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…
Shqipëria dhe Bashkimi Europian: integrimi Europian dhe perspektiva e pranimit

Minela Bogdani, John Loughlin
★★★☆☆ 0 Reviews
87% * 0
Dajt, 2004 - History - 278 pages

From inside the book

shqiperia  Search

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adhikëm, ndërkohë të mëna dhe shqipëri, do të flet në shumë për rezervimin e lartës së pyetjeve deri në një mënyrë e ndërkombëtare. 

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Welcome to the Shared Digital Future

HathiTrust Welcomes New Partners
- University of Pittsburgh
- Utah State University
- Cornell University Library
- Dartmouth College
- Triangle Research Libraries Network

HathiTrust is a bold idea with big plans.

As a digital repository for the nation’s great research libraries, HathiTrust brings together the immense collections of partner institutions.

HathiTrust was conceived as a collaboration of the thirteen universities of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation and the University of California system to establish a repository for those universities to archive and share their digitized collections.

Partnership is open to institutions worldwide who share this grand vision.
A national digital library (the DPLA)…
...And a world digital library
Next-Generation Discovery Tools

Summon™

True Web-Scale Discovery: Full-Breadth of Library Content - Easy & Fast.

Your library, with a single starting point.

The Summon™ web-scale discovery service enables a familiar web-searching experience of the full breadth of content found in library collections—from books and videos to e-resources such as articles. It goes beyond federated search, beyond next-generation catalogs to create an all-new service for libraries.

Through one simple search to a single unified index, the Summon service provides instant access to the breadth of authoritative content that’s the hallmark of great libraries. No need to broadcast searches to other databases—it provides one search box for a researcher to enter any terms they want and quickly get credible results in one relevant ranked-list.

Librarians like the service’s power to transform their institution’s search experience, and have found it easy to set up and integrate into their current library operations.
Next-Generation Library Systems
Digital Preservation
eBooks and Print-On-Demand (POD)

What Gutenberg’s press did for Europe in the 15th century, digitization and the Espresso Book Machine® can do for the world...today!

Library quality paperbacks at low cost, identical to factory made books, printed direct from digital files for the reader in minutes, serving a radically decentralized world-wide multilingual marketplace.

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NEWSFLASH: Xerox to Market, Sell/LendDate, and Service Espresso Book Machine!

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Mobile
The Cloud
But wait, there’s more…

(With apologies to AB Svensk Filminindustri)
How to keep up with it all?

Forget it. You can’t.
What to do?

“…Choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.”

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

Dr. Dave Ketchen
AU Eminent Scholar

When asked why he decided to coauthor textbooks as graphic novels, Dr. Ketchen replied, “It is clear that people learn more when they are being entertained. Textbooks in my field offer a great deal of substance, but are notoriously boring. My coauthors and I believed that student engagement and learning could increase if the academic rigor of textbooks and the fun factor of pop management books [merged]. The graphic novel format allowed us to meld rigor and fun.”

https://library.auburn.edu/writing/writingArchive.aspx
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 Alabama Digital Preservation Network (ADPNet) is a distributed digital preservation network for locally created digital content. It represents a low-cost digital preservation solution for academic institutions, state agencies, and cultural heritage organizations in Alabama. Any Alabama institution with digital collections that are freely available to the public is invited to join ADPNet and use the network for archival preservation.

ADPNet is a Private LOCKSS Network (FLN). This means that the archived content is accessible only to the members and only if it is needed to restore content lost as the result of a mishap or natural disaster.

ADPNet is a program of the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries. A steering committee with representatives from each ADPNet member institution sets policy and manages the network.

Transferring data from adpnet.org...
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.
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)
Finally, international collaboration is crucial. We can do more together than we can separately, and do it more efficiently.
Example: Aligning National Approaches to Digital Preservation (ANADP)
The National Library of Albania and...?
Thank you

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