

ADINET e-News Digest

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When Google is your librarian and Starbucks your WiFi, do we still need public libraries?

Review of "BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google" by John Palfrey

John Palfrey has very pleasant memories of old physical libraries, but he is also wary of them. After all, fond recollections of pleasant reading rooms can cloud our judgment of what libraries offer us — and need from us — today. In an era when search engines, online retailers and social media are overtaking some of libraries' essential tasks, "nostalgia can actually be dangerous," Palfrey warns.

Palfrey, the former head of the Harvard Law School Library and the founding chairman of the Digital Public Library of America, wants a library revolution, one that remakes the institution's technology, goals and training. Libraries are in peril, he writes, facing budget cuts and a growing perception that technology has rendered them less necessary. All that's at stake, Palfrey argues, is America's experiment in self-government. "If we do not have libraries, if we lose the notion of free access to most information, the world of the haves and the have-nots will grow further and further apart. Our economy will

suffer, and our democracy will be put at unnecessary risk." You don't really have to believe that the fate of the republic hangs in the balance to recognize that libraries are facing unique challenges wrought by changing technology and consumer habits. Palfrey's main concern seems to be not that people will be cut off from information but that the main conduits for that information will be private companies rather than public libraries. "The private sector has been wildly successful in digital innovation. . . . When it comes to the cultural, historical, political, and scientific record of a society, however, the public sector needs to play a leading role."

But when Google is America's reference librarian and Starbucks its WiFi, what role for your local library? "BiblioTech" serves as an extended mission statement for libraries' continued relevance. But relevance comes with a price. "For centuries, libraries have remained essentially separate, even competing with one another to establish and maintain the greatest collection," Palfrey writes. Now, they need to "recast themselves as platforms rather than storehouses." This transition won't be easy, he cautions, and will require giving up lots of old, bad habits.

Libraries must operate more as “nodes in a larger network” of organizations and must move toward “the digital, networked, mobile, and cloud-based library.” We must “hack” libraries, he urges, meaning we must find ways of distributing their traditional tasks — gathering, sorting and safeguarding physical materials, and helping people access them — among a network of institutions, leaving more time for staffers to focus on helping users access the array of works available throughout these linked institutions. Think of a virtual, turbo-charged interlibrary loan system. (FYI, simply “reforming” or “rethinking” an institution won’t get it done; for lasting change, always be hacking.)

Palfrey points to some libraries and initiatives, and even to specific small-town librarians, that are starting down this path. Among these efforts is the Digital Public Library of America, a nexus of state- and university-based collections that seeks to digitize their holdings and make them available to the public. Palfrey also highlights efforts in South Korea, Singapore and across Europe that are further along in making disparate holdings available across national borders. “Libraries must act as ambitiously networked institutions,” he reiterates, and must “connect their network effectively with

partner institutions: archives, historical societies, museums, and other cultural heritage organizations.”

Still, none of this compares to the transformations underway in the business world. “Most of the innovation in how we create and use knowledge is occurring in the private, for-profit sector,” Palfrey admits. “Funded by ambitious venture capitalists and pursued relentlessly by entrepreneurial CEOs and their programming teams, the start-up scene has been cranking out successful new information-related projects for decades.” Next to Google’s search engine, Amazon’s Kindle, Facebook, Twitter and Apple’s apps platform, he asks, “what is the biggest innovation to emerge from libraries in the digital age?”

Yes, it’s a rhetorical question. But Palfrey has faith that libraries can rise to the challenge, if only because he is so freaked out by the alternative. “The risk of a small number of technically savvy, for-profit companies determining the bulk of what we read and how we read it is enormous,” he warns. And those companies will always have incentives to offer services that are “biased, limited, and costly.”

Nonetheless, Palfrey, a director at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society, is adept at

explaining the struggles libraries face with technologies that constrain as much as they liberate. Digital information is easier to access but harder to preserve than its analog forms, for instance, in part because of constantly shifting digital file formats. "As each year passes," he laments, "we are losing essential materials that we ought to be preserving for the historical record."

And as a lawyer rather than a professional librarian (a fact he seems a tad defensive about), Palfrey is particularly good at explaining new legal challenges to preserving information. Libraries can purchase books and then lend them out as often as they like. But when libraries are renters rather than owners of digital materials — as is the case with e-books — their ability to lend is limited by licensing agreements. Because of longstanding copyright laws, "the digital age could perversely become an era with less accessibility, not more, than the analog age."

So, how does Palfrey propose to fund the transformations he wants — all those hacks that will empower libraries and keep the information citizens need out of corporate control? Private philanthropy, of course! Yes, as suspicious as he is of corporate motives, Palfrey is eager for

libraries to sop up the benevolent cash that private sources could provide. "The next big innovation in knowledge management should come out of the world of libraries," he asserts. Sure, but it will be funded by the world of corporations. Citing the philanthropy of Joshua Bates in Boston and Andrew Carnegie's massive infusions of cash for libraries across America, Palfrey declares: "The moment is right for a new investment of this same type and scale."

Can nodes in a digital network someday elicit similar devotion? In a world where more than half of Americans use a library regularly, Palfrey believes they can. "Libraries must create new nostalgia," he concludes. "The purpose of renewed investments in libraries should be to establish new services and ways of discovering and accessing knowledge."

Source:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Library of Congress Releases Digital Audio of 75 Years of Recordings

When the technological push behind the publishing industry first took off, one of the many great promises about this wave of the literary future was in the ability to record and store great works for all time, protecting our

literary history in an indestructible archive. Google's ambitious digitization project has started on that path to preservation, but the initial release yesterday from the Library of Congress has added even more highly valuable content: digital audio of famous recordings.

The digital audio, which includes recordings of poetry, speaking engagements at the LoC, and audio sessions in the LoC's own Jefferson Building recording studio, often features the authors themselves in the recordings, reading from their own works. The archived content was originally captured on magnetic tape, but thanks to the digitization, the content is now being released from remote streaming access. Of the proposed 2,000 works that will undergo this preservation process, the first fifty are now available and an additional five recordings per month are planned.

According to a post for Hyperallergic, "The material includes readings by former US Poet Laureates and Consultants Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, and Gwendolyn Brooks, as well as a 1971 lecture by Kurt Vonnegut, a 1984 talk by Ray Bradbury, a 1959 interview with Robert Frost, and readings by Audre Lorde and Nobel Laureate Czesław Miłosz."

There has been a recent dramatic increase in the availability of audio literature and a renewed

focus on this once-niche market of publishing. According to data from IBISWorld's Audiobook Publishing market research report, the audiobook market enjoyed steady growth of only 12.7% over the past five years, but that growth accounts for a \$2 billion a year industry.

Source: <http://goodereader.com/>

Nepal quake leaves century-old library in ruins

KATHMANDU - Janaki Karmacharya sits on a plastic chair under the tarpaulin that now serves as her office and despairs at the wreckage of her once magnificent library in the heart of Kathmandu.

An employee looks at damaged book shelves at the Kaiser Library in Kathmandu on May 7, 2015

Until last month's earthquake, the Kaiser Library buzzed with Nepali students, intellectuals and tourists attracted by its collection of rare books, maps and ancient manuscripts -- all housed in an opulent former palace.

Now wooden bookcases lie smashed on the floor of the 120-year-old building, which was gifted to the nation by the Rana dynasty that ruled Nepal for more than a century before losing power in 1951. The library was closed on April 25 when the quake struck, and Karmacharya said it was two days before she plucked up the courage to go and see the destruction.

"I was speechless for a while... it was hard to believe the extent of the damage," the 58-year-old chief librarian told AFP as she surveyed the impact of the 7.8-magnitude quake, which killed more than 7,800 people.

"I cried when I got home, I couldn't help myself. The books are like my children, and I love them very much.

Karmacharya estimates that the quake damaged around a third of the 28,000 books in the Kaiser Library. They were the collection of Kaiser Shumsher, a scion of the Rana family who travelled to England in 1908 and fell in love with the grand houses and their private libraries.

When he returned to Nepal he decided to build his own in his palace in central Kathmandu.

Inside the building, antique statues lie in pieces on the floor and stuffed animal heads and portraits of Nepal's former rulers in full military dress hang precariously on severely cracked walls.

The Library also houses rare South Asian manuscripts on Buddhism, Tantrism and astrology, some so old they are written on palm-leaves. They include a 1,100-year-old copy of the Susrutasamhita, an ancient Sanskrit text on medicine, which is listed in UNESCO's Memory of the World International Register.

"The damage in the Kaiser library is a huge loss to us as it was not only a home for books but an archive of invaluable historic

scripts of archaeological importance," said Labha Dev Awasthi, joint secretary at Nepal's education ministry.

Awasthi said the ministry was urgently seeking somewhere safe to store the valuable contents of the building, which is so badly damaged that staff has been advised not to enter.

"There are lots of cracks and aftershocks happen every day so this building isn't safe anymore," said Karmacharya, who now meets with her staff every day under a tarpaulin in the library's tree-filled garden near the former royal palace.

"It will be a really big challenge for us to manage the library and move the books somewhere else. But we are concerned about the safety of these books."

"There are not a lot of libraries here in Kathmandu and on top of that it's a really beautiful place to read," he told AFP.

TCS restores iconic Rajabai Clock Tower, digitises University library
The Clock Tower is modelled on the lines of London's "Big Ben", and stands at 85 meters; its construction was completed in November 1878
BS Reporter | Pune

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India largest IT services provider, today announced the restoration of the iconic Rajabai Clock Tower and Library building in

coordination with Indian Heritage Society, Mumbai.

The Rajabai Clock Tower is located in Fort campus of the University of Mumbai. Modeled on the lines of London's "Big Ben", the tower stands at a height of 85 m (280 ft.). The foundation stone was laid on March 1, 1869 and the construction was completed in November 1878. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, an English architect, it reflects the Gothic and Venetian style of architecture. The occasion was marked by the release of a coffee table book showcasing the immense beauty and heritage of this legacy defining structure.

N Chandrasekaran, CEO and MD, TCS said "The restoration of the iconic Mumbai landmark - the Rajabai Tower is a matter of great pride for all of us at Tata Consultancy Services. It has been a privilege for us to play a part in the effort to restore it to its original grandeur and glory and extend our support to this initiative."

He further added, "Alongside restoration, another objective was to convert the conventional library into a digital-led, technology-enabled learning of excellence which continues to house a collection of rare books. We thank the University of Mumbai for this opportunity and are extremely proud of the efforts by all stakeholders in restoring this Mumbai landmark to its rightful glory."

The architectural restoration was undertaken by Somaya and Kalpana Consultants. It involved structural services (stoning, restoring woodwork, water - proofing, electrical work and fire alarms) interior works along with ensuring the longevity of the building for future generations. One of the enormous challenges of this project was to implement sensitive restoration and repair work of the clock tower, with the clock functioning and working at a height of 870m (approximately 29 floors).

India to renovate Rabindra Memorial Library in Sripalee College, Horana

As part of its development partnership with Sri Lanka in the field of education, the Government of India is undertaking a project to renovate the Rabindra Memorial Library and Hall in Sripalee College, Horana, at a total cost of SLR 38 million. In this regard, following a process of competitive bidding, a Contract Agreement was signed with M/s. Farzan Building Construction on 13 May 2015.

The objective of the project is to provide a conducive learning environment for the students of Sripalee College, and to provide a reading space for the general public in the region. The project involves renovation of the existing library building and hall to upgrade it into a reference library. The project is expected to be completed within a period of

240 days, and its implementation will be jointly monitored by the High Commission and the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka.

The 21st Century Library: A Conversation With NYPL's Anthony Marx

The excerpt below comes from Forbes/Wolfe Emerging Technology Report's recent full-length interview with Anthony W. Marx, President and CEO of the New York Public Library. Dr. Marx shares with us some of the unique opportunities and challenges of navigating one of the world's largest library systems into the Information Age.

What attracted you to the New York Public Library?

I, like so many New Yorkers, grew up using the library system. The public libraries of New York get close to 40 million physical visits a year – more than all the museums, cultural institutions and professional sporting teams combined. There's probably no other institution that has the same reach to all New Yorkers of all different backgrounds. Its central mission is the preservation and sharing of knowledge and the encouragement of learning, which is a mission that I believe in powerfully. Its history is great and must be preserved, but this is also a moment of unprecedented transition regarding what a library can do

and the tools it has at its disposal.

There are people who think that the Digital Age is a mortal threat to the library. I think it's the greatest opportunity in the history of libraries, and that means that this institution of huge scale and beloved by millions of people is also at a moment of revitalizing itself fundamentally. In my line of work, that's an unbeatable combination.

You mentioned the opportunity to transition the library into the Digital Age. Can you talk a bit more about that?

We are in completely uncharted territory, and I think that the Information Age serves as an incredible opportunity for us. I love physical books, most of what happens at a library still has built upon physical books, and I think this will continue to be the case for a long time. But the library is misunderstood as a repository of books. The library is a repository of information, and a sharing, and providing of access to information, and guide to using it. The book has been the platform for how to do that. New technology now enables us to fulfill our mission at an exponentially higher level. The technology now means it's possible to imagine a world in which every person, anywhere, anytime, could read any book, look at any image, explore any document, or archive, get curatorial help to understand it,

or to find it, and to create their own products with it.

That is incredible, right? If you believe that the fate of our world depends upon our knowledge and our creativity to find solutions and to inspire each other, then this tool is like nothing we have ever seen. This is a moment of renaissance of what a library can do and the New York Public Library is perfectly positioned for this moment.

What are some of the reasons the NYPL is uniquely positioned to thrive in this renaissance?

We don't have so many of the institutional, bureaucratic or political constraints that other institutions at this scale have. If we can take that opportunity and figure out how to divide it into manageable pieces, partner with other organizations, such as tech companies, the opportunities are endless.

What are some of the current and future initiatives that the library is working on?

We're continuing to refine electronic availability with the publishers and authors. We continue to expand a partnership with the public schools of New York. Now, teachers in 600 schools can online order up to 100 books in a set from our collections, depending on what they're teaching that month, and we'll deliver right into that classroom and create a library around that month's research topic for the student.

Three million New Yorkers can't afford digital access at home, which means they can't be informed citizens or skill up for and apply for jobs. They can wait for a free computer at the library, but not for extended periods of time, and if they're a student maybe they can use a computer at school, but students are in school a limited each day for a limited part of the year. We're now lending 10,000 households Internet at home where they're using it for education, building skills and for applying for jobs. We hope to convince the White House and the FCC that this is a nationally applicable model given that the digital divide affects somewhere in the area of 60-80 million Americans.

Do you have any other programs that are helping to tackle this digital divide?

We have started a partnership with Code Academy and others to teach coding for free in the South Bronx and Harlem. We found that when we opened such a program, the number of applicants for it was many times greater than the spaces we had. There's clearly huge demand for these skills, just as there is a huge need for talent in the tech industry. Encouragingly, the persistence through one of these eight-week courses was in the 90% range.

If you could leave readers with one thought, what would that be?

I believe we are where we are as a world because of human creativity. That creativity has

been constrained by physical access to the material that can inform it. Whether you live near it, whether you have the financial wherewithal to get access to it, if those constraints were removed, imagine the explosion of talent that would be applied to the issues that we face! Creativity and wisdom are more widely distributed than we have yet tapped. And the technology that the library can help make available can foster that explosion of creativity.

Source:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshwolfe/2015/06/01/the-21st-century-library-a-conversation-with-nypls-anthony-marx/>

ADINET Librarians' Day

Seminar on 22nd August, 2015 ADINET in collaboration with INFLIBNET & Nirma University will be celebrating the birth anniversary of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan as Librarians' Day by holding a Seminar on 22nd August 2015 at the Nirma University

With the recent developments in Information Technology that is now known as disruptive technology in Higher Education, Libraries and Librarians have to redefine their role and relevance in future with respect to learning spaces. Looking to the future, there is a concern about the existence of Libraries. But the future of libraries can be really bright with innovative Library practices in terms of resources,

services, skills, users and usage of Libraries. Hence, this year's Seminar topic has been decided as:

Library as a Learning Space - Role and Relevance of Libraries in the Future

The Sub Themes are as follows:

*Library Resources
Library Services & Facilities
Skills of Library Professionals
Users & Usage of Libraries*

Please note the last date for Registration: 13th August 2015

The last date for paper submission : 22nd June 2015

Forthcoming Events

International Conference on "Information Unbounded: The Past, The Present, and The Future of Information Sciences"

As a part of the Golden Jubilee celebration an International Conference on "Information Unbounded: The Past, The Present, and The Future of Information Sciences" will be organized during June 18-20, 2015, in association with Mysore University Information and Library Alumni Network.

Location: Department of Library and Information Science, University of Mysore.

Website : <http://milan-mysore.org/summit/>