Libraries in the digital age: a view from the United States

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National Library of Albania September 29, 2011



Basic information about Auburn University

- Located in east-central Alabama
- Founded in 1856 as East Alabama Male College
- Land-grant university (Morrill Act, 1862)
- Fourteen colleges, including Agriculture, Engineering, Forestry, Liberal Arts, and Veterinary Medicine
- Almost 25,000 students (undergraduate and graduate)



Basic information about the Auburn University Libraries

- Member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL)
- One main library and two branch libraries
- Over 3 million volumes, 220 databases, and 10 million archival and manuscript items
- Strong information literacy and bibliographic instruction program
- Strong digital library program
- Strong digital preservation program; member of National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA)

What is a "Next-Generation Library"?

"Next-Generation Library" =

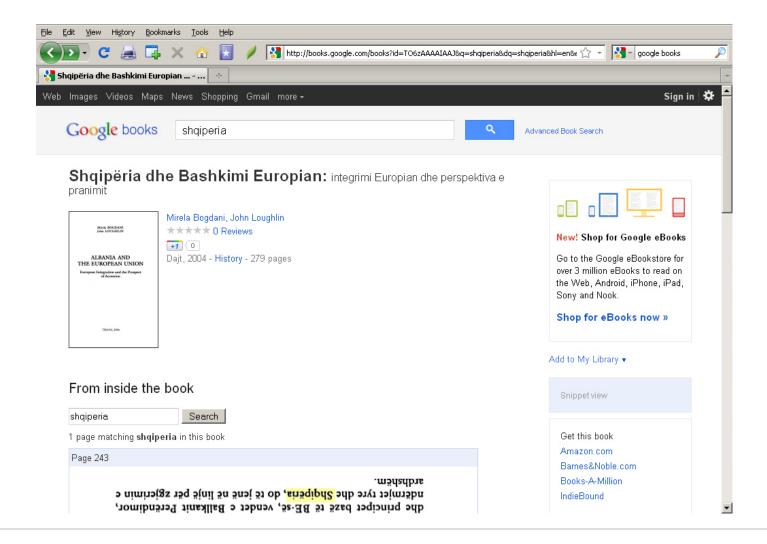
A library that takes full advantage of new information technologies to provide new types of patron service.

Libraries and information technology: there's a lot going on

Just a few examples...

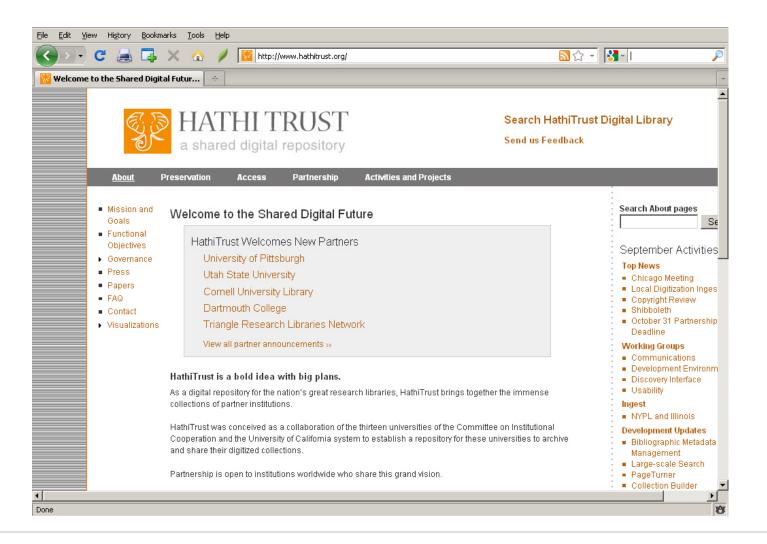


Google Books



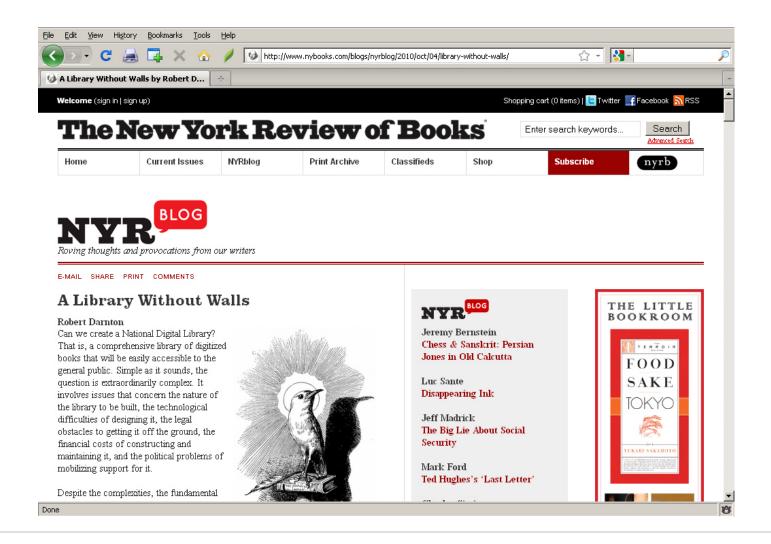


HathiTrust



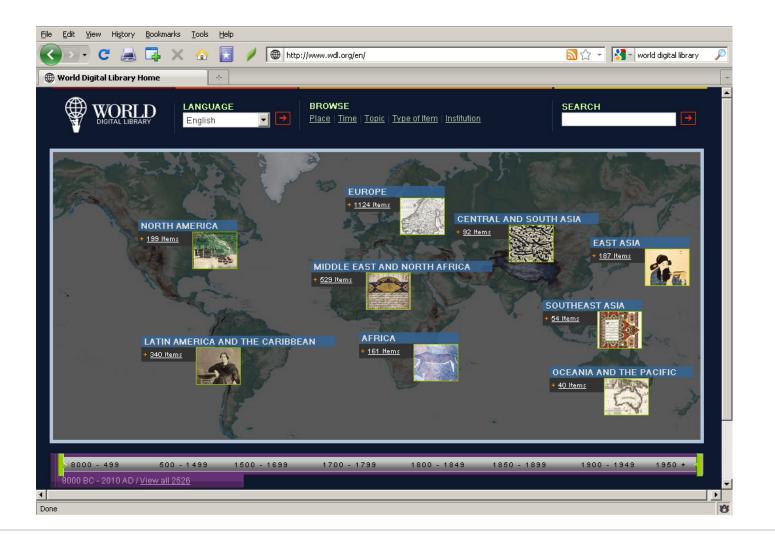


A national digital library (the DPLA)...



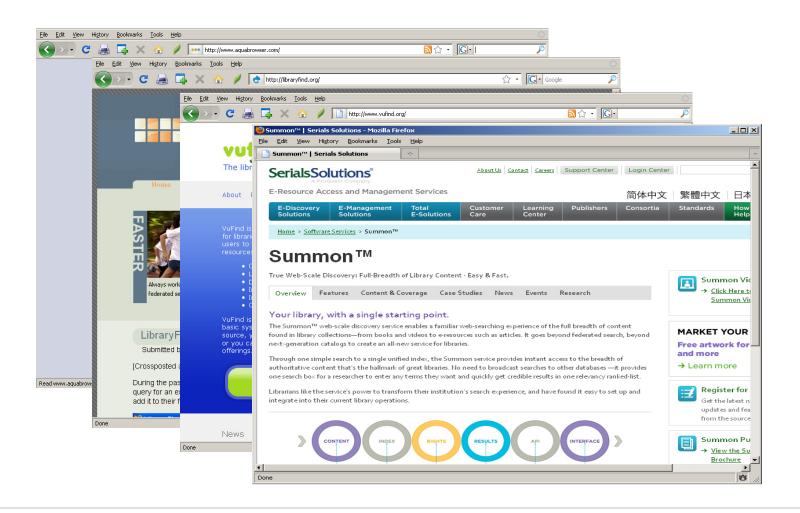


...And a world digital library



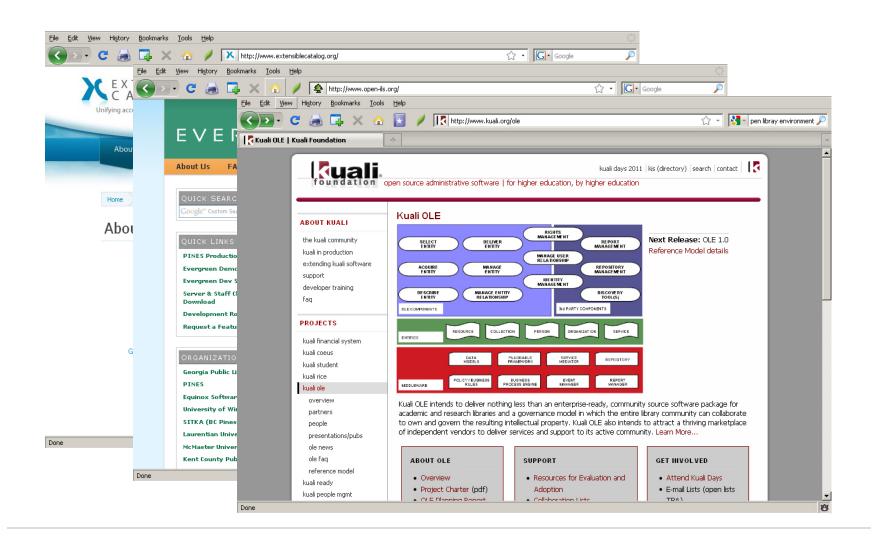


Next-Generation Discovery Tools



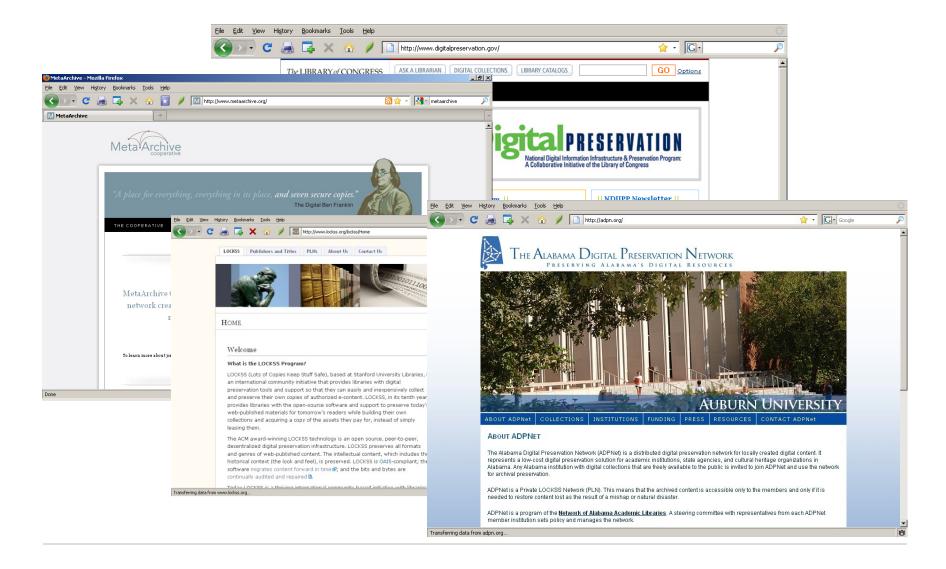


Next-Generation Library Systems



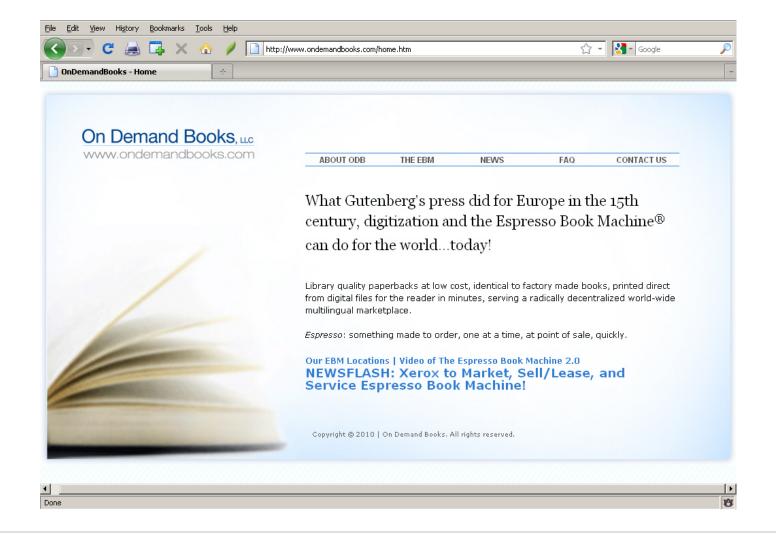


Digital Preservation





eBooks and Print-On-Demand (POD)



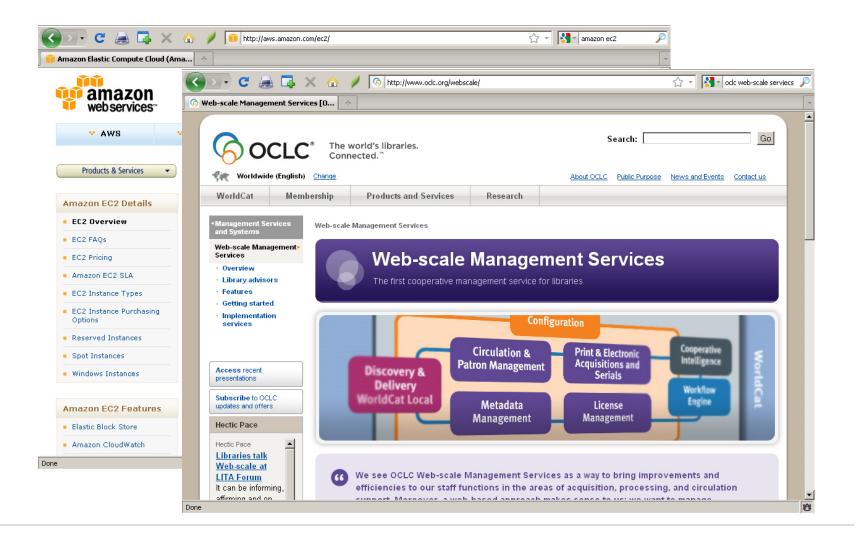


Mobile





The Cloud





But wait, there's more...



How to keep up with it all?

Forget it. You can't.



What to do?



Robert Frost meets with students in Baker Library's Treasure Room in 1947. (Photo: Dartmouth College Library)

"...Choose something like a star To stay our minds on and be staid."

In other words:

Identify a few guiding principles, and focus on those.

Like what?

Like these:

- 1. The library as public space (agora)
- 2. The library as digital publisher
- 3. The library as laboratory and testbed
- 4. The library as help center
- 5. The library as digital steward



1. The library as public space (agora)

- An agora or "third place" (Ray Oldenburg, 1989) where people can gather, talk, study, and create—in groups, or by themselves
- A place for reading (broadly defined), reflection, and creation
- A place that fuses traditional resources with the latest technology
- Ideal location for an information/learning commons



Example: The Learning Commons at the Auburn University Libraries





2. The library as digital publisher

- Unique digital collections
- Videos and library-produced documentaries
- Oral histories
- Class projects
- Electronic theses and dissertations
- Undergraduate research e-journal
- Faculty e-journals
- Institutional repositories (e.g. IDEALS, SMARTech)

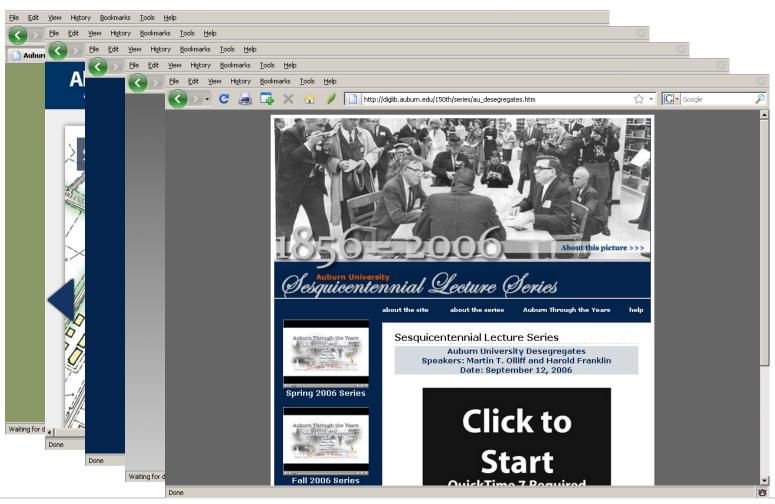


Example: AlabamaMosaic





Example: The Auburn University Digital Library



3. The library as laboratory and testbed

- Multimedia laboratory (with full-time staff)
- High-end computer workstations and software
- Audio and video production studios
- Group project rooms
- Presentation rooms
- A testbed for discovery tools, learning technologies, digital projects, and new forms of scholarly communication



Example: The Media and Digital Resource Laboratory at Auburn

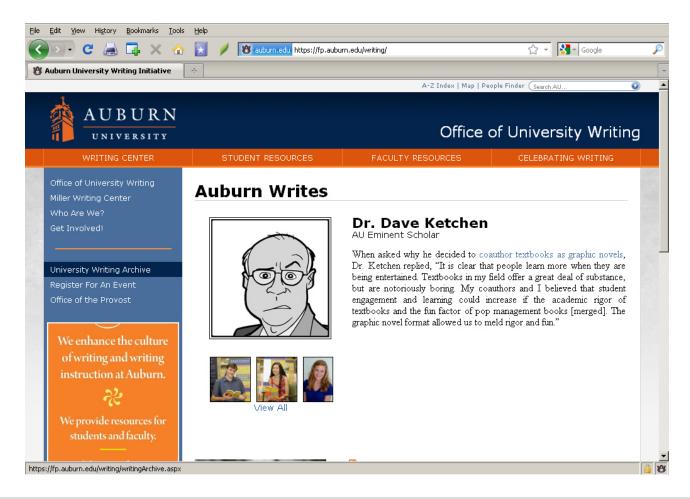


4. The library as help center

- The go-to place for help and expertise on any subject
- Reference librarians and subject specialists
- Information technology consultants
- Tutors and tutorial services
- Writing instructors
- Visual communication specialists
- Career counselors for students



Example: The Miller Writing Center at the Auburn University Libraries

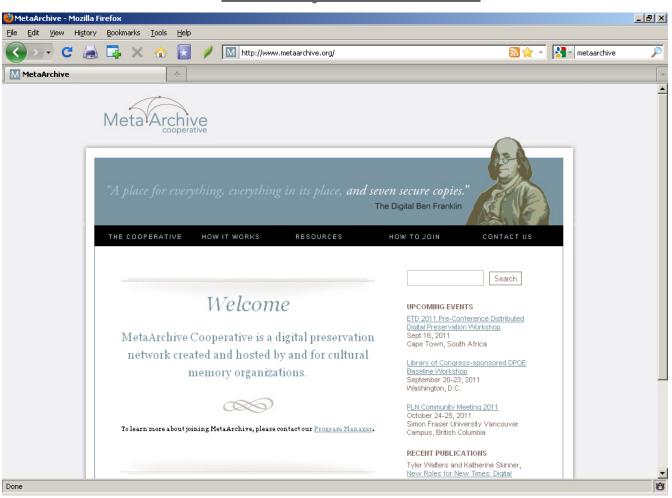


5. The library as digital steward

- Traditional stewardship role, with new content
- Home for the institutional/scholarly repository
- Experience with traditional conservation and preservation methods
- Experience with digital preservation (e.g. through a Private LOCKSS Network)
- Expertise with file organization and preservation metadata



Example: The MetaArchive Cooperative





Example: The Alabama Digital Preservation Network (ADPNet)



The Big Shift: From Curation to Creation

- Libraries used to be primarily about managing content produced by others.
- Now libraries can create their own scholarly content, and involve students and faculty in the process.
- Consequently, the role of the librarian is changing.
- Required: flexibility, creativity, imagination, and the willingness to experiment and take risks—and make mistakes.

Closing Thought #1

A pretty good solution that can actually be implemented is better than a perfect solution that can't be.

Closing Thought #2

Technology is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

"It's knowing what to do with things that counts." (Robert Frost, again)

Knowing what NOT to do with things is also important (e.g. twitter, Facebook)

Closing Thought #3

Finally, international collaboration is crucial. We can do more together than we can separately, and do it more efficiently.

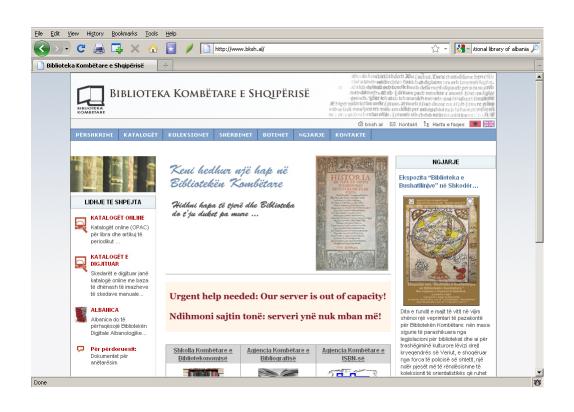


Example: <u>Aligning National Approaches</u> to Digital Preservation (ANADP)





The National Library of Albania and...?





Thank you

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