

Title:

Which Future For Libraries?

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1251

Summary:

Will libraries becoming increasingly virtual, the librarian becoming a knowledge navigator? Or

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Article Body:

Will libraries becoming increasingly virtual, the librarian becoming a knowledge navigator? Or

The library, while appearing to be stable has changed throughout history. It has moved from be

The library has entered a contested domain ~ its definition, its bundle of services are up for

Other issues that challenge a stable future for libraries include:

-Local and state governments dramatically decreasing their funds for libraries ~ other financi

-Users changing from the young to the aged OR from the aged to the young.

-Libraries buildings as examples of "green" and even developing cradle to grave green technolo

-The library as a place for escape from a chaotic world, eg the Slow Movement: slow time, slow

-The librarian becoming a digital avatar, interacting with users, learning about their changin

-The off-shore Call Centre Library.

-Death of the book ~ continuing emergence of new media formats.

The impact of these emerging issues point to libraries changing dramatically from today ~ part

But would libraries be more digital or slow; for the young or the aged; in suburbs or co-locat

## SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE

There are four plausible futures.

The first is the "Lean, Mean, Information Machine." This future would arise from concern about

Libraries in this future would need to seek funding through philanthropy to supplement governm

The role of some librarians would shift, becoming entrepreneurial, a broker of services and en

The second scenario is the opposite of this. Civilizing the world, civilizing ourselves is the

The purpose of the library is that of community builder ~ providing ideas to all, those who ca

However, the best way to serve as community builders is to go to the community. "Co-location f

Libraries would have multiple shifting rooms, focused on the needs of different groups. Or lib

The librarian would need to be multi-skilled, understanding the diverse needs of different ages.

In a third scenario, the library and the librarian becomes a "Knowledge Navigator". Users would be able to find information easily.

For those new to the digital world and for emerging technologies they would need training, it could train them.

The last scenario, takes the knowledge navigator future but makes the tough observation - given the current state of the industry, many librarians as well are unable to meet the challenge of the skills shift. They are unable to keep up with the changes.

WHICH FUTURE?

Will one future emerge triumphant? Or will there be a mix and match? Which ever future results will be the best?

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