
BUILDING THE LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE

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IS THIS WHERE WE ARE HEADED?

THE NOT SO GREAT NEWS:

- It will be hard to find a public library 15 years from now.
- Libraries make no sense in the future. Anyone with Internet access already has access to far more books than were in that library. There is no need for a building.
- In a fully ebooked world, which I expect we'll be living in 10 or 15 years from now, print books won't be extinct, but they'll be either exotic or very purpose-driven. They won't be common or an ordinary way to deliver content, the way they are today.
- When all of us have access to more books on our screens than are in the library, what's the point to the library?
- statistics show that libraries are being used more than ever. I don't doubt that but it doesn't undercut my belief about where things will be in 10 or 15 years. Newspapers had record years for profits in the mid-1990s.

Mike Shatzkin April 2011

THE TRIED AND TRUE REBUTTAL TO THE LAST SLIDE

- When records were invented, print was said to be dead.
 - When film was invented, print was said to be dead.
 - When radio was invented, print was said to be dead.
 - When television was invented, print was said to be dead.
 - When computers were invented, print was said to be dead.
 - With the internet explosion, print was said to be dead.

 - With each of the above, the library had to EXPAND, not reduce, what it offered, the space it needed to offer the above, AND the book collection didn't shrink to compensate for this. On top of that, in spite of the above our library use is INCREASING, not diminishing.
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AND WHY THIS REBUTTAL MAY NOT WORK THIS TIME

- I used to hear, “If technology is so much better, why are Barnes and Noble’s book sales soaring?” I don’t hear that anymore.
 - With the advent of E books, tablets, smartphones, etc., print **MAY ACTUALLY BE DYING** this time.
 - The E book, unlike the last slides technologies, is specifically designed to drive the book into obsolescence. They may be “rough around the edges” right now, but my guess is in twenty to thirty years they will be pretty spectacular.
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1985 mobile phone



27 years later



2012 Kindle Fire



2037





OR WILL WE WIND UP HERE?

**BUILDING TODAY FOR TOMORROW'S NEEDS
(IN NEW HAMPSHIRE)**

THE GOOD NEWS:

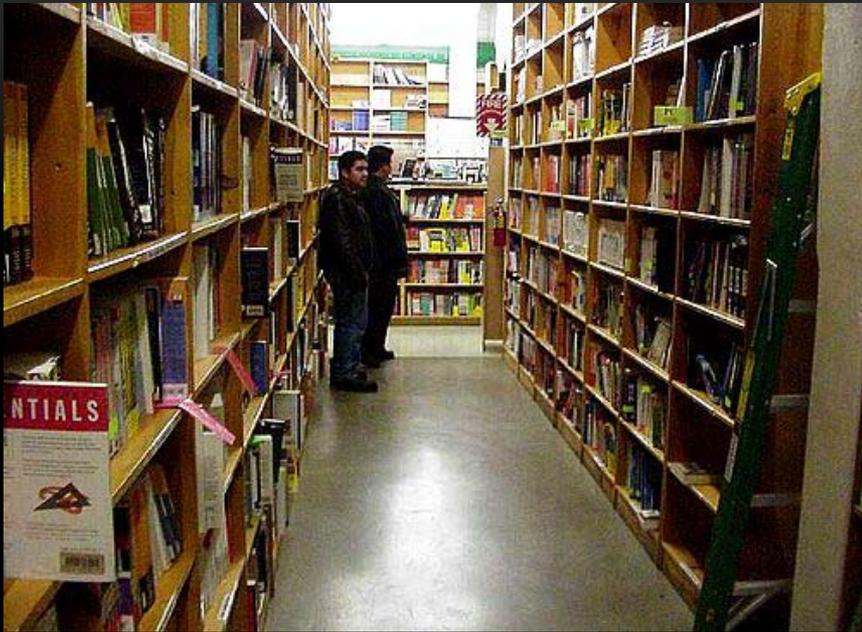
- New Hampshire public libraries haven't served as "book warehouses" for at least the last half century.
 - As the necessity for printed material diminishes, space becomes available for the functions which make your library a destination that makes even more people want to use your facility.
 - When digital media completely overtakes "hard" copies of media, you will avoid having to store 16 mm films, AND VHS tapes, AND DVD's of the same content.
 - Information technology is getting cheaper, better, easier to use, and less cumbersome to install and provide for.
 - "Green" technology is getting cheaper, better, easier to use, and less cumbersome to install and provide for.
 - You may actually have enough room for intimate quiet spaces, small scale collaborative spaces, large scale multi purpose spaces, children's areas and programs.
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THINKING IN TERMS OF THE FUTURE:

- Envision the library as “place”, and in particular an INVITING place.
 - Embrace technology, for it is your future.
 - Library programming is your future.
 - The children are your future. (And they already embrace technology.)
 - Design for environmental sustainability, for it is your future.
 - Create a center for collaboration, micro and macro, and at the same time allow for quiet individual spaces.
 - Consider what your security needs are, (and aren't).
 - Plan for change by being flexible in spaces and infrastructure.
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CREATING AN INVITING SPACE

- Wherever possible keep stack height down.
 - Wherever possible keep stacks off the wall.
 - Make circulation paths and spaces a functional, integral space. Create art exhibits in corridors, provide informational displays such as bulletin boards on otherwise unused wall space.
 - Use extensive exterior glass and windows (done properly) to let the outside feel as though it's part of your space.
 - Use extensive interior glass and windows (done properly) to let small spaces seem larger and less claustrophobic.
 - Make your circulation desk appear to the patron as a welcome center as opposed to a watchtower/teller window.
 - Keep your facility bright, light and open.
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AVOID HIGH STACKS IF AT ALL POSSIBLE



BRING THE OUTSIDE INSIDE WITH GLASS



OPEN UP THE INSIDE WITH GLASS

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

- Continue to provide public access computers with internet access and perhaps limited word processing/spreadsheet/presentation abilities.
 - Understand that most future users will be bringing their technological needs with them and provide for this. (Outlets everywhere and keep some chargers handy.)
 - Offer unfettered wireless service.
 - Offer wireless print capability.
 - Keep thinking of ways to let electronic media SLOWLY eliminate hard copy information media.
 - Try to think in terms of what will work for US now and in the future as opposed to what the folks in the next town did last year.
 - Try to bring on staff that is technological “excited” if you can’t swing a full time tech support person.
 - Incorporate “screen” technology throughout collaborative spaces and the library in general.
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IF IT DOESN'T MOVE AND YOU CAN'T SEE THROUGH IT, PUT AN OUTLET NEAR IT (AND KEEP A STASH OF CHARGERS DU JOUR).

LIBRARY PROGRAMMING SPACES

- Focus on permanent stack storage and risk becoming relatively “unnecessary” within the next three decades.
 - Don’t think of what you can’t do, think of what you can offer.
 - Think of different size spaces for different sized programs.
 - Think of what draws non or light “book” users into your library and provide appropriate space for it (i.e. music/performing arts, lectures, clubs, tutoring, etc.)
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CHILDREN'S SPACES

- Children LOVE libraries.
 - Although the delivery method may be undergoing a profound shift after nearly 600 years, it is all still about READING and the library is where kids come to enjoyably hone their reading skills.
 - Kids don't need to be enticed to enter your facility, and if you make it pleasant for them they become lifelong supporters.
 - With kids come parents who otherwise may have drifted away from the library. They start sniffing around and before you know it they are lifelong supporters.
 - Whatever you thought the size of your Children's Area should be, think of making it bigger.
 - Try not to bury the Children's Area in the darkest lowest part of the library that is the furthest away from the entry.
 - Try to at least visually open up your Children's Area to the rest of the library.
 - Consider using "portable" fun as opposed to built in permanent "play" structures for future flexibility.
 - I prefer "vanilla" Children's Area's as opposed permanent "primary colored" kids spaces. Let your Children's Director go wild with paper clips, construction paper, scotch tape and kid's artwork. The result is fun, beautiful, timely, and easily totally reconfigured.
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“PORTABLE” FUN IN CHILDREN’S SPACES

DESIGNING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Use the LEED standards (even if you aren't going for certification) as an outline for sustainability discussions.
 - Come to a consensus about realistic expectations about "going green" regarding scope, budget, and expectations.
 - Look hard at cost benefit analysis of heating, cooling, and electrical upgrades.
 - Demand at least slightly enhanced thermal envelope construction.
 - Look hard at geothermal and biomass systems. They are more expensive, but they are getting more "mainstream" and can result in reasonable paybacks.
 - On site alternative electrical generation presently does not have reasonable payback, but this too may change sooner rather than later.
 - Conservation is the most cost effective "green energy" plan. Consider the following:
 - Motion controlled high efficiency lighting.
 - Daylighting controlled lighting.
 - CO2 detection to adjust fresh air requirements.
 - Make recycling a commitment during design, construction, and building use.
 - Pay attention to storm water treatment in relation to roofs and paved areas.
 - Transfer switches now allow emergency generators and possible future connection to alternative electrical sources.
 - Question your consultants HARD about costs of sustainability upgrades.
 - Beware of hyper complicated systems that your part time janitor is expected to operate.
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CENTERS FOR COLLABORATION/INDIVIDUAL SPACES

- Think in terms of small (2 to 4 people), medium (up to 15/20 people) and large (over 20) “multi purpose” spaces.
 - Some collaborative space doesn't have to be in “rooms”.
 - Remember that your main multi-purpose room has to function as more than a “lecture hall”
 - Try to avoid “meeting closets.” (I prefer extensive use of interior storefront.)
 - In spite of everything I have said, it is still a library for goodness sake. Provide comfortable quiet “solo” reading/working areas. (Just remember to keep outlets nearby.....)
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PLANNING FOR SECURITY NEEDS

- Look hard at your theft control systems and how applicable they will be in 20 years.
 - Cameras are getting cheaper and easier to deal with and may have other advantages (think webcasting).
 - (Security is VERY library specific.)
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PLAN FOR CHANGE

- Consider rolling stacks. They are increasing in capacity and allow for infinite space reconfiguration. (As well as easy future flooring replacement.)
 - Consider high density stacks for housing low use collections (or at least plan for it now).
 - Walls don't move easily. Try to open up things as much as possible.
 - Consider limiting "built in" casework if its possible to replace it with furniture.
 - Try to allow a little "extra" mechanical/electrical space to allow ease of future upgrades.
 - If it can be done wirelessly, do it that way.
 - Be wary of upsizing mechanical/electrical/structural systems for potential future growth.
 - Drop in ceilings allow for future incidental wiring.
 - Consider spare room for future circuit breakers.
 - Consider "just in time" ordering of high tech items. (What you specify in March may be obsolete in December.)
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CONSIDER ROLLING STACKS FOR FLEXIBILITY



CONSIDER HIGH DENSITY STACKS FOR HOUSING LOW USE COLLECTIONS (OR AT LEAST PLAN FOR IT NOW)

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- I LOVE technology and gizmos, however, I am certain that New Hampshire libraries will still have “actual books” in 2027. (But not as many.)
 - For the next couple of decades in some ways New Hampshire libraries will be getting the worst of both worlds. They will STILL have house the collection AND they will have make technology available “free to all.” However, these libraries, if done right now, will be at a space advantage as book storage needs diminish.
 - Whereas other states will be imploding by state budget cuts for the foreseeable future, those of you in New Hampshire have gotten VERY good at doing a great deal with relatively little “outside” support.
 - I don’t like the phrase “Community Center” for New Hampshire libraries, because it makes me think of basketball hoops, BUT, New Hampshire libraries have been and will continue to be “Community Centers for Self Advancement” (I’m not real crazy about that either, will someone please come up with a better phrase?)
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