Future and value

The Library as Strategic Partner

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Charleston Conference™
ISSUES IN BOOK AND SERIAL ACQUISITION
About this Lively Session

◊ **Background research: a brief overview**
  ◊ Economic macrotrends: post-growth, saturation, stagnation theories
  ◊ Pressures on higher education: cost and access
  ◊ Library pressures: stagnant support & budgets post-recession

◊ **Interactive exercises, un-conference-style**
  ◊ Live poll & discussion

◊ **Takeaways for you and your home libraries:**
  ◊ Live poll compilations emailed to session participants,
  ◊ Conference paper: [https://works.bepress.com/antjemays](https://works.bepress.com/antjemays)
Part 1

Background:

- Broader economic trends
- Higher education pressures
- Library pressures
- Professional impact & value
Winter is coming: economic macrotrends

◊ Post-growth, no growth, stagnation theories
◊ Technological saturation
◊ Evolution toward “medieval economy”:
  ◊ → high-end niche markets
  ◊ → low-tech service sector
◊ Pressures on higher education:
  ◊ → cost, debt, access, value, returns
◊ Library pressures: budgets, value judgments
Economic winter: snowing on libraries

- Higher education access, cost, debt, value judgments
- Post-recession stagnation for library support & budgets
- Stakeholders’ outdated library perceptions
- Value & ROI: mismatched & incomplete measures
- Negative prognoses
- Negative value judgments
- Impact on the profession: fear, uncertainty, dissatisfaction

Cappelli (2015); Horrigan (2016; 2015); King & Tenopir (2013); Rosa (2018); Wolff-Eisenberg (2016).
Professions and value judgments

- **Financial industry** – negative global impact of poor judgment
  - Exotic investment instruments: securitized debt of shaky underlying value
  - Cascade of financial collapses → widespread economic harm

- Sentiment in the profession:
  - self-correct → instill values
  - emphasize ethics in business education

*Bierman (2010); Sigurjónsson et al (2015).*
Professions and value judgments, ctd.

◊ **Library profession** – positive impact of trustworthy information services
  ◇ Highly ranked among most trusted professions
  ◇ Effective services provider ⇒ known for delivering what users need
  ◇ Natural ally in widely-needed skill development

◊ **Sentiment in the profession:**
  ◇ Negative self-image
  ◇ Timid in recognizing own value

Horrigan (2016; 2015); Lockwood & Ritter (2016); OECD (2012).
Trust and viable information

- 90% agree that it is important to educate people on how to find trustworthy information.
- 84% agree that they trust information more when it is given by a professional.
- 66% agree that it is harder than ever to find trustworthy information.

Most likely sources of trustworthy information

- Medical staff: 74%
- Teachers: 49%
- Police officers: 49%
- Librarians: 46%
- Lawyers: 39%
- Economists: 20%
- Journalists: 6%
- Pollsters: 4%
- Estate agents: 3%
- Politicians: 2%
- None of these: 9%
- Don't know: 7%

Most trusted professions

- Librarians second only to nurses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarians</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Doctors</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school teachers</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funeral directors</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountants</td>
<td>43%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A few positive strategies

- Soft-advocacy -- beyond fundraising -- through expertise
- Partner across obvious lines (campus, community)
- Community engagement → leverage expertise
- Engage with local business community
  - Skill development
  - Economic development
- Engage with professionals in other industries
- Look to other industries for creative solutions

Kim & Mauborgne (2015); Onsomu et al (2010); Maine State Library Trusted Professions Survey. (n=400)
Part 2

- **Interactives:**
  - Mentimeter live polls
  - Discussions
Interactive Reflections

Live polls – 9 questions:

- **Basics**: organizations, roles – Q. 1-2
- **Library environments**: integration vs. isolation – Q.3-4
- **Information professions**: challenges & opportunities – Q.5-8
- **Closing thoughts**: open-ended – Q.9
Interactive poll results:

.exports The next 9 slides show session participants’ responses from the interactive Mentimeter live polls.
1. What type of organization are you with?

- Academic library: research (5)
- Academic library: 2-4 year college (1)
- Corporate library (0)
- Government office (0)
- University - other office (0)
- Vendor (0)
- Other (1)
2. What is your role?

- Librarian: 2
- Library administrator: 4
- University administrator: 0
- Professor/teacher: 0
- Researcher: 0
- Vendor: 0
- Other: 1
3. How integrated is your library in your broader organization and community?

- My library is consulted early in developing new programs. 2.6
- On my campus, my librarians are respected as equal professionals among the faculty. 2.1
- My library and parent administrators share effective and open communication. 3
- My library is valued and supported by administrators and stakeholders. 2.9

[Image of a Mentimeter chart]
4. How isolated is your library from the organization and broader community?

- Connecting with faculty and students is difficult.
  - 2.3

- The value of my library’s collections is misunderstood/not appreciated.
  - 2.7

- The value of my library’s information services is not appreciated.
  - 2.3
5. What key challenges do you see for library / information professionals?

- Funding
  - Finding new funding sources. Communicating value.
- Open access
- Budget is key
- Open access
- DRM
- Budget
  - Shifts in higher ed more broadly
- Sustainability of scholarly communication
- Faculty who don’t require quality research = students who don’t use the library. Resources are costing more and library budgets are shrinking.
6. What great opportunities do you see for library / information professionals?

- Moving into non-traditional areas and services
- Potential for greater integration with research and scholarly communications lifecycles.
- Credible source of reliable information in light of all the fake news
- Data visualization services / moving into other service areas.
- Better integration to community
- Preserving social media networks for the historical record – beyond web archiving, preserving nodes and pathways.
7. Society’s unassigned problems: What needs are library professionals strongly suited to address?

- Credible information sources
- Combat dumbing down
- Assistance to the broader campus community, including alumni and community members
- Providing research support for non-profits and local governments.
8. Soft advocacy: What can library professionals do to be effective ambassadors for the profession?

- Stop thinking of/communicating about libraries using technical jargon
- Take opportunities to always talk to non-librarians
- Show how our skill set can help most situations
- Establish partnerships with academic depts where possible
- Be open to hiring non-MLS employees to work in our libraries
- Be service oriented. Help navigate our users through the complicated info-space
- Show value by releasing statistics on services rendered and value added to programs and degrees. Collaboration with students on projects.
- Don't inflate what we do to non-traditional library users. Talk about libraries in a way that makes sense to the audience.
9. Your closing thoughts: free-form & open-ended

- academic freedom
- leadership
- digital services
- neoliberalism
- be responsive
- empathy
- greater marketing
- value-added
- publishing
- be flexible
- analyze
- not bound by legacy
- adaptive services
- demonstrate value
- adaptable
- be helpful
- disability outreach
- technology services
- users where they are
- observe other industries
- advocacy for new funding
- collaborate with others
- corporate university
- service outside
- meet patrons
- think creatively
- crises
Part 3

♦ More background research:
♦ Selected readings


Additional Readings, ctd.


Additional Readings, ctd.


◊ King, D. W., & Tenopir, C. (2013). Linking information seeking patterns with purpose, use, value, and return on investment of academic library journals. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, 8(2), 153-162.

Additional Readings, ctd.


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Questions?

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