

# 2020 vision

Idaho Library Challenges of the Future

## Futures Blog Archive

*"The biggest single threat to what libraries are to become is indifference. If people don't care, if they don't come, if they don't pay attention to us, if they don't support us, if they don't think what we do is important, then it's over."*

*- Joe Janes*

*"If you listen carefully, you can learn what the future is telling you."*

*- Glen Hiemstra*

## Interesting Article...

[http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/content/may2006/sb20060525\\_583430.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/smallbiz/content/may2006/sb20060525_583430.htm)

Submitted by Anonymous on June 22, 2006

## Article: The Future of the Internet

Here is an article recently published on the Red Herring site (from the April 10th print issue) — ~~The Future of the Internet: in a decade, the Net will dig deeper into our lives\*~~.

An excerpt: "If Mr. Cerf and about two dozen other pundits Red Herring interviewed about the future of the Internet are right, in 10 years' time the barriers between our bodies and the Internet will blur as will those between the real world and virtual reality."

*\*Editor's Note: The link to this article has been removed. It is no longer available from the Red Herring site.*

Submitted by Elaine Watson on April 20, 2006

### RE: The future of the Internet

Comment by: Aufkleber (not verified); September 20, 2007

Engineers have already tested the system successfully. Trials with consumers could start as early as this summer, says Bill St. Arnaud, senior director of advanced networks at CANARIE, a Canadian industry and government consortium that is developing next-generation Internet technologies. Scary.

## And the iTunes winner is...

Hi all - thanks for participating and blogging! The winner of the drawing for the iTunes card is Leslie McCombs at Ada Community Library. Now if someone would just buy her an MP3 player to go with it ;) Glenna Rhodes, Boise Public Library.

Submitted by Glenna Rhodes on April 18, 2006

### Wow! Thanks for the great

Comment by: Anonymous; April 18, 2006

Wow! Thanks for the great opportunity! (I actually have an iPod, so I'm all set for an iTunes card!) I really enjoyed posting and watching what other people had to say. Hooray for the next generation!

### wow

Comment by: Diabetes Bob (not verified); December 31, 2006

Ipods are great for podcasting. I don't have the time to read in the bus while going to work (I often change from one bus line to another) but with my ipod, I can listen to the narration of audio books.

### Cool

Comment by: Johnny :- ) (not verified); July 4, 2007

Will another one of these competitions be run? I just got an ipod, and now I need to save up so that I can put on a whole bunch of ipod movies on it... unless I win an iTunes card!

## Digital Natives as Library Stakeholders

Libraries have always wooed particular segments of their community. Sometimes it is a conscious effort done by assessing who the library needs to connect with so they can create a mutually beneficial relationship (the small business community, for example). Or libraries may offer a traditional slate of services that may or may not match their community needs and consequently may not create strong library advocates.

Professionally, and personally, I would always advocate making conscious choices but first we need some facts! To better understand digital natives and have them become our next generation of library stakeholders check out the website listed below. (Thank you Marcia Beckwith, Boise School District, for sharing this site.)

“Family, Friends & Community: Teens and Technology”, 2006 Public Library Association Conference presentation.

[http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/63/presentation\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/63/presentation_display.asp)

Posted on the Pew Internet and American Life Project site. It also includes links to reports on the following topics (all critical areas we NEED to know about):

- The Strength of Internet Ties
- Teen Content Creators and Consumers
- Teens and Technology
- Protecting Teens Online

Glenna Rhodes, Boise Public Library

Submitted by Glenna Rhodes on April 13, 2006

## I am definitely a “digital

Comment by: karen.sayko (not verified); April 14, 2006

I am definitely a “digital immigrant” in fact I am so new to this that I might be considered a “digital klutz working on immigrating to the digital age”. I learned a lot at Saturday’s session. I already knew that most young people today are pretty well “plugged in” and “wired” and not just on coffee but what heartens me is that books and libraries are still important to them. They still view a library as a place to come to not just to connect to. They meet their friends there, check out books and participate in programs. In fact it sounds like they would like even more programs and they have good ideas for those programs The fact that the library is still important to them tells me that we are reaching them and that they are already advocates for libraries. It may be a library different than the one I went to as a young person but it will be there and it will have more than just books. Perhaps if the building has the ability to be more multi-functional, taxpayers and voters will be more willing to pass bond issues. Libraries need to include young people on their boards. They can offer fresh ideas, new perspectives and a vision that will carry us past 2020. Learning about “digital natives” and “digital immigrants” and hearing from these “natives” inspires and encourages me to keep on with my struggle to enter this new age and brave new world.

## Do you speak “digital native”?

Hi all - it was a great conference (ILA SW Region 3) today at Eagle Academy! I loved that it rained so we weren’t all wishing we were outside ;)

But down to business. I’m sure you all went home and immediately told your families or significant others that you couldn’t possibly make dinner because you had to think and strategize about how we can save Libraryland from apathy and entice the Millennial Generation into our virtual and real doors. You know...those digital natives who will soon “rule the world”.

What are your ideas about how we might alter the landscape of our libraries to make them meet the expectations of this generation? A generation that according to Stewart Bodner wants things to be “cheap, fast, and good” and that “convenience trumps quality”. Can librarians make quality convenient?? Can we address their desire for fast paced, collaborative, high tech mobility within the library space?

Can we make a difference if we can't build new libraries or buy "new toys"? Can we reach out to them with just a shift in our attitude or by providing different types services or by being less restrictive in our rules and procedures? And even tho I said "just a shift in our attitude" - that really is no small thing.

So don't forget to log on and comment by next Saturday 4/15. We want your ideas, big or small, wild or practical....bring it on and BLOG! Remember there's an iTunes card waiting for some lucky conference attendee who posts a comment! Glenna Rhodes

Submitted by Glenna Rhodes on April 7, 2006

**Thanks for a great,**

Comment by: Anonymous; April 10, 2006

Thanks for a great, thought-provoking presentation Glenna. I so agreed...a few showers kept us from wishing we could be outdoors hiking or gardening...instead we got a brain cramp trying to come up with ways to get those "digital" native, gadget-oriented, multitasking, impatient communicators into or using the services of the "LIBRARY"  
Thanks Marcia

**Glenna - thanks for your**

Comment by: Anonymous; April 11, 2006

Glenna - thanks for your great presentation Saturday! I thought the info you shared was vital and I was exited to see EPIC shown to an audience who'd probably never seen or heard of it before. I think that if we want to keep libraries (and librarianship!) relevant we must be incredibly deliberate and proactive. We must face the reality at hand and earnestly seek for solutions... and then put them into action. Many of the things you mention in your post are great ideas...that we need to start practicing. We need to be less restrictive with our space. We need to become a destination, not just a thoroughfare. We have to make quality information and services convenient — especially since we have the technology to do so. We need to educate the public to synthesize the information they're getting from such vastly different sources. We need

to change the idea of what “library” means internally before we can successfully change it externally. We can’t just be about books and information anymore. That is not to say that we stop being about those things, but that we become more. We have to provide services and programs that will draw people into the library, and realize that if they are there often enough they might just pick up a book or two. Perhaps most importantly, WE need to change. Change is hard, and not all librarians feel the need to “ride the wave of technology” but if they don’t, if the people who have authority and seniority don’t realize how important these issues are, this profession we all love so much just might die. I am personally counting on it lasting at least another 40 years...or I’m going to be in trouble. If we wait until people have stopped coming in our doors to make changes it will be too late. We will have already alienated the generation we are trying to reach. The generation who will pass the laws and appropriate the funds in the very near future. Rather, we have to start implementing these ideas (from the inside out) now. Unfortunately we can no longer count on people believing in libraries, we have to convince them. Anna H. Warns - Digital Native

### It was so great to see

Comment by: Anonymous; April 12, 2006

It was so great to see librarians getting excited about embracing the next generation on Saturday! What a way to end the week. As a Digital Native on the border between worlds (i.e. - I was born in ‘82) it’s a real challenge to connect the two generations. Many people have negative knee-jerk reactions when it comes to things like MySpace.com and video games. But here’s the kicker: these things are the future and they have changed the way the Millennials think. So the biggest trick to connecting with the Millennial generation is to think like them. Go out and play a video game. Get a MySpace or LiveJournal account and post. Talk to kids about what they’re looking at, listening to, reading, doing... and the try it for yourself! As the saying goes: “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.” This doesn’t mean you have to LIKE doing all these things. Some of them will be difficult, frustrating or possibly offensive. But you MUST try them to be able to connect with the next generation. Even though I’m a Digital Native, I’m still sorely disconnected from the world the teens at my library live in. Every time I talk to them (or just eavesdrop), I find out something new about their world. Once you can speak the language of the Millenials, you will be better able to see the world through

their eyes. What do teens want at the library? They want a community space, not a place where they get “shushed”. They want a place they can go have coffee, sit comfortably, eat junk food, talk loudly, study quietly, play games, find entertainment, find research... you start to get the idea here. As Anna points out - the library should be more than a thoroughfare, it should be a destination! Bring on the coffee stains and the loud people! It’s time to start thinking like the community nuclei that we should be.  
Leslie McCombs - Ada Community Library

**Glenna,**

Comment by: Anonymous; April 12, 2006

Glenna, Thanks for another great presentation. I have always loved libraries and what they stand for and I am ready to meet the future even if it means change. If we continue as a community to try to reach the digital natives I think we will achieve that goal. I came home with a wealth of new information that has been presented to my Board and we want to try what we can to soar in this new technology age. The first sign that I want to change is that I made it onto the Blog and that I want that music card because I actually have my own MP3 player. Colleen

**Glenna-**

Comment by: Anonymous; April 12, 2006

Glenna- Loved the presentation! I can only hope it was as inspiring to others to take action as it was to me.

### Thanks Glenna for getting us

Comment by: Anonymous; April 12, 2006

Thanks Glenna for getting us all thinking in these terms! So enjoyed your presentation at the conference. One of the first things we need to do is “lighten up on the rules” for teens using the computers...the second is to provide a “user friendly” environment for them! Extras might include food and drink accessibility. Teens love food. Why not put in a couple of vending machines in our foyers especially for them? I know there are many other ‘techy’ things we could do to encourage their participation, but some common sense, make them feel welcome changes seem essential to begin with! Thanks again for this opportunity and the great conference presentation! Sharon

### I would like to say thanks

Comment by: Anonymous; April 14, 2006

I would like to say thanks for all the hard work and effort you guys put into presenting the conference, I came away with a lot of information and ideas to improve my library in several different aspects. As for the digital native, working with a digital native, we plan to survey the high school and find out what my digital natives would like from the library and me. From there we are hoping to implement some new programs/activities that they will enjoy and will help them to take part ownership in their library. I liked the idea of a young adult night where we could play some video games in the library, so I’m working on it. Thanks again for helping me to improve my communities library and my digital natives. Cheryl Taylor

### I don’t want to be a wet

Comment by: Anonymous; May 23, 2006

I don’t want to be a wet blanket on the “digital natives” thing, but I’m very concerned that this is just another flash-in-the-pan label, that nothing of any real substance will come of it. Perhaps it’s because I’ve seen so much in the three+ decades I’ve been in the field — so many good ideas, so many concepts, die without a whimper. We NEED and

MUST reach this segment. But it must be done in a consistent and constant way. (I also speak I337.) Mike Doellman

### reply

Comment by: Todd (not verified); April 2, 2008

I think you should definitely be a bit more on the subject and stop it with the comparisons.

## Can you blog like a digital native?

The April 8th ILA Southwest Regional Conference will be discussing "digital natives". All digital immigrants will be encouraged to blog their comments and ideas about how libraries can reach this group. Watch this blog for more information from the keynote session and take advantage of this worry-free opportunity to be a blogger ;) See you Saturday!

Glenna Rhodes, Boise Public Library

Submitted by Glenna Rhodes on April 6, 2006

### Online access to library resources

Comment by: P. in Weston, MA (not verified); March 28, 2007

Hello there, I was born and raised in Idaho Falls, but now life has taken me to the Boston area. I fondly remember spending many afternoons doing research in the Idaho Falls Public Library, and I think it is great that you have this online resource and blog. As a "digital native" myself, I think that the best opportunities for libraries are in sharing digital resources between libraries, creating larger digital-resource-sharing networks, and making more digital information available. The Boston Public Library has an incredible number of resources (subscription databases, digitized newspaper/journal archives, etc) that are accessible through their web-portal, protected only by a library card number. This way, anyone with a library card can login and access all of these resources online. I think to embrace "digital natives", these online resources are much more important than putting more computers in the physical libraries themselves.

## Paul Dirac & You

Paul Dirac shared the Nobel Prize in Physics with Erwin Schrödinger in 1933 for his work in the mathematics of quantum mechanics. No, I'm not going to bore you with the math and I'll try to keep this simple (so that I understand it too).

After the discovery of the positron in 1932 (confirming Dirac's prediction in 1928), Dirac postulated (among many other things) that positrons are noticed because they are the ABSENCE of an electron. This can be compared to a fish, which doesn't notice the water but does notice the bubbles (the absence of water).

We live in a sea of information and, like the fish, don't notice it (and like the fish we use it without noticing it). We take notice of information only 1) in its absence and 2) when it disagrees with our preconceptions.

I haven't fully developed this line of thought yet, but it's percolating. There are definite implications for libraries here.

If you'd like to see the Dirac Equations, they're at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirac\\_equation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirac_equation).

Submitted by Mike Doellman on April 4, 2006

## Now it's Wyoming

From the Blogjunction listserv, on savvy marketing to focus on libraries: The Wyoming Libraries Campaign. Similar in scope to Washington's efforts from my previous post on creating a recognizable, fun, and innovative way of showcasing the importance of libraries.

Submitted by m3mo on March 16, 2006

## Newsvine: Get Smarter Here

Think you're going to have to wait until 2014 for Googlezon's EPIC to emerge? (See Memo's post about the "Googlezon Video".) Not anymore.

Check out [Newsvine](#) for a look at the shape of things to come. Here's a clip from the site's welcome page: "Welcome to the Newsvine collective. A place where anyone can read, write, and influence the news." Sounds to me that this is something libraries should definitely be interested in.

The site's in private beta right now, but I happen to have a fistful of invites available. If you're interested in trying Newsvine for yourself, send an email to me ([grifflet@gmail.com](mailto:grifflet@gmail.com)) and I'll toss you an invite (as long as I still have some to spare).

Submitted by Dylan Baker on February 1, 2006

## Audio from Joe Janes

Many of you heard Joe Janes, iSchool professor from my alma mater the University of Washington, at the Think Tank talking about libraries and the issues surrounding future changes to library services. If you liked his talk, you can now hear Joe talk about Google in the first inaugural online radio show from the iSchool, called [InfoSpeak.org](#).

Joe always has fresh perspectives on the nature of information and Google's hydra nature, so I encourage you to check out InfoSpeak and lend your ear to Joe discuss interesting Googly things. – Memo Cordova

Submitted by m3mo on January 17, 2006

### Thanks for sharing the tip,

Comment by: Dylan Baker; September 1, 2006

Thanks for sharing the tip, Memo! I really appreciated hearing Joe Janes speak about Google and the nature of humanity and search. I look forward to future podcast episodes from the iSchool. Dylan Baker

## Joe is a great speaker and

Comment by: m3mo; February 2, 2006 - 1:22pm

Joe is a great speaker and professor, and the iSchool is an awesome and innovative place to explore and stretch the concept of librarianship.

## Branding: OCLC report

Here's more on how people view libraries. We have our work cut out for us. (in case you lack time to read the entire report, look at the conclusion and then work your way back).

[OCLC Perceptions](#)

Submitted by Lynn Baird on December 6, 2005

## Googlezon video

Way back in the Think Tank we were shown a video titled "Googlezon" (EPIC 2014) which partly blew my socks off and partly gave me déjà vu. We know Google is putting together a massive grid of innovative and creative services, and will get even more powerful as they partner with institutions like the Library of Congress or spearhead online content-enrichment services like Google Base. Anyhow, I enjoyed watching the video once again and thought others out there would too:

[EPIC 2014](#)

By the way, there is an updated version of the video titled "EPIC 2015" but the link was not working as of this posting. [Robin Good](#) also has a summarized transcript of the video for those interested.

Submitted by m3mo on November 23, 2005

## Technology as a verb

Read [this post](#) from A Wandering Eyre. Jane talks of her Freshman Comp class learning to use the library. Asked to come up with synonyms for “technology,” they surprised her:

*“These students, about 8 years younger than myself, think of what they do with technology as opposed to the object of technology. Their attitudes are completely different than what I expected.”*

Submitted by Anonymous on November 10, 2005

### I've been trying to decide

Comment by: Lynn Baird; November 14, 2005

I've been trying to decide if this is really different than how I see technology. Is this a function of our environment? I live in a world that is always connected. I am connecting with colleagues, students, friends and family for most of the day in some fashion, and I often remind myself that sometimes my connectivity is different than others. ~Lynn Baird

## Future of libraries

In today's link of the day (Library Link of the Day) we find Tom Frey from the [DaVinci Institute's](#) view of the future.

In it, there are trends to heed and advice for libraries. The advice is to:

1. Evaluate the library experience
2. Embrace new information technologies
3. Preserve the memories of your own communities
4. Experiment with creative spaces so the future role of the library can define itself.

I recommend you look at this. I particularly liked the trend that libraries become centers of culture, but I thought the comments were interesting. ~Lynn Baird

Submitted by Lynn Baird on October 27, 2005

## European visions

Came across this article via [ResourceShelf](#) on the efforts of the European Union's "European Commission responsible for Information Society and Media" and a conference titled "The Role of Libraries in the Information Society", which took place in Luxembourg on September 29, 2005. The commissioner, Viviane Reding, gives an illuminating overview of the challenges and importance of libraries as they grapple with questions of access, digitization efforts, and relevance.

In her address, she outlines an initiative called i2010, which aims to "provide[s] a framework to address the main challenges facing the Information Society and media sectors in the next 5 years."

She also lists three main components that the European community, and their libraries, must surmount before any large-scale digitization processes can occur:

1. **digitisation** – always bearing in mind that though it is important to get the paper of the past online, our digital libraries of the future will also have born digital materials in an increasing range of formats – for example, audio, still and moving images, 3D graphics dynamic web pages.
2. **making resources accessible over networks** – users expect that books and articles can be delivered to them over networks. It appears increasingly paradoxical to them that they have physically to visit the library to consult an electronic publication.
3. **preservation** and archiving of digital resources. Digital material needs to be maintained to keep it alive, if not it risks being lost because of the rapid changes of hardware, software or because the physical supports (e.g. CD-ROMs) are decaying. This comes as a shock to most citizens, especially those with digital cameras, but the library world recognised the issue years ago and is looking for ways to deal with it.

The article provides a great map of the obstacles, challenges and strategies both libraries and governments must hammer out before we as societies become, as Ms. Reding states, a "20th century black hole in the digital collection of knowledge."

Article: <http://tinyurl.com/7jeac>

Website: <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/index.htm>

Lots of great stuff too in the [European Commission](#) website.

Submitted by m3mo on October 15, 2005

## I, Librarian

Found a great read in the September 2005 issue of *Information Technology and Libraries* (Vol. 24, no. 3), titled "I, Librarian" by Hilda Kruger. In it she discusses the same issues we 2020 Vision folk are discussing, including virtual reference (on steroids), wearable computing, and futuristic concepts applied to day-do-day library transactions; and let's not forget the keen awareness that librarians and libraries are increasingly mutating to reflect the demands of both the people we serve and the technologies available to them. It also includes excerpts from science fiction novels and futurists. It's all so weirdly familiar...

I could not find a link to the article, but it is worth reading.

Submitted by m3mo on October 11, 2005

### OK, I didn't look hard

Comment by: m3mo; October 12, 2005

OK, I didn't look hard enough! You can find the article if you have access to Academic Search Premier, which lists the full text article for the 9/05 issue of *Information Technology and Libraries* (Sep2005, Vol. 24 Issue 3, p123-129, 7p).

### here's another resource

Comment by: Marcia Beckwith; November 10, 2005

here's another resource for us ALA TechSource Blog

<http://www.techsource.ala.org/blog/> This companion blog to the subscription ALA

TechSource features some of the profession's best thinkers on the possibilities for libraries in new technologies: Karen G. Schneider, Michael Stephens, Jenny Levine, Tom Peters, and Teresa Koltzenburg.

## Serving (and surviving) teens

It's confession time. As a teenager, I was lazy. It's true. I watched too much tv. I slept in. I had to be threatened with punishment before I'd clean my room, pick up a broom, or dust something. I did my homework quickly and with the fewest steps possible—if I did it at all. I also procrastinated; writing reports the day before they were due and often scribbling away at algebra during the lunch break before my 5th period class. I, dare I say, was a pretty normal teenager. Unfortunately, I don't have any real research upon which to base my opinion. I can only say that I generally saw my friends, my sisters, and other kids at school behaving pretty much the same way.

Luckily for me, my future, and my parents' hearts and sanity; I snapped out of it. I went to college, I got a job, I paid my bills. Eventually I got a Master's degree and one of those jobs that parents are pretty proud of. Again, I don't have much research on that, but I'm told my Dad keeps one my business cards in his wallet so he can show it to his friends.

I have always been under the impression that most teenagers are just different from adults. Not bad, just different. They see the world differently. Their life experience is vastly different. They have different accepted values and norms. It's just a different culture and I've been taught repeatedly that you can't force change on a culture. In fact, I'll go out on a limb and suggest that, instead, cultures influence change.

This is why I am so heartbroken when I hear about libraries trying to change the way teens operate in order to make them come to the library. Some teens will come and they will carry with them long-lasting memories of all they learned and experienced there. But this is 2005 and that sense of the physical place is not always a high priority for today's teens. Heck, it's not necessarily a high priority for today's 35-year-old. The life experience for today's teen is one in which the Internet has always existed. Online technology has made it possible for people today to patronize businesses without ever having to walk in their doors. Why do we feel compelled to change them? What if, instead, we tweaked our services to work with their culture?

What is the risk? What is the potential?

Submitted by gina.persichini on October 11, 2005

## A View From Capitol Hill (Seattle)

I urge the readers of this blog and those thinking about the future of libraries to read [Chrystie Hill's blog piece](#) posted at WebJunction. She asks, "...do libraries currently have enough going for them to stay open? Some of them may. Is there enough there there to sustain this concept of libraries for the public good?"

Chrystie wrote an interesting piece that starts with a look at 7 users in a coffee shop on an average day and moves on to discuss social networks and the role of libraries in the lives of one generation of users.

Submitted by gina.persichini on October 3, 2005

## Washington shenanigans

Take a look at Washington's state-wide [library marketing campaign](#). Lots of information as well as great ideas and pointers to adapt their marketing and awareness campaign to one's own make-your-library-known bandwagon.

Who's putting it together?

A statewide committee comprised of library marketing professionals and representatives from all types of libraries is guiding the project. The project is coordinated by the Washington State Library and funded with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

(guiding?) How far have we have come in getting our libraries noticed and used? I definitely favor the state buy-in support for a unified approach to encourage and garner library support, and it's great to see other states push the very real worth of libraries.

Submitted by m3mo on September 19, 2005

### Marketing campaigns are

Comment by: anne.abrams; January 5, 2006

Marketing campaigns are starting to pop up in the western states. Not only is Washington moving forward, but Montana and others are too. Idaho is right in there with the latest LiLI-D statewide campaign targeted to those aged 13-17. The evaluation

survey done after the campaign ended in September 2004 pointed to increased use by teens after seeing/hearing the commercials. But most teens found out about LiLI-D from their teachers, followed by their librarians. More to the point, we increased summer reading by 32 percent statewide last year. Yes, there was a marketing component using radio spots, but I think the critical element was the youth services librarians going to their schools and telling the kids about their fun programs. We have plans to do a major ad campaign for LiLI U in September, but the question is how many libraries are offering their customers the direct link to ILLs? How many are willing to go outside the United States to obtain materials for their customers? How many are willing to loan their local history collections? These services would be great to target to those consumers who use Amazon.com, go to bookstores, or are interested in genealogy but again, should we market something statewide that is not available to all library customers? Without commitment by local libraries, state campaigns fall flat.

## "peak libraries"

Here's An Interesting LISWiki Article on the "peak libraries" idea.

Peak libraries is a concept named after the (contested) theory of peak oil. According to the peak oil theory, as the world's oil supply becomes depleted, its supply will diminish along a mathematical curve, causing large economic shifts and forcing alternative power supplies to be explored.

The peak libraries theory states that traditional libraries and librarians, such as those that have existed since the Library of Alexandria, are similarly doomed due to the advent of information technology.

Just as the unskilled assembly line worker was replaced by machines or the elevator operator was eliminated because the general public can use modern elevators directly, librarianship will cease to exist (or be radically altered) by the automation of library work.

[http://www.liswiki.com/wiki/Peak\\_libraries](http://www.liswiki.com/wiki/Peak_libraries)

In this, you will find links to library bots, by the way!

And from this article are links to this site:

<http://www.infography.com/content/795897082330.html>

The Infography about the Future of LibrariesIt has a selected list of readings, too.

Happy continued reading, all!

Submitted by Lynn Baird on September 12, 2005

## Aussie 2010 vision of the Internet

Found this fascinating 170-page report (no, I didn't read the whole thing, but c'mon!) via [BoingBoing](#) on how the Australian government sees the Internet evolving, and the means by which it's trying to anticipate how much of a bigger splash the Internet of 2010 will make and how it can be met. Sound familiar? The report makes four distinct definitions, or identifying factors, of Internet evolution by 2010:

1. **Basic communications:** from fixed to mobile telephony
2. **Personal managers:** same mobile telephony pushes integrated mobile gadgets
3. **Lifestyle junkies:** new breed of music/video consumers using, surprise, integrated mobile gadgets
4. **Communicating machines:** nothing new in 2010 but developing said mobile communication.

I didn't find see any mention of libraries in the whole spectrum of the report beyond a heavy emphasis on Siva Vaidhyanathan's book *The Anarchist in the Library*. I figured that libraries, being such crucial access centers to much of the known world, would feature prominently in the report. Perhaps Australians have something else in mind for their libraries? Either way, an interesting read which identifies comparable influences with our own 2020 work-in-progress-vision of Idaho libraries.

The report can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/7og65>

Submitted by m3mo on September 4, 2005

## Third "Place"

In a recent email exchange at the Idaho State Library, Jan Wall shared the following URL [<http://user.gru.net/domz/third.htm>] , which leads to an article discussing the “third place,” that comfortable place that isn’t work and isn’t home, but is the third place where you find yourself seeking a social outlet, or to meet various needs. Starbucks or a library could be an example.

I haven’t been directly involved in the Futures planning work, but I have coded the web site where much of the work has been done, so in the spirit of a carpenter who feels qualified to lean in, hammer in hand, and tell the architect his view on things, I fired off the following email, which I’ve been encouraged to post here in the blog:

I’m sure this all relates to a discussion in the LD meeting yesterday when I wasn’t in the room, so I hope I’ll be forgiven for jumping in with my 2 cents. I’m guessing the discussion related to the library of the future.

In reading the article and subsequent comments on it, it occurred to me how much the “third place” for this upcoming generation is electronic and decentralized. For many, the web, with instant messaging and social web sites such as [www.friendster.com](http://www.friendster.com) is the third place. For others, the cell phone or text messaging provides a third place. And even others find their third place in online multi-player gaming (whether through a PC or console such as the Xbox).

“Place” is having less and less to do with space, even when socializing is factored in.

But are physical third places important? Oh, you bet. I don’t want to discount their important. I just wanted to throw the idea of “virtual space” into the mix. Have you noticed, those of you who get your coffee at the Flying M here in Boise, how in the last few years, since coffee places have started providing WiFi Internet access, there seems to be less conversation and more laptops among the clientele? It’s an interesting route we’re taking to meet our needs. Consider this: <http://tinyurl.com/d2xz9>. It’s a review of the much-hyped, and yet to arrive, release of Nintendogs for the Nintendo DS handheld game console. DS stands for Dual Screen. Why two screens? One is touch sensitive, and so it provides for some unique game-play. Anyway, I bring this game up here, because of its “bark mode.” That is, you can set the game to use the DS’s WiFi capabilities to scan the airwaves in your vicinity to find other Nintendogs. Once you find another Nintendog

out there, your dogs can play. How's that for a new type of social interaction in a whole new "place"?

I'd better stop my speculating. My 2 cents is starting to look more like \$2.35.

[New addition: another article on Nintendogs, which seemed to be on-topic enough that I thought I'd share it, too: <http://tinyurl.com/bnqbj>]

Submitted by michael.samuelson on August 29, 2005

### I support this view of the

Comment by: Angela Dove; August 30, 2005

I support this view of the importance of Third Spaces, and I've commented on it in more depth on <http://knowledgespacelibrary.blogspot.com/>

## Mindset

To see what the mindset of our current/future users might be, look at:

<http://www.beloit.edu/~pubaff/mindset/>

Page down and look at item #49, which mentions libraries!

Submitted by jan.wall on August 23, 2005

## Article from the Observer

When I returned to work, there was this e-mail waiting for me. It seems to be related just to library architecture, but ends up talking about the future of libraries. I enjoyed the article, and thought you might, too... Beth Hill, U of I, Moscow

THE OBSERVER

Architect of learning

The reinvention of the college library

By Sam Allis, Globe Columnist | July 31, 2005

Good architects are a treat to talk to because they speak the language of design — a tongue we rarely hear. Developers and contractors traffic in their own argot and, as a

general rule, pursue the vocabulary of design with the fluency of a Serbian speaking Sanskrit.

That's why the Observer was delighted last week to corner Geoffrey Freeman, one of America's top library architects, in his office at the venerable Boston firm of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott. Freeman specializes in academic libraries. His client list runs over 80 colleges and universities, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Columbia, Duke, Rice — you name it.

"I worship at his feet," says Crit Stuart, associate director for public services of the Georgia Tech Library and Information Centers. "He's way out there — absolutely cutting edge."

Stuart mentions Freeman because Georgia Tech has just hired him to help rethink what its library should be for the 21st century. (He's also advising Johns Hopkins and the University of Illinois on the same issue.) "We must provide the environment that accepts change but focuses on the activity of learning rather than technology," Freeman says.

Freeman, a boyish 63, studies how people learn the way a lepidopterist plumbs the mystery of the Blue Morpho. He looked for clues at places like Starbucks, Borders bookstores, and Kinko's. He likes the blend of books and cafe at Borders and found that Kinko's is where students congregate most after midnight.

The news is that while public libraries struggle to stay afloat amid oceans of red ink, college libraries are experiencing a renaissance. This is counterintuitive when you consider that colleges have, with great fanfare, wired dormitories to provide Internet access to students in the privacy of their gamy rooms. If they can use their laptops there to do their homework, why would they ever darken the marble doorstep of some mausoleum and labor alone in sepulchral silence?

For starters, that's so last century. Today, says Freeman, libraries are where the action is: "We are in this great cycle of the rise of college libraries. Learning is a significant social phenomenon. You don't learn in a vacuum. It's not a monastic activity. Technology has allowed us to focus on the activity of learning and communicating. It's nothing about architectural style now. It's all about the user." (One false assumption, says Freeman, is that students routinely bring their laptops to libraries.)

But with all this brave new technology come new questions.

“There are the different mediums — paper, digital, video. How do I combine these different pieces of information?” he asks. “Today’s library is where people challenge the information they get. It’s a real cultural difference. Students don’t care if it’s a technology or content question, so the new demands on a library are tremendous. The biggest challenge in any of these facilities is how to integrate technology and knowledge. The goal is one-stop shopping.”

Libraries now embrace the idea of a “learning commons,” open areas that promote the easy exchange of ideas among students. Library cafes are becoming the hallmark of this process — “the Parisian sidewalk cafe” in Freeman’s words: “They don’t serve a student union function, which is purely a social activity, but they’re there to recognize and complement learning activity.”

Georgia Tech has created its own commons on one floor of its main library complex. Students work in a huge open space that can be reconfigured to accommodate groups of different sizes. There are no vertical separations among 100 computers sited there, each of which comes with a set of headphones because, says Stuart, students want more, not less, stimulation. More than 20 of these have multimedia software with two display screens and are staffed most of each 24-hour day by hybrid personnel with technology and content expertise.

The importance of physical collections of books diminishes as access to a digital world of information extends far beyond the confines of the building.

“With the libraries of the past,” explains Freeman, “you projected the rate of acquisition of a collection for 20 years. It always expanded at the expense of the user function. It’s just the opposite now. Now you project it out to zero growth. You design around the user and expand at the expense of the collection.”

For many places, he argues, this is not the end of the world: “Technology has opened up the collections. You’ll see collections more specialized and specific to an institution. It has leveled the playing field. Bigger is not necessarily better.”

Great research universities like Harvard must maintain their huge collections at large expense because those resources define them. Not so small liberal arts colleges.

"I tell them, 'You're in a fantastic position,' " says Freeman. "For them, the question is, 'What's the right amount?' They will not be expanding like water finding its own level."

"The ideal library," he adds, "is a place where I can take someone to its center fast and explain how it works. I need to understand it."

Sam Allis's e-mail address is [allis@globe.com](mailto:allis@globe.com)

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Submitted by Beth Hill on August 22, 2005

## Books on the go

How about this take on information on demand: [book vending machines](#). Found this link on [BoingBoing](#) (truly, "A Directory of Wonderful Things") via Yahoo! News. The implications? How about virtual information kiosks on busy street corners? 24/7 virtual reference terminals in bus stations or malls? Or an on-demand, computerized and temperature-controlled, with perfectly caffeinated calibration, cafe au lait dispensing machine next to my bed? You know, what you want, when you want it.

Fun and inventive, the book vending machine opens possibilities. Of course, I wouldn't want to be encased in a glass coffin dispensing information willy-nilly (I'd probably fog up the glass), but the idea of a virtual library presence just about anywhere does have awesome possibilities. Wonder if they have pastries-on-demand on those French streets?

Submitted by m3mo on August 18, 2005

## What constitutes a library?

When I got home from Boise last night, I checked my email and found a message about an interesting post on what constitutes a library at the blog Sivacracy.net :

“The Madisonian Take on Libraries”

<http://www.nyu.edu/classes/siva/archives/001875.html>

There are some very interesting ideas noted there — gives us more food for thought to add to our discussions at the Think Tank.

Enjoy.

Submitted by Samantha on August 17, 2005

## Cool futures

Of course, when I got home, the only things I could find were posts relating to futures. Future technologies, future concepts, the works.

I started thinking about differential fees to provide better access. Should we think hard about the Netflix model for delivery? Would this be responsive to the needs of our public in a way that we are obviously missing now? (Thanks, Samantha, for your posting which prompted this thought to pop out!)

I also wondered about comments that I heard around the room. Is the technology really not earth-shaking? Many of the things we saw were imaginable and seemed to be within reach. This is unlike the late 1980s when the Internet became a household world.

Social librarianship is something I thought we might talk about, and here are a couple of links that I wanted to share with you if you didn't see them elsewhere:

from Jenny:

[http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/social\\_Kansas\\_libraries](http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/social_Kansas_libraries) also check out the Kansas State librarian's blog from this site.

These might be examples of how we can be community and virtual. I haven't found the lib-bot yet.

Submitted by Lynn Baird on August 18, 2005

## What fun!

Several things I wanted to share with you all. First, a great big Thank You to Jan, Glen, all the presenters, and the folks at the Idaho State Library for the opportunity to come together and share/bounce ideas about library futures.

Second, I wish I would've done a better job of getting to know all the participants—next time I will make sure I introduce myself, shake your hand, and get to know you well enough to borrow money.

Third, I'm still digesting everything that I heard and read and am percolating the implications involved to truly change my current mindset of "it's possible" with the preferred future vision of "let's do it!" I know I have to strengthen my guts (heart? head? being?) to start affecting change.

Lastly, I'm sure everyone from the Think Tank will ruminate on these issues and discussions for a long time to come; let's keep the fires burning, all right? Know what else? Add your thoughts to this blog, as it is a forum to share ideas and ignite discussion.

Thank you all for a great time!

Submitted by m3mo on August 16, 2005 - 11:00pm.

### Duh! I meant to spell

Comment by: m3mo; August 18, 2005

Duh! I meant to spell Ann—not Jan—on the first line of my post. Sorry! Memo C.

### Right on, Memo—

Comment by: Lynn Baird; August 19, 2005

Right on, Memo— I'm never lending you money, but this was a wonderful opportunity to connect and reconnect. I spent many subsequent hours thinking about what we discussed, what we did not discuss, and trying to engage others outside our field in telling me more about their thoughts. Thanks to everyone for giving so much of themselves in this process.

## Last Random Thoughts Before Boise

We as librarians — regardless of our type of library — hold knowledge in trust. Library school (at least mine!) said that we exist to meet the educational, recreational, and informational needs of our users. To do this, we assume a hubris that ranks right up there with the best in Greek tragedy: we confront and attempt to organize for use all human knowledge.

.....

Information is abundant; wisdom is rare. Should we be attempting to provide keys to wisdom as well as information?

.....

Video on demand is one of the “coming things.” Do you supposed that a “library on demand” is also possible?

.....

“Books are going to be around for a long time — at least until I can take a laptop out into the woods and use it when I run out of toilet paper.” (A friend of mine)

.....

Why doesn't Idaho require certification of librarians, or at least of public library directors?

.....

See y'all tomorrow.

Mike Doellman  
Marshall Public Library  
Pocatello

Submitted by Mike Doellman on August 13, 2005

## ...admitting our ignorance, our concerns, our fears

This will be my last attempt at blogging before the conference. I realize I missed the boat by not responding regularly to what others had to say like Cayce does with Parkaboy in William Gibson's *Pattern Recognition*. But, I do look forward to meeting all the characters in our drama face-to-face.

I also finished *The Age of Spiritual Machines, Good to Great* and I'm working on *Tomorrow Now* along with many other documents and those in OCLC's 2003 *Environmental Scan*. I bounced his writing about genetics off on an expert in the industry and had an enlightening conversation. It is hard to believe we will actually meet this author. It is an incredible opportunity.

Levy offers answers to the means of facing our futures' dilemma. "Through careful examination and reflection, through pointed questioning, through public discussion. By admitting our ignorance, our concerns, our fears. By looking at the present instabilities to see what they have to show us. We may not be able to predict the future, but at looking at documents we can perhaps see something at least as important: ourselves." I think libraries (if they survive) will contribute to the "mechanism by which we continually create meaning and order. Levy, *Scrolling Forward*, 202"

Levy's writing is beautiful and his intellect is off-the-charts amazing. His book and *The Future of Music* by Kusek and Leonhard rocked my world and are the new foundations of my personal collection right there with the ipod, TiVo and my personal assistant named Shuttle, who is my computer.

I was struck with the message **where** these authors collectively chose to leave-off the reader. "Plain information must make a connection to the subliminal-to the heart or the spirit-if it is to emerge as a meaningful contribution. That is the Internet has to offer us more than just information, we also need experience...perception... Music sells because it touches people. *The Future of Music*, Kusek and Leonhard, 172"

Signing off (until Monday, Monday), Sue Bello

Submitted by Sue Bello on August 13, 2005

## Getting in on the (future) action

While I was standing in the checkout lane of the grocery store, I saw that *Reader's Digest* has an article titled something like "14 new trends that will change your life." I might have to buy it just to see what the CW (Common Wisdom) says. I haven't checked on LILI-D to see if it's there. After all, what's RD without the jokes?

Jan

Submitted by jan.wall on August 11, 2005

## Article: The Architect of Learning: The Reinvention of the College Library

Below is an article from the July 31st Boston Globe:

The Architect of Learning: The reinvention of the college library

[http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2005/07/31/architect\\_of\\_learning/](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2005/07/31/architect_of_learning/)

Below is a quote from Geoffrey Freeman in the article:

"There are the different mediums — paper, digital, video. How do I combine these different pieces of information?" he asks. "Today's library is where people challenge the information they get. It's a real cultural difference. Students don't care if it's a technology or content question, so the new demands on a library are tremendous. The biggest challenge in any of these facilities is how to integrate technology and knowledge. The goal is one-stop shopping."

Submitted by Elaine Watson on August 10, 2005

## Change to stay the same

I read an article in CNET News.com titled "College Library of the Future" which emphasizes Google's continued efforts to digitize the biggie libraries (Stanford, NYPL, etc.), as well as the efforts of other libraries not on Google's digitization radar. Nothing new on that scope, but what I found interesting was the ending comment of the article:

"The library that acts as a steward will have to learn what it means to capture and persistently manage new vehicles of information," said Daniel Greenstein, associate vice provost of libraries at the University of California's Digital Library project. "It will have to change in order to stay the same."

The adage "the more things change, the more they stay the same" aptly describes how libraries have maintained a steady grip on the cultural front while being buffeted by the winds of social and technological change (I could enter this line in the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, no?) through the judicious application of time-honored library practices (research strategies, information literacy, thoughtful reference interviews, etc.) and applying it to emergent and continually changing technological advancements and resources.

We adapt and absorb, using finely honed skills and experiences to wade through the never-ending mutation of library access and content delivery. The more we change the more we'll stay the same because that has served us well in the past and, by gosh, should serve us well in the future.

Submitted by m3mo on August 8, 2005

### **Memo, What about**

Comment by: J R (not verified); December 7, 2006

Memo, What about evolution? J R

## What about evolution? I'm

Comment by: Memo Cordova (not verified); December 7, 2006

What about evolution? I'm not discounting it, but pushing for strategizing our approach to new and challenging times by adapting and using our collective experience. That's evolutionary, right? Or revolutionary—depending on how far one can adapt, survive, and thrive in the-future-is-now environment. Memo

## Beware Exploding Heads

Good golly! I haven't been immersed in directed reading and thinking like this since library school. Do you think things will get so intense we'll have people's heads exploding like cherry bomb stuffed pumpkins?

One intellectual trail leads to another. I'm preparing for the future by reading the past...suggested reading leads back to McLuhan, McLuhan bridges over to de Chardin; I'm not going any farther back than Augustine.

This stuff is so heady that I am really hoping we can get outside in Boise to avoid the pressure cooker syndrome (and avoid those splattered pumpkins).

We'll be in a place that is close to some fine natural beauty. The river should be part of this conversation.

The readings have brought me uncomfortably close to the realization that our library is not connecting up with people younger than 30. Hell, we're actually pushing teenagers away. Usually for the sake of our own sanity.

The germs are already germinating. The idea of a web page section dedicated to gamers, and perhaps run by gamers, along with the struggle to find a physical space for them in the building...well, those are welcomed practical problems popping up from the theoretical thinking we're doing. Isn't that what this event is all about? I'm getting good stuff out of it and it hasn't even started!

Looking forward to seeing all you pumpkins in Boise. I'm wearing protective gear.

Post Falls Joe

Submitted by Joe Reiss on August 8, 2005

### exactly my thoughts Joe.

Comment by: Marcia Beckwith (not verified); December 7, 2006

exactly my thoughts Joe. I've also revisited Cliff Stoll's work...and Senge...maybe we can get an advanced degree for all this reading! As a "digital immigrant" I have spent many days lately trying to imagine how we can better meet the needs of our Digital Natives...and not alienate the more traditional. We may not be able to be all things to all people but we have to have the skills to understand their lingo!! m- my pumpkin head is full to bursting

### All of this presupposes that

Comment by: Jan Wall (not verified); December 7, 2006

All of this presupposes that we actually have figured out libraries' role in society. We tout libraries as "information centers," but is that how people see us? (Particularly public libraries.) Or is that merely a sound bite that we give to our funders? Now that the public gets one-stop shopping from the web (however good, reliable, valid it may be), what do they want from us? What can we be? How do we fit in, in the anti-tax, "government services are socialism" age? (I heard that comment from more than one person at the property tax meetings in Coeur d'Alene...) I'm sorry to be missing the dialog next week. I'm sure those questions and more will be answered, or at least discussed. I'll take the laptop and tune in, in a coffee shop offering wireless access, after Wagner the night before. Jan

## The dark side...

Technology is wonderful. Sometimes. But. I had 575 (no, I didn't add a digit) comments on one of my posts - pornographic links that also showed up in my email inbox. The email names were pretty humorous, actually, but it certainly shows the dark side of technology.

Please let us know if this happens to you! (You can't miss it, when your administrator sends a message: "Your mailbox is over its limit" and you have 600 new messages overnight!)

Jan

Submitted by jan.wall on August 7, 2005

## A thought on technology and librarians

This will be quick, since I'm on a public computer at PNLA in Sitka.

Technology is not, and cannot, be the savior and solution for the future.

Technology is a tool and nothing more. And this comes from someone who was a System Administrator for 10+ years.

Used well, technology, like fire, becomes a powerful force which will assist us in getting information and recreation to our users. But if it is viewed as a solution in itself it will cause us to crash and burn — and we will deserve to do so because we couldn't tell the difference between the hammer and the house we were building.

Mike Doellman

Marshall Public Library

Pocatello

Submitted by Mike Doellman on August 4, 2005

## My first blog - Musings on the future

A library. What do you see in your mind's eye when you see those words? I have worked and been in many libraries, but I still think of the one I went to as a child. It was a wondrous place. There was so much to look at: the book displays, the art exhibits, the people quietly reading at the big tables. And then when I chose a book or two or three, I thumbed through it to see the fine illustrations, the type that was used, even the smell of the book. My senses were on high alert for any and everything.

My daughter will also have fond memories of her childhood, but they will be much different than mine. She will also see fine art and appreciate the various fonts that are used, but she sees it mostly online now. She explores the world through her computer. When she is curious about a subject, her first inclination is to go online. Does she know that the place called a library exists? Well, yes, it's been a part of her life, as it has been mine, but she sees it as an additional destination, not the only one.

Her future will be filled with images and ideas that come to her in a popcorn popper sort of way, instead of the toothpaste tube way that we viewed the world. We must be one of those kernels of corn that come to her when she least expects it. When she searches online, one of her choices on that google search should be her library. We will need to spend more money on marketing. The book display will catch her eye on the library's web page, long before she enters the building. She will still want to read a paper based book. She enjoys the tactile feel of them, but she will probably read while listening to her music (in whatever format it is in), and while having her computer on for any instant messages that are coming in, as well as having her cell phone on for calls from friends.

When she goes off to college, she will treat the library there the same way. It will be one of various choices for research. Librarians will need to make sure that she understands what she can find in the college library that she might not find through a google search. She will expect that information to come to her, not for her to look for it. If it's not on her computer in a place she frequents, she will probably not know about it, unless it is on tv, or the radio, or another media that she uses often. How does she know what the latest fashions are? How did she find out when Harry Potter was due out? She didn't go to the library, the information came to her. How does Harry know where to catch the train to Hogwarts? It isn't apparent even at the train station. He needed to be told and shown how to access the train at gate 9 ¾.

Previous postings mentioned Netflix, as an example of the media going to the user. Why not take the next step and offer a similar service from the library? Instead of loaning cds and videos, hook the user up to the library's collection of online movies and music, along with the books from the netlibrary collection.

Well, this is my first blog. I have been reading some of the literature too, and it has me really thinking. In addition, I started back to school last year, so I am seeing the world a little bit better through the eyes of a student.

It is all so exciting. Looking forward to the conference!

Submitted by Susan Mueller on August 3, 2005

### Catching up on postings and reading ...Sue Bello

I read an article from LibraryJournal.com, *Making the Big Decision*, July 15, 2005, that Karen Ganske mentioned on LIBIDAHO. The author Christine Schutz describes her "quirky...librarian-style" suggesting that librarians should forget the stereotype and find what works for them in today's libraries. Christine is the new Director of the Terteling Library at Albertson College. She re-arranged her energies, spending priorities and the furniture. This article reminded me of Mike's entry, "We need a "specialist" who is really a synthesist. Is there something we do better than anyone/anything else?" Then, Sue Walker answered that "value added" is what we can add in addition to access to information.

So, what is the "value added?" Elaine hopes that the focus will be on interacting with real people over electronic delivery. I hope so, too. But, reading John Beck's articles, *Zone In On Your Users* and *Staying in the Game!*, I'm reminded that "today's students think and process information fundamentally different from their predecessors" (us). So he says "personalize" your website as well as the spaces in the library. The patron gets attention online and in person.

Now, returning to my original comment, I explored the LibraryJournal.com website where I retrieved Schutz's article. And, there is more to the web site than just the magazine. There are interviews, news, reviews, and searchable databases. You can get advice from "Dear LJ", look for a job, or ask them what to read. In this "fluid state of library services (Memo)" libraries should develop an electronic interface that is online-friendly and works.

LibraryJournal.com's audience is more for Beck's "boomers" rather than the younger "gamers." Perhaps libraries could adapt by developing web site choices. I think the gamers need to show us what they need or want. They need to join the ranks if we're going to keep adapting. "Model the way, share vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart," Steven Jobs makes it sound so easy.

Submitted by Sue Bello on August 2, 2005

## Excited about 2020 Vision

I applaud Ann Joslin and the Idaho State Library staff for shepherding us to the 2020 Vision conference. While in my last post I was trudging the roads of reality I am now looking forward to engaging in thinking, brainstorming, discussing, and being challenged by colleagues as we ponder the future of libraries.

Having worked, as a professional, in high school, academic, and public libraries I know that there are many differences in our respective missions. However, in spite of the differences, we are all trying to get appropriate information to our users.

In my preparation for this conference I read Greg Bear's "Darwin's Radio." What I got from the book was that adaptations to an environment will happen whether we like it or not. We can either embrace the change or find it hideous and try to hide it away from public view. I would like to think that I fall into the "embracing" reaction but the uncomfortable reality is that all too often I see things through my "hideous" eyes.

I challenge us (mostly me) to look to the possibilities of our respective futures as we continue to prepare for the conference. It does no good to market blocks of ice when people are clearly moving to electric refrigerators! Yes, we have people with ice boxes and must continue to service them but if we don't find a way to somehow retool to accommodate electricity we will find ourselves out of business.

I know one of the criticisms of the last Futures process was that the final product got a "oh, this is nice" reaction and was promptly put on the shelf. I think we, as participants in the conference, have a responsibility to think outside the box, challenge ourselves, but accept that we do have a responsibility to give the Think Tank good material to work with as they try to forge a document that will be USEFUL to all the libraries in Idaho.

Well, my stream of consciousness thinking has run its course. I look forward to spending a couple of intense and immensely fulfilling days with everyone during the upcoming 2020 Vision conference .

Submitted by Anonymous on July 31, 2005

### Semi-random thoughts to prep for Think Tank

One of my big goals to prepare for the Future's conference was to try to get a better handle on the present – catch up to 2005. Every once in a while I have a mini-panic attack because I don't feel like I'm really in touch with what's happening in the world out there. In fact, I'll confess that one of the reasons I like living in Idaho is it's perfectly fine to not be as hip as the gals in N.Y. or L.A. We can pick and choose the latest items we want to try (yeah Netflix) and ignore those that aren't going to meet our needs (like wearing camisoles to work or listening to pod casts while I'm trying to type). I even made a list of "homework" I was going to do before the big event:

1. buy groceries online and have them delivered
2. download and print my own digital photos instead of looking at last year's vacation shots in the view-mode of my camera
3. borrow someone's blackberry and figure out what's so great about it
4. download music onto the MP3 player that we have, but have never used
5. actually write something for the blog instead of just lurking and thinking of responses that I never put out there for others to read

Well, I am blogging, but most of those items are still on my to do list and I was starting to feel like maybe I should give up my spot at the Think Tank for someone who's a little more with it. But, I've done some of the homework reading and I am still excited about looking into the future and what that might look like for libraries. And it's been interesting to read this blog and think about my reactions to some of the topics. Here's what I think about some of them (and yes, I know you're supposed to respond under each topic in the post section – but obviously if this is the first time I'm blogging I haven't done that and want to do now – in one sitting) so here it goes:

Gina's thoughts on Netflix and libraries: I love Netflix and have already developed such brand loyalty that wouldn't switch to another company who tries to play catch up because it was such a great idea and it works so well.

No fines! That's brilliant. (My kids and I manage to accumulate enough library fines throughout the year to pay for someone to clean one of Janice's branch library toilets.)

I don't have to leave my house! Whoo-hoo! I am not one of those people who is embracing the role of "libraries as community gathering places" or that we're going to bring the blue and red states together over coffee and a stimulating book discussion. Having just read one of the articles on the future of libraries on this topic, I don't seem to feel very sad that people build fences around their houses and don't hang out on their front porches. They build fences because they like fences. I'm sure nice neighbors would be interesting to hang out with, but ours have almost always been on the semi-psychotic side. Nice is nice, but psychotic is just psychotic. Anyway, if I did find some time to hang out in a gathering place, I'd probably call my best friend (whom I haven't had time to see in a month and a half) and get a cup of coffee or a drink of something stronger far away from my local library. And the idea of talking my spouse into spending an evening hanging out with a bunch of strangers with opposing political views at the library is just delusional. Okay – now that you know my view on that role for libraries — back to Netflix & things libraries could pick up from this brilliant business model. The ability to browse is bliss. Jan worried that some of the technology out there would take away the "wonderful serendipitous finds" but I find the opposite is true with Netflix as I spend a lot more time browsing online than I ever did at any video store (is there anyone out there who enjoys going to a video store?) or my public library (it doesn't take long to browse through their collection of 30 DVDs). I like seeing what others recommend and searching the categories of titles they have – with the **covers** (something that more OPACs are moving toward, but we're not there yet). I also love adding titles to my queue (my ten-year-old even has his own queue so he gets every third DVD and can't get anything R rated). Recently I've started using my library "account" this way more by placing holds this way. But would I pay more to have books from the library mailed to my home? When Boise Public offered this service (for a mere \$1 per book through the mail) I never used it. Hmm.

Libraries as big boxes, lack of money, reading rooms & technology for the sake of technology . . . Interesting comments all. Makes me think about Barnes & Noble and Borders, which are basically reading rooms in a big box – same look and feel throughout the nation (although their contents can be customized to the community depending on what sells there — i.e. what people want!) and people seem to like them (or they wouldn't be in business). Janice said their patrons want "locations in all of the

communities, more hours, new materials, sufficient staffing, trained staff, ILL, a user-friendly webpage, etc.” Um, me too (plus the answer to one or two reference questions a year AND LiLi! — I couldn’t get along without full text databases that I can access 24/7). Other than ILL, those seem to be qualities that Barnes and Noble and other bookstore chains cultivate. People are willing to pay for things like that because that’s what they want. No, you won’t find a Barnes & Noble in Potlatch and I don’t know what the future holds for big box book stores, but they do seem to be meeting customers’ needs (without a ton of techie gadgets) and that ties in with Jan’s thoughts on “what do our patrons want from us” and the “idea of acquiring technology even if it is marginally (or not at all) useful?” That doesn’t mean that I don’t think we need to be out on the cutting edge or at least clued in to the tech side of libraries, though — just a lot to think about.

If you’re still reading this, thanks. I still feel a little guilty about ranting on during work time (but it is fun), so I’m out of here. Wish me luck with my online grocery shopping trip!

- Stephanie B-W

Submitted by Stephanie Bailey-White on July 26, 2005

### Stephanie’s post makes me

Comment by: Elaine Watson (not verified); December 7, 2006

Stephanie’s post makes me think about how we increasingly want services delivered to us rather than going out to obtain them and how that will impact libraries. I love Netflix too. I like that I can cancel my subscription for a few months and my queue will still be there when I sign up again. The Netflix movie experience at home isn’t quite the same as seeing a film on the big screen but it’s so convenient. With our increasingly busy lives, we all want convenience. Getting back to how this impacts libraries, those people who want the information/product delivered to them will not be concerned about library as place and will not be concerned if the library strives to be a community meeting place. They are the ones who want delivery to their homes, full-text articles available via their computer, and so on. And yes, I have used Boise Public Library’s home delivery service for books via the postal service and I thought it was worth the cost. I could easily stop at the library on my way home but that would take additional time. For me convenience is more important than waiting a few days. Library as place is more important to those

who regularly go out to obtain their information or who are already in close proximity to the library. These are the people who go to the library to pick up a book or have small children with whom they go to the library or who are students/faculty on an academic campus. So if there are these two main groups of library customers, where do we want to focus our energy? My first thought is that we should be focussing our energy on electronic delivery and services to a person's desktop or delivery to a person's home and less on library as place. But what type of society will we end up having if interactions with computers is preferable to interactions other people? I'm getting a little off-topic so I'll stop rambling.

## The Long Tail and Predictions

Found two extremely interesting articles on the future of library content and delivery. The first is by Clifford Lynch from D-Lib Magazine titled "[Where Do We Go From Here? The Next Decade for Digital Libraries](#)". In which Clifford expounds on what the next ten years will be like for digital libraries.

The second took place in ALA's 2005 annual conference (which I didn't attend):

[OCLC Symposium: Mining the Long Tail: Libraries, Amazoogole and Infinite Availability](#) uses Chris Anderson's (Wired Magazine) paper [The Long Tail](#) to explore the increasing use of content targeting, the future of information resources, and how technology has and will shape how libraries provide services. Of course, Mr. Armstrong is the first speaker but the rest, like John Blossom and Nancy Davenport, also provide great insights into the fluid state of library services.

Memo

Submitted by m3mo on July 21, 2005

### I hope everyone involved

Comment by: Beth Hill (not verified); December 7, 2006 - 11:44am

I hope everyone involved with Think Tank will read Lynch's article. I saw your link to it here earlier, but just today was sent the URL through a listserv I belong to- a health sciences library listserv, no less- and actually took the time to read it. It's a little shocking- "Others would argue that the issue of the future of libraries as social, cultural

and community institutions, along with related questions about the character and treatment of what we have come to call “intellectual property” in our society, form perhaps the most central of the core questions within the discipline of digital libraries – and that these questions are too important to be left to librarians, who should be seen as nothing more than one group among a broad array of stakeholders.” Yikes- But on the other hand- I agree. We aren’t the only group interested in these issues, or that should be interested in these issues. Perhaps our survival depends on the involvement of other constituencies. Another quote: “Perhaps the overarching theme here, and it is one that may point to a major direction for research that follows on the last decade of progress in digital libraries, is connecting and integrating digital libraries with broader individual, group and societal activities, and doing this across meaningful time horizons that recognize digital libraries and related constructs as an integral and permanent part of the evolving information environment. The next decade for digital libraries may well be characterized most profoundly by the transition from technologies and prototypes to the ubiquitous, immersive, and pervasive deployment of digital library technologies and services in the broader information and information technology landscape.” Beth Hill U of I Moscow

### You are right, Beth, that

Comment by: Memo Cordova (not verified); December 7, 2006

You are right, Beth, that Lynch sucker punches librarians with his comment that “these questions are too important to be left to librarians, who should be seen as nothing more than one group among a broad array of stakeholders.” I would counter that librarians may take the lead to these “shareholders” by virtue of experience in information management and as gatekeepers to content and knowledge, online and not. Who else, really? And in any case, wouldn’t this also guarantee our own survival? I could be wrong of course, but I’d rather think that given the scope, breadth, and know-how that librarians possess (and the chaotic equanimity in which we greet most technological change), we are more than suited to address this kind of thorny concern. I say, bring it on!:-) Memo Cordova

## Big Box stores/libraries

I keep going back to the UTNE article that says that libraries are in danger of becoming alike - looking like the Big Box bookstores, having the same set of popular materials on the shelf. One size fits all... One of the points is that libraries need to customize to their clientele - local and unique items.

As Pullman struggles with the possibility of a Super-Sized WalMart, there have been lots of comments in the paper both pro and con. The stores in Moscow that survived the first onslaught of WalMart did so by offering unique items that couldn't be obtained elsewhere. And yet, it's very frustrating, as a committed non-WalMart shopper, that there are some items that can only be found at WalMart (in the limited shopping area of Moscow-Pullman.)

How does this relate to libraries? It's this - we can't be so specialized that people have to go to the bookstore (or internet?) for their informational/recreational etc needs. Neither can we look like the Big Box stores.

Balance - so what else is new?

Jan Wall

Submitted by Jan Wall on July 21, 2005

### Jan, I am so glad you posted

Comment by: Gina Persichini (not verified); December 7, 2006

Jan, I am so glad you posted this. I was just this morning looking again at Chris Dodge's Utne UTNE article. He says this: "Too frequently, the trend toward standardization leads to similarly bland collections across the continent. Investors and travelers may find what they need, but where are the street newspapers, pamphlets about squatting and tenants' rights, and the titles like Dwelling Portably about how to live out of a car? The stacks burgeon with books on how to manage businesses, but there's far less about how to organize a union or cope with being a rank-and-file employee. Ask young people about libraries. Do they expect to find recordings by indie bands or periodicals like Maximumrocknroll, Punk Planet, Venus, or Razorcake ? ... " When I read this, I think Chris Dodge is talking about libraries as the box store. I wonder about those teens he mentions, though, have they ever expected to find those things at the library? Do

people think of the library for that unique information? It was never my expectation... until I learned about libraries. Then I figured out that libraries are exactly the place to get those things. I agree with the need for balance. The specialized items don't have to be the primary collection. We have resource sharing. With that libraries CAN get that unique information. Through resource sharing, those young people CAN get indie recordings and periodicals and all those other "long tail" items they might want.

### And without taking a side on

Comment by: Glenna R. Rhodes (not verified); December 7, 2006

And without taking a side on this issue I will comment about this statement: "We have resource sharing. With that libraries CAN get that unique information. Through resource sharing, those young people CAN get indie recordings and periodicals and all those other "long tail" items they might want." I LOVE resource sharing but in a world of immediate gratification (yeah, I'm also one of THOSE also) resource sharing only works occasionally. Doing serious research? Not on a tight timeline? Hunting down some genealogical fact? No worries....resource sharing is great. But for the browser and casual user if it's not in view then, in essence, it doesn't exist. Or even if they were told by their friend the library HAS it if they have to wait to get it they often walk away. So that leaves us meeting the needs of a particular type of user...you know the "serious" user. And what if the future is comprised of browsers, grazers and people with a need for NOW? How does that effect how we purchase and deploy our resources?

### Okay – so I'm posting

Comment by: Glenna R. Rhodes (not verified); December 7, 2006

Okay - so I'm posting while I'm on the desk - a slow Friday afternoon - AND there isn't spell check!! How can I possibly sound intelligent without spellcheck...sorry but it's true I can't spell without assistance. Read past it all and know it will probably happen again.  
Glenna

### I also heard at meetings in

Comment by: Jan Wall (not verified); December 7, 2006

I also heard at meetings in branch communities that the users want the resources and materials THERE, not just available. Not to pick on that particular location, I've heard that all over. And this is in libraries where there is a reliable (and timely) courier system in place, and the item could be there within a day or 2. So what does that do to the notion of resource sharing? Echoing Glenna, I didn't put my name on the list for the newest Harry Potter. As a matter of fact, we have 2 copies (for the 3 people in my family - guess who doesn't get a copy? Me!!!) And I rented a copy of "Rabbit Proof Fence" because I didn't want to wait for it to come back in. I had the time and inclination to watch it then, and wasn't sure I would when it was available through the library. I don't have any solutions. Maybe time will work it out. Maybe there will be some technology that allows some sort of "print/view on demand" that will work for libraries and their patrons. Maybe as we Boomers slow down and retire, we'll actually be content to wait for our gratification?

## Futures & Academic Libraries

Here's a selection from Walt Crawford that I thought might be worthy of sharing:

[Cites & Incites 5:9: Predicting the Future...](#)

Lynn Baird

Submitted by Lynn Baird on July 15, 2005

## Budgeting & its role in our future

As most of you are, I am in the midst of preparing my FY 05-06 budget. Earlier this year I wrote a column that appeared in the Moscow Pulman Daily News which addressed the difference between a library and a reading room. The point I was making is that a library provides a full spectrum of services, not just access to books. I was hoping to inspire the county residents to a higher goal for their libraries. But alas -

As I meet with community groups throughout the county I frequently heard that they want books on the shelves, lots of books - but no apparent concern about the currency and accuracy of the information in the books or the breadth of available information.

Now I combine the above thought with the role of a public library in a democratic society - that being to make available a wide selection of information that the citizens can access in hopes of making them informed participants in society.

It is access to the very information most needed by citizens of a democratic society that many libraries are finding increasingly difficult to provide. Latah County patrons want libraries in all of the communities, more hours, new materials, sufficient staffing, trained staff, ILL, a user-friendly webpage, etc. And rightly so. These are the elements that make up a vital public library.

Now enters reality - this Library District does NOT have sufficient revenue to provide all of the above. I know, we are not unlike many other public libraries and that is my point. While I am really enjoying the preparations necessary for the 2020 Vision conference and I applaud Ann Joslin and the ISL staff for pulling this all together I have a nagging fear. That fear is that we are looking at the future of public libraries in Idaho knowing that most of us will probably not be able to afford to go very far down that path.

I know that the point I make will come into play once we embark on the regional meetings and ultimately pull together a final Futures document but I do hope that we keep in mind as we look to the future the "budgetary reality" must be part of the mix.

I feel compelled to post this on the blog because I have encountered a huge dose of reality as I am out amongst the very people that I serve as their director. I believe in public libraries and what they stand for but many of my libraries are struggling just to find a volunteer to come in and clean the toilets. They are on the bottom rung of

Maslow's hierarchy as regards the life of their library. How can we get them to a place where they are afforded the opportunity to look more toward their "self actualization?"

Janice McPherson (and in this post aka Debbie Downer!)

Submitted by Janice McPherson on July 14, 2005

### **In the fall of 1980, members**

Comment by: Richard Wilson (not verified); December 7, 2006

In the fall of 1980, members of the Idaho library community were facing a crisis in funding for library services. The 1% initiative to limit property taxes loomed on the horizon, President-elect Reagan promised reforms (cuts) in federal spending, and Governor Evans had initiated holdbacks in the state budget. Richard Mabbutt (from Boise State University and the Boise Futures Foundation) met with us to initiate discussions about the future of Idaho libraries. He began the session by asking us to list all the problems facing Idaho libraries. He uncapped his marking pen, paused, and said, "Oh, by the way, money is not a problem...it is a resource." Some were greatly offended and spent the remainder of our time arguing that money was indeed a problem—most of our problems could be solved with sufficient funding. Some were greatly relieved to be freed from the constraints of banging of heads against the economic models and paradigms of limited resources. Some rejected the whole thing as a waste of time when so many problems were waiting to be solved. Whichever path you choose, I encourage examination of the assumptions around which we formulate our "problems."

### **I agree that money is a**

Comment by: Janice McPherson (not verified); December 7, 2006

I agree that money is a resource just as staff are but there are resource limitations that must be dealt with - if you define that as a problem so be it but regardless of how it is defined it must be addressed. I guess I must be a head banger!

### Thank you for sharing your

Comment by: Gina Persichini (not verified); December 7, 2006

Thank you for sharing your thoughts. I think there are probably a lot more people that have fears of planning a future that some libraries may not be able to achieve. When the present is a struggle, it's hard to plan a mighty future. My belief, and I suspect you agree since you are participating, is that we still need to plan for that future. If we don't create the vision, we have nothing to move toward. Without the lighthouse to guide us, we are merely treading water. It is my experience that movement, even small movement, toward a goal can fill one with confidence, inspiration, and motivation to keep swimming. On the other hand, I find treading water to be simply exhausting. With the 2020 Vision, we will have a goal for our future. Any movement toward it, no matter how large or how small, is still progress. Today I'm feeling, Overly Optimistic

### Reality has a way of

Comment by: Jan Wall (not verified); December 7, 2006

Reality has a way of ambushing us... At the community meeting in Latah County that I attended, I heard people say that they didn't want any more computers. They wanted hours open, to protect "their" staff, but otherwise cheap labor and lots and lots of books. So I wonder if we are chasing after technology that our users don't want or expect from us. Are we in the position of trying to create an audience for a service that WE think they need/want? I've been pretty immersed in the Property Tax Interim Committee doings, and maybe I'm Debby Downer today too! Jan

### Janice's concerns with

Comment by: Paulina Freeburg (not verified); December 7, 2006

Janice's concerns with budgeting issues are definitely a part of the present reality; however, I agree with Gina's comments about the need to create a vision, so we have a common goal to work toward. I am hoping that along with the vision there will be ideas shared about how to make the vision attainable. One of many questions I have is "how

long can Idaho libraries continue to provide “free” services that as Janice pointed out the citizens have come to expect? (insert “gasp” wherever necessary) For instance, we have many travelers passing through our community who seem surprised that we don’t charge a fee for computer use. I’m looking forward to the conference, and have just started the homework on Bruce Sterling’s book. Paulina

## Steve Jobs - 6/12/2005

The following stories form yet another way to view the present and future.

This is the text of the Commencement address at Stanford University by Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and of Pixar Animation Studios, delivered on June 12, 2005.

I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I’ve ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That’s it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first 6 months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife. Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: “We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?” They said: “Of course.” My biological mother later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents’ savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn’t see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out.

And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting. It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backwards ten years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something - your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky - I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees. We had just released our finest creation - the Macintosh - a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down - that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me - I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together. I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it.

Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is

great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

My third story is about death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: "If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer. I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months. My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery. I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope its the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960's, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors, and polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: it was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of The Whole Earth Catalog, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.

Thank you all very much

Submitted by Richard Wilson on July 13, 2005

## Crossroads

The future truly is the place where no one has gone before. There seem to be so many trends that we're barely taking advantage of. (And should we?) I feel that especially when I visit Seattle. My family lives on their cell phones - text messages, photos, etc. Meanwhile, like many in northern Idaho, I don't even own a cell phone. I can't use it at home unless I want to make and take all calls in the middle of the road outside my home. And I know from observing my (work) cell phone that I'm in and out of service as I drive up the backbone - Highway 95.

And blogging - we're just catching on but my daughter has had a blog for over 3 years. Are we destined to be playing catch-up in Idaho? I wonder sometimes that by the time we get the technology or knowledge about new trends and ways of doing things that it will already be passe and everyone will be on to something else.

So I guess one of the questions that face us is - what do our patrons want from us? Are we guilty of "techno-lust" - must have technology even if it is marginally (or not at all) usueful? Or techno-bust...

After sitting in the Statehouse listening to the Property Tax Interim Committee, whose charge is to give property tax relief - I can't help but wonder what that means to libraries in Idaho. Or to the notion of public good (my soap box) and the idea that public services are good/necessary for a community.

So I think that we're at a crossroads - not just for libraries, but for all of us. Will our communities be the type of place that we recognize and want to live in?

Submitted by Jan Wall on July 12, 2005

## Words from years ago

*The greatest crisis facing us is not Russia, not the Atom Bomb, not corruption in government, not encroaching hunger, not the morals of the young. It is a crisis in the organization and accessibility of human knowledge. We own an enormous “encyclopedia” — which isn’t even arranged alphabetically. Our “file cards” are spilled on the floor, nor were they ever in order. The answers we want may be buried somewhere in the heap, but it might take a lifetime to locate two already known facts, place them side by side and derive a third fact, the one we urgently need.*

*Call it the Crisis of the Librarian.*

*We need a new “specialist” who is not a specialist, but a synthesist....*

The above was written in 1950.

*...The data explosion is now being solved, mostly by cybernetics and electronics men rather than by librarians — and if the solutions are less than perfect, at least they are better than what Grandpa had to work with.*

Same author, 1965.

Mike Doellman  
Marshall Public Library  
Pocatello

Submitted by Mike Doellman on July 8, 2005

## More on Utne

I thought I was the only person who reads Utne! I also read Mother Jones, but perhaps that’s more information about my political persuasion than I should give.

I also went back and read Mike’s post about why we exist, and should we continue to exist? It hasn’t been all that long that libraries have existed for the public (as a public good, as Rich so eloquently points out.) I read a book (I forget the title, but can find it again) that is a primary source about jobs that existed a century ago: jobs such as wheelwright, ironmonger, etc. that largely don’t exist anymore. Many of the chapters

dealt with how people coped as their jobs disappeared beneath their feet. Is there anything that guarantees the further existence of libraries? Not everything lasts forever.

Nevertheless, I would hate to see the demise of libraries. With increased privatization and standardization (which Dodge points out in the Utne article), is there a role that libraries can and should play? Is there something that we do better than anyone/anything else?

I have one brief answer (and probably other longer answers as well): libraries exist as a symbol of the First Amendment. Maybe some (secretly, since we at least pay lip service to freedom of speech) wouldn't think that's an important role. But I like to think of opposing viewpoints, sitting side by side in the same Dewey number.

Submitted by Jan Wall on July 7, 2005

## Losing the way

Here's a link to an article in Utne by Chris Dodge entitled *Knowledge For Sale: Are America's public libraries on the verge of losing their way?*

[Article at Utne.com.](#)

(Sorry, but I can't seem to make the linkmaker work.) [Editor: the link has been fixed.]

Mike

Submitted by Anonymous on July 4, 2005

## Digitizing the Future

It might be worthwhile to read (and print out, if you wish) The Infinite Library from Technology Review. It can be found at

[www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/05/issue/feature\\_library.asp](http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/05/issue/feature_library.asp).

Mike Doellman

Marshall Public Library, Pocatello

Submitted by Mike Doellman on June 28, 2005

## What is SEARCH?

### UPDATES:

Catching up on blog entries, we have some terrific material and thoughts being shared. Thanks to everyone for contributing and reading.

I've been able to meet with Brenda Cooper and Louise Marley in person, and Dave Kusek by phone in the past couple of weeks. They are all excited to attend. Brenda and Louise will be able to join us for the entire Think Tank. They will stay in the discussions, and Brenda will help with facilitating if needed.

Brenda's first novel, with dean of Science Fiction Larry Niven is out this month. Title: [Building Harlequin's Moon](#). I am reading it now and it's a great summer read. Earthborn people escape an over-technological earth but get stranded on the way to a new world. They have to build their own world, and in so doing must use the same technology they set out to escape, plus they have to birth a new civilization of moon-born. Thus they must come face-to-face with their own prejudices and fears.

Now some thoughts on the future, specifically the future of "search."

Mark Anderson, publisher of Strategic News Service, recently did a newsletter called "What is Search?" I am going to paste in some of his letter here. What is the purpose of libraries, and librarians, if it is not to help with "search?"

Here is Mark....

Begin Quote from Strategic News Service, 02-15-2005

What is Search?

During a recent NPR interview I (Mark) shared this thought: Every task begins with a question.

A little more cogitation, and you finish it: And concludes with a document.

That document, almost always intended for communication, is where Microsoft lives: MS Word, Excel, Outlook Express, etc. You might say that MS Office has the back end down cold.

But what about the front end? Does every task begin with a question? And, if so, does that mean that Search is the beginning step of every task? Now That is Interesting.

If it's true, and if we increasingly live in an AORTA (Always on real time access) world, then – every task starts with Search. Now that is big.

This isn't just a bolt-on function, a menu-bar add-in, this is the front end of how we think and work. And, thanks to AORTA, That is why search is Search.

Is there more? Sure. [There was a time when] there was no Web, and getting things off your disk was less a problem, since disks were smaller. But disk space per dollar has been outgrowing Moore's Law ever since Alan Shugart joined the fray, and today we're approaching moderately priced hard disks with capacities of several hundred gigabytes. Think of finding a needle on Mars.

Add in the Web, and that needle could be anywhere in the solar system. But there is a more compelling reason why search matters today: because the world's content is searchable. Even five years ago, this was not true, in the sense that most of the world's content was still in analog form. You might find the title of a book or paper, but probably wouldn't have a complete digital copy of the work. Today we are well on the way to digitizing almost all content on the planet, from illuminated manuscripts to phone calls.

In other words, we have Reach. Every library, almost every book (just search Amazon, and the books within it - and now the streets of America, presented by streetfront photos), every Web page (via Alexa, Google, MSN Search, Yahoo!, Altavista, Dogpile, Lycos, Excite, Lexis/Nexis, etc.), every scientific article, all are reachable now, and so are searchable.

John Sculley seemed to think that the magic was in the device, in his case the video concept device Knowledge Navigator, apparently purloined from Robert Heinlein. But what Heinlein knew, that Sculley didn't, was that it was the Library, the networked content, and not the device, that held the magic.

Today, every connected device is infinitely more useful than all of the Library of Alexandria, ancient or new.

The same is true for "news." As I predicted earlier, we have now crossed the moment when broadcast networks held sway over the news. Today, the networks are used for

propaganda (thank you, Mr. Murdoch), and, as difficult as it is, the real story will be found somewhere on the Net. (SNSer Dan Gillmor, a well-respected technology columnist at the San Jose Mercury for many years, having written a book on this subject has just launched his own new site and business to pursue it.)

Does Search do more than just fetch things back to us? Sure, it changes our business, and perhaps personal, landscape of connections. More important, it has caused us to turn to Search instead of the old ways. Yesterday, you might have found one of the cheaper saws in your neighborhood. Today, you can find the cheapest Hitachi 15" compound miter saw within three hundred miles. This not only changes how those saws are sold, and who makes the money, but how you use roads (less) and shipping (more) and your own town (less) and how you even perceive your home turf.

For most of the people I know today, Amazon is just part of the new AORTA / Search neighborhood – unfortunate for small bookstores everywhere.

People talk about Google as if the word is interchangeable with Search, even though Yahoo! has almost as many users, and MSNSearch is now getting fired up. In fact, if you fire up the International Director of Search Engines, at <http://www.searchenginecolossus.com/> you'll notice search engine entries for each of 198 countries and 68 territories. The U.S. alone has listings for 130, and this number probably is short.

And not only does the Web searched today have Reach, it also has depth: almost every website has its own search function, finishing the arborization of the library-turned-brain.

So Search, unlike search, evolved to the time when it changes not only the world around us, but changes us, too.

Is it yet more?

Google has been pretty well managed so far. Let's go back to that original idea, that every task starts with a question. With a little luck, that may mean that Google is the starting point for almost every project. Now here is the part I wonder about: once they have you, why should they let you go? They are already giving you email, the most common form of document, so they have most of the back end of this process covered: find something, communicate it.

If you were Microsoft, you'd have to be awfully nervous about that last paragraph, as I'm sure they are. Recent figures have Office users pegged at around 400MM. Do you know how many people use Google?

Trailing in search was one thing; trailing in Search will be another.

End Quote from Strategic News Service, 02-15-2005

What will be the role of libraries in the future of SEARCH?

Glen Hiemstra

Submitted by Glen Hiemstra on June 28, 2005

### **the rearview mirror**

Professional librarians are taught how to acquire, organize and disseminate information to meet the needs of their patrons. Librarians are also exposed to core values of the profession. One of the core values is the concept of the public good. Over 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson presented his ideas about social compacts—governments are instituted among people and derive their powers from the consent of the governed. The people create these compacts and governments to obtain a collective, greater good and security of their natural rights. Therefore, the public good is that which serves the collective population overall in addition to enhancing the life of the individual in that society. Fundamental to the success of Jeffersonian democracy are the assumptions that citizens can read, freely access information, and gather with their neighbors to discuss issues in order to make decisions about their government. Librarians assert that a library serves the public good through acting to help citizens become more informed members of the electorate and more capable of self-governance in a democracy.

While technology may change the tools available to the patron and the librarian, the demands for recreational, educational, and business information continue to expand. Whether the access to the library is virtual—bits and bytes in space—or a physical location, the cultural and social roles of the library endure as a place to read, research, reflect, gather to meet and discuss common issues, and to provide a human touch in the high-tech information age.

Idaho libraries sit on an historical continuum. The understanding of past events lends credibility and stability to present actions that stretch into the ideas and potentialities of

unlimited futures. As we dream and explore, an occasional glance in the rearview mirror may be beneficial.

Submitted by Richard Wilson on June 27, 2005

## Travel

With the recent comments about vacations, it seems appropriate to mention the travel web site [www.spacefuture.com](http://www.spacefuture.com). It was brought to my attention in a recent Ebsco futures' Alert in a little blurb from CANADIAN BUSINESS (4/25/2005) entitled "Beware of zero-gravity pickpockets." Many may already know about the web site. As a scifi fan I enjoyed my clicking-trip which required no dramamine. If you are not taking off to Eurpoe, Costa Rica, Greece, or even the Tetons, you could take a pre-space flight clicking-trip around the site.

The adventuresome may be interested in the 7-Up Soda Contest for a space trip in a suborbital vehicle in the not so distant future. There is currently no information on just which vehicle is partnered with 7-Up but you have until August 31, 2005 to get your entries postmarked! The 7-Up article can be found in the Space Future Journal list accessed from the site's home page.

Happy traveling,

Marj Hooper

ISL

Submitted by Marj Hooper on June 27, 2005

## Measuring up

In one of my many readings, a posting listed several different ways of looking how public libraries are measuring up.

One such project, the Normative Data Project for Libraries has a great website:

<http://www.libraryndp.info/index.html>

I was looking at Idaho's information which shows that we are ranked 7th in the nation for library visits per capita.

One of the things I find interesting about this is (and it relates to Mike's last post about the future of libraries) the value that people ascribe to the "library as place". I've become more conscious of this role in recent months and I think it might need to be one of those considerations for us in the future.

Lynn Baird

Submitted by Lynn Baird on June 26, 2005

## Why Do We Exist?

I think that in order to determine where we should go we have to first step back and ask ourselves why we exist at all. What makes libraries of **any** sort — public, academic, prison, governmental, special, school — so important that they exist? Why should the taxpayers/company/whoever pay thousands for what we do? Could someone else do it better and more efficiently? What do we give back to our communities that others do not?

And, perhaps most important, has the day of the library, historically the epitome of linearity, ended? Or has it just begun?

Mike Doellman

Marshall PL

Pocatello

Submitted by Anonymous on June 23, 2005

## I've been reading

Comment by: Beth Hill (not verified); December 7, 2006

I've been reading "Tomorrow Now" by Bruce Sterling and in his first thematic stage "the infant" he suggests that "the infant personifies the future. You place your children into history. You are their past" (page 3). This passage made me think about how I viewed my parents when I was growing up. They were my past, even when I was living with them in the present. Their existence constituted what "was" about my life, not what was to be. I did not look to them when determining a new direction in my life. Certainly they were safe and held a knowledge and experience that could be drawn from, but was that the first place I chose to look? No... I sought among my peers- including my relationships with them, and to what was happening in the world currently. What would make me look back at my parents or my history? A crisis of identity perhaps- or not finding a satisfying answer from the present. Similarly, why would today's children look to libraries? First, they would need to understand the value of them, or what they have to offer. What makes libraries different than the Internet? A common thread running through a few of the postings is the idea of the library as place, or as a means for establishing relationships. My personal opinion is that this is the key. This may not be an appreciated comment, but yes, I think there are plenty of others out there in affiliated professions who can "do it better and more efficiently" as far as designing databases, and creating better accessibility, and teaching how to use ever-changing database interfaces. But, "machines themselves have nothing to teach us (page 60)." The Internet cannot provide human touch or emotional support. People still do that. How do we take this "specialty" and promote it as reasoning for the continuation of libraries? I don't know. But, I think it's all we've got. Beth Hill University of Idaho Moscow

## Another Joiner

I have finally wound up the school year and may have time to think and read...I hope! I received the books from ILA - Thanks, and have looked at the reading list, etc. I will be leaving for Costa Rica this Friday and plan to take along some reading materials for the think tank. I don't really have anything to add to the discussion at this time, but wanted to let you know I'm out here and reading your postings. I will post more by way of the discussion when I return after July 4! (Sue! Enjoy Greece!!!)

Penni Cyr  
Librarian, Moscow High School

Submitted by Penni Cyr on June 20, 2005

## Back in the Saddle Again!

Finally! Summer has started and I'm getting the chance to "jump in"! Thanks for the books. I've started reading them and the posts. Also, have read Collapse-by Jared Diamond. What a thought provoking book for any "ThinkTankers"!

Here's to summer and the future, what ever they hold!

Priscilla Sisson

Submitted by Priscilla Sisson on June 20, 2005

## Serving the Print Impaired

I'm caught up thinking about the future. Earlier this month I attended 5 focus groups with print impaired users and service providers. In those groups we asked questions about information needs, preferred formats for receiving information, and suggestions for improved access to information. I heard frustrations about current capabilities as well as ideas for future services and resources. Most of all I heard users wanting to participate in their communities and service providers eager to help make that connection. As we continue to gather more information for the print impaired strategic plan, I'm excited to see how it develops.

One thing seems obvious: the Talking Book Service which has been the primary provider of information to visually and physically disabled users for 70 years cannot continue to be the only game in town. The March/April issue of Public Libraries has a series of titles on this topic. The articles range from sharp criticism of the program for changing too slowly to eager anticipation for the digital books and players that will begin distribution in 2008. I agree with portions of what each author says, but realize the discussion must be more than philosophical.

We are an aging population. I recently read that by 2010 1 in 3 Americans will be 50 or older. (I fit right in) With aging comes visual, physical, and mental conditions that limit one's ability to read standard print. In addition, isolating conditions increase one's need for community. How will Idaho's libraries respond to these needs? Will we harness new technologies to overcome the inability to physically come to the library? What can we offer in addition to access to information? This is the value added that distinguishes libraries from accessing the Internet. Preparing for Vision 2020 and developing the Print Impaired Strategic Plan is a great opportunity to think outside the box.

Sue Walker

Submitted by Sue Walker on June 15, 2005

### At the moment, I'm

Comment by: Mike Doellman (not verified); December 7, 2006

At the moment, I'm thinking that MP3 technology would work well. The players are small and inexpensive. One drawback would be the need for the physically handicapped to work the controls, but that is something that can easily be overcome. Mike Doellman  
Director, Marshall PL Pocatello

## Browsing

I'm struck by this thought when I read these posts - what about browsing? I wonder if the focused search - i.e. knowing exactly what is "needed" will be the demise of wonderful serendipitous finds?

For example - downloading specific tunes rather than buying a CD: when I buy a CD, I often find tunes that I didn't know but like more as time goes by. And when I go to a

library, often the book I really want is the one sitting on the shelf next to the one I thought I needed...

And if we only rely on what's hot, do we cut out a lot of "filler" material that gives a more rounded picture?

I'm not sure where I'm headed with this, but it seem to me that we as a society are either headed to a homogenization of culture, or we could be headed to total customization. (And if we're all unique, aren't we all the same?) ;)

Jan Wall

Submitted by Jan Wall on June 12, 2005

### **There was an excellent news**

Comment by: Lynn Baird (not verified); December 7, 2006

There was an excellent news article recently on the reason for large collections and the purpose of browsing, referenced above. Here's a great quote: "The chance of seeing what the next volume is, or running your eyes idly over the spines, opening the pages and falling upon something is memorable, pleasurable, instructive and frequently decisive in the way you work," said Neil Harris, a U. of C. historian and member of the faculty committee involved in planning the new addition. While we may promote ease of use, should we not also be working towards providing excellence of resource? Google Scholar versus expensive databases, for example. The challenge before us is the help our users recognize that there are times when the first answer located isn't necessarily the response to the question. If we are linear in our approach to information seeking, we are unlikely to entertain other ideas. It takes a broad mind to even see the serendipitous event as an option. Lynn Baird

## Jumping In

Graduation is over and now I'm gathering books, articles and reading postings in the Vision's blog.

I'm jumping in!

I've read part of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't*, by Jim Collins. Commonalities of organizations or companies that have moved beyond "good" to "great" are identified by Collins. One shared element is that almost all their CEO's or leaders who lead the group from "good" to "great" came from within. Drawing on this point, libraries should look to a cooperative management approach to create great leadership. In school libraries, this would involve the faculty, staff, students, administrators, counselors and the community. The physical presence of our school libraries will be morphed and so must the staff and the system by which new leaders are developed.

Tomorrow I leave for Greece and will not be back until July. I've packed two paperbacks, *Pattern Recognition*, by William Gibson and *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*, by Ray Kurzweil. I've got audio books in the Ipod and hope to find Internet Cafes to keep blogging. I have *The Future of Music: Manifesto for the Digital Music Revolution*, by David Kusek on order at Borders. The rules-to-be on recording and distribution of copyrighted music may help us see how books will be shared in other than the printed format.

As a school librarian, I'm seeing these assertions:

- Library patrons right now want easy access to all types of information not matter where they are. We are finding new ways to share information and will form specialized learning groups through whatever avenues are opened or we may develop. Libraries need to lead in access and sharing.
- Patrons of all ages need access to and training in how to use a flood of ever changing information sources. Without this help, they will get their information where it is open to them or most convenient. Information skills should be a basic part of earliest education; they're fundamental. Skills will determine access.

*On the Road*, Sue Bello

Submitted by Sue Bello on June 11, 2005

### I'd like to suggest a look

Comment by: Mike Doellman (not verified); December 7, 2006

I'd like to suggest a look at Appreciative Inquiry. There's a definition at <http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>. That's the Appreciative Inquiry Commons, a good site to learn about AI. There's also the Taos Institute at [www.taosinstitute.net](http://www.taosinstitute.net). Mike Doellman

## The Gamer Generation

I recently read a review of a book by John Beck & Mitchell Wade entitled "Got Game: How the Gamer Generation is Reshaping Business Forever." In it Beck and Wade suggest that in the next five years, Gamers will have a significant impact on society and will be the dominant demographic for libraries. They also suggest that libraries will need to serve and attract both Gamers and Boomers through a number of avenues including creating separate zones in your library, knowing each generation's culture and being attentive to the needs of both cultures. The review can be found at:

<http://www.oclc.org/news/publications/newsletters/oclc/2005/267/stayinthegame.htm>

It definitely gives you some interesting food for thought regarding the future of library services.

-Samantha Thompson-Franklin, LCSC Library

Submitted by Samantah Thompson-Franklin on June 7, 2005

## Some URLs

I received this e-mail today from the libadmin listserv, and I thought I would post it here. It seems to offer some interesting sites for exploration.

Beth Hill

How do some of the largest libraries in North America see their near-term future? Two of my recent DigitalKoans posts provide links to ARL libraries' strategic planning Web sites and documents. Web sites were included if the library's strategic plan included the years 2004 and/or 2005.

<http://www.escholarlypub.com/digitalkoans/2005/05/31/strategic-planning-efforts-at-arl-libraries-part-1/>

<http://www.escholarlypub.com/digitalkoans/2005/06/01/strategic-planning-efforts-at-arl-libraries-part-2/>

Other posts of potential interest may be:

ARL Institutional Repositories

<http://www.escholarlypub.com/digitalkoans/2005/05/01/arل-institutional-repositories/>

Scholarly Communication Web Sites at ARL Libraries

<http://www.escholarlypub.com/digitalkoans/2005/05/11/scholarly-communication-web-sites-at-arل-libraries/>

Best Regards,

Charles

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DigitalKoans: <http://www.escholarlypub.com/digitalkoans/>

Open Access Bibliography: <http://www.arل.org/pubscat/pubs/openaccess/>

Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography: <http://info.lib.uh.edu/sepb/sepb.html>

Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog: <http://info.lib.uh.edu/sepb/sepw.htm>

Submitted by Beth Hill on May 31, 2005

## The Future of Music - Megatrends

At the end of his book *The Future of Music: Manifesto for the Digital Revolution*, David Kusek (who will be joining us in August) and his coauthor Gerd Leonhard put forth six megatrends that they believe will affect the future of music. Since the authors say “knowing how to recognize a trend often leads to recognizing a specific opportunity that may result from it”, here they are for your contemplation:

**The accelerating pace and scope of diversity** – This trend seems a no-brainer as we are all experiencing its “unfettered, low cost, all-you-can-eat access” to information. However, the authors’ description of our media becoming less ‘push’ and more ‘pull’ is an interesting one to consider. Information consumers are more and more attracted to access that offers choice and control, less TV and more internet for example.

**Changing paradigm of work and leisure** – Here the authors claim that our society is moving up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, leaving an emphasis on basic needs and entering the social interaction, acknowledgement, and self-realization realms. They see a growing emphasis on knowledge, arts, experiences, and emotions.

**The unobtrusive expansion of technology** – In order for a technological advancement to succeed it must be seamlessly coordinated with what people want. “Technology is actually adapting to people rather than the reverse”, and cell phones are becoming the supreme portable computing device.

**The overload of information and media** – Cell phones and other wireless devices will be major information distributors, the internet and filtering through its plethora of info will be taken for granted, and “what you pay attention to will completely replace the question of how you get access to it. It’s all about exposure and discovery.”

**The surveillance society and concerns of privacy** – The fear of surveillance and concern for secure interactions won’t go away any time soon.

**Heart over brain** – Leonard and Kusek see this trend as one that moves beyond the human brain’s ability to process information to the abilities of the human heart: experience, identity, aesthetics, esteem, impulse, emotions, impulse, and foresight. “Plain information must make a connection to the subliminal if it is to emerge as a meaningful contribution.”

It is worthwhile to consider these trends when thinking about the future of libraries. I'm interested in your thoughts about any of these.

Susan Tabor Boesch

Submitted by Susan Tabor Boesch on May 27, 2005

**This post is more than a bit**

Comment by: ilo (not verified); April 6, 2008

This post is more than a bit dated, but totally check out the book. Solid read :)

### **Questions (no answers) about serving the NextGen users**

"I'll add it to my queue." This was the statement from a friend of mine when a group was discussing a particular movie that needed to be watched or, as it happened, re-watched. He was referring to his queue of movies with [Netflix](#). As I read his words (because many of our conversations take place online by email, IM, or within a weblog) I found myself thinking 'Netflix generation.'

A Netflix user gets movies shipped directly to their home. They watch them and return them to Netflix when they are done. No due dates. No late fees. No postage. After returning the movies, Netflix will send the next videos in the user's queue.

NextGen users are used to this type of service. More than that, they expect it. They are being raised on it. As we consider the future of library services, how do libraries compete? Should we be trying to replace "Netflix" in the above description with the word "library"? Perhaps not. I mean, this is not necessarily a competition. But, should we be considering how we can serve a generation of users that are used to this type of response to their information needs? Should we be considering how we can complement or partner with the Google, Netflix, and Amazons of the world that are already serving those users? Should we at least be taking a hint from the lessons they've learned or the features they've shown to be helpful to users?

Consider the ILS. Lorcan Dempsey posted on his blog [May 15, 2005](#) to "think about some of the characteristics of the major web presences which have become the first — and sometimes last — resort of research for many of our users. And then to think about

library services within that context.” Read his entire entry for his views on important characteristics of user interfaces.

As we look to the future, I am excited to consider all sorts of possibilities for library services. Please contribute to the conversation we’re having here exploring the many ideas.

-gina

Submitted by Gina Persichini on May 23, 2005

## Looking Forward from the Past

While cleaning out our back room here in Post Falls, I came across photocopies of a series of articles on the future of libraries written by Raymond Kurzweil in the Jan, Feb, and Mar 1992 issues of Library Journal.

I thought it would be interesting to look back 13 years to see what people were saying about the future, as we are supposed to be looking 15 years out in creating our vision.

Kurzweil made predictions about the future of the digital book, circa 2000, that haven’t come to pass, but doesn’t discuss the Internet at all.

He does raise some interesting questions about the role of the library in light of the digital revolution.

John McDonald

Submitted by Anonymous on May 19, 2005

## New perspectives

Stewart Brand makes some excellent points in his article about environmentalists and the points of view that predetermine people's thoughts. By standing in one place and not moving from that spot when viewing the world, the scenery is always the same. If we can collectively move from that comfortable area to a different spot, a couple of things automatically happen. First, we aren't comfortable so we are more aware of what things look like. We take the time to really notice relationships. Then, just by virtue of this changed perspective, we are seeing different things.

Suspending assumptions. Getting a new view. Being prepared to really look once you find your new location.

It will be interesting for us to explore our assumptions so we can then make that change. I look forward to the dialogue.

Lynn Baird

Submitted by Lynn Baird on May 19, 2005

## Futures Reading

Our Futures reading list is growing (Links and Recommended Reading), but as is often the case, reading "Tomorrow Now" has to compete with today's deadlines. However, what I have read is permeating my thinking. Suddenly a lot of my normal work/newspaper/magazine reading seems related to our futures discussion.

In reviewing Margaret Wheatley's video "Lessons from the New Workplace," I noted her discussion of the importance of looking for information that will surprise us. This seems relevant to identifying trends and uncovering our personal assumptions as part of the futures process. Soon after, the "Idaho Statesman" carried an article entitled "Europe Skeptical of Google Plan: Critics say digital library will crush culture, history" (May 6, 2005 Business section). That information surprised me; my view has been that libraries collect and preserve culture and history and make them accessible to many. Is the view described in the article an anomaly, or is a backlash against digitization a possibility? What other surprising information about our work is out there?

Last week I picked up the May/June 2005 issue of “Sierra Magazine” at lunch and found an interview with Jared Diamond, author of “Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed.” In it, he says that a society’s core values often spell its ruin. In the interview he explains that “the most difficult values to jettison are those that have helped you in the past. You’re inclined to cling to them.” He gives the very compelling example of the Greenland Norse; the values that sustained them for 450 years ultimately killed them. We’re very aware of the library’s core values; can we envision a scenario in which those values will cause the library’s demise?

We’ll continue to add to the Futures reading list; stay tuned.

Submitted by Ann Joslin on May 16, 2005

**I’m finally back home and**

Comment by: Priscilla Sisson (not verified); December 7, 2006

I’m finally back home and dealing with aging parents problems so haven’t gotten into the books sent to us yet. BUT I will! ;- ) I have also read Collapse by Jared Diamond and it has much to say about our future as a society and our decisions to either fail or thrive. What a wonderful book for “ThinkTanker’s” to read! More later!

## Mission Statement

We've very recently revised both the Mission and Vision Statements for the Marshall Public Library. For whatever it's worth, here's our vision statement — and much thanks to Kay Flowers, too!

### Vision Statement

By merging the best of tradition and technology, the Marshall Public Library aspires to provide

- public library services for all people, beginning in the formative years;
- a foundation for community and economic development;
- access to and training in effective information use;
- a gathering and meeting place for cultural and intergenerational activity, and to meet the need of the community for informational, educational, recreational, and personal growth.

Mike Doellman

Submitted by Mike Doellman on May 2, 2005

## Why Books, Why Libraries?

The Vision 2020 Think Tank is taking shape. See the agenda at the website. We have attracted terrific resource people, with one to go. Science Fiction writers Bruce Sterling, Brenda Cooper and Louise Marley. Thinkers and writers Dr. Greg Raymond and David Kusek. I expect them to challenge us. Are you ready to be challenged?

Here is one thought to ponder. If you have kids in the age range of 2-20, watch them sometime. Watch how they access information. Watch how they multi-task. Ask what it means. This is the “digital native” generation, the first to grow up with computers, then with the Web. They are not like us.

I remember walking into the home office one evening when David, now 21, was in high school. I watched in amazement as he talked on a cell phone and a land-line phone simultaneously, while monitoring several instant message conversations on the net, fingers flying over the keyboard. This was just his background noise to accompany his

homework, which he was also doing. I remember thinking that something is going on here. I am good with computers and the net, but nothing like this.

What will it mean for libraries in 2020 when the digital native generation is in the adult age bracket, while the next even more digital generation of kids follows? Just 15 years away.

Here are some clues, borrowed from a Blog called [The Long Tail](#). It has to do with stats on the use of media:

Flat to Down to Way Down:

- Music: sales last year were down 21% from their peak in 1999
- Television: network TV's audience share has fallen by a third since 1985
- Radio: listenership is at a 27-year low
- Newspapers: circulation peaked in 1987, and the decline is accelerating
- Magazines: total circulation peaked in 2000 and is now back to 1994 levels (but a few premier titles are bucking the trend!)
- Books: sales growth is lagging the economy as whole

Up:

- Movies: 2004 was another record year, both for theaters and DVDs
- Videogames: even in the last year of this generation of consoles, sales hit a new record
- Web: online ads will grow 30% this year, breaking \$10 billion (5.4% of all advertising)

What will survive? Why?

Glen Hiemstra

April 28, 2005

Submitted by Glen Hiemstra on April 27, 2005

## My first stab at using the

Comment by: Edit Szanto (not verified); December 7, 2006

My first stab at using the futures blog... I am excited to be part of this. Just started reading the e-book published by EDUCAUSE: Educating the Net Generation. It is available online. It has great information for everyone involved in education, including libraries (not just academic, but public as well). Chapter 13 is dedicated for libraries. Edit

## Bruce Sterling is IN for sure, Brenda Cooper too

Everyone I hope is as pleased as I am that author Bruce Sterling definitely confirmed today that he will be joining us. His non-fiction Tomorrow Now could be one of our texts, and I am sure you'll want to dip into his extensive science fiction collection, such as one of my favorites, Holy Fire. Rumor has it that Bruce does not pull punches when making observations, so a good time ought to be had by all.

By the way, if you've not reviewed the draft agenda for the Think Tank we are now planning on having our science fiction writers with us for the afternoon on the first day, then joining us for dinner and after dinner open conversation. This ought to provide some extended discussion.

Our second science fiction guest, Brenda Cooper, will not be known to you yet (I don't think) but her novel with Larry Niven is out in June, Building Harlequin's Moon. (It can be pre-ordered now at Amazon.) Brenda also happens to work currently in city government while she becomes a breakout writer, so she is in a similar situation to many of you...toiling for the state while dreaming dreams.

I'll keep you posted on the resource people as they get lined up. One thing I hope without being able to guarantee it is that some of them will find time to dip into the blog as we move toward August.

Glen Hiemstra

Submitted by Glen Hiemstra on March 23, 2005

## Afterwards

I tried to post yesterday. I finally managed to find a spot where the wireless signal was strong enough to connect. But the wireless service provider evidently doesn't support blogging, because each time I tried to "publish" (or even save), the message disappeared.

I'll have to look over my notes to see if there's any content that I should mention. But maybe that was part of my evaluation (the delta, if you will) of this conference: there was too much. Too many sessions and speakers. We were so scheduled that there was hardly time for reflection. Lots of ideas were thrown around, but we hardly had time for in-depth exploration. And because the pace seemed (to me) so frenetic, there wasn't time to get to know anyone.

Other issues: the location wasn't conducive to any cohesiveness. There are too many places to go to in SLC, and participants stayed in numerous hotels across the city. (But maybe cohesiveness wasn't a part of the desired outcomes.) There wasn't a list of participants, so it will be difficult to put names and faces together in the future. And a criticism I have of librarians in general: they seemed to travel in the same herd they came with.

Perhaps one of the things that I saw as a drawback was intentional on the planner's part. It seemed that the tone (and theme) of the conference was pre-determined. I'm not sure how to explain this. We started with Nancy Kranich, who extolled the virtue (and necessity) of developing libraries as facilitators in community dialog. And we ended with Meg Wheatley, whose presentation brought it full circle, with the same theme. So is it any wonder that conversations ran along those lines? I'm not sure that anyone came away with another model than that, another role that libraries might play in the future.

Maybe that was their desired outcome. But I think we need to have more of a "blank slate" than that. (Or am I misinterpreting out intentions?) Do we have an idea of what we want the solution(s) to be? Or the role(s) we want libraries to play in the future? If so, it's not "their" conference, it's "ours."

Okay, that's probably enough philosophy. What worked about the conference: an impressive library, where everything worked together for the benefit of the patrons,

staff, and community; a great model for community involvement; support from staff and volunteers to make the conference run smoothly; great small group discussions; excellent bibliographies and reading materials; video feeds; website; participants from all areas and library (and some non-library) positions (but no school librarians!!!); lots to think about.

Can we build upon any of these plus/deltas? I realize that this conference is seen through my lens, so take everything I say with a grain of salt! (A feeble joke, considering where I've been.)

Submitted by Jan Wall on March 20, 2005

### I found several things

Comment by: Kay Flowers (not verified); December 7, 2006

I found several things interesting. The most important was the lack of spare time. I think librarians, out of guilt or necessity, feel this need to schedule every single minute at a conference. In a big city with lots of competing attractions, maybe that is needed. However, I think there is a real value to setting aside time to think and reflect. I would hope that we would leave a lot of times for small groups of mixed backgrounds to get together and brainstorm. Such interaction should be the true meat of the conference, not just listening to sci-fi writers and futurists. I was also interested that Jan felt that the conference was "staged" to come to a certain conclusion, as if the "future" of the library as a bastion of democracy was already accepted and the conference was just for coming up with details. I hope that our selection of writers will come up with several alternative futures. At an ACRL meeting several years ago, one session was devoted to alternative futures. A small group had fleshed out four possible futures and the groups worked on what they liked/disliked about each and what were the odds of each happening. That exercise was helpful in opening up folks to possibilities, including less than positive possibilities!!. More thoughts later. Let's hear from some other folks. Kay

### Unaccustomed as I am to

Comment by: Jan Wall (not verified); December 7, 2006

Unaccustomed as I am to public blogging (that sounds ominous/dangerous), I perhaps should have toned down my evaluation? It sounds like I'm ungrateful or that I didn't get anything out of it. On the contrary, I found it extremely valuable to be included. There were a lot of ideas that were valuable for me personally and professionally. Looking at what worked and what didn't, IMO, was colored/clouded/interpreted through what I think our Futures event is shaping up to be. And maybe I'm comparing apples and oranges here. I think our event has different purposes. And we are intentionally keeping it free. (As in \$\$). I'm sure the self-selection nature of the group (i.e. those whose budget could absorb travel costs and the \$150 registration) made the composition of the group different than we envision. And thus the conversations as well. I'm not very comfortable taking this out to LibIdaho at this point. I had thought this would be (or stay) internal at this point, although I have included LD in the conversation as well. Jan

### HEY! WOW..ME FIRST

Comment by: Joe Reiss (not verified); December 7, 2006

HEY! WOW..ME FIRST BLOGGO! Well, moving right along...Jan, I appreciated your opinions, and do not think "toned down" comments will get us anywhere. Tell it like you see it, isn't that what this is all about? I found your blogging useful and informative, and found myself in agreement with your sentiments. Kay, your comments are spot right on, and as perceptive as usual. Also agree with what you wrote. Do you guys feel there is an undercurrent to every conference that becomes either an overt or covert theme? Sometimes the theme seems to develop in an almost serendipitous fashion. Nobody sets out to establish it, but a theme underlies and/or links sessions, workshops, discussions...like a steady thrumming bass line. Perhaps that's what happened in SLC, one presenter carooming off the position of another. Or, perhaps the conference had an intentional theme going in. Either way, it is an interesting one. Libraries tend to flock to the latest banner. The banner of the moment that seems to have relevance, resonance and practical application. "Hey gang, over here...DEMOCRACY MUST BE SAVED! and we're the ones to do it. We'll become centers of enlightened discussion, interlocutors of community communication, and maybe show a film or two. You know, that sounds just

like Post Falls. We haven't started selling popcorn yet, but video is just around the corner. Like Kay said, hopefully the Idaho conference will have a bit different bend. We aren't out to explore a self-fulfilling vision, we're out to be out. To attempt to hear the good and bad, the thrilling and the scary, the possible and the darn right challenging. Or did I get that wrong? Jan, I do wonder about other visions of the future you encountered at SLC aside from the conference theme song. Even a blog is no substitute for being there, and I know it's impossible to get it all down, but let's hear more about the other stuff. You seemed enthralled with the main SLC Public building. Moishe strikes again. He really has the vision of the library as a public place, the center of a forum..literally. Complete with ruins. Joe

### Joe, you're right about

Comment by: Jan Wall (not verified); December 7, 2006

Joe, you're right about how a theme often seems to spontaneously evolve (or reveal itself) as a conference goes on. And I don't know if there was an agreed-upon theme before the SLC conference. But here's the difference, as I think about it. At ISL, we always counsel libraries going through strategic planning not to look at the library first. (In other words, don't think "what services/programs can the library provide to the community?" as the first step.) It's essential to look at the entire environment first - from the community aspect first. And that's what I think we're trying to do - look at future, what our communities might be like, trends etc., and THEN to look at what role libraries might play.

### Great Site!

Comment by: Anonymous (not verified); October 8, 2007

I just wanted to thank you all for this great blog! Keep up the good work! Eric Bryant, President Gnosis Arts

## Futures - day #1

It's been a full day. There have been so many thoughts and ideas that I hardly know where to begin. I hope that some of you have been able to see the video of the main speakers.

Nancy Kranich - practicing democracy. Over the last 30 years, citizen participation in all form of public life has diminished: clubs, voting, volunteering, etc. How can libraries help restore opportunities to participate? Can we spark our our citizens and engage our communities?

Her POV is that libraries must provide leadership to create a civic dialog in order for democracy to flourish. We can/must offer programs that position us as facilitators that bridge the gap between people and groups to solve problems. And we must also provide opportunities for people to bond within a community.

What does it mean to practice democracy? Her definitions are to provide information to all, to encourage independent thought with in-depth info, and to be an active place where people exchange ideas. Public spaces are important for democracy - libraries can provide that. Libraries should go beyond educating, inspiring and informing to playing an active role to encourage exchange.

How can we do it? By partnerships, facilitating local interaction, providing an exchange of local info, promoting civic literacy, undertaking community-relating activities and providing community/public space. To do this we need to include the entire community, reduce barriers to access, and think about not just great libraries, but great public spaces.

Libraries can occupy a unique niche by focusing on local information. This niche cannot be filled by a "one size fits all", cookie cutter chain store. When we think about libraries in this light, we can become an enabler of civic literacy. But we need to think of what it will take for citizens to participate in public life. What skills will they need? And what skills do we need to help them get there? Her closing remark was "Citizenship is not a spectator sport." (From Putnam)

From this opening charge, we broke into small groups that were facilitated (small f) by "experts." I chose the group that was asked the question: "What do we need to be credible?" The conversation was quite lively, and I hope that the notes from this session

will be posted. I find that the small group discussion is where ideas are formed and possibilities explored. If it weren't late and it hadn't been a long day, I'd go on...

It wasn't possible to blog as the day went on. It went too fast - there was no time. And there wasn't wi-fi in the auditorium. And the ideas flew so quickly (and thickly) that it really takes some time to reflect.

Here I've written volumes and this was just the first third of the day... Maybe I can catch up later?

Submitted by Jan Wall on March 18, 2005

## Thinking Ahead 2005

The SLC Library (The City Library) is remarkable - an impressive entrance with shops (Urban Room), an atrium, wireless and ethernet connections, self-checkout, a 3-tiered fireplace, meeting rooms and auditorium. Very welcoming. Truly a community space.

That seems to be the focus of this conference: the ability of a library to pull the community together; civic dialog. The opening remarks by the owners of Weller Bookstore in SLC were in the form of a duet, or more accurately, contrapuntal. Sometimes they spoke in unison, sometimes solo, and sometimes at the same time but with different words. If anyone saw it, it was unique. I'd like to listen to it again because I missed what one was saying as I listened to the other.

But the gist of the "duet" was this: that booksellers and librarians are necessary to the survival of our democracy. We are the purveyors of knowledge, and protect first amendment rights - to write, read, and explore diverse ideas. We "biblionerds" aren't alone in the fight to preserve our freedoms. Words, ideas, literature and literacy are powerful, and "hope and dreams can be the best of tools." After all, free public libraries are founded upon such hope and dreams.

This conference has pulled in people from all over. So far I've met people from New Jersey, Seattle, Maricopa County, Omaha, and of course Salt Lake and environs. It seems to be a good mix of positions represented, including Friends, IT people etc.

I will try and post tomorrow as the day goes on. I'm not sure of connections in the auditorium, and the small group break-outs aren't designed to be passive activities. I intend to participate. But I'll post as I'm able.

Snowing tonight, but otherwise a nice walk from the hotel to the library. More tomorrow.

Submitted by Jan Wall on March 17, 2005

## **Hello World!**

Welcome to the Idaho Library Futures 2020 Vision Think Tank blog.

Submitted by Michael Samuelson on February 5, 2005