all come to decry, *Government Secrecy* seeks to provide a global perspective which is both selective and representative. Each of the sections is ably introduced by Maret who serves as the reader’s guide through the individual articles in the volume.

For anyone wanting a cook’s tour of the history of government secrecy studies, both Maret’s Introduction and her separate overviews of the four sections, provide excellent background. In the opening Introduction, putting the essays in the volume in context, she ably describes such seminal figures as Georg Simmel, a German philosopher and social critic, who was one of the first critical thinkers in Europe to delve into the political pathology of the “dysfunctional excesses of secrecy” back in the early 1900s. We are introduced to sociologists like Edward Shils and Carl Friedrich in the U.S., who worked under the shadow of McCarthyism yet wrote poignantly about the fallout of “the compulsory withholding of knowledge.” And to give even the government its due, Maret explores recent efforts by the U.S. government’s to sanction exposure as set out by such efforts as the Senate’s Moynihan Commission in the late 1990s.

In all one comes to realize that government secrecy is a hugely complex but equally interdisciplinary subject whose welter of complex parts remains largely unexplored. Indeed, in Table 1 in the Introduction called “Selected Forms of Secrecy and Enabling Factors” Maret provides two pages of topics each worthy of its own voluminous inquiry. Next to each topic she includes some of the early investigators, providing in total a set of proposed boundaries to this emerging field.

While the articles themselves focus heavily on the United States, *Government Secrecy* does provide excellent investigations on the ‘British view’ (Wilkinson), a Cuban perspective (Maret & Aschenkas), cross-national Africa (Relly), and from Mexico (Fox & Haight). There is also a fine cross-section of topics, from the secretive early responses to the BP spill (Edelstein), to a critique on the censorship of history (de Baets),

to a deconstruction of conspiracy theories (Olmstead), to freedoms of the press in Israel (Nossek & Limor) to a topic dear to this reviewer, Project Censored and media accountability.

In aggregate these essays flesh out a conceptual framework that reveals the differences between privacy and secrecy, between secrecy and censorship, between what gets censored and the duties of a truly investigative press, and how the media, especially social media, feeds conspiracy theories, and why conspiracy theories at heart are a perfectly understandable psychic response which an alarmed citizenry of the world has come to realize are too often confirmed by revelations of nefarious activity by their own governments. No wonder leaders, legislators and corporate tycoons everywhere seek to control access to information, too often their dirty laundry shows just how often they work tirelessly against the interests of we the people. In reading these essays one becomes only too aware that often the greatest weapon governments, and corporations have in their armamentarium of concealments is the counter-intuitive weapon of the controlled leak, or worse misinformation campaigns. This work seeks to tease out these disparate threads and examine more effectively their interconnectedness.

Worldwide, but especially in the United States, we see a growing collapse of the financial stability of the Fourth Estate. We witness the consolidation of media empires under the rogue stewardship of demagogues and bottom-liners. Yet we remain ubiquitously surrounded by a Google driven miasma of variegated information outlets. Sadly, to the average voter the blogosphere may well seem indistinguishable from critical reporting. Social media abounds to info-tain the masses, and YouTube can often seem more 'truthful' in its voyeuristic quality of seeing 'history' as it happens, as opposed to the hard slog of wading through long articles of investigative reporting. The mantra "who has the time to read all that stuff" resounds. Even a news junkie like this reviewer, feels guilty each night as yet another *New Yorker*, *Harpers*, or *New York Times* piles up beside his bed unread. For this very reason, creating a new field of scholarly endeavor called "secrecy studies" that will be rooted in the traditions of academic freedom and intellectual inquiry, funded we can only hope by independent universities, is a welcome emergence if our democratic institutions of governance are to survive this near ubiquitous onslaught of closed door deals and dealings by the rich and powerful. In this regard volume 19 of the monographic series *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy* covering this engaging topic of "Government Secrecy" is a welcome vanguard to an emerging field.

Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines, edited by Gloria J. Leckie, Lisa M. Given, and John E. Buschman. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2010.

reviewed by Kevin Rioux

Regular readers of *Progressive Librarian* are likely to be aware that critical theoretical tools have long been mainstays of research in the humanities and social sciences, but that library and information science, heavily influenced by positivistic traditions, has been slow to adopt critical methods. Squarely addressing this lack of engagement, Gloria Leckie, Lisa Given, and John Buschman, editors of *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines*, present a substantive collection of essays on critical theories positioned especially for LIS researchers.

Leckie and Buschman introduce critical theory by tracing its source to the Frankfurt School of social thought and critique that emerged in Germany in the 1930s, along with a concurrent critical theory movement in France. Initially, critical theory was primarily concerned with social aspects of economic issues. Readers new to critical methods will notice that the approach leans heavily on neo-Marxist vocabularies, which is attributable to its early-to-mid 20th Century European origins. Leckie and Buschman show us that some critical theorists eventually rejected Marxian language and/or de-emphasized economics. The goal of these later theorists was to encourage societal pluralism, democratic justice for minorities, and the recognition of a complex, diverse humanity that scientific definitions of reality, often perceived as being privileged, could not fully articulate.

It quickly becomes clear to the reader of Leckie and Bushman's introduction that the concept of critical theory can be somewhat amorphous. But one can readily conclude that critical theory works simultaneously as both a tool of social critique and as a metatheoretical approach that urges the active and continuous examination of the foundations of any given theory. In contrast to some positivistic methods, critical theory encourages researchers to uncover and make explicit all underlying assumptions and goals of their research methods and agendas, and to acknowledge that they themselves, as integrated members of society, cannot be entirely neutral observers.

The editors suggest that because it is widely considered to be under-theorized, library and information science can benefit from the rigor of critical methods in a number of ways. Among them: 1) critical theory can guide researchers to read LIS scholarship "against the grain", providing richer conclusions and better guidance for practice; 2) LIS is often enhanced by adopting theoretical perspectives from other fields. Critical approaches can assist researchers to become more aware of the underpinnings of borrowed theory and theoretical developments, providing additional

integration of LIS and its research into the larger academic community; 3) critical theories give LIS researchers new perspectives and tools to examine issues that concern the field, including information technologies, equitable access to information, cultural diversity, lifelong learning, and overall societal improvement.

Following up on their introductory points, the editors present twenty-three chapters on a wide variety of critical theorists and theories written by LIS scholars from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, and the United States. Among this group are authors well known for their critical-theoretical work (e.g., John Budd, John Buschman, Ronald Day, Bernd Frohmann, Hope Olson, Sanna Talja).

Each chapter is unique, as each author is unique. But it is clear that the intention of all the contributors is to welcome the reader, even if the theoretical topic being discussed is admittedly complex. Chapters start with a biography of a featured critical theorist that includes philosophical influences and/or the social or historic contexts in which he or she worked. Then the authors provide a thorough commentary and explication of the critical theory, and relate it to possible applications in library and information science. Each chapter concludes with a full set of references for further reading.

Working with theory is always a tough business, but these writers neither obfuscate nor over-simplify. Chapters are engagingly written, accessible to motivated readers of every level of experience. Throughout the text, the reader is encouraged to actively engage with intellectually “chewy” material, and rewarding edification is the result. With a little effort, readers come away with an increased appreciation of critical methods, and an expanded view of how to consider LIS phenomena.

The editors indicate that they do not cluster chapters in any particular order because of inherent conceptual reasons. Instead, critical theorists are presented in alphabetical order. This reviewer took liberties and did some grouping to illustrate the breadth of potential audiences of this book. Thus, readers interested in pragmatic applications and the service ethos of librarianship will especially appreciate the critical theories of Michel Aglietta, Antonio Gramsci, and Dorothy Smith. Readers involved in classification, taxonomy, indexing, social media, and knowledge representation will be interested in the chapters featuring the work of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, the Psychoanalysts, and Martin Heidegger. Readers interested in information behavior will find the chapters on Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Jean Lave, Anthony Giddens, and Ferdinand de Saussure particularly useful. Researchers interested in the cultural aspects of the information sphere, including notions of power, capital, positive social transformation and democratization will appreciate the chapters on Pierre Bordieu, Paolo Friere, Henry Giroux, Jürgen Habermas, Bruno Latour, Henri Lefebvre, Herbert Marcuse, Chantal Mouffe, Antonio Negri, and Gayatri Spivak. Readers with general interests would do well to simply

start at the Introduction and read the entire book, either skipping around or in chapter sequence.

Indeed, *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science* is a fine contribution to LIS literature, and is highly recommended for experienced researchers and graduate students. The editors and contributors position critical theory well in this volume, but do not set up critical theory as a panacea to all theory building challenges in LIS. Rather, critical theory is put forth as a way to expand our horizons and keep LIS intellectually strong and honest.

But placing the book in a wider context reveals a shortcoming. Whenever scholars urge change (in this case, urging full consideration of critical theory in LIS contexts), there is always the danger of “preaching to the choir”. As good as this book is, it does not entirely escape from this danger. LIS scholars already familiar with the efficacy of critical theory (the “choir”) will be very pleased with this book. However, some of the characteristic vocabulary of critical theory may be bewildering to younger scholars and readers who are well-read but new to critical theory. In light of a decades-long era of capitalist triumphalism, neo-liberalism, and recent public union-busting and austerity, critical theory terms long associated with social struggles such as “emancipation”, “resistance”, and “progressive” may be perceived as defeated or weak or irrelevant. Critical theory is often identified with the political left and the intelligentsia, two groups that have long been on the defensive in North America, northern Europe, and Australia, the home of much LIS research. What’s more, the post World War II era and the social upheavals of the late 1960s, influential for many of the theorists profiled in this book, are long-ago history for many readers. This prompts the question: Is critical theory underutilized in LIS because of perceptions of its relevance to the contemporary information scene? Is it seen as being archaic?

Neither the editors nor the contributors of this book directly address these questions, nor do they offer an explicit “tool kit” that could help researchers show that critical theory and its accompanying discourse remains more relevant than ever in this time of information commoditization. The writers and editors of this volume, clearly passionate about critical studies, are no doubt aware of this intellectual problem, but probably decided these issues could be addressed elsewhere.

This should be seen as a challenge for all of us interested in critical studies and progressive politics in librarianship. We need an ongoing effort to show that critical theoretical tools have been and continue to be relevant for LIS. *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from Across the Disciplines* serves as an excellent foundation for this effort.

Introduction to Public Librarianship, Second Edition, by Kathleen de la Peña McCook. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011.

reviewed by Mark Hudson

When the first edition of Kathleen de la Peña McCook's *Introduction to Public Librarianship* was published in 2005, it filled a great void in the scholarly and practical literature of the field, and it remains the most rigorous, comprehensive and thoughtful overview available on the subject. In that first edition, McCook articulated a vision of the public library as a community-building institution, dedicated to sustaining and expanding the public sphere by developing diverse collections, programs and services that promote reflective reading and lifelong learning and thus empower poor, working-class and culturally excluded people to enter the dialogue of the commons. McCook traced the philosophical shift regarding collection development and intellectual freedom from the First World War, during which librarians in the United States willingly engaged in the censorship of pacifist, antiwar, and German-language materials, to the period following the Second World War, when the profession made the transition to an ethical position defined at its core by an abstract commitment to the ideals of intellectual freedom.

The second edition is significantly expanded and enhanced by the addition of numerous new sources published since 2005. Chapters 7, 8 and 9 (Structure and Infrastructure, Adult Services, and Youth Services) in particular have been greatly augmented and to a large extent completely rewritten. Chapter 12 ("The Future of Public Libraries in the Twenty-First Century: Human Rights and Human Capabilities," co-authored with Katharine J. Phenix) is completely new, and it is this chapter that most compellingly articulates McCook's vision of a transformative public librarianship that goes beyond an abstract defense of intellectual freedom toward an unequivocal commitment to social justice and human emancipation.

McCook and Phenix predict that U.S. public librarians in the twenty-first century will begin to develop service models and employ language reflecting universal human rights values. The connections between public library practice and human rights concepts have long been an integral part of global library discourse but have remained implicit and submerged in U.S. public library philosophy. In an interconnected global society, however, this is likely to change, and U.S. public librarians will increasingly be guided by a commitment to universal human rights and the free development of human capabilities. Access to knowledge, the right to receive and disseminate ideas and information, the right to participate in cultural life, and the protection and promotion of cultural expression and linguistic diversity are some of the principles that will expand our thinking about public library service in the twenty-first century.

McCook and Phenix provide grounds for optimism about the future of public librarianship, but there are strong countervailing forces that could lead to a very different outcome for the profession. U.S. public libraries stand at a dangerous crossroads. Will we continue to embrace a technology-driven business model that marginalizes human and social concerns and strives to emulate chain bookstores and e-commerce, or will we remain true to the best ideals of the profession and an expanded commitment to social justice, human rights and human emancipation? Library workers and educators who choose the latter will find no text more indispensable than the second edition of *Introduction to Public Librarianship*.

The Atlas of New Librarianship, by R. David Lankes. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2011. 978-0-262-01509-7; 10x10, 408 pp., 1 map, 242 figures, 3 tables, \$55.00.

reviewed by Elaine Harger

Where to begin this review of *The Atlas of New Librarianship* by R. David Lankes? Being a lover of maps and atlases since childhood, I jumped at the chance to review this hot-off-the-press book from MIT Press. But, where to start is a dilemma. With the sinking feeling I got thumbing through the pages searching in vain for the rich, colorful graphic representation of the terrain our new librarianship will travel in years to come? With the tears of pride toward my profession when I read Lankes' account of how the Free Library of Philadelphia handled its "homeless problem"? Or, maybe I should just immediately dispense with the irritation caused throughout my reading of *The Atlas* toward the seemingly non-existent editorial oversight of this coffetable-quality produced (and priced) tome. So many choices from a wild topography of reactions to a book hailed by other reviewers as: "Essential" – "wow.wow.wow" – "Deep thinking, beyond brands" – "not a book...a manifesto."

My fellow reviewers have convinced me. There is only one appropriate place to begin – on the positive side, with a point of agreement, and an invitation to conversation. On page 11, Lankes writes,

There are, no doubt, other limiting perspectives in this work, and it is your responsibility to point them out and my responsibility to listen and work with you to correct or at least account for them.

Okay, David. Ready to begin a conversation?

At the foundation of the new librarianship is knowledge, conversation and community, (not books or buildings or cataloging systems) and the pole star to navigating this new librarianship is a mission statement: "The Mission of Librarians is to Improve Society through Facilitating Knowledge Creation in their Communities."

Lankes presents his thinking through a series of "Threads" and an assortment of "Agreements." The threads (aka chapters) – Mission; Knowledge Creation; Facilitating; Communities; Improve Society; and Librarians – take up roughly half of the book, and through them, in a breezy, conversational tone, Lankes explains the vision he has for a new librarianship. The agreements (aka appendices) –147 in all – which take up the other half of this 408 page book, and provide elaboration (more on this later) on some of the concepts, theories, and proposals raised in the preceding threads/chapters. The book also comes with a folded 67 x 89 cm. map, a graphic representation of concepts and connections of the

new librarianship, pieces of which are presented in both the threads and agreements.

There are some ideas one can heartily and unhesitatingly agree with, and others worthy of serious consideration. Here's a small sample:

"Members Not Patrons or Users"...I like the term because it implies belonging, shared ownership, and shared responsibility. p. 6

I feel it important now to state that I am not anti-book or anti-artifact. They are amazingly useful tools and are indeed amazingly effective in helping transfer knowledge. p.41

...information literacy must include the idea of conversational literacy. p.73

I hate the READ posters [although he does admit to liking Yoda's]...What I would put in their place is Ask posters. p.73-4

Perhaps an area where you can serve a major need in your community is by moderating in-person meetings, ensuring safety from those seeking to dominate the conversation, or sidelining a conversant. p.77

...if the conversation is important to your community, you need to find a way to be a part of it. p.110

What you as a librarian must aspire to is intellectual honesty. p.123

The social justice obligation of a new librarian is to implement values within their communities, particularly around concepts of minority views¹. They must do so by understanding the value systems of the community and do their best to speak within that value system. However, once again the mission of "improving society" trumps the value norms of any one given community. p. 125

How can you as a librarian expect to produce positive change agents from your members, and ask a community to change and improve, if you are not willing to do so yourself? p.128

Our goal is an improved society, and that means that individual librarians must risk personal comfort and clearly defined boundaries for the greater good. Librarians must lead. They must do so not out of a desire for power, money, or a better parking spot, but because the better the leaders in the library community, the better the community as a whole can serve society. p.134

While it fills this gray-headed librarian's heart with gladness to see knowledge, facilitation, community and social improvement placed at the forefront of the new librarianship, I have to admit (as Lankes himself frequently does) that there is much here that is not new to librarianship at all. In recent years, these four concepts have not always been given the central position Lankes places them in, but there have been (and still are) librarians for whom these ideas have long served as guiding lights both professionally and personally. By way of example, Lankes writes,

...in our new librarianship we facilitate literacy in members [aka patrons or users] to empower...literacy is about the power to excel and, when necessary, break the rules to improve society and the community. p.75

This will certainly sound familiar to the ears of librarians with grayer heads than mine. No mere coincidence accounts for the fact that libraries have long been the sites of literacy programs across the nation serving members of their communities. Would a librarian who'd been involved with setting up libraries during Freedom Summer in Mississippi think literacy as power marked something "new" in librarianship? How about a librarian inspired by the work of Paulo Freire?

"New" is a pesky little adjective – it works, of course, to describe the truly new. It also describes things that are not new, in and of themselves, but that are new to the person encountering them for the first time. There is also the newness arising from our society's cultural predisposition to historic amnesia that often makes it appear that something is new, when in fact it has actually been around for quite some time, but has fallen out-of-style, or into a period of dormancy, or was driven out, repressed, or otherwise forced to flee or be forgotten. And, of course, there is the constant, unrelenting marketing of "new" thises and thats. Few would buy, for example, a new book called *The Atlas of Old Librarianship* – which is not to suggest that Lankes' book doesn't present some new ideas, but there is a fundamental scholarly sloppiness in neglecting to either research or to acknowledge historical antecedents.

The point of this little semantic digression (leading to a major concern), however, is that although Lankes does admit that many of the tasks he charges the new librarianship with aren't really new, he never asks "What happened?" What happened, for example, to the idea that "literacy is power" so that the director of the iSchool at Syracuse should feel compelled to place this idea in the forefront of the profession's attention again by claiming it for the "new" librarianship?

It is precisely here that this reviewer finds *The Atlas*' greatest shortcoming. In not exploring the historical roots of issues or acknowledging the power dynamics at play within and upon librarianship, forces which cause us to become trapped in cycles of new- and oldness, a truly new and empowering vision of the profession can never be achieved. Lankes' vision will get "lost" like others that came before, pulled under to sit in the depths before popping to the surface again to be noticed by someone as something "new." Maybe it is because we school librarians (employed, unemployed, on trial or otherwise) are possibly more tuned in to this phenomenon than our colleagues in other settings that I'm dwelling on this business of newness. After all, how many generations of "the new curriculum" have we seen come through our schools? More than we've seen generations of students, that is for sure. But this is important. Those who don't learn from history

are bound to repeat it. So let's do a little deep thinking exercise on one paragraph from the book.

Librarians must go back to the days of pathfinders and annotated bibliographies. In a real sense, the drive toward efficiency put in place by Dewey a century ago is going to greatly decrease the value of librarians. This drive has led to the equating of copy cataloging to information organization. Librarians are taking records focused on artifacts, developed in one context, and assuming they have universal utility to all communities. This is crazy.

Several things are going on in this passage. First the implication here is that, somehow, notions Dewey had about efficiency are responsible for the fact that pathfinders and annotated bibliographies need to be revived by the new librarianship. Well, the disappearance of these tools from the library scene had nothing to do with Dewey, and everything to do with the belief, quite popular in library and information science circles in the 1980s and '90s, that keyword searches of digitized information made things like pathfinders and bibliographies obsolete. Plus, they took time to compile and money to produce. It was much cheaper to do keyword searches to find everything the patron/user/member might need. At the time, many librarians argued that we shouldn't abandon bibliographic work, but they lost that "vicious" debate. They were, after all, only a bunch of Dewey-loving bibliofundamentalists, definitely not-with-it dinosaurs.

About the copy cataloging, yes, a drive toward efficiency prompted the practice of copy cataloging, back in 1901 at the Library of Congress. It was also a drive toward standardization, an effort to compile of a comprehensive list of books published in the U.S. and holding libraries, and probably even a simple desire for the sharing of professional knowledge and skill. However, the "equation" (or, I'd suggest, the substitution) of copy cataloging to library-specific information organization, and the practice of utilizing the former in place of the later, was all about money and made possible by technological developments. RLIN and OCLC made it possible to have library clerks begin to take over work done by librarians. Furthermore, large-scale use of unenhanced copy cataloging took off in the 1980s and '90s, so it simply isn't fair (never mind accurate) to blame old Melville for all this.

As for the matter of the assumption that cataloging practices have "universal utility to all communities," the fact is that cataloging is an art, and the cataloger can approach his or her work as a copyist or as an artist (or any combination thereof). A cataloger can acknowledge all members of the library community and provide access points to the artifacts that live in the library that address any number of special needs. That such artistry takes place less-and-less these days is a reflection, more than anything else, of (1) budgetary priorities, (2) the demise of cataloging as not only a specialization, but as a skill in the field, and (3) technological possibility.

Lankes' blanket refusal to acknowledge the economic, information industry, market, and ideological forces at play here (and elsewhere in *The Atlas*) leaves one wondering why new librarians *are not to be informed* of these power dynamics. Lankes writes that, "It pains me to see [librarians] battered and beaten in the winds of a financial and political storm." (p. 98), but does this pain prompt him to add to his extensive explication of the new librarianship any alerts on how to identify, and possibly be prepared to deal with, such "storms"? And, why in the world call them "storms" in the first place? To make us feel even more powerless than we already do? Storms are a force of nature. There is little librarianship can do in the face of a tsunami or a tornado, while there is much that can be done when confronted by often self-serving and sometimes manipulative markets, industries, trends, *if* one knows how they work, *if* one can read the signs of their presence and activity, *if* one can decode their doublespeak. Why not give over a few pages of *The Atlas* to an examination of this reality? Elsewhere, Lankes writes, "if paraprofessionals are being brought in to replace librarians because they are cheaper, this is not the right reason." (p. 177) But, surely, Lankes knows that the trend toward hiring of paraprofessionals was and is fueled *exactly* because of their low "cost." Why not describe that dynamic so that new librarians can at least have a textbook understanding of the process?

The Atlas glosses over far too many ideas and statements in similar fashion – from passages regarding ERIC's demise to "augmented reality" to "massive scale" data collecting to roaming librarians in the pediatric wards of hospitals. The conversational quality of these threads trumps any inclination for the rich, deep exploration they deserve.

Moving on to another concern, *The Atlas* suffers from a lack of editorial oversight.

There is no index, although one would be most helpful. Ditto for a bibliography. And, never mind the funky alphabetization of Agreement headings², but the unevenness of the content within them comes across as downright sloppy – lazy. Imagine, if you will, that Webster decided not to include any information (except SEE references) for 60% of the words in his dictionary; that he provided only partial information for 11%; but did provide pronunciation keys, parts of speech, plurals, tenses and definitions for the rest – 41% – although with extreme unevenness. The Agreement for Scapes, for example, is 13 pages long, while many of the Agreements that have more than a wee SEE reference, only contain a one paragraph "Agreement Description" and/or a "Conversation Starter" and/or "Related Artifacts" ie. citations.

Here's a sample of other, mostly minor matters: Typos (Scape for scape being the most frequent in spite of the fact that Lankes offers a rule about when and when-not-to capitalize); sentence fragments ("These services consisted of some libraries but a lot of AskA services (they get their name from services such as Ask-A-Scientist, Ask-a-Volcanologist, etc.)." p.122);

and formatting (see p. 100 for an alignment mistake). And, as far as I'm concerned, the typo on p. 385 is unforgivable (can't even bring myself to tell you, dear reader, what it is). I can, of course, accept that *The Atlas* is a work in progress, but the book has the feel of a very long e-mail. One overlooks the niceties (such as spelling), and surfs the surface in order to share what's on one's mind at the moment. Or maybe I simply expect too much from MIT Press' editorial staff.

Before finally commenting on the cartography of *The Atlas of New Librarianship*, there is a very disturbing us-versus-them thread in this book. Part of it is rhetorical, and – okay – I can deal with that, but another part seems either unnecessarily antagonistic or actually downright and truly mean-spirited.

There is a debate coming...it is sure to be vicious, [it] will come from within our own ranks. It will be from the annoyed librarians³ of the world who seek the status quo and see their mission as recorded knowledge⁴, the collection of artifacts, and the maintenance of organizations labeled libraries.... But listen to me. There will come a point when the debate must end – when, as we know from our understanding of Conversation Theory, we must agree to disagree. Then we will have to do something painful. We will have to leave them behind. p.172

First, it must be said that Lankes is as much on the side of more and bigger technology as he is on the side of community, facilitation, knowledge and librarians. This comes through clearly in the pages of *The Atlas*. And if the choice comes down to circuitry or bricks and paper, he'll be on the side of the circuits, bits and bytes, digitally-mediated conversations, and superdatasets. Now, I know many librarians who would almost rather die than watch a library destroyed, and I know these are not "vicious" people. They are passionate, yes, and they will argue vociferously against exchanging book-filled libraries for "massive scale" databases of transportation departments with their daily asphalt temperatures and of apartment complexes in Dubai with their daily elevator-ride times and destinations the maintenance of which Lankes tells us we must embrace as an important (and worthwhile) task of librarianship's future. And, when anyone in the camp of the computer industry (an arm, of course, of the military-industrial-security complex) states, "We will have to do something painful," well, I can't help but wonder "Why painful"? Why an expression of violence, why the armageddon-style "leave them behind" as if librarians who defend the books and the buildings (as well as the OPACs and internet terminals, library Facebook pages, community outreach programs, etc.) are deserving of hell and damnation? What could possibly be the underlying (unconscious?) intent of this atlas?

Might the intent be revealed (as in a Freudian slip?) in the Agreement heading "Intellectual Freedom and Safety"? I find this heading intriguing. The notion of intellectual freedom is usually a stand-alone. Not in Lankes'

book. He explains that librarians must make the arena of knowledge and conversation “safe” for voices of dissent, for minority voices. Okay. So, how is describing a not-yet-held debate as “vicious” and warning of “painful” consequences a model of the exercise of intellectual freedom in a safe environment? I thought we were supposed to “walk the talk.” Or maybe Lankes is actually edging toward alliance with those for whom “security” trumps the First Amendment. That is, after all, where the big bucks are.

Finally, about the cartography of this atlas. There isn’t any. Tinted titanium-looking balls of varying sizes are strung together by definitely anorexic arrows into what could pass as a classic hierarchical organizational flowchart (except that rectangles and straight lines have been replaced by the curves of spheres and downward flowing arrows). The map, folded into a pocket at the back of the book, shows the entire chart. Each sphere and arrow is labeled. The atlas itself contains fragments of the map at appropriate places. Each Agreement contains its piece of map and sometimes references to threads, citations, conversation starters, descriptive paragraphs or excerpts from lengthier, related texts. One telling aspect of this map is that everything flows in one direction. No feedback loops, no inputs, no representation of context. Not even a label. Nothing but empty white space surrounds the mission of the library and everything else flowing from that solitary source.

And the cover – Alas! Here is planet Earth reflected in, and framed by, some-brand, top-of-the-line computer screen with what looks like GPS data around the edges. Over both screen and planet is another reflection, of a hand, a white man’s hand, cuffed in the sleeve of a business suit, index finger pointing to the word “New” in the book’s title – hovering over Siberia. The hand sort of floats in some clouds, like the hand of God, with the sun reflected at the base of his little finger.

Clearly, man and technology dominate the planet. And here I was, kind of hoping that it would be a central part of the mission of a “new librarianship” to compel our communities toward a different understanding of our relationship with the Earth. Silly me.

If you are a map enthusiast, as I am, you will not find anything that touches your heart. Not that librarianship (new, old or otherwise) can’t be mapped, it just isn’t – here. To be fair, an atlas is a huge undertaking, maybe too much so to expect of today’s largely 2.0 penchant for surfing over surfaces. Most software can produce flowcharts. But one would need to dive into some heavyduty cartographic software to actually produce a map.

The Atlas of New Librarianship is without a doubt worth a read, and Lankes is, I believe, sincere in his invitation to converse. If you’re like me, crazy with the marginalia, you’ll have to buy your own copy. Otherwise, borrow it from your nearest and dearest, brick-and-mortar library or visit it online at <http://www.newlibrarianship.org/wordpress/>.

Footnotes

1. Although Lankes makes repeated references to librarians' responsibility in facilitating minority, dissident, silenced views in community conversations, *The Atlas* is strikingly barren of any references to or citations from the plethora of writers and works regarding minorities (racial, ethnic, gender, class) and their concerns, communities, contributions to librarianship, and experiences as minority, as dissident, as silenced. A case of historic amnesia, oversight, ignorance?
2. General practice (even in the new librarianship, one would hope) is that initial articles, such as "The," are ignored for purposes of alphabetization. So, for instance, "The Mission of Librarians is..." would be alphabetized under "Mission" not "The" which is where Lankes places it. Also, general practice is that in alphabetizing a phrase, one selects the keyword as the one by which to alphabetize. Thus, "Importance of a Worldview" would be alphabetized under "Worldview" rather than listed under "Importance" as is done throughout this book. In a digital environment, of course, it doesn't matter too much how things are alphabetized, but it does matter in a book.
3. It is below-the-belt to use as a general moniker (for all librarians who might not share Lankes' worldview) the name of this anonymous blogger who delights in dis'ing anyone who non-anonymously holds viewpoints other than her (his?) own.
4. Lankes goes to great length to express his loathing for the phrase "recorded knowledge" on p. 41.

Beyond Article 19: Libraries and Social and Cultural Rights, edited by Julie Biando Edwards and Stephan P. Edwards. Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010.

reviewed by Katharine Phenix

Under Ronald Reagan, Secretary of State George Schultz announced that the United States government would not renew its membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on December 19, 1984, ostensibly because UNESCO was becoming too politicized, the budget was bloated, and there were “management failures”¹ by the Director General Amidou Mahtar M’Bow, a Muslim from Senegal. The third reason Secretary Schultz cited is perhaps more telling. It included these phrases: endemic hostility towards the basic institutions of a free society; in particular, a free press, free markets and, above all, the rights of the individual.² This last statement is in reference to the content of the MacBride Report, written by a 16-member International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. Published in 1980 under the title *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*, its conclusion called for a New World Information and Communication Order. The report noted that access to information and its sources and flow was largely controlled by the Western media bureaus such as the Associated Press and Reuters. Its recommendations, involving de-commercialization of the media and coordinated international government regulation and control, among many others, including strengthening cultural identity and encouraging grassroots communication, was primarily backed by Third World coalitions and Soviet countries. This could not be supported by the US, commercial interests in the US, and our friend, Great Britain.

The withdrawal was not without dissenters at the time. The ALA Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) pleaded for the US to remain in UNESCO and at least keep in touch.

RESOLVED, that the Department of State and the Congress to monitor closely future developments in UNESCO so as both to safeguard important American interests in the library, information and communications areas during the period of withdrawal and to facilitate a continuing process of reform that will permit the United States to rejoin UNESCO at the earliest possible date.³

Other opposition is described by Mahoney and Roach in their letter to the *New York Times* “Spread the Truth About UNESCO.”⁴

This withdrawal robbed a generation of Americans (the UK withdrew in 1985 and returned in 1997) of the opportunity to learn about and participate in what is known as second and third generations of human

rights development.⁵ We have remained stolidly in support of the first generation of human rights which are defined by in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Second generation rights evolve from the first, and include a societal right to a quality of life, to welfare, education, and leisure. They include the right to work, to choice of work, for equal pay for equal work, to join a trade union, and the right to “social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality” (Article 22). Exercising these rights requires the intentional promotion of the “many voices.” With our withdrawal from UNESCO, librarianship in the United States was left behind in the evolution of the understanding of the role of libraries and cultural rights.

We have begun to reclaim and recognize that the foundation for library services to the individual is solid and bound up with Article 19. We must begin to embrace our responsibilities to second and third generation human rights as expressed in the UDHR beyond Article 19, which speak to cultural rights and group rights, including...access to culture and to community at the public library. There is a new canon of literature addressing human rights in libraries, and this work builds and expands upon it.

Beyond Article 19 is a slim volume comprised of four excellent and diverse discussions of the direction already embraced by libraries and librarians as they re-create their purposes and re-think their policies. Most of the authors focus on Article 27 of the UDHR which states:

- (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

In the first essay, Julie Biando Edwards sets the stage for bringing us all to the place where libraries are representations of Culture and centers for preserving and enhancing communities of culture. She says “...the current literature has by and large not connected libraries, community, and human rights in a way that allows us to conceptualize our role in reflecting and creating the cultural life of the community as human rights work.” (p. 15) Her “new vision of librarianship” draws from a 1952 UNESCO study of Article 27 called “Study of the right to participate in cultural life.”⁶ Edwards notes that libraries are specifically mentioned four times, and

their work implied in other sections. The authors discuss new technologies of communication and conclude that:

...these new developments should enable the man on the street, as well as the small privileged minority, gradually to acquire the ability to enjoy the most liberal and civilized forms of cultural life in all its rich diversity, to keep in touch with the advances in science, and to profit from what has been handed down by the world's civilizations.

Edwards recognizes that this document is seated in a period in history when Westernization wasn't considered to be such a bad thing, even to the point of encouraging destruction of indigenous culture, but this study is nuanced in support of multiculturalism, and goes on to say:

On the other hand the man on the street is now often uprooted from his natural environment and can rely less and less upon a fabric of beliefs and accepted patterns of behaviour characteristic of the group in which he lives; the demands made on him from every side complicate his life. Many thinkers are convinced that man's only hope of recovering a harmonious balance is to strive independently after a deeper spiritual understanding. From this point of view it is of vital importance that all shall have the opportunity of taking part in cultural life, for such participation seems supremely apt to furnish modern man with the means of achieving this clear-sighted harmony.

The works that follow Edwards introduction build on the importance of a libraries' relationship to cultural expression. Natalia Taylor Poppeliers reminds us again that several UN documents specifically mention libraries, or implicate them as institutions which promote popular participation in culture, or at least preserve it, as well as cultural centers, museums, theaters, cinemas, and traditional arts and crafts. Within the context of libraries in Africa, a generation of Colonial repression is revealed. Libraries can be seen as representative of Colonial repression in Sub-Saharan Africa, or in the case of indigenous peoples of the Global North, a "tool for the promotion of the interests of the ruling classes"(p. 120). This takes us right back to the moment the US left the human rights movement, in response to the MacBride report, *Many Voices*, which warns against top-down, Western biased information, calls upon indigenous voices in native languages to balance corporate interests, warns against Colonial interference in local practice and land use, and recommends:

Strengthening Cultural Identity

Promoting conditions for the preservation of cultural identity of every society is necessary to enable it to enjoy a harmonious and creative inter-relationship with other cultures. It is equally necessary to modify situations in many developed and developing

countries which suffer from cultural dominance. We recommend: Establishment of national cultural policies which should foster cultural identity and creativity, and involve the media in these tasks. Such policies should also contain guidelines for safeguarding national cultural development while promoting knowledge of other cultures. It is in relation to others that each culture enhances its own identity.

Poppeliers revisits “community” in the African context and warns against using dominant technological models, or, information and communication technologies (ICTs) to further promote western cultural expansion and reduce, rather than amplify local community expression and communication.

Franz Albarillo’s “Cultural Rights and Language Rights in Libraries” explores some of the dynamic tension between individual and group rights as defined as cultural rights. Since information is mediated by language, it is a most fundamental right of culture. He notes “it is a positive sign that there are 10,000 entries in Swahili in Wikipedia.” Just recently the Special Rapporteur...has declared that access to the Internet is a fundamental human right,⁷ but if Internet information is only available in the languages of the ruling classes, then whole populations are denied that right. Librarians are called upon to make a “fundamental shift from equitable access and “by the numbers” policies to a broader understanding that people have a universal right to information...which is represented in language, poetry, technology, and so on.” Paraphrasing Nigerian writer Ngugi wa Thiong he concludes “Our collections need to restore people’s beliefs in their language, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacity, and ultimately in themselves.” (p.111)

The final contribution to this work is “We Collect, Organize, Preserve, and Provide Access, With Respect: Indigenous Peoples’ Cultural Life in Libraries”, by Loriene Roy and Kristen Hogan. The authors again focus on Article 27 of the UDHR and recognize that critical interpretation of culture requires recognition of indigenous cultures. “We believe that in consciously engaging with Article 27 librarians can begin a consideration of the intersection between indigenous rights, their cultural expressions, and the service and philosophical missions of libraries” p. 116. After a discussion of who are indigenous peoples, and librarians’ failure to record tribal history and/or conform to tribal protocol, we are reminded that “a key part of indigenous peoples’ cultural rights is indigenous control over indigenous cultural practices and creations.” This is in its way, the most radical of propositions, but the most logical extension of what cultural rights in the library context really mean.

“...libraries cannot support indigenous peoples’ cultural rights without including indigenous librarians and library consultants in shaping the space and work of the library. If it seems to some non-indigenous librarians almost impossible to develop relationships

with indigenous communities, librarians, or advocates... obstacles do not absolve non-indigenous librarians from seeking indigenous partners” p. 137.

Here we see the classic clash of cultures, a Western library perspective of open access and information for all, meeting a conflicting culture of stories told only during a certain season, or selected access to cultural property. Roy and Hogan remind us that the UDHR and two of six major initiatives of the ALA strategic plan plus its policy 59.3. address issues of indigenous people and cultures in libraries. This is the place where our policies must directly inform our practice of reflecting the culture and cultures of community.

Toni Samek, author of *Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-First Century Guide* (2007), writes in the preface:

Together these teachers and learners make a stark case for global library citizenship...but these cultural workers are...far outnumbered by bureaucratized, corporatized, and militarized library and information workforces and discourses. And I am left pondering the weight of library complacency, which will undoubtedly limit the place of this book...

Furthermore, in her introduction, Edwards states

It is absolutely essential to note, however, that while this book advocates for an exploration of librarianship beyond Article 19, we understand that a focus on promoting, protecting, and supporting the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community may be a luxury for many librarians.

I disagree with the general tone of these statements. I do agree with Julie Edwards that using community as a starting point for re-defining the public library purpose and mission is necessary and that it is the very act of recognizing, encouraging and promoting the cultural treasure embodied in the communities served that will anchor the library as a center of common good and become essentially *the* daily work of librarians and not a luxury at all. I point to my own institution, the Rangeview Library District “anythinks” which encourage playfulness and participation, programming and transformation and defines its trustees, staff, and volunteers as geniuses, wizards, and explorers who actively seek to remove barriers to participation (e.g. dump the Dewey Decimal system, remove overdue fines, and rename librarians as Experience Guides) and thus provide open space for cultural expression.

Additionally, James K Elmborg describes in “Libraries as the Spaces Between Us: Recognizing and Valuing the Third Space”⁸ the history of the library as “third place” and now “third space” movement. He concludes

A library is a fundamentally different place than a bookstore of the cloud, and one profound difference is the presence of librarians. If we allow our space to become abstract, then we will lose that difference. Third Space is not a panacea for all that is wrong with the world or libraries. However, it does form a realistic way of understanding what is going on in the world right now, and it leads the way to an intellectually rigorous way of thinking about librarianship in a world of borderlands, migration, hybridity, and the ongoing effort to create a more fair and just world.

These are positive steps toward libraries as agents of human rights potential, just as this book is, as Edwards states in her Introduction, “an act of optimism... which will generate further inquiry and writing.” p. 5

FOOTNOTES

1. U.S. confirms withdrawal from UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – transcript. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1079/is_v85/ai_3621166/
2. See The US’s Return to UNESCO: Relaxation or Hardening Before the Ghost of MacBride?, by Divina Frau Meigs, in *Quaderns del CAC*: Issue 21. http://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/recerca/quaderns_cac/Q21fraumeigs_EN.pdf
3. ALA. GODORT Resolution Regarding Continued United States Membership in UNESCO. <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/godort/godortresolutions/19840111114.cfm>
4. Spread the Truth About UNESCO. *New York Times*, December 5, 1987. Letter to the editor by Eileen Mahoney and Colleen Roach. <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/12/05/opinion/1-spread-the-truth-about-unesco-275587.html>
5. McCook, Kathleen de la Peña and Katharine Phenix “The Future of Public Libraries: Human Rights and Human Capabilities,” in *Introduction to Public Librarianship*, 2nd ed. NY: Neal Schuman, 2010. p. 345.
6. Study of the “Right to Participate in Cultural Life: Basic Document, pp. 4-5. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001272/127221eb.pdf>
7. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue, 16 May 2011. This report explores key trends and challenges to the right of all individuals to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds through the Internet. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.27_en.pdf
8. Elmborg, James K. “Libraries as the Spaces Between Us: Recognizing and Valuing the Third Space.” *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 50 (Summer 2011): 338-50.

DOCUMENTS

Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) Stands in Solidarity with Public Employees

The Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) stands in solidarity with public employees in Wisconsin and in all other states across the nation where workers' rights to collective bargaining are under attack by governors and legislatures determined to use budgetary exigencies as a pretext to try to decisively break the back of the public-sector unions as a key part of an ideological agenda which seeks to fundamentally remake America, taking the country back to a pre-New Deal, pre-Progressive era regime of unfettered, rapacious corporate rule.

The attack on the public employees unions is only part of a broader assault on all aspects of democratic society aimed to turn the clock back on issues like women's rights, civil rights, education, and culture, environmental protection, social welfare and insurance, and the very existence of a public sector. Preventing this overturning of all the gains made through struggle and sacrifice in the previous century will require above all, the mobilization of a broad people's movement of a kind heralded by the sustained demonstration in Madison and spreading across the country as people begin to awaken to what is at stake.

PLG Coordinating Committee
February 27, 2011

A Response to McMaster University Librarian Jeff Trzeciak

from the Edmonton Chapter of the PLG

On April 8 of this year, McMaster University Librarian Jeff Trzeciak addressed a conference at Pennsylvania State University. His presentation was entitled “Transforming Traditional Organizations: McMaster 2006-present” and in it, Trzeciak stated that new hires at McMaster Library would “unlikely to be librarians, unlikely to be traditional paraprofessionals... likely to be PhDs...[and] likely to be shared with other units.” In other words, Trzeciak was claiming that McMaster University Library was at its maximum level of librarians and that no new librarians would be hired as others retire or leave the institution, but rather be replaced by subject specialist PhDs and IT specialists.

This came as a surprise to the members of the McMaster University Academic Librarians’ Association (MUALA), the recently-formed union that represents librarians at the institution, as did Trzeciak’s announcement in the presentation (which was streamed live on the internet) that four McMaster librarians were about to retire. None of these announcements had been made at McMaster and as MUALA states (see here <<http://www.muala.ca/node/23>>), none of the four librarians who were being publicly pushed out the door by Trzeciak had actually signed their retirement papers.

There has been a large amount of commentary on this issue from librarians and library associations across North America. Most of this commentary justifiably condemns Trzeciak for the indiscretion of his remarks as well as his attack on the library profession, with the latter concern forming the bulk of the criticism of Trzeciak (for a summary of this commentary, see here <http://scienceblogs.com/confessions/2011/05/mcmastergate_in_chronological.php>). However, while the Edmonton chapter of the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) adds our voice to the chorus of condemnation focusing on Trzeciak’s assault on the library profession, there is another issue at stake that is equally important to address: Jeff Trzeciak is a union-buster.

Step back and look at this situation from a worker’s perspective but do not specify to the degree of “librarian.” After all, we are workers first and only then defined by the actual work we undertake. From a worker’s perspective, we see a new boss taking over an established institution. This new boss has a knack for self-promotion and some new ideas about modernization, but these ideas bring massive upheaval to the workplace and in particular, his methods for implementing change are not at all well-received by the workers. In response to the demoralization brought about by top-down management, the workers organize and form a union. In

reaction to that, the boss goes outside of the institution and announces at a conference in a foreign country that he will no longer hire any workers who would be eligible to join this new union. Instead, he will attempt to out-flank the union, undermine the union, outlast the union, *bust* the union. Then he can proceed with his “innovation” unimpeded by a united opposition to his single-minded, authoritarian visions.

It is useful to take this step back and clarify the issue as a workers’ struggle, not as a debate over the future of librarianship. In this manner, we see what is at the heart of Trzeciak’s manoeuvrings and can stand in solidarity with the men and women of MUALA, worker-to-worker and secondly librarian-to-librarian.

Ironically, McMaster University is located in Hamilton, Ontario, a city at the heart of Canada’s labour traditions. The Workers Arts and Heritage Centre, an institution mandated to preserve and promote the history and culture of workers, is located in Hamilton and is one of the only institutions of its kind in all of Canada. The Canadian auto industry is also situated in Hamilton and the Canadian Auto Workers union has a long history there. Most ironic of all is the fact that McMaster University itself is home to a renowned School of Labour Studies. On a larger scale, this attack on MUALA comes at a time of wide-spread attacks on organized labour across the United States and increasingly in Canada.

This should come as no surprise, though. Jeff Trzeciak is a 2005 graduate of the US-based Frye Leadership Institute, a management-dominated institute that instils top-down methodology in mid-career librarians and other professionals in the information field. Ushering in the language of business to administer change in the library field, Trzeciak has also brought union-busting tactics so favoured by the private sector, pro-management think tanks, and “leadership institutes” to McMaster University.

The leadership of McMaster University is apparently in favour of Trzeciak’s tactics, as Trzeciak was re-appointed to another five-year term as University Librarian without consulting the membership of MUALA. The union even submitted a report on Trzeciak’s performance that was based on an opinion survey completed by the union membership, to no avail (see here <http://www.muala.ca/node/23>).

The Edmonton chapter of the PLG stands in solidarity with the men and women of MUALA and strongly condemns the union-busting actions of Jeff Trzeciak and the role of McMaster University administration in re-appointing Mr. Trzeciak and thereby condoning his methods. Through collective action, workers in the library field must rebuke such blatant attacks on our profession and our unions to ensure that social justice remains a key component of not only our work, but also our workplaces.

Edmonton Chapter, PLG
June, 2011

PLG statement on Occupy Wall Street 10/06/11

The Progressive Librarians Guild supports the initiative of the Occupy Wall Street protest and the movement it has sparked, with manifestations all across the U.S.

We applaud the commitment and creativity being shown in providing a space for the articulation of opposition to the whole apparatus of the one-sided class war against workers, unions, the poor, immigrants, minorities, people of color, women, students and other sectors, which make up the vast majority of Americans. We applaud the movement's resistance to the greed, injustice and inequality which is corroding the fabric of American society and its desire to imagine and help build a better future, starting right now, for all Americans, by freeing ourselves from the destructive grip of unaccountable elites, insatiable profiteers and ruthless and cynical corporate plunderers.

We note that the Occupy Wall Street community has seen the need to create a "library" as part of its essential infrastructure even under the very difficult conditions under which the occupation has to operate in the streets. We call upon members of the Progressive Librarians Guild and all librarians of conscience to assist the movement with resources and technical aid. Please support the Occupation movement, document its development and report back to the library community to encourage greater understanding and wider support among our colleagues and in our communities.

PLG Coordinating Committee, October 6, 2011



Source: <http://tjjourian.tumblr.com/post/11198111379/you-know-things-are-messed-up-when-librarians>

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Shiraz Durrani retired as Senior Lecturer in Information Management at the London Metropolitan University in 2010. His books include *Information and Liberation* (2008, Library Juice Press). Shiraz is currently working on a new book, *Progressive Librarianship: Perspectives from Kenya and Britain*.

Elaine Harger, another unemployed librarian, has returned to school with the Danforth Educational Leadership Program at the University of Washington.

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Leif Kajberg was for many years (until 1 September 2008) affiliated with the Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark. He served as the Royal School's research officer and international coordinator and has published widely in Danish and international LIS journals. Leif Kajberg continues writing for publication now addressing issues related to the public library's social commitment and political role in the age of social network media.

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Will Wheeler is Head of Research & Instruction at Georgetown University where he also teaches occasional classes for the Music Department. Before working at Georgetown, he held librarian positions at Yale, NC State, and Stanford and taught in the library schools at Illinois, UNC, and Maryland. Wheeler has a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Indiana University and an MLS and CAS from the University of Illinois.