

Innovate or Become Obsolete: Technical Services Staffing for the 21st Century

Bradford Lee Eden, Ph.D.

Associate University Librarian for Technical
Services & Scholarly Communication

University of California, Santa Barbara

eden@library.ucsb.edu

“Did you know...?”

<http://www.chrisrawlinson.com/2009/09/new-2009-did-you-know-video-4-0-september-update/>

Caveats...

- This esteemed conference and previous speakers...
- Can't really say much more about skills, direction, or importance for technical services staff to proactively determine your place in the new information landscape...
- But, I can speak from the library administrator position, one that broadens perspective and focus, but may not be welcomed...
- And, something that has been left out of the equation, but is so very vital and essential...

“FutureSpeak: A preface to top technology trends in libraries” by Tom Wilson

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/lita/litaresources/toptechtrends/futurespeak.cfm>

“The ultimate folly of looking toward the future is to believe that anyone can predict the future. While near-term prognostications can be fairly accurate (if broad based), the long-term future can be elusive. But more to the point, there are two main reasons why thinking that the future can be predicted is problematic. First, the notion of prediction confuses the point of looking toward the future for our purposes. “Prediction” suggests a high degree of specificity and accuracy as if to imply that one can control the future or even know the future. The image of crystal balls and incantations to an oracle come to mind. More importantly, the use of the article “the” in conjunction with the word “future” connotes a singular scenario in which, if the details are correct, the predictor can pinpoint exactly what future will exist, as if there could be just one future... **Certainly, one large influential factor would be one's relative level of positivism or negativity in attitude. If one is relatively pessimistic, one may tend toward doomsday approaches to the future. Or if one leans toward optimism, one may propose utopian ideas.**

“Neither cynical pessimism nor blind optimism form the healthiest disposition. We need a mixture: enough positive outlook for hope, and enough realism to discern what lies in our control and what lies out of it.”

Catalysts for Change in Libraries

- The economy, and state support for higher education
- Google digitization and book settlement
- Social networking
- Space (people, collections)
 - Distributed print repositories, shared print-in-place
- Open stack: \$4.26; High density storage: .86; Hybrid (10 years in open stacks): \$1.53; Hybrid (20 years in open stacks): \$1.99
- 30-50% of Harvard, UCLA, UCB, and Columbia's collections are off-site with no evidence of adverse effects on scholarship or national reputation (70 million books)
- Shifting resources to providing access to unique local collections
- Moving from the local to the network level in collaborations, metadata, and resource sharing (WorldCat Local (NGM), NGTS, etc.)
- http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uc_oclc.html
- <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/>
- Move towards open access and scholarly communication
 - Digital preservation (NIH, NSF, etc.)
 - Institutional repositories
 - Copyright
- Web and Library 3.0, mobile devices, media literacy
- 3D information visualization
 - <http://www.thebanmappingproject.com/>
- Assessment

Recent reports for context

No brief candle: reconceiving research libraries for the 21st century (Council on Library and Information Resources)(August 2008)

<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub142/pub142.pdf>

- Calls for a fundamental rethinking of the academic research library
- Culture of libraries: inhibiting change?
- New alliances with students
- Redefining the library workforce
- New kinds of engagement with faculty
- Identifying the library's competitive advantage
- The library's relationship with the commercial sector
- Expanding the idea of collaboration and collective action
- Need for experimentation
- The fragility of academic publishing

Kenney response to CLIR report

Anne Kenney "Approaching an Entity Crisis: Reconceiving Research Libraries in a Multi-Institutional Context."

http://www.oclc.org/research/dss/ppt/dss_kenney.pdf

Four assertions:

- There is a collective wealth held hostage by redundant operations and collections in academic libraries
- Many of the things we compete over **don't** make our institutions more competitive
- Our history of collaboration may ironically make it more difficult to do **radical** collaboration
- Our staff would rather do **more** work than give up doing some things

Aggressive statements

- Stop measuring success by how much money is spent/dedicated to libraries; instead, measure success by operational and institutional efficiencies, resource reallocation, consortial work, or addressing big challenges at the university
- Collective collections (UC and 2CUL directions)
- Shared backroom functions
- New domains, like building local cyberinfrastructures, bridging institutional repositories, collaborating in new areas
- The power of many: exercising collective clout

For technical services, Transformative Change is the new mantra

- University of California System
 - Bibliographic Services Task Force (BSTF) report (2005)
<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/sopag/BSTF/Final.pdf>
- UC Next Generation Technical Services (NGTS) and 2CUL initiatives (2010-)
<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/>
<http://2cul.org/>
- Library of Congress report by Karen Calhoun (2006)
 - “Changing Nature of the Catalog and its Integration with Other Discovery Tools”
 - <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/calhoun-report-final.pdf>
- LC’s Working Group on the Future of Bibliographic Control (2008)
 - <http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future/news/lcwg-ontherecord-jan08-final.pdf>

The library catalog

- “Lipstick on a pig”
 - Endeca, Aquabrowser/ThoroBrowser, Syndetic Solutions, FRBRization, RDA, etc.
 - Future of the ILS
https://gustavus.edu/library/libdata_pos/page_print.phtml?page_id=139
- Open source solutions
 - eXtensible catalog, LibraryThing, Pines/Evergreen, biblios.net, Koha, etc.
- Competition to proprietary ILS vendors
 - OCLC’s Web Scale Management Services (WSMS)

This still leaves three big issues for library administrators...

- The costs involved in maintaining/ updating/researching bibliographic records, licensing costs (OCLC, vendor utility), personnel (salaries + benefits), and redundant work for “local” practices is no longer sustainable (the status quo).
- Users no longer think of the library (and the OPAC) as the first option for obtaining information; we are usually the last option, if an option at all.
- If (and when) the current economic crisis goes away, staffing within libraries will never go back to what they were.

Ending the status quo

- Eden, Bradford Lee. “The new user environment: the end of technical services?” *Information Technology and Libraries* (June 2010).
- Recent special issue of *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* (v. 48, no. 6/7, 2010) titled *21st Century Metadata Operations: Challenges, Opportunities, Directions*.
- Eden, Bradford Lee. “Ending the Status Quo.” *American Libraries*; Mar 2008 (39:3) pg. 38.
- Eden, Bradford Lee. *Information Organization Future for Libraries* (*Library technology reports*, vol. 43, no. 6, November/December 2007).
 - See “Reinventing the OPAC” section of this document for many papers/presentations on new roles for technical services staff.
- “Good enough”
 - Library of Congress has abandoned its role as a “national” library, moving resources and people from cataloging to digitization of unique resources, and providing access to same with educational resources over the Internet.
 - Google is the #1 way that people begin their information search.
 - Precision and exactness of bibliographic records, while laudable and of value in the long term, is not sustainable nor marketable in the current information environment.
 - MARC is only one of a myriad of metadata formats in use for the organization and description of information (and the one that our patrons neither understand nor use).
- For a good overview of this topic, see the plethora of articles in *Computers in Libraries*, v. 27, no. 9 (October 2007) titled *21st-Century Library Systems*.
- <http://www.slideshare.net/smartbroad/crisis-or-opportunity-cataloging-catalogers-rda-and-change>
Diane Hillman presentation

What does this mean for YOU??!

Let's go back to the opening quote:

Certainly, one large influential factor would be one's relative level of positivism or negativity in attitude. If one is relatively pessimistic, one may tend toward doomsday approaches to the future. Or if one leans toward optimism, one may propose utopian ideas.

Buddhist quote: “Lean into your discomfort”

“Work to live, not the other way around”

(in other words, don't “live to work”)

Library administrators, in these tough budget times, are looking for staff members who maintain a positive attitude towards change and life, who are willing to grow and learn both professionally and personally, to work “outside their comfort zone” and “outside the box” when it comes to helping the library to fulfill its mission and goals.

So, it really is up to you!!

- As Diane Hillman states, these things are going to happen, whether we want them to or not.
- The real change that matters, is YOUR response to these changes. Will they be negative or will they be positive?
 - Professional development (ask for webinars)
 - An open mind
 - Assist (don't hinder) with reorganization efforts to make work more efficient
 - Volunteer!! (UCSB personnel)
 - Learn non-MARC metadata (UNLV/UCSB TEI)
 - We are already the experts when it comes to the organization and description of print resources; we need to move that expertise to the digital objects environment
 - Learn scanning/digitization

Next Generation Technical Services (NGTS) at the University of California

<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/>

57 Technical Services FTE lost in fiscal year 2009/10 alone

<http://universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/25150>

Current budget situation on UC campuses

NGTS-2 Enterprise-Level Collection Management Services Report (one of three task forces that I chaired).

http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/docs/ngts_phase2.html

http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/uls/ngts/docs/CoUL_Priorities_Cover_2010.pdf

UC System-wide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC)

<http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/planning/taskforce/>

http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/planning/taskforce/Mar2_SLASIAC_TF_Budget_Scenario_v2a.pdf

- From “Research Libraries, Risk and Systemic Change” OCLC Report (March 2010):
“Most institutions continue to direct resources in traditional ways towards operations that are marginal to institutional and national research priorities, towards processes and services that are ignored or undervalued by their clients, and towards staff activities that are driven more by legacy professional concerns than user needs.”

So, what will the future of technical services look like?

From ITAL article referenced earlier:

- Conduct a process review of all current workflows, following each type of format from receipt at loading dock to access by user. Revise and redesign workflows for efficiency.
- Eliminate all backlogs, incorporating and standardizing various types of bibliographic organization (from brief records to full records, using established criteria of importance and access).
- As much as possible, contract with vendors to make all English language purchased print materials shelf-ready, establishing and monitoring profiles for quality and accuracy. Establish a rate of error that is amenable to technical services staff; once that error rate is met, review incoming print materials only once or twice a year.
- Assure technical services staff that their skills, experience, and attention to detail are needed in the electronic environment, and provide training and professional development to assist them in scanning and digitizing unique collections, learning non-MARC metadata standards, improving project management, and performing consultation training to interact with faculty and students who work with data sets, metadata, and research planning. Support and actively work for revised job reclassification of library support staff positions.
- Even when and if the economy returns to previous levels, library staffing never will.

Lynne Dyer “The role of the cataloguer in the 21st century”

<http://highvisibilitycataloguing.wordpress.com/professional-positive-advocacy/the-role-of-the-cataloguer-in-the-21st-century/>

See especially:

- Suggestions for new, enhanced roles and competencies for cataloguers
- Survival tips for the cataloguer

ALCTS E-forum on Beyond 2010: The Year of Cataloging Research

- How many live this statement: “When I came here, we had a stable of MLS, fully tenured faculty catalogers. Now we are down to 1 full-time, tenured faculty cataloger... me!! And I’m swamped! In the meantime, most of what was done by the other catalogers has been reassigned to library assistants, **whose numbers are also dwindling**. (that’s why we need to focus on unique/digital resources, things like NGTS)
- 3 camps: linked data/RDF camp, XML/metadata/digital library camp, and the MARC/AACR2 camp.

ALCTS Midwinter 2010 Symposium

Time Horizon 2020: Library Renaissance

by Susan Gibbons

- <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/resources/z687/gibbons.pdf>
- 80/20 rule, 20% of collection accounts for 80% of circulation and use; more like 6.5% (OCLC report)
- “Distinction between acquisitions and interlibrary loan will likely dissolve.”
- “...shifting of resources in TS towards the identification, preservation, and some level of republication of books held uniquely by each library.”
- “Over the next ten years, I suspect that the emphasis of technical services will change from the acquisition of content to the user’s discovery of content... facilitation of discovery and access of locally created materials... increasing percentage of their work shifted away from procurement of external content to the care and distribution of locally created content.”
- “... growing acceptance of download counts as part of an academic’s impact metric... emerging area for TS staff might be gathering and maintaining institutional metrics.”
- Summary: “I believe the focus will shift from external to internal content, from just-in-case to just-in-time collection development, and from disparate silos of information resources to a mandated expectation that those silos can communicate and interact in ways that meet the expectations of library users.”

The future of the ILS

- OCLC's Web-scale Management Services
- <http://www.oclc.org/webscale/>
 - Open source platform
 - Development by both OCLC and community (similar to iPhone apps)
 - Circulation and Acquisitions modules currently available, Advanced Serials and eReserves modules in development
 - Subscription cost model
 - No downtime for versioning/upgrades of software
 - Use of cloud computing technology
 - Ability to work across consortiums and within systems
 - Early adopters include Pepperdine University and Orbis-Cascade Alliance, some large public library consortiums
 - Early implementer: University of Tennessee-Chattanooga

Getting back to attitude, it all comes down to...

➤ Maintaining a sense of PERSPECTIVE

CHANGING YOUR MIND -- GETTING RID OF LIMITING HABITS AND BELIEFS THAT SLOW YOU DOWN

"I used to think that my success was based on 95% processes and techniques, and about 5% on my mindset. As I have moved through life, I eventually found that this formula was all wrong. 95% of your success is based on your mindset and attitude, and only 5% on learning processes and techniques."

If you don't believe you are good enough, smart enough, experienced enough, knowledgeable enough to change and adapt, you will stay stuck right where you are.

If you are pursuing a particular path, whether corporate or academic, because of pride, or fear of the unknown, or because of what your parents expect, or because of what other people might think, you will be miserable with your work, and your goal when you reach it (if you do) will taste like ashes in your mouth.

If you are not confident enough to dream and act big or you don't believe you deserve to be successful, you will stay small.

When you are interested, you do what is convenient. When you are committed, you do whatever is necessary. Once you are utterly committed to the "what," the "how" appears, often in unexpected and serendipitous ways. But developing commitment, a no-excuses determination to move forward toward change requires clarity and focus, and a willingness to spend some time examining some of the darker corners of your psyche.

What's your position on the future of your career?

- Reactive: Whining, complaining, uncooperative, angry, pining for the “good ole days,” holding back forward progress.

“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.”

- Proactive: accepting, moving forward, assisting, experimenting, trying, defining, planning, learning
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op8BjKID1gM>

Final thoughts...

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

For every minute you are angry, you lose 60 seconds of happiness

Ralph Waldo Emerson

US essayist & poet (1803 - 1882)

The background features a faded image of a book cover with Chinese calligraphy. A decorative header bar is positioned at the top, consisting of a small teal square on the left and a long brown rectangle extending to the right.

<http://www.chrisrawlinson.com/2009/03/2009-did-you-know-video/>



Questions? And thank you!

eden@library.ucsb.edu