ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS IN OUR SOCIAL CHANGES

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Abstract: *In the academic environment the use of social networking and digital content sites has impacted considerably on scholarly activities of academics and students. Libraries can and should play an important role in supporting academia in their use of these social tools as part of the research process. The role of librarian in providing inspiration, creative spaces, and creating opportunities for healthy and positive dialogues between different populations. They can rebuild the information landscape to helping society move away from misinformation to clarity and balance. Libraries are supporting the development of information and media literacy skills, I think that it is important to start by saying that there is a good deal of excellent work going on to tackle social exclusion at all types of library in a period of major and discontinuous change, tackling the fundamental questions of the future of libraries in the context of major social, political and environmental issues important questions for the profession and policy development.*

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INTRODUCTION:

Social institutions today look vastly different than they did 20 years ago. A variety of forces, most specifically economic changes and technological developments, have reshaped and redefined our notions of what constitutes a bank, a service station, or a bookstore. Libraries are not immune to the societal forces re-shaping other institutions. As we approach the millennium, we can expect the library of the early 21st century to bear as much resemblance to a 1970s library as a 1990s service station resembles a 1970s service station .As the library rapidly evolves into something that looks quite different than it did just a few decades ago, it is critical that librarians not only become aware of this evolution, but that they actively intervene to help reshape the institution in ways that are consistent with the core mission of libraries. Changes to libraries are inevitable, and if librarians do not get actively involved in shaping those changes, it is likely that the 21st century library will carry very few of the core missions and values that have historically been associated with libraries. Librarians understand some of the changes that will affect libraries in the coming years, and to prompt librarians to think seriously about how to deal with these changes.

The begins by outlining the sweeping changes affecting other types of institutions. It then reviews how technological trends have been affecting library services, and focuses in on the implications of an increasing reliance on resources not controlled by the local library. The Libraries lays out a set of key areas that will challenge libraries in an online age, before discussing a number of the hazards that libraries will face, particularly. if library services move out of local libraries into more centralized external sites. It then recommends that libraries examine their core missions, and using public libraries as an example, shows how one might focus in on the vital functions we need to preserve in a changing environment. The chapter then concludes with some recommendations about areas of public discourse that librarians can get involved in to help preserve the key missions of libraries.

SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION: THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND THE POSTMODERN

The information society opens up new opportunities that may allow us to reverse the downward trends in use of reference services. But first we must acknowledge societal transformation and understand its implications. It may seem counter-intuitive to librarians

that the movement into the information society would draw patrons away from the library, but in a society where so much information is easily available, the library can no longer claim a unique role as the portal to all knowledge. Rather than wait in breathless anticipation for the warm embrace of the coming societal transformation, libraries must transform right along with society or be left behind.

LIBRARY AND DISCONTINUOUS CHANGES:

It looks at all types of library in a period of major and discontinuous change, tackling the fundamental questions of the future of libraries in the context of major societal, political and environmental issues

1 poses important questions for the profession and policy development

2 Fills a major gap in literature (recent discourse and debate on the future of democracy, for example, the library is rarely included)

3 written by recognized national and international authorities

4 incorporates analysis of past developments, current good practice and future trends across major aspects of library development

5 provides a focus and a springboard for discussion about future education for librarianship, library management and policy development

6 will be valuable to practitioners, tutors and students in a wide variety of situations

The historical and future roles that public, private, academic and special libraries have in supporting and shaping society at local, regional, national and international levels. Globalization, economic turmoil, political and ethnic tensions, rapid technology development, global warming and other key environmental factors are all combining in myriad and complex ways to affect everyone, both individually and collectively. Fundamental questions are being asked about the future of society and the bedrock organizations that underpin it. Libraries and Society considers the key aspects of library provision and the major challenges that libraries – however defined, managed, developed and provided now face, and will continue to face in the future. It also focuses on the emerging chapter in cultural, economic and social history and the library's role in serving diverse communities within this new era.

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN MODERN SOCIETY:

The information society development demands to re-define the position and objectives of all the Institutions which work with information, knowledge, and culture. Of these, media and education have been discussed in the. Libraries have been a marginal theme. The situation is changing Libraries have been identified as one of the key elements for open access to information, which is crucial to democratic information society development. Libraries are especially important now when the whole idea of education is stressing more and more independent learning and acting. All citizens must be able to find and use information. It is the key raw material - but it is a zero resource, if there are no access points to it and if documents are in chaotic order.

Here we can see libraries enter the stage: The unique function of libraries is to acquire, organize, offer for use and preserve publicly available material irrespective of the form in which it is packaged (print, cassette, CD-ROM, network form) in such a way that, when it is needed, it can be found and put to use. No other institution carries out this long-term, systematic work.

THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

It was felt that the public library underpinned the literacy activities of younger children with rhyme time, book challenges etc and those at school, with homework clubs and stuff. The issue of the lack of professionally qualified library staff came up here again and concerns raised that if the schools library service was being cut and the public library service being cut then there's even less chance for children and young people to have a good start with developing their information skills.

INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There were some good suggestions of how to address this, as well as more collaboration between schools, colleges and universities, there was discussion around teaching teachers, academics about information literacy skills so that they can include them in assignments and assessments, looking at ways that they can develop them in their students. This is something that we're working on at Brighton with the development of an information literacy module for staff. It's in the making and has been developed by academics in the

Centre for Learning and Teaching and the Information Studies department and librarians from across the university libraries.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES

Changes in the technological environment have had some of the most dramatic effects on business. A company may be thoroughly committed to a particular type of technology, and may have made major investments in equipment and training only to see a new, more innovative and cost-effective technology emerge.

Indeed, the managing director of multinational organization manufacturing heavy machinery once said that the hardest part of his job had nothing to do with unions, pay or products, but with whether or not to spend money on the latest technologically improved equipment.

ECONOMIC CHANGES

The economic environment tends to receive the greatest amount of attention from export planners. The primary concern in analyzing the economic environment is to assess opportunities for marketing the company's products abroad or possibly for locating some of the company's production and distribution facilities outside of South Africa. Indeed, when striving to identify potential countries to focus on, one of the major differentiating factors will be the differences in the economic environments that exist between potential target countries.

POLITICAL CHANGES

Social exclusion keeps a social group outside power centers and resources. It takes the form of segregation from the social, political, economic, cultural, educational and religious domains of society. It thus imbues a sense of superiority and inferiority in members of a society or culture and results in a system of domination and subjugation. These processes ultimately lead to oppression and exploitation.

LIBRARIES AND CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT, DEMOCRACY AND E-GOVERNMENT

Effective citizen action is possible only when citizens know how to gain access to information of all kinds and have the skills to become responsible, informed participants in democracies. This is especially so as e-government evolves. Libraries offer real and virtual civic spaces where citizens can speak freely, share similar interests and concerns, and

pursue what they believe are in their public's interest. Ultimately, free discourse among informed citizens assures civil society; and civil society provides the social capital necessary to achieve common goals. Through this role libraries prevent the lack of information and idea exchanges which in a closed society stifles creativity, suppresses the imagination and creates a barrier to social, economic and technical progress.

ROLE OF LIBRARIANS IN A SOCIETY

A major method for fighting against social exclusion is education and professional activity. In this context we mean literary and media education at the primary school level, and technological information at higher levels of education. These abilities will enable one to skillfully move through the tangle of information which one encounters during each stage of life.

Undoubtedly, in the field of education libraries find an extremely wide scope for activity. They are suited for this, because "if a well–preserved human thought (output) constitutes a piece of information, disseminating this output will mean disseminating information. The fact that the library cooperates with the development of science, economy, culture and education indicates that via library the information is provided to the society in need of information. Therefore, the libraries were co–creating the information society long before it started to be associated with particular conceptions of society

Modern libraries could be compared to information malls. Moving around them can cause certain difficulties. A very common phenomenon is that of "library anxiety," mainly observed in higher education institutions where users feel uncomfortable about their level of knowledge. The main barrier is the fear of embarrassing oneself when asking elementary questions, or getting a negative feedback from a librarian. Another obstacle is a lack of computer proficiency, which renders searching superficial and incomplete. This leads to the perception of the library as an unfriendly place. Therefore, one can obviously conclude that the librarian is an irreplaceable link. In Singapore, a full self–service library was opened with a remote information section and a cyber–librarian, from which one could obtain necessary information at any time. This, however, has not eliminated the service rendered by the librarian. Although invisible to the reader, a librarian actually participates in the process of searching for information; this brings to mind current hybrid libraries, which combine features of traditional libraries with those using modern technologies. Indeed, we enter the

world of "hyper–reality," with hypertexts, in which an image, a vision, or the play of signs displaces real sensations and experiences. In the era of information processing, communication, and the knowledge industry, the librarian participates in building a new society.

CONCLUSION

Libraries have a lot of material that can be presented through web sites. Although has considerably provided the number of services that libraries can offer to the public, business community and tourist, the role of the workers is still invaluable. The educated and skilled staff is the key to providing quality service. In order to introduce all the library services to tourists and the local community it is important to develop an excellent marketing strategy. It involves a well-designed and accessible web- presentation, since it can be accessed to from all over the world: the sending of e-mails to potential n the complicated modern society libraries have many kinds of answers to many demands of the society, as well as those of the citizens. They have potential means to serve both the Information society development and their traditional humanistic tasks. Maybe information technology will even make it easier to combine these elements in future than in the past. It uses an economic model that gets as close as anyone can to demonstrating the real economic value of public libraries This brings me onto my other hand .There are so many different agendas which are worthy and deserving of support, not just the library and information one, how do we fit into those agendas to strengthen them and our own. To conclude a very thought provoking session with interesting contribution from across the sectors. Rather than answering any of the questions. So, I think librarians can facilitate social change.

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