

# My Job in 10 Years: The Future of Academic Libraries

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OLA Super Conference, February 2, 2008

# Provocative, Being

Be a library provocateur by making bold statements like:

- Library instruction doesn't work.
- Library catalogs are obsolete.
- Reference is dead.
- Librarianship is not a science.
- Google wins.

Be careful not to be too provocative, lest you run the risk of talking yourself out of your cushy job.

-A Librarians Guide to Etiquette

<http://libetiquette.blogspot.com/2007/10/provocative-being.html>

# Agenda

- How it all began
- Assumptions
- Some thoughts
- Reference
- Collections
- Instruction
- Physical environment
- Virtual environment
- The way forward
- References

# How it all began

- Beginnings in 2005
- Boggled down by Googlization essay
- Sabbatical
- First big post (Dec 2006)
- Biblio databases
- The big finish
- A continuing obsession

# Assumptions

- All of our institutions are different
- Our first loyalty is to our patrons
- Libraries and librarians have something useful to offer going forward
- The genie is out of the bottle
- Mobile and ubiquitous computing is going to change everything
- Everything is Miscellaneous
- Baby, bath water

# Faculty & student assumptions?

Laptops, WiFi and online catalogues make the traditional library obsolete.

-Henry Petroski  
ASEE Prism Magazine

Could academic libraries start to disappear from the landscape in the 10-20 year timeframe?

Yes.



Let's talk about how we can  
change the way we do our work  
to keep that from happening.

Some thoughts

We always tell our students that not everything is available for free on the internet...

What happens when the free stuff truly becomes "good enough?"

Should we work for or against that possibility?

Did you become a librarian to serve coffee to teenagers?

To play DDR with them?

Are we The Cathedral

or

The Bazaar

What was your media universe when you were 9?

What is the media universe of today's 9 year old?

How about when you were 20?

Compare the number of gadgets you had at those ages with today's youth.

What if Google buys Elsevier?

Thomson?

Sirsi?



Is there a sustainable business model  
for Scholarly Societies & Associations  
without publications revenue?

When you see a great big room full of books,  
do you see it as something alive  
or as something  
dead?

What if the Library of Congress is  
outsourced to Microsoft?

What happens when ebook readers become  
as ubiquitous as cell phones are now?

How about when cell phones become  
ebook readers?

# The situation today

- Let's do our own environment scan...

# And in the future

- Let's identify some trends to watch...

**Attention** is the first currency of the digital realm...

**Reputation** is the second currency of the digital realm...

To me this means that in the digital realm, you have to stop thinking that you're in the XYZ business...and start thinking that you're in the attention and reputation business.

-Richard Akerman

[http://scilib.typepad.com/science\\_library\\_pad/2008/01/the-currencies.html](http://scilib.typepad.com/science_library_pad/2008/01/the-currencies.html)

# And in the future: My list

- What does it mean for libraries and librarians to be in the reputation and attention business?
- Free
- Death of the Desktop
- Unified web culture



# Reference

How and where we interface with our users is where the rubber meets the road and should merit a little more thought than simply thrusting a MySpace page in their face or building a new library in Second Life -- a service our users overwhelmingly do not use and, which seems to me, like a creepy post-apocalyptic wasteland.

-John Blyberg

<http://www.blyberg.net/2008/01/17/library-20-debased/>

# Second Life, Joining

Librarians should think twice before joining [Second Life](#) in an attempt to connect with patrons. Your patrons don't want to be friends with you in real life, so it's not likely that they'll be interested in hanging out with your avatar.

-A Librarian's Guide to Ettiquette

<http://libetiquette.blogspot.com/2007/02/second-life-joining.html>

# Reference

- Death to the ref desk
- Long live the ref desk
  
- Reputation & Attention
- It's all about meeting our patrons where they actually are, not where we would like them to be
  
- No, really, I think there is a huge future for connecting with patrons in virtual environments

# Collections

Obscurity is a far greater threat to authors and creative artists than piracy.

-Tim O'Reilly

<http://www.openp2p.com/lpt/a/3015>

This is why I've always found the publishing disdain for "user generated content" to be so perplexing. The fundamental job of publishing is curation -- finding good stuff and bringing it to an audience that might not otherwise encounter it.

-Tim O'Reilly

[http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2008/01/wikipedia\\_community\\_publishing.html](http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2008/01/wikipedia_community_publishing.html)

# Collections

- Scholarly publishing
- Journals
- Books
- A&I databases
- Content aggregators
- And all the rest

# Scholarly publishing

- Reputation, reputation, reputation
  - Is there anything in scholarly publishing that isn't about reputation or attention?
- "Data is the new Intel Inside"
- What is the unit of scholarly publishing
- The nature of Authorship
- Blogs, wikis, audio, video, ...
- Peer review
- Social Networks
- Open Access

# Journals

- Open Access tipping point
  - A multitude of business models will survive
  - End of the issue
  - The article is just the start of the conversation
  - Supporting data
  - Multimedia
  - T&P concerns
- 
- Will peer review & journal publishing be as important to the next generation of scholars as to the current one?



# Books

A great deal of what is happening on the web is the reinvention of the practices of publishing, not creating an alternative to them, but *recreating* them, reinforcing them, and showing publishers what is most important about what they do, and how to re-discover their core competencies in the new medium.

-Tim O'Reilly

[http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2008/01/wikipedia\\_community\\_publishing.html](http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2008/01/wikipedia_community_publishing.html)

# Books

- Books
  - I will hardly buy any print books at all in 10 years
- eBooks
  - What is a book, anyway, Slice & dice, mix & match
  - Dynamic rather than static content
  - A sustainable business model
- The coming revolution in textbook publishing
- The coming revolution in scholarly monograph publishing
- eBook reading devices will completely transform what we think of scholarly books
- Free?

# A&I Databases

## **Fundraising tip: Sue Google**

Google has done irreparable psychological damage to plenty of librarians who loved being the tightfisted and anal retentive guardians of information. And they have to hear "Google" used as a verb all the time. No one ever made a verb of "librarian," and if they did it probably wouldn't have anything to do with search. Now that Google's around and it's so popular, these poor damaged librarians should sue Google for something or other. Maybe they could even handwrite the note.

**-The Annoyed Librarian**

<http://annoyedlibrarian.blogspot.com/2007/09/fundraising-tip-sue-google.html>

# A&I Databases

- Most people want to find, not search
- Good enough
- Discovery at the network level
  - Full text
  - Seamless
- ElseMicrogooglesoftiVier
- Adding value
  
- A&I Databases will be in big trouble

# Content aggregations

- All media are on the table here
- What is worth paying for
  - Journal content?
  - Newspapers?
- The business model of the publisher...
  - New York Times
- Free?
  
- We will concentrate on providing exclusive access to a valuable resource

# And all the rest

- Bibliographic databases
- Citation databases & impact factorishes
- Models
- Social tools, blogs, wikis...
- And stuff we can't even imagine

It seems to me that the core questions here is:

What's worth paying for?

# Instruction

- We are in a golden age of Information Literacy instruction
- Disciplinary context, scholarly communication
- Reputation & Attention
  - Ours & theirs
- Curriculum integration
- Multiple delivery formats
  
- Is this golden age sustainable? What fundamentally do we have to offer?



# Liaison & Outreach

- Who's gone to a non-librarian conference in the past couple of years?
- Who reads faculty blogs?
- What is our disciplinary expertise?
- To establish our profile for maintaining instruction, we must be effective in outreach to the campus community
- We must constantly justify our existence

# The physical environment

- Balance -- We must become:
  - Quiet
  - Noisy
  - Collaborative
  - Flexible
  - The best study and work place on campus
- On the other hand:
  - Legacy buildings & cost of renovations
  - Campus perceptions
  - Our own fears
  - The student centre syndrome

# The virtual environment

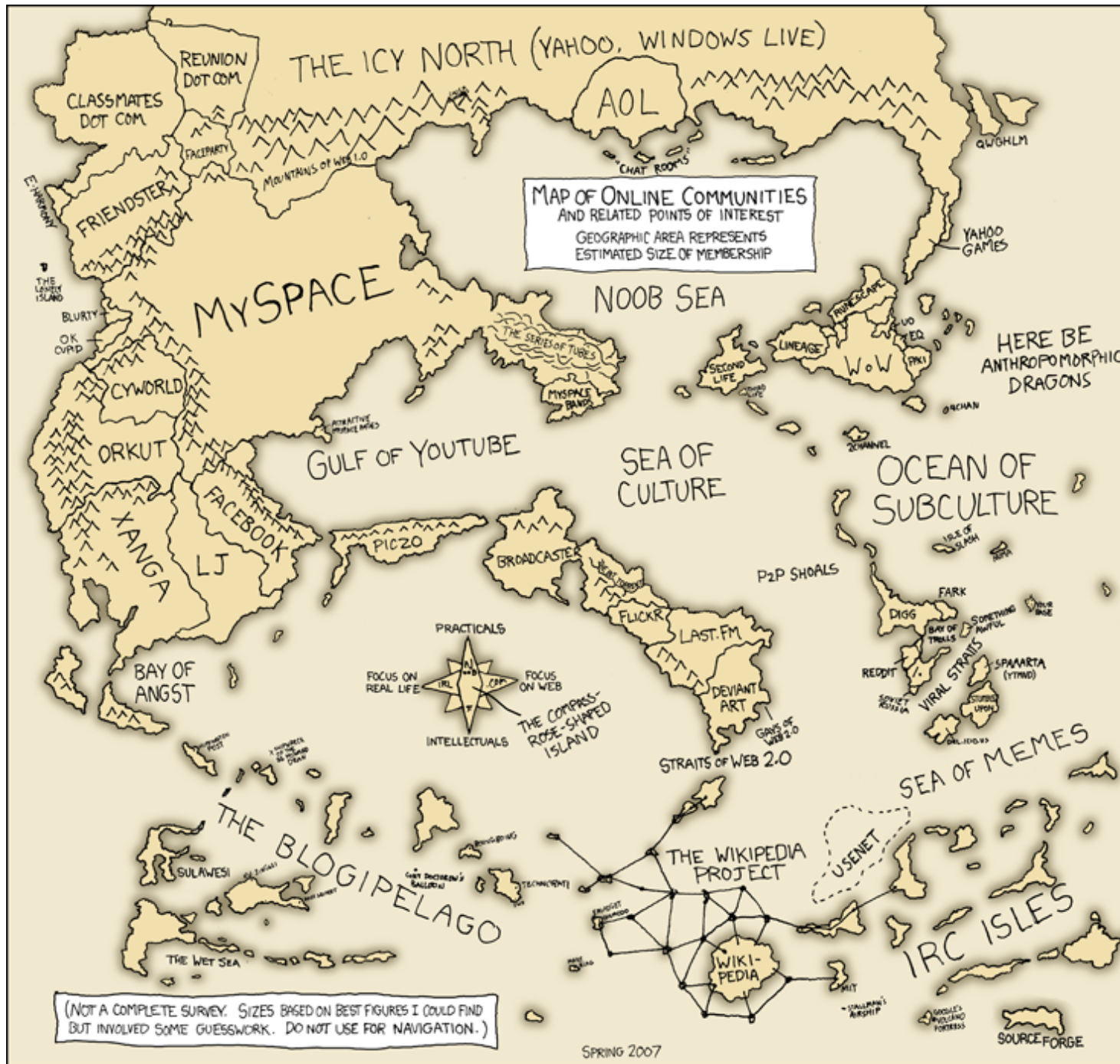
I have always wished for my computer to be as easy to use as my telephone; my wish has come true because I can no longer figure out how to use my telephone.

-Bjarne Stroustrup

[http://www.research.att.com/%7Ebs/bs\\_faq.html#really-say-that](http://www.research.att.com/%7Ebs/bs_faq.html#really-say-that)

# The virtual environment

- eScience & eScholarship
- The social web
- User-generated content
- Virtual worlds
- Mobile and ubiquitous computing
- Discovery at the network level
- What's an OPAC
- Special collections
- Serendipity



Library 2.0 proponents have a lot to say about what we should do differently, but far less to say about why we should do it. At times, when someone's vision of a not-too-far-in-the-future library service begins to sound like an iTunes store for the e-book reader, committed librarians begin to wonder, "What would be the point?"

-Rory Litwin

<http://libraryjuicepress.com/blog/?p=353>

# On the other hand

- Creeping commercialization
- Privacy
- Offensive content
- Build it and...what if they don't come
- Digital divide
- Preservation
- Academic integrity & intellectual property
- Patience

The future has already arrived. It's just not evenly distributed yet.

-William Gibson



# The way forward

We have to:

- Be at the forefront of changes in scholarly communications
- Be the social learning space on campus
- Engage our campus communities
- Have a role in the institution's educational mission
- Provide virtual spaces that are invisible, social, scalable...
- Decide what's worth paying for
- Focus on content not container
- Avoid vision drift

# Preparing for the future

We need to practice our own lifelong learning preaching.

- Web 2.0, learning about and learning in
- Read books
- Trend watching
- Blogs are a wonderful source
- And not just library blogs
- Conferences
- The scholarly literature...
- And not just the LIS scholarly literature
- Experiment with new technologies, programs and processes, without being afraid to fail

# Some books

- *Everything is Miscellaneous* by David Weinberger
- *Wikinomics* by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams
- *Glut: Mastering information through the ages* by Alex Wright
- *The Google Story* by David Vise and Mark Malseed
- *The Long Tail* by Chris Anderson
- *The Trouble with Physics* by Lee Smolin
- *Dreaming in Code* by Stott Rosenberg
- *Ambient Findability* by Peter Morville
- *The Cluetrain Manifesto* by by Christopher Locke, et al.

# Contact & References

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## References

<http://del.icio.us/jdupuis/futureacad>

## My Job in 10 Years

<http://www.yorku.ca/jdupuis/ola2008.pdf> (presentation)

<http://www.yorku.ca/jdupuis/dupuis10yrs.pdf> (original)

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