Toward a Library Renaissance[1]

By Olivier Serrat

In the age of the internet, many think libraries are being destroyed. One need not yield to pessimism: identifiable trends point to a promising future. In light of these, one should be able to circumscribe plausible scenarios. Approaches to strategic planning that count on ownership should make a big difference and point to desirable skills for librarians. If they also invest in resilience and give unequivocal attention to branding, libraries can enjoy a renaissance.

On Alexandria and the Name of the Rose

For centuries, librarians have tried to safeguard information, sometimes in the face of destruction. Think of the great Library of Alexandria,[2] the burning of which symbolizes the irretrievable loss of knowledge. Think also of Umberto Eco's novel, *The Name of the Rose*, and the (fictitious) 14th-century story about the search for a "lost" volume of Aristotle that no one is allowed to read—but yet must be preserved—because it might reveal that Jesus could and did laugh, contrary to the death-obsessed zeitgeist of the time. Fast-forward to the age of the internet, when some fear libraries are again being destroyed[3] and many ask: "Who wants libraries when you have Google?"[4] This is not an easy question to address but one need not yield to pessimism.[5] These *Knowledge Solutions* argue that identifiable trends direct to a promising future: in light of these, one should be

> *To ask why we need libraries at all, when there is so much information available elsewhere, is about as sensible as asking if roadmaps are necessary now that there are so very many roads.*
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> —Jon Bing

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1   These *Knowledge Solutions* reproduce a paper presented at a Satellite Meeting on Knowledge Management as a Vital Tool for Change Management held on 15 August 2014 in Lyon, France in advance of the 2014 IFLA World Library and Information Congress.

2   Founded by Ptolemy I Soter (367–283 BC), this library was said to have amassed an estimated 400,000 manuscripts. With collections of works, lecture halls, meeting rooms, and gardens, it was considered the leading intellectual metropolis of the Hellenistic world

3   For sure, the internet is not the only driver of change. Indubitably, the logarithmic growth of the internet has given libraries a rival as a provider of information and leisure; but, certainly in the West, many libraries have also become geographically isolated from urban centers, while a changing cultural landscape has fashioned different user profiles and expectations. All the while, budgetary cuts compel libraries to challenge, compare, consult, and compete, to use the 4Cs of commitment to "Best Value" that, from the late 1990s, government policy in the United Kingdom stipulated for provision of public services.

4   An apple should not be faulted for not being an orange. In the "Age of Knowledge", libraries are too easily judged by the standards of (highly innovative) companies such as Amazon, Apple, and Google.

5   A majority of libraries operate from a distinctive—sometimes wondrous—physical infrastructure based on a particular "theory of the business". Then again, the media, music, and publishing industries too face disintermediation, meaning, the elimination of intermediaries in transactions between parties. To this list some would add universities: instead of attending lectures on campus and after that heading off to work on assignments students will first scrutinize online material and then gather in hybrid learning spaces to explore a subject in rich conversations (or laboratory exercises) with professors and fellow students. Proponents of blended learning reckon that the Flipped Classroom model may even enhance critical thinking. (Paradoxically, since economic reasons determine much in higher education, traditional but exclusive face-to-face tuition may become the privilege of a few while demand for global standardization in some fields may lower the level in many cases. In reality, consolidation and diversification are not mutually exclusive.)

![ADB Asian Development Bank]

able to circumscribe plausible scenarios. Approaches to strategic planning that count on ownership should make a big difference and point to desirable skills for librarians. If they also invest in resilience and give unequivocal attention to branding, libraries can enjoy a renaissance.[6]

Wanted: Information Overload—Better, Knowledge Management—Specialists

From our contemporary vantage point, it is well-nigh impossible to imagine how we could exist without the internet: we can—and are wont to—work, study, shop, and play from a laptop or smartphone. On the other hand, since freelancing "seeders" proactively generate and share data and information, we are now awash in it. Google, for one, has greatly helped organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful, its mission statement.

Information is ubiquitous because producing, manipulating, and disseminating it has become cheap and easy. The digital world provides a myriad means: distance no longer matters. We generate (create), collect (capture), store (record), process (manage), transmit (share), use (consume), recycle (discard), and plan (identify) information throughout the day. By means of the internet, electronic mail remains the communication channel of choice but instant messaging and social media are two technologies that increasingly challenge its preeminence.

> *We all would like to know more and, at the same time, to receive less information. In fact, the problem of a worker in today's knowledge industry is not the scarcity of information but its excess. The same holds for professionals: just think of a physician or an executive, constantly bombarded by information that is at best irrelevant. In order to learn anything we need time. And to make time we must use information filters allowing us to ignore most of the information aimed at us. We must ignore much to learn a little.*
>
> —Mario Augusto Bunge

Data smog, infobesity, infoxication, and—more frequently—information glut are fitting metaphors that describe the deluge of information we are experiencing. Information overload occurs when the amount of input to a system exceeds its processing capacity. Where content abounds, cognitive and perceptual factors constrain consumption; Thomas Davenport and John Beck[7] define attention as focused mental engagement on a particular item of information. They coin the term "attention economy" to describe an environment where the scarcest resource is not ideas or even talent but attention itself. In the attention economy, channels of information constantly compete to attract the largest share of attention, leading to information overload. According to Herbert Simon,[8] "In a knowledge-rich world, progress does not lie in the direction of reading and writing information faster or storing more of it. Progress lies in the direction of extracting and exploiting the patterns of the world so that far less information needs to be read, written, or stored."

> *... a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention ...*
>
> —Herbert Simon

In the 21st century, exploring the distinction between information and knowledge is a primary area of inquiry. Lest we forget, the time-honored function of librarians was precisely that: to curate[9] knowledge, which entails pulling together, sifting through, selecting, and interpreting content. Today, by filtering the wealth of information into meaningful insights, they can find the signal in the noise and both energize and synchronize communities and networks of interest and practice. Working across content, structures, and stakeholders, librarians can turn disruptive chaos into creative clusters. To maximize outreach, librarians must in the "Age of Knowledge" consider what transformations challenge the value of

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[6] The Renaissance was a cultural movement that spanned the 14th–17th centuries, spreading across Europe from its birthplace in Italy, especially Florence, in the Late Middle Ages. A time of great cultural and social change, the period was characterized by astonishing creativity and innovation in the fields of art and architecture, literature, philosophy, and science. Propelled by bustling trade, humanism and renewed interest in Classical learning and values led to seismic realization after the "Dark Ages"—viz., the entire period after the decline of the Roman Empire in the 4th–5th centuries—that things might be different.
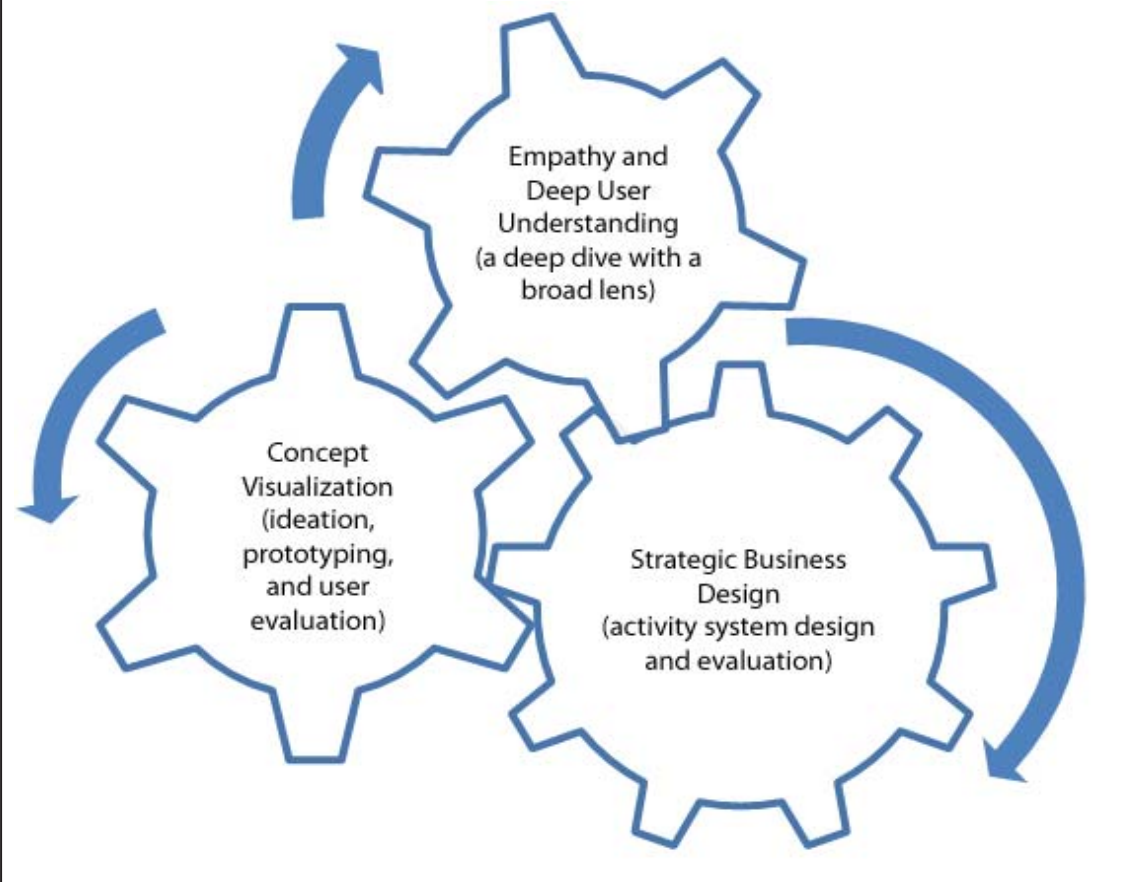
[7] See Thomas Davenport and John Beck. 2001. *The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business*. Harvard Business School Press.

[8] See Herbert Simon. 1971. Designing Organizations for an Information-Rich World. In Martin Greenberger (Ed.). *Computers, Communications, and the Public Interest*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

[9] It ought not surprise that this verb derives from Medieval Latin *curatus*, from *cura* meaning "care", with first known use also in the 14th century. A curate was, and however archaically remains, any ecclesiastic entrusted with the care or cure of souls, such as a parish priest.

libraries to clients, audiences, and partners and recognize opportunities to engage with design[10] thinking in new forms and functions of "knowledge work".[11] Storage aside, what are the most valuable products and services that they can deliver?

Figure 1: The Gears of Business Design

Empathy and Deep User Understanding (a deep dive with a broad lens)

Concept Visualization (ideation, prototyping, and user evaluation)

Strategic Business Design (activity system design and evaluation)

Source: Heather Fraser. 2009. Designing Business: New Models for Success. *Design Management Review*. Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 55–65.

Key Trends Affecting Libraries

Doubtlessly, many librarians would welcome a vision of the future that foresees a growing need for libraries because of recent advances in social media, mobile computing, and open data. But, there is danger in counting on such trends if libraries fail in any case to demonstrate the value of the products and services they must now provide in both physical and virtual[12] settings and in a variety of formats.

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[10] That is a human-centered, prototype-driven process for the exploration of new ideas that can be applied to operations, products, services, strategies, and even management.

[11] Exhaustively, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions classifies a dozen different types: academic and research libraries, art libraries, government libraries, health and biosciences libraries, law libraries, libraries serving persons with print disabilities, library and research services for parliaments, metropolitan libraries, national libraries, public libraries, school libraries, science and technology libraries, and social science libraries. More prosaic typologies refer to academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries, and special libraries.

[12] For many people, a library remains a bricks-and-mortar building that stocks paper books. But a library does not have to be a physical entity: at a more intellectual level, it is a repository of information in various formats. As likely as not, Wikipedia too is a library. This does not imply that the library of the future is inevitably digital: what with nearly half of the world's population—more than 3 billion people—living on less than $2.50 a day, there is no need to explain that not everybody can afford a laptop and home connection to the internet.

Thomas Frey of the DaVinci Institute identifies 10 trends.[13] Paraphrasing and reordering:
- Trend No. 1—The demand for information is growing very rapidly.
- Trend No. 2—The stage is being set for global cultural, economic, political, social, and technological systems.
- Trend No. 3—Information and communications technology is constantly shaping the way people tap information.
- Trend No. 4—We have not reached the smallest particle for storage capacity but may soon.
- Trend No. 5—Search technology is becoming increasingly complex.
- Trend No. 6—Busyness is driving the lifestyles of library users.
- Trend No. 7—We are transitioning to a verbal society, less reliant on the keyboard.
- Trend No. 8—We are shifting from product- to experience-based lifestyles.
- Trend No. 9—Many libraries are morphing into centers of culture.
- Trend No. 10—The information and communications technology we currently depend on will ineluctably become obsolete.

Pure Scenarios for Future Libraries

Libraries are fundamental to teaching and learning: one might think that this is enough to endear them to us. However, the world is and will continue to be an ever-changing place. Based on a horizon scan and a political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental (PESTLE) analysis of the environment for higher education and libraries, the Academic Libraries of the Future project[14] fleshed out three (somewhat exaggerated) scenarios for libraries, positioned along open–closed and market–state axes:

> *I tell this story to illustrate the truth of the statement I heard long ago in the Army: Plans are worthless, but planning is everything. There is a very great distinction because when you are planning for an emergency you must start with this one thing: the very definition of "emergency" is that it is unexpected, therefore it is not going to happen the way you are planning.*
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> —Dwight D. Eisenhower

- **The Wild West Scenario**—Under this scenario, private providers compete with one another and with governments to offer consumers information services and learning material. The power lies in the hands of the consumers, who are able to pick and choose from materials to create a personal experience.
- **The Beehive Scenario**—Under this scenario, for instance in the education sector, governments remain the primary funder and controller of information services and learning material. The overarching goal is to produce a skilled workforce, created mostly by largely homogenous higher education systems for the masses while allowing elites to attend private institutions. A limited market is used to provide competition in higher education and drive up quality.
- **The Walled Garden Scenario**—Under this scenario, for instance in the education sector, the closed nature of society makes higher education systems insular and inward-looking, isolated from other institutions by competing value systems. Here, the provision of information services is as much concerned with protecting own materials as it is with enabling access.

Enter Future Search Conferencing

Fatigue pervades organizations that cannot learn to change. Tell-tale signs are (i) senior management and change sponsors do not attend progress reviews; (ii) there is reluctance to share, perhaps even comment on, information about the change effort; (iii) resources are given over to other strategic initiatives; (iv) clients, audiences, and

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13 See Thomas Frey. Not dated. *The Future of Libraries*. Available: www.davinciinstitute.com/papers/the-future-of-libraries/
14 The Academic Libraries of the Future project spanned 2010–2011. In the United Kingdom, it aimed to generate scenarios of how libraries might by 2050 have evolved in light of long-term uncertainties. The uncertainties included how higher education will be funded and operated; how information will be created, discovered, accessed, and managed; how learning, teaching, and research will evolve to take best advantage of improvements in information and communications technology; and what will be the information needs of users for learning, teaching, and research, the knowledge economy, and students and researchers as "consumers". The project was sponsored by the British Library, the Joint Information Systems Committee, the Research Information Network, Research Libraries UK, and the Society of College, National, and University Libraries. Its final report is dated 18 May 2011.

> *Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so.*
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> —Noam Chomsky

partners demonstrate impatience with the duration of the change effort or increasingly question its objectives; and (v) managers, champions, and agents are stressed out and the change team considers leaving. We should not forget that organizations are human institutions, not machines: people must understand and buy into the need for change if any meaningful progress toward a desired future is to be made at all. It is difficult and ultimately pointless to make people do what they do not want to do.

Futurists deal with probable, possible, preferable, and prospective futures.[15] Trend analysis, one of their tools, is valuable because moving with trends, not against them, is a logical undertaking. However, the patterns that trend analysis identifies can lead to organizational lock-in of the either–or, black-and-white variety the three outright scenarios may conduce; conversely, they may open too many unrealizable vistas. Trends analysis works best when accompanied by other techniques. Future Search conferencing has emerged as a system-wide strategic planning tool that enables diverse and potentially conflicting groups to find common ground for constructive action. After all, it stands to reason that, where the stakes are communal, people should work as a group to bring common sense to bear on organizational change.
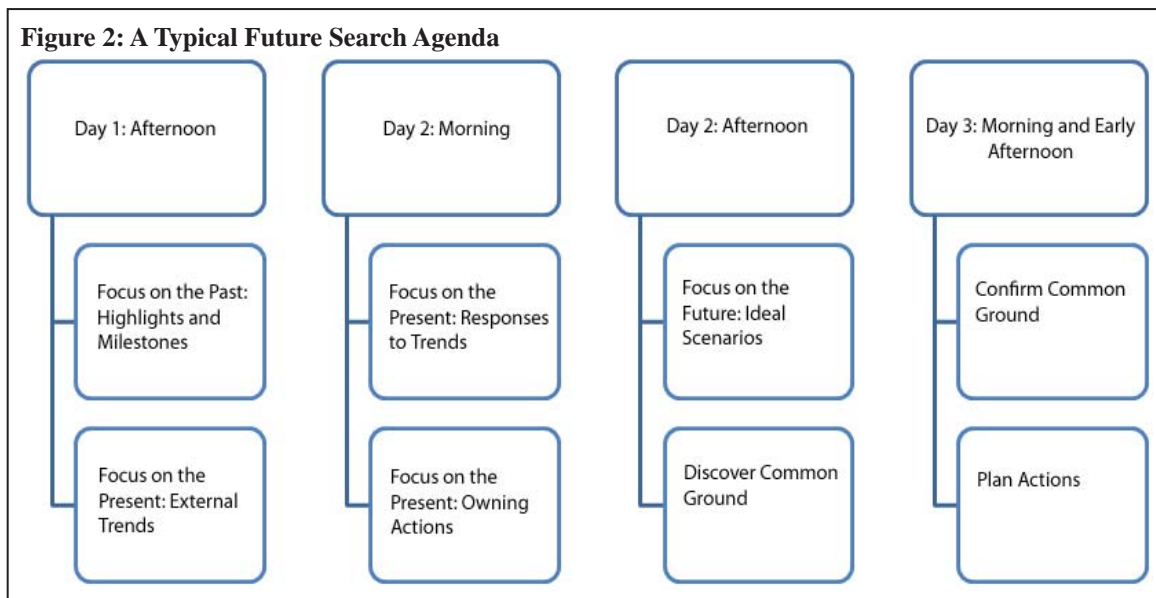
> *For millions of years, mankind lived just like the animals. Then something happened which unleashed the power of our imagination. We learned to talk and we learned to listen. Speech has allowed the communication of ideas, enabling human beings to work together to build the impossible. Mankind's greatest achievements have come about by talking, and its greatest failures by not talking. It doesn't have to be like this. Our greatest hopes could become reality in the future. With the technology at our disposal, the possibilities are unbounded. All we need to do is make sure we keep talking.*
>
> —Stephen Hawking

Future Search conferencing was conceptualized to help organizations create shared visions and plot organizational directions linked to results over a 5–20 year horizon.[16] It is a 3-day event structured to:

- Represent the system in one room;
- Explore the whole in context before seeking to act on parts, focusing on common ground and desired futures and treating problems as information; and
- Self-manage work and take responsibility for action.

Future Search conferencing links inputs, activities, and outputs to result in a vision built on

- Appreciation of an organization's history;
- Acknowledgment of present-day strengths and weaknesses; and
- Considered opinion about major opportunities in the future.

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[15] These futures are all subject to cultural, psychological, and sociological influences but cannot be explored in the same way: the first (one future) entails trend analysis; the second (many futures) calls for imagination and flexibility; the third (an "other" future) springs from value positions, both critical and ideological; the fourth (futuring) hinges on preparedness to act, rooted in self-reliance and solidarity. The research methods associated with each orientation differ too.

[16] Not all topics invite the same time span. The maximum horizon should lie beyond the normal planning vista, but not stretch so far away as to seem irrelevant; one should still be able to make an impression with today's decisions. The factors that help define the perspective of a Future Search exercise are (i) the inertia or volatility of the system; (ii) the schedule of decisions to be made, the authority to make them, and the means to be used; and (iii) the degree of rigidity or motivation of participants. The horizon an organization selects has a serious effect on results—a narrow timeframe lowers the net present value of an endeavor by overlooking future benefits; an unduly long vista overestimates them. Organizations should plump for a horizon that encompasses all conceivable benefits and costs likely to ensue from an endeavor, but they must also consider how far they can reasonably predict effects.

Figure 2: A Typical Future Search Agenda

Day 1: Afternoon	Day 2: Morning	Day 2: Afternoon	Day 3: Morning and Early Afternoon
Focus on the Past: Highlights and Milestones	Focus on the Present: Responses to Trends	Focus on the Future: Ideal Scenarios	Confirm Common Ground
Focus on the Present: External Trends	Focus on the Present: Owning Actions	Discover Common Ground	Plan Actions

Source: Author.

Not a free-floating brainstorming exercise, Future Search conferencing is a carefully designed methodology linking inputs, activities, and outputs. In four or five sessions each lasting half a day, participants keep to the following in small groups or plenary sessions:[17]

- **Focus on the Past: Highlights and Milestones**—In the first half-day, preferably after a warm-up allowing participants to converse with one another, the Future Search gets underway with a look at the past. The eight groups contribute historical information and compose timelines of key events in the world, their personal lives, and the history of the Future Search topic. The groups tell stories about each timeline and what implications the stories have for the work they have come to do. No items are too trivial and no individual dominates: forbearance on the beliefs and positions of others deepens comprehension and acceptance. This process creates a shared, global context for the Future Search.
- **Focus on the Present: External Trends**—Later, the entire assembly draws a mind map, ranks ongoing trends affecting the system the participants operate or exist in, and identifies which are most important in relation to the topic. This process clarifies what is impacting the organization.
- **Focus on the Present: Responses to Trends**—In the morning of the second day, the groups describe what they are doing about the key trends identified and explain what they plan to do in the future. This process helps assess current actions.
- **Focus on the Present: Owning Actions**—Later, the groups report on what they are proud of and sorry about in the way they are dealing with the Future Search topic. This process surfaces strengths and weaknesses in the organization and affords psychological safety for admission of errors.
- **Focus on the Future: Ideal Scenarios**—In the afternoon of the second day, the groups project themselves into the future and describe their preferred vision10 of the future as though it had already come about. This process generates a clear and powerful image of a healthy organization—and its values—through which the participants would like to advance their joint purpose, to be made real over the selected horizon.
- **Discover Common Ground**—Later, the groups post themes they believe hold common—but not necessarily easy—ground for all participants. Disagreements are acknowledged without auxiliary discussion. This

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[17] In the United States, libraries that report having used Future Search conferencing include, for instance, Drexel University Libraries, Durham County Library, Monroe County Public Library, and Nebraska Library Services. For an informative account of the experience of Drexel University Libraries see Danuta Nitecki, Jennifer Livingston, Gerry Gorelick, and Suzanne Noll. 2013. Evaluating a Future Search Conference for an Academic Library's Strategic Planning. *Library Leadership & Management*. Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 1–21. Available: journals.tdl.org/llm/index.php/llm/article/view/7021

> *Human relationships always help us to carry on because they always presuppose further developments, a future—and also because we live as if our only task was precisely to have relationships with other people.*
>
> —Albert Camus

process enables participants to locate springboards for action, having elucidated what assumptions—e.g., the nature of society, the means of social change, and the attributes and roles of knowledge—underpin each.

• **Confirm Common Ground**—In the morning of the third day, the entire assembly dialogues to agree on common ground. This process helps participants conceptualize behaviors for cooperative ventures.

• **Plan Actions**—In the afternoon of the third day, champions throughout the organization sign up to implement action plans. Of course, authority, resources, and arrangements for action are confirmed by reality checks.[12] Participants walk out of the assembly room committed and ready to accomplish the envisioned future based on a more cogent framework that connects values and actions in new relationships and real time. This process formulates mutually supportive, practicable sets of rapid undertakings for individuals, groups, and the organization they are members of, close follow-up on which will determine whether change has occurred.

Here too, Thomas Frey's recommendations for libraries deserve mention, if only because many of them have to do with the sort of conversations that Future Search conferencing engenders. Paraphrasing and expanding, he advises them to:

• **Evaluate the Library Experience**—Libraries can survey the opinions and suggestions of clients, audiences, and partners to grasp what matters most to them. The patrons are the community at large and the people who walk through the library doors.

• **Embrace New Information and Communications Technology**—Information and communications technology is being introduced on a daily basis and most people are at a loss when it comes to deciding what to use or what to stay away from. Because no organization has taken the lead in helping the general public understand new technology there are opportunities for libraries to become centers of digital learning and points of reference—culture (including recreation), research, innovation, etc.—for local communities: they can, for instance, create technology advisory boards; enroll technology-savvy members of the community to hold monthly discussions that the community at large would be invited to join; and organize guest lecture series on technology—this is quite converse to the idea that the internet will make them superfluous or irrelevant.[18]

> *The art challenges the technology, and the technology inspires the art.*
>
> —John Lasseter

• **Preserve the Memories of Their Own Communities**—The historical memories of a community amount to much, much more than a few documents: they embody many forms that should not disappear and libraries have a quintessential role to play.[19]

• **Experiment with Creative Spaces so the Future Role of the Library Can Define Itself**—Because the role of libraries 20 years hence will have changed and will likely embrace multiple new forms and functions, libraries can design creative spaces to enable clients, audiences, and partners, not forgetting staff, to experiment and determine what ideas draw attention and get traction. With social innovation, possible uses for creative spaces include art studios; band practice rooms; blogger stations; cybercafés; daycare facilities; drama studios; exercise bicycles and treadmills; gamer stations; imagination rooms; mini-theaters;

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[18] As early as 1999, Stuart Basefsky envisioned libraries as agents of change. Beyond collecting, organizing, and assisting, he made the case they needed to (i) inform patrons about the material being collected, presumably on their behalf; (ii) discuss the issues that the curated material was to provide background and enlightenment on; (iii) solicit end user buy-in through extensive demonstration programs of how to best use the information collected, and for what purposes; (iv) ascribe key individuals in libraries to special services so they might convey the value of the information to patrons; (v) team with management in libraries to bring the perspectives of knowledge and information providers (librarians) to the table; and (vi) stretch the job description of librarians or the organizational role of libraries to better fit the needs of the organizations they serve. Toward these, he argued they had to act as facilitators, consultants, trainers, and journalists/reporters. See Stuart Basefsky. 1999. The Library as an Agent of Change: Pushing the Client Institution Forward. *Information Outlook*. Vol. 3, No. 8, pp. 37–40. Available: digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles/189/

[19] For example, the role of Library and Archives Canada, established in 2004, is to preserve Canada's documentary heritage and make it accessible. Its products comprise databases, digitized microforms, an electronic collection, open data, research aids, thematic guides, and virtual exhibitions.

> *Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last you create what you will.*
>
> —George Bernard Shaw

podcast studios; recording studios; video studios; and virtual world stations.

Since they juxtapose also the Wild West, Beehive, and Walled Garden scenarios described earlier, it is relevant to note Thomas Frey's three configurations for libraries. He calls them the Time Capsule Room,[20] the Search Command Center,[21] and the Electronic Outpost.[22] Not an "official story", the Time Capsule Room would preserve and make accessible sensory information about the essence of community in audio, video, and image forms. (Over time, new technologies may capture frequencies, pressures, smells, tastes, textures, vibrations, and other situational attributes.) To establish a library as a center of gravity for exploration, the Search Command Center would draw attention to databases, specialized search engines, and other available resources; provide expert, hands-on assistance in finding and using databases; and teach patrons how to access information remotely. To extend the digital world to efficiently-run community gathering places, the Electronic Outpost would in different shapes and sizes, and for varying purposes, serve as the satellite branch of a central library; some outposts would offer selections of digital tablets and book readers; others would feature daycare centers, gamer stations, mini-theaters, working studios, etc., perhaps also a Search Command Center.

A Skills Framework for Librarians

Creating a shared vision and plotting organizational directions is one thing but delivering the dream is another. At a time when increasingly advanced skills are required for success in life and work, all libraries must retool. Competence is the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified to deliver a specific task, action, or function successfully. It is also a specific range of knowledge, skills, or behaviors utilized to improve performance. Today, sustainable competitive advantage derives from strenuous efforts to identify, cultivate, and exploit an organization's core competencies, the tangible fruits of which are products and services that anticipate and meet demand. (Yesteryear, instead of strengthening the roots of competitiveness, the accent was placed on business units. Innately, given their defining characteristics, business units under-invest in core competencies, incarcerate resources, and bind innovation—when they do not stifle it.)

Core competencies are integrated and harmonized abilities that provide potential access to markets; create and deliver value to audiences, clients, and partners there; and are difficult for competitors to imitate. They depend on relentless design of strategic architecture, deployment of competence carriers, and commitment to collaborate across silos. They are the product of collective learning. The Five Competencies Framework[23] aims to build strengths in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage. Over the medium- to long-term, libraries may need to build competencies in the first two areas, and unremittingly strengthen abilities in the other three.

> *It's easy to run to others. It's so hard to stand on one's own record. You can fake virtue for an audience. You can't fake it in your own eyes. Your ego is your strictest judge. They run from it. They spend their lives running. It's easier to donate a few thousand to charity and think oneself noble than to base self-respect on personal standards of personal achievement. It's simple to seek substitutes for competence—such easy substitutes: love, charm, kindness, charity. But there is no substitute for competence.*
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> —Ayn Rand

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20 See Thomas Frey. Not dated. *The Future of Library Series: Part 1—The Time Capsule Room*. Available: www.davinciinstitute.com/papers/the-library-of-the-future-series-part-1-%e2%80%93-the-time-capsule-room-by-futurist-thomas-frey/

21 See Thomas Frey. Not dated. *The Future of Library Series: Part 2—The Search Command Center*. Available: www.davinciinstitute.com/papers/the-library-of-the-future-series-part-2-%e2%80%93-the-search-command-center-by-futurist-thomas-frey/

22 See Thomas Frey. Not dated. *The Future of Library Series: Part 3—The Electronic Outpost*. Available: www.davinciinstitute.com/papers/the-library-of-the-future-series-part-3-the-electronic-outpost-by-thomas-frey/

23 See ADB. 2008–. *Knowledge Solutions*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/site/knowledge-management/knowledge-solutions

More immediately, citing the Institute of Museum and Library Services,[24] a skills framework (particularized to the configuration of each library) would likely comprise:

- **Learning and Innovation Skills**, e.g., critical thinking and problem solving; creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; visual literacy; scientific and numerical literacy; cross-disciplinary thinking; and basic literacy.
- **Information, Media, and Technology Skills**, e.g., information literacy; media literacy; and information, communications, and technology literacy.
- **Life and Career Skills**, e.g., flexibility and adaptability; initiative and self-direction; social and cross-cultural skills; productivity and accountability; and leadership and responsibility.
- **21st Century Themes**, e.g., global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health literacy; and environmental literacy.

Toward Resilience, Not Just Sustainability

Organizations must be resilient if they are to survive and thrive in turbulent times: it is no longer sufficient to throw efforts at strategy, structure, and systems, parameters that lie mainly within an organization's boundaries. In today's dynamic and complex environment, enduring success requires organizational agility across boundaries. In the century of complexity, organizations must be "in the making" and the locus of attention must become purpose, processes, and people, the vital factors that Future Search conferencing investigates.

> *You have no idea how eager I am to ensure that the notion of library does not disappear – it's too important. But the thing is, it's going to have to curate an extremely broad range of materials, and increasingly digital content.*
>
> —Vint Cerf

Libraries must accommodate environmental turbulence and effectively manage disruptive change and its pace to engage, adapt, and recover; to capture or realize opportunity; and in some cases to actually morph to become stronger on account of the experience. With newfound purpose from Future Search conferencing, investments in three areas would assuredly move libraries from passivity to action:[25]

- **Leadership and Culture**—which define the adaptive capacity of the organization.
- **Networks**—which amount to the internal and external relationships fostered and developed for the organization to leverage when needed.
- **Change Readiness**—which signifies the planning undertaken and direction established to enable the organization to be change-ready.

Investments in leadership and culture relate to leadership, staff engagement, situation awareness, decision making, and creativity and innovation. Investments in networks relate to effective partnerships, leveraging knowledge, breaking silos, and internal resources. Investments in change readiness relate to unity of purpose, proactive posture, planning strategies, and stress-testing plans.

A Postscript on Branding

Irrespective of configuration, libraries must in addition do more about branding. Branding is a means to identify an organization's products or services, differentiate them from others, and create and maintain an image that encourages confidence among clients, audiences, and partners. Until the mid-1990s, brand management—based on the 4Ps of product (or service), place, price, and promotion—aimed to engineer additional value from single brands. The idea of organizational branding has since matured to embrace relational capital, with implications

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[24] See Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2009. *Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills*. Available: www.imls.gov/assets/1/assetmanager/21stcenturyskills.pdf. With attention to institutional assets (human capital, physical infrastructure, information technology, collections, programs), leadership and management (vision and planning, access, resource allocation and sustainability), partnering (business partners, community partners, education partners), and accountability (goal setting, metric development, continuous improvement), the Institute of Museum and Library Services also provides a self-assessment tool to helps libraries (and museums) scan the organization and focus planning efforts around core areas of operations.

[25] Work in this area owes much to Resilient Organizations. On top, Resilient Organizations has devised a resilience benchmark tool and associated questionnaire to gauge the resilience of an organization, monitor progress over time, and compare resilience strengths and weaknesses against other organizations in the sector of interest or of a similar size. See Resilient Organizations. 2014. Available: www.resorgs.org.nz/

for behavior, and is making inroads in the public sector too. Marketers have come to agree that the parties to a transaction are in fact exchanging one behavior with another as individuals or communities: they do not just "transact". And so, if relationships—in other words, supply chains—are crucial to marketing and marketing is not an act but a habit, libraries should do the following:

- Think in terms of social capital and relationships, which requires that they plan for the long-term and build brand equity accordingly.

> *I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.*
>
> —Jorge Luis Borges

- Consider what deep-seated values relate to the behaviors of targeted end users and ascertain better what value and motivational attributes products and services have from the perspective of end users.
- Focus, simplify, and organize products and services by emphasizing and facilitating understanding of unique selling propositions, which demands that for all products and services they look at the why, what, how, when, where, and who of end-user behaviors.
- Bring more and different partners together to initiate and deploy synergies.
- Constantly monitor and evaluate efforts by surveying the perceptions of end users.
- Visualize marketing as change management, the success of which hinges on explicit consideration of relevant determinants of intraorganizational behaviors throughout marketing activities, institutions, and processes.
- Accept that organizational behavior is central to marketing and branding: it is a management philosophy for organizational practice; a strategy that relates to end users; an organizational tool for structuring and infusing teams; a tactic with which to drive inputs; and a measurement of the relevance, efficiency, efficacy, impact, and sustainability of activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Further Reading

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For further information