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## Abstract

University library directors are faced with the strategic problem of deciding what their libraries will be like in ten years from now and what will need to have happened within the next five years to make the transition to the future. A shift is beginning to occur with the rapid growth of information technology, electronic access to information, and the scholar's workstation concept. University libraries need to develop new missions and services as retaliatory innovation to these developments and shift from a production mode of service to a facilitator mode. This requires reconceptualizing the role of the university library, the role of the client, and the role of library staff. New staff profiles will be needed, and the task of regrowing staff through staff development will be essential to the successful shaping of the future library.

## 1.0 Introduction

"Life, at its best, is a flowing, changing process in which nothing is fixed." [1]

University library directors are all grappling with the issues of high demand for services, inadequate funding to maintain existing services (let alone to develop new services), increasing pressure to measure performance, and the need to attain quality. All of these issues about the present preoccupy university library directors, while, at the same time, they are faced with strategic issues related to the future of university libraries. The established roles of university libraries are being challenged by the emerging scholar's workstation concept in which the client has the ability to access, from a personal computer via communication networks, information irrespective of its ownership or location. University library directors are trying to forecast what impact this development will have on their libraries' missions and to predict what their libraries will be like five and ten years from now.

Within this context of managerial angst and soul searching, the notion of the university library director regrowing staff may seem to be peripheral to the real business at hand, namely the health and survival of university libraries. My purpose in this paper is to consider the critical need to regrow staff now for the long-term success of university libraries. This means more than developing essential on-the-job staff skills; it requires reconceptualizing the role of the university library and the role of the client, and then regrowing staff who will shape the new direction for the library and the new information behavior of clients.

Regrowing staff includes having the staff develop a clear understanding of the need for the library to become a different organization in an electronic campus information environment. It also

includes having the staff believe in the know-how that they already possess as information professionals and reassess how they will reorient that know-how to respond to changing client needs. Staff must let go of the past ways in which they have applied their skills and develop confidence in their ability to move beyond the comfort zone of the library. While this type of growth is partly the responsibility of the individual as a professional, the fostering of the conditions for this growth requires leadership from the top (i.e., from the university library director).

2.0 Individual Growth and Outcomes

Argyris [2] observed almost thirty years ago that an individual grows and learns at work if he/she identifies with the job, feels self-enhanced through its performance, and sees the attainment of its aims. If these conditions prevail, the individual will be stimulated toward further commitment to the job and to purposeful behavior. An organization must provide opportunities for work in which the individual is able to define his/her immediate goals, relate these goals to the goals of the organization, evaluate his/her own effectiveness, and constantly increase the degree of challenge at work. As a result of this goal-directed behavior, staff will: (1) receive and give feedback on performance; (2) own and permit others to own their ideas, values, and feelings; (3) show openness to new ideas and values; and (4) engage in increased experimentation and risk-taking.

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The need for openness to new ideas and values, experimentation, and risk-taking have never been more crucial in university libraries as they now face an uncertain future and question their missions. The traditional business of a university library has been to identify, acquire, organize, locate, and distribute information and knowledge from external sources that are relevant to its university's mission and goals and that benefit staff and students. Developments such as the Internet make it possible for academic staff (and potentially for students) to access external information from their own scholar's workstations in their offices or homes and to obtain copies of documents using the file transfer and printing capabilities of personal computers. The client is now able to pursue in part what is seen to be the library's mission, namely providing access to external information and knowledge.

3.0 Neutralization of the Library's Mission and Retaliatory Innovation

Network access to external information and knowledge is an innovation that has neutralized the university library's long established role. Bowersox [3] suggests that neutralization of an organization's traditional advantage in the marketplace is a predictable stage in the process of institutional change. While the innovation benefits the client, the organization threatened by the change must overcome its natural tendency to resist change and must retaliate with the next round of innovation. For university libraries this means both a new mission that is generic enough to survive changing modes of information access and delivery as well as new services that ensure the library maintains its value as a central participant in the university's business.

A new mission for university libraries is suggested by Dougherty and Hughes [4] in their account of a series of workshops with library directors and university provosts on their preferred futures for university libraries. They propose a leadership role for university libraries in "creating a campus information environment" for the 21st century. This new mission requires risk-taking, shaping the new services required by universities to support the scholar's workstation environment, becoming fully

integrated into the community of scholars, and pro-actively adopting new and changing responsibilities, rather than seeking direction from others.

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The mission of information for the campus has been developed even more strongly by the Strategic Visions Steering Committee, [5] an independent group of librarians in the United States. By means of a series of open meetings at ALA Conferences and an ongoing computer conference, the group has developed a strategic vision for professional librarians as the basis for librarianship in the 21st century. They propose a leadership role for university libraries and suggest that they develop information policies for their universities, apply information technology, perform information research, collaborate with others on new ways to access information, and educate clients to manage their electronic information.

While each university library will have to develop its own mission for the needs of its parent university and clientele, it is clear that the mission will be influenced by a shift in values that is taking place. There is a shift in values from: (1) collection building in anticipation of needs to collection building to meet identified essential needs, (2) ownership of information to access to information on demand, (3) the library as a physical entity to the library as an information system accessible from the client's multifunctional workstation, (4) the library as the provider of external information to the library as an intermediary facilitating access for the individual to campus information and external information, and (5) large central data bases to distributed databases with mechanisms to make them widely accessible to students and staff. The shift will be made all the more complex by the presence of a transition period that is unlikely to end. University libraries will be servicing both the traditional information gathering behavior of students and academic staff as well as their new needs as they participate in the scholar's workstation environment.

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4.0 Strategic Questions

From my perspective as a University Librarian, the shift is exciting and exhausting to contemplate. What will my university be like in ten years time? What will my library need to be like in five and ten years time in preparation for the university's information needs? How will my library make the transition to the future within current funding levels? Will there really be the end of one era in library service and the start of another, or is it more likely that there will be a continuation of the old side-by-side with an ongoing process of change? What mission will my library suggest that it should pursue within the university? How will my library move into an electronic information environment? What will be the nature of its relationships with other service providers on the campus and with the faculty? How will the library encourage the university to develop an academic plan for new teaching methods in the scholar's workstation environment? What will be the library's input to an information policy for the campus? What will be the library's input to the university's strategic plan for information technology? What library services will be needed to support the scholar's workstation environment? What new services and structures are needed? Will academic staff and students accept the need to reconceptualize their roles as library users?

5.0 Finding the Answers Within Our Staff

The answers to these questions cannot be found in textbooks on librarianship, standards for professional service produced by library associations, library school curricula, published research in librarianship, or the practices of other libraries. The shift is occurring too rapidly and has simply overtaken the profession's capacity to develop appropriate theory and practice. The answers must be found quickly by the staff working in libraries; hence the need to regrow staff.

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University library directors need to regrow two kinds of staff if the library is to stay in charge of its own destiny. They must first regrow the champions among the staff who will cross the existing boundaries and establish the library's new position in the electronic information environment. The champions are those select few who: (1) thrive on uncertainty and ambiguity, (2) take risks without being risk-prone, (3) learn new skills in an unstructured learning environment, (4) perform well in unprescribed roles, (5) demonstrate an unerring commitment to client needs, (6) communicate their ideas convincingly to colleagues and clients, (7) share their knowledge and skills openly with others, (8) and do not seek to be told what the future will be but actively work at making it happen. These are the staff who, by doing, will provide form and substance for the competencies that will be needed for retaliatory innovation, and they will establish the new relationships with others on campus.

The second task is to regrow the rest of the staff to fit the new staff profile that will be required. These are the staff who perceive themselves as the workers; the ordinary people whose value lies in the contribution they make to keeping the library running smoothly. Their role is different from that of the champions, but they are just as important to the future of university libraries. It is their changing role which will need to be well managed for a successful new staff profile to emerge.

6.0 Staff Development and Goal-Directed Behavior

Staff development has existed in libraries for many years. Trends in the literature for the past twenty years include the use of staff development for: (1) improving productivity; (2) motivating staff; (3) managing problem staff; (4) helping libraries adapt to automation; (5) developing a sense of professionalism; (6) addressing equity issues such as improved career paths, multiskilling, and staff participation and consultation in decision making; and (7) renewing organizations.

Strategies for staff development have included training programs (e.g., on-the-job training, in-service courses, and external courses), performance appraisal, staff exchanges, professional involvement (e.g., membership in professional associations, attendance at professional meetings, publication, and professional networks), staff suggestions, management-by- objectives, peer coaching programs, staff participation in the recruitment process, internship, in-house research programs, in- house information sharing sessions between units, mentoring schemes, and participative structures.

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These strategies are all important if they are purposefully set within a human resource management plan and if they help the university library to focus on the individual and on the library, developing the performance of the individual in a way that contributes to the performance of the library. The individual's progress and development in terms of work interests, skills, and knowledge need to be meshed with the library's plans for the individual and the library's development. The desired outcome is goal-directed behavior for both the individual and the library.

The champions require little nurturing other than strategic guidelines to focus their energies, genuine interest shown in their ideas, budget encouragement to support their initiatives, and organizational structures that facilitate their performance.

Unlike the champions, the balance of the staff need reassurance and nurturing. They may feel insecure about change, and they are likely to find the growth process--learning new knowledge, developing new skills, opening themselves to different values, and being part of experimental efforts--to be stressful. They need leadership, a clearly defined role in a work group, structured training, ongoing support from other staff who are knowledgeable and able to contribute to their learning, and feedback on their performance. Given the right conditions, the majority of staff will grow and begin to demand the right to grow even more as they gain self-confidence.

7.0 Changing the Staff Profile

While the decentralized access provided by the scholar's workstation is supplanting the university library's traditional role as the central provider of external information, a central library structure will continue to be needed for campus-wide information needs. University library staff have professional know-how that will be needed in the future. They have know-how in managing information for retrieval, analyzing client needs, identifying relevant information and filtering out irrelevant information, and using the market channels for the supply of information in both print and electronic formats.

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With these sustainable competencies, there is an opportunity for university libraries to create a new mission and provide a range of different services, i.e., an opportunity to engage in retaliatory innovation. To do so, however, university libraries need to move away from a production mode of service to a facilitator mode. The process of selection, acquisition, cataloging, storage, and lending of library-owned collections will continue, but decline in importance in relation to new services that will enable clients to undertake the production process themselves with ease and efficiency in the electronic environment. The library's increasingly important new roles will be to provide clients with advice about electronic information and to help them develop skills in accessing, using, and managing this information. There is no doubt that the staff profile of university libraries will change if the present production-based service declines as print collections are replaced by electronic publishing, delivery, and access. Staffing needs will be directed by the new principles for library service that are beginning to emerge:

1. Emphasize the elimination of irrelevant information, rather than the supply of all relevant information. [6] Librarians must work as a team with academic staff, understanding their actual information needs and the needs of their students and filtering out information that is not pertinent. This requires a move away from the traditional role of building large collections designed to satisfy all possible needs to a role of selectively building core collections directly of benefit to the university. It also involves reorganizing library staff into teams, some with a strongly focused client orientation and others with a quality assurance orientation. The client-oriented teams are needed to integrate, on a day-to-day basis, the library's work with the teaching, learning, and research activities of the faculty and other university units. The quality-assurance-oriented teams maintain internal efficiency and

consistency in systems, policies, procedures, equipment, collections, and facilities to support the work of the client-oriented teams.

2. Provide access to finding tools (e.g., indexes, catalogs, bibliographies, and databases) that identify the existence of information, both primary and secondary sources, pertinent to the university's mission and goals. The emphasis here will be on electronically-mediated access to information irrespective of who owns the information. Tools that allow students and staff to browse other publications, such as Current Contents or copied title pages, together with appropriate finding tools that enable location of relevant information sources must be freely available to all staff and students.

3. All information and related equipment considered to be essential to support the university's teaching, learning, and research missions should be freely accessible to students and staff. Critical information should be owned by the library, regardless of whether it is in print or electronic form.

4. Repackage essential information for mass distribution by the university when access is required by many students at the same time or for distribution at the workplace.

5. Provide on-demand access to secondary sources using document delivery services, including interlibrary loan services. These sources must be made available to students and staff under conditions similar to (or better than) ownership (i.e., fast delivery and no apparent additional charges to the individual).

6. Advise clients and teach them skills in how to identify, select, locate, and manage information as well as to be competent users of information technology. The library staff can contribute to the development of quality graduates by transferring their skills in finding and managing information and encouraging independence in learning.

7. Collaborate with others in the university to create an overall campus information environment.

It is becoming evident that the competencies (i.e., skills, knowledge, and attitudes) that traditionally belong to librarianship will need reorientation to pursue these principles. In a facilitator role, the ability to establish off-counter professional/client relationships becomes more important than ever before and requires a new level of competence in analyzing client needs, making clients aware of electronic and print sources of information, and educating clients in how to gain access to them.

Clients will expect library staff to be knowledgeable about obtaining the best sources of information available via networks to meet their needs, getting started with the technology of the scholar's workstation to retrieve information, transferring files across the networks for manipulation on personal computers, and generating information for electronic publication.

There is also the potential for library staff to transfer their skills in classification, cataloging, and indexing to developing electronic guides to the mass of information available on networks and to

filtering out the "junk." These skills are also needed to advise clients on ways to manage the information on their scholar's workstations to generate, store, and retrieve their own customized files.

While some recruitment may be needed to import staff with technical skills in networking and managing software (or to fill other new positions), for the most part, the staff profile will need to be developed by regrowing the existing staff. This assumes the existence of a staff development plan that parallels the library's strategic plan.

8.0 Conclusion

An important performance indicator for measuring a university's achievement of its educational mission is its success in preparing staff and students to access information and knowledge and to use both for effective problem solving. Changes occurring in the means of access and the amount of information to be accessed are together suggesting the need for new library services to help staff and students. These services will develop effectively if university library directors help their staff (and clients) to reconceptualize their roles and to grow in their jobs.

University library directors themselves must grow in their jobs if they are to provide the organizational environment for the development of their staff. It is the university library directors who must ultimately provide a clear strategic vision for the library's role in the university and the drive to move toward it. They must not be weighed down by the worries of funding constraints or wearied by the magnitude of the task of satisfying both client needs and staff aspirations.

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The pending paradigm shift requires university library directors to move beyond their past "theories-in-use" about the management of libraries and to provide leadership for new organizational learning. Argyris [7] has described "theories-in- use" as the learned perspectives that we hold about the organization that blinker us to the reexamination of our expectations of its performance.

There is a need for university library directors to be attuned to innovation, risk-taking, flexibility, and the abandonment of the obsolete, the superseded, and the unimportant. They must work hard to develop flexible structures that can respond to the transition which lies ahead. Drucker [8] has written recently about the new productivity challenge for knowledge and service workers and the need to build into the job of every employee and work team the opportunity for continuous learning and teaching. This must also apply to the university library director's job, for it is important for staff to feel inspired by seeing the boss at his or her best, flowing and changing too.

References and Notes

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