

Coherence and Invisibility: The Library Behind the Curtain



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Acknowledgments

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Some Questions

Are these Libraries?

The logo for amazon.com, featuring the word "amazon" in a black sans-serif font with a curved orange arrow underneath it, and ".com" in a smaller black font to the right.The Netflix logo, consisting of the word "NETFLIX" in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a thick red outline, set against a black background.The Google Scholar logo, featuring the word "Google" in its multi-colored font, with "Scholar" in green below it and "BETA" in small grey letters to the right.The IMDb logo, featuring the letters "IMDb" in a bold, black, sans-serif font inside a yellow rectangular frame with a film strip border, with the tagline "Earth's Biggest Movie Database™" in a smaller font below it.

What do libraries do?

**When you are asked to look up something
relevant to your academic work...**

Where do you go?

What are your perceptions of libraries and their roles in the web context?

A VERY Brief History of Libraries

- for over 5000 years cultures have established libraries whenever social, political, and economic developments have enabled them to record and collect knowledge.
- many different kinds of libraries developed by *organizations* such as kingdoms, churches, governments, universities, public, professional societies.
- also other libraries such as commercial lending libraries, subscription libraries, and other privately funded libraries.
- All libraries have been and are defined by their respective funding sources.
- Today's discussion is primarily concerned with academic/scholarly libraries

As distinct from public libraries

- Library organization was idiosyncratic until mid-19th century
 - shelves ordered by chronology of acquisition
 - *shelf list* major tool for discovery
- Libraries today are products of innovation that began ~150 years ago (Dewey).
 - notion of the *catalog* as distinct from the *shelf list*
 - organization of knowledge into taxonomic structure

A few concepts

- Libraries are *integrated, coherent* systems
 - multiple services
 - defined roles (external and internal)
- Like good infrastructure they are often *invisible*
- They act as *intermediaries*, transforming *documents* (data) into *information*
- Academic libraries have been a critical link in the support of *scholarly works* (works that make no unsupported assertions)

The Role of the Academic Library

Core functions of higher education

- teaching,
- research,
- dissemination of knowledge through publication,
- preservation of and access to the scholarly record in libraries.

<http://www.mellon.org/programs/highered/libraries/Content.htm>

The Library's Role

The library is an information service whose primary *role* is to add value (increase access) to information resources for a specified community.

A primary concern of the academic library is making accessible for posterity information that is worthy of being preserved.

Library services add value and provide access by selecting and then

- collecting (acquisitions),
- organizing (cataloging)
- conserving,
- preserving, (stewardship)

information, knowledge, evidence, data
discourse, and culture.

Library Services

delivery

- acquisition,
- circulation,
- ILL,
- preservation,
- systems

mediation

- cataloging,
- reference,
- collection development

<http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/>

Both services have enabling technologies

Cornell University Library's mission

- enhance campus vitality and scholarly productivity by:
 - providing a stable and reliable knowledge base
 - organizing information into meaningful and manageable forms
 - making available well-equipped and functional work places on campus
 - serving as a major cultural repository
- being the information resource of choice for the majority of the Cornell community

Library Social Ethic

What is the social ethic, purpose and objective of the organization (entity) that is doing the selection?

- Service not commerce
- Access enhancement not revenue production

Library Ideology (Traditional)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm>

Library Bill of Rights (1949)

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

Library Ideology (Traditional)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm>

-Library Bill of Rights (1949)

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

Library Ideology (Traditional)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm>

-Library Bill of Rights (1949)

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

Library Ideology (Traditional)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm>

-Library Bill of Rights (1949)

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

Library Ideology (Traditional)

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.htm>

-Library Bill of Rights (1949)

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Library Ideology (Modern) -Keystone Principles (1999)

<http://www.arl.org/training/keystone.html>

1. Access to Information as a Public Good

Scholarly and government information is a "public good" and must be available free of marketing bias, commercial motives, and cost to the individual user.

Library Ideology (Modern)

-Keystone Principles (1999)

<http://www.arl.org/training/keystone.html>

2. Need for Bias-free Systems and for Libraries to Create These New Systems

Libraries are responsible for creating innovative information systems for the dissemination and preservation of information and new knowledge regardless of format.

Library Ideology (Modern)

-Keystone Principles (1999)

<http://www.arl.org/training/keystone.html>

3. Affirm the Idea of the Library as a Nexus for Learning and the Sharing of Knowledge

The academic library is the intellectual commons for the community where people and ideas interact in both the real and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.

The Library in the Web Age

- From physical to digital objects
 - Control
 - Preservation
- Economics
 - Human vs. machine effort
 - Scholarly communication “crisis”
- Googlization
 - “not online, not important”
 - User information perceptions
- Ethical Pressures
 - Patriot Act