
[Remarks delivered by Wendy Pradt Lougee, at Elsevier's Digital Libraries Symposium in January 2010]

Well, good afternoon. It's fun to be the warmup act. Interesting topic, I think, and one that we, at University of Minnesota have taken very seriously in thinking about positioning. Positioning, both in the sense of how you find the right niche in which you fit, and where you should fit in the future. But positioning in the sense of also being a marketing question, and how you communicate to others who you are and what you do.

Our institution is in the throes of a kind of a contentious new conflict of interest policy, and I don't know where the draft will go. But if it goes into effect, my next slide will need to explain my relationship with the sponsor for this program. So, just for the record, we buy Elsevier journals, and I'll leave it at that.

I want to cover three things. I want to talk first about what I think is a very different paradigm for where we are. A paradigm in the sense of something that frames the way you think about the world, similar to the Copernicus heliocentric kind of paradigm-shifting move in science. It's that kind of really rethinking the ways in which you approach problems, and resources.

Then I'm going to shift gears into a really fast run-through on three examples from my own institution of explorations. They're studies, really of what is going on in the environment, and how we use those data to inform how we reposition the libraries. Then lastly, I'm going to take one case study of a program we have. So, in each of these three areas, I'm hoping I can give you sort of a generic takeaway, but then some specific examples.

Now, just in case you've forgotten what a paradigm is, it really, is as I referenced earlier with the sort of Copernicus example, this notion of having a conceptual or methodological model for approaching an organization or approaching a suite of tasks or challenges. And, if we've all read Thomas Kuhn, probably back in high school days, he talks about a paradigm shift is evidenced by an array of anomalies, things that don't fit anymore. And it really prompts you to think about a new set of commitments.

So, I want you to keep that in mind, because what I'm going to describe in this early set of slides is all of those anomalies, all those mind-bending changes in our environment that are prompting us to think about different commitments. Now, I'm going to quote another person here, myself. Back at the turn of the century, in thinking about what that new paradigm ought to be, I used the word "diffuse" libraries, which has been interpreted in lots of different ways.

But, what I had in mind back in the '90s, was this push of distributed technologies, kind of letting loose the power and the control over information, coupled with open paradigms. Open, in the sense of collaborating in the online environment. And that prompted libraries to begin to think about how they supported the processes of

scholarship in all its forms -- creation dissemination and use-- and, in effect, becoming a diffuse agent.

Now since 2002, I think we could add another force which is the whole social push of thinking about the ways in which the community contributes to that environment. So, what are those paradigm shifts? I'm going to run through a couple of them that I think are pretty fundamental. In the past, we thought of ourselves as collection-centric. And, now, we might be conveyed as expertise-centric. That's not to say collections aren't important anymore, but we bring so much more to the table in terms of what we know about the environment.

In the past, we were much more publication-focused. And now, I would argue that we are challenged to be process-focused. To think about the process of scholarship and the benchmarks along the way where we can insert ourselves and help the scholar or the student or whomever. Our role in access in the past was very much one of control, as represented here by a good old MARC record. And now I think we're challenged to think about sense-making. That is to say, "How do we take this messy information universe and make sense of it?" Not just for all users, but for particular communities of users.

We thought of service in the past in terms of mediation. There was the user with an information need. There was the collection or the information world, and we helped bring those together. And increasingly, I think we're challenged to play a consulting role. There are areas -- where we have unique expertise that we contribute to the environment and putting consultation services in place -- I think are going to be fundamental to who we are in the future.

Then lastly, we tended to serve a local audience. Obviously, that had some permeable boundaries, but we were very much charged to address a community that supported us. But increasingly, especially if we're talking about serving whole domains, we have to think about a global audience.

There's obviously one thing wrong with this picture [no snow]. There we go [revised photo]. Minnesota, this week.

Now what does that shift look like? I'm going to give you here a local example. In 2002, on the left there you see our Vision and Mission Statement which was very much saying the library is the center of the information world. You come to us. We fulfill your needs. We take that information universe, our collection, and we preserve the record of human thought for the future. Absolutely, nothing wrong with that Vision Statement or Mission Statement. But it doesn't really, fully line up with the way the world has changed.

So, the new one, first of all says, "We're an asset for our campus. We can be used instrumentally." We have areas where we have unique expertise: information literacy, intellectual property, you name it. And that our goal is to provide what we call

“extraordinary information experiences.” We stole that from the Cold Stone Creamery mission statement, which provides extraordinary ice cream experiences, but I think it’s really relevant here. And our mission is carried out not just with content, but also with collaboration and expertise.

Now, here comes the rapid-fire segment of this presentation, where I’m going to run through several studies that I hope will convey some data points that will inform how we should be thinking about positioning libraries. And there’s three that I want to call out.

One is a sequence of studies we did where we tried, through surveys and focus groups, and a number of other mechanisms, to really understand the workflow of scholars. Then secondly, some work that’s underway right now, to understand in our own Web services context, how our services fit into the broader information and tool universe. And then thirdly, some work we’ve undertaken to understand where our community is publishing, how they’re thinking about disseminating their scholarship.

And this particular model has been documented by ARL, so is readily available to anyone. And the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, also known as the Big Ten, plus Chicago, is now following up and conducting this same study across the consortium. So, we’ll have good data from 13 institutions.

In each of these instances though, we’re not trying to assess us, but rather we’re trying to assess the user and how he or she is doing, how effectively they’re operating in those extraordinary information experiences. Or are they information experiences of another kind that could be improved?

So, here we go with the rapid-fire description of them. The first set of studies was trying to understand researcher behavior, so it was focused on graduate students and faculty. You’ve got some URLs there. We surveyed the whole campus, got a lot of good data, and just a quick summary of some of the results. No big surprises here. Our community told us they had a strong appetite for everything digital. They want it to be mobile. They were highly interdisciplinary.

But here is where things got interesting. They were really struggling with how to manage their processes of scholarship. Once they gathered content, they didn’t know what to do with it. They didn’t know how to manage the raw material of scholarship, like data. When it came to interest in interdisciplinary work, they had very different definitions of what that meant. So, the humanist and the social scientists meant, I want to look at somebody else’s literature. The scientist meant, I want to have someone else at the table who brings some expertise I don’t have. My favorite quote was a physicist who said, “Interdisciplinary means working with someone on a different wave length.” And I think that really captures it all.

The last point, too, was that they were struggling in that they had a very strong tradition of methodologies and they weren’t translating into the digital world. So, some real opportunity points for us to help them be more productive.

Now, part of what this study helped us do was to begin to categorize in a very generic way, what we call primitives, some benchmarks in the process of scholarship. So, that we could begin to tease apart what people were trying to do and then respond to those challenges. So, we came up with four primitive behaviors or stages in the scholarly process. And you'll now find these are some similar language in lots and lots of different studies. Carole Palmer did a very nice inventory of some of these research behavior studies.

We took those categories and then we began to line up – this is the scary slide. I'm sorry. If you go to the real report, it's all explained there. But, we lined up in the next part of the concentric circle the other tasks that people were doing. And then we lined up the data points of what they were telling us. So, for example, on the far right there, 73 percent said they could use assistance organizing and storing the materials of scholarship. Or, over on the left, 68 percent saying they really wanted to work collaboratively, but were challenged to do so.

So, it began – it gave us a roadmap, if you will, of the process of scholarship, and where people were having problems. We began to then hypothesize what we could do to respond to those challenges, and this is just a kind of brainstorming list of tools and services we could create. And we began to cherry pick those that had the most likely success in the near term.

The reports give you much more detail about what we actually did, but what I think we can highlight here is that it began to get us to be much more community- and discipline-sensitive in what we developed. And to find ways that we could take our assets and reposition them and repurpose them in different contexts, to allow the user to have a lot more control over what we were presenting them.

So, for example, if you enter the University's portal, based on who you are, individually (where and what category of user, graduate student in philosophy, second year of your program), you get a different view of the library based on who you are. And that allows us to capture data about you, as well, and about your community, so we can then use your data to customize or let the community shape the service over time. So, just a little bit of a teaser about what the data allowed us to do.

The second set of studies is underway right now, so I can't point to all the results. But, was looking at how we understand our changing role in access. And the little graphic there says it all really, what you probably can't read, the fine print. But, the smaller, little bars tell you what percentage of our users come to us from our catalogue or from our federated search. And you can guess what the big bar is. [Google]

So, it's helped us think again about discoverability and not how we create the best access environment, but how we position our assets into other access environments, and to think about repurposing and exposing our data in other places. We also have a group working

on personal information management to address that need that I pointed out earlier and how to integrate very specifically those assets into the curriculum.

The last process is this one of trying to understand where publishing is going or, more accurately, what our community is doing with respect to disseminating their scholarship. And it's the basis of a suite of consultation services. So, we went out to 125 departments. And we have captured data on what norms exist within each discipline, what promotion, and tenure policies are in place. And we learned, for example, that 4 percent of the tenure and promotion policies explicitly accepted alternative venues of publishing, whereas 11 percent explicitly prohibit it. Now, there's a lot in between there that we can address and help figure out where the pressure points might be.

We got data on deposit, how much open access deposit was going on. That 9 percent of the departments had greater than 20 faculty doing open access deposit. Then we captured information about editorial roles. We had almost 600 faculty who had editorial roles, including 33 editors-in-chief and 65 primary officers of scholarly organizations. So, that forms a group that we can call upon in thinking about legislative issues and policy environment.

So, you can see the kinds of issues there, that we're trying to build into these consultation services and workshops, helping on deposit where faculty need that, and also the institutional repository for capturing not only faculty works, but also individual unit works. This is all documented. ARL has put up a nice site with the sort of processes that we used for this kind of assessment work. As I said, the CIC is now emulating it.

Now where does that get us to think about a new paradigm, a new frame of reference? You know, I've given you a lot of data. But what we know about the communities and where they're changing and where they're challenged. And we know something about how the information universe has changed. So, do we think about a new paradigm for libraries?

And I'm going to give you one case study that attempts to build a virtual community for a particular domain and hopes to be a sustainable community. And the characteristics are that we're trying very hard to get in the flow, as Lorcan Dempsey would say of that community; to be very sensitive to the disciplines' norms and also to their workflow and processes; to leverage distributed content that exists; to figure out how to enable them to collaborate and to be productive in that environment; and, also, for us to take a leadership role in adding value to the community.

Just as backdrop here, I hope most of you have seen or hopefully read *Beyond Being There*, an NSF report, about this whole approach of building virtual communities and that it really is the new frontier, of thinking about not just the technology infrastructure, but what you need in terms of organizational models, trust mechanisms and the technology as well. So, that really informs what we're talking about in this project.

The name of the program is EthicShare. And it is funded in three grants now from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It's focused on bioethics to start with, and the goal is really to create a sustainable, multi-institutional, so that global piece, interdisciplinary community.

And there are really four parts to the program. We've started with how do we build the content universe for them? But, not by building a collection, but rather, harvesting citation data through relationships with providers, bringing those citations together. And then, we've developed resolution mechanisms that will allow the user to go from a citation to the correct licensed copy, for their institution, of that particular full-text resource.

In the discovery environment, we've used not only controlled vocabulary provided by Georgetown's Kennedy Institute on Ethics, but we've also allowed the community to begin to tag and to add value in their own way. And to help us sort out what the right faceting should be for displaying the content. We've engaged the community globally.

And we have about 1,000 registered users. It went live last May in its formal debut. We also engaged them in trying to think through what social tools they want. So, there's a lot of tools for working in groups, for commentary, for sharing with one another. And we've also engaged them in governance. So, there is a group of scholars and faculty who are helping on editorial policies, what should be included, what shouldn't, how to refine the iterative searches that bring the, harvest the, citation data and other kinds of policies.

Just a quick screenshot here. But, and this is for the generic users, so you can't sort of see what happens once you become a repeat customer. But, I want to highlight a couple of things -- that every single feature has had a global community of testers. So, helping us understand if it really responds to their workflow.

And we've been working with a computer science faculty member and graduate students, to conduct experiments in the environment, to see what conditions will elicit the most contribution from the scholars and from the graduate students. What will make them want to tag things or to share things or to add news features or to add things about upcoming conferences? So, we're very much trying to get at not just the processes, but what motivates those processes.

I'm going to end now with Kuhn again and his notion that when you have the kind of episode where you see those shifts in professional commitments. I think EthicShare is really a very good example of that, a sort of new age, branch library if you will. That is really when you get to a revolutionary point in your profession and your organization. It's really tradition-shattering, and tradition bounding a new activity.

So, the new paradigm that I've been trying to describe all along here really has a number of characteristics. It is, I think diffuse. And I would define that as deeply integrated into the workflow. It's engaged, that is to say sensitive to the norms and behaviors of a global

community. And lastly, that it's a catalyst. It really does try to enable a community to do something, to advance and to evolve into what its future potential can be.

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