

## Reactions to "The Model Research Library: Planning for the Future"

### A Brief Overview

A concept of the future research library that projected a more central and integral role for the library on campus was presented in the July 1989 issue of *JAL*\*. The article's authors envisioned a future in which there is increasing diversity among research libraries, with a few large research collections at one end of the spectrum and with others focusing on providing electronic access to information. Organizationally, the library was depicted as tripartite, but with a fluid and changing structure comprised of a set of service clusters with coordinative administrative underpinnings. Each component assumes primary responsibility for a segment of the external environment, yet all interact to serve their primary clientele. Control of budget and service mission rests more directly in the service clusters.

The article projected that more of the library's human resources would work in user services collaborating with faculty and students in research and teaching. Future library staff, librarians, and other professionals were characterized as having high levels of communication and interpersonal skills, managerial ability, subject expertise, and knowledge of information technologies, in addition to the

traditional professional knowledge base. They would be proactive in identifying user needs, customizing information "packages" for users, designing and maintaining information access systems, fostering interinstitutional cooperation, and, in all their functions, being assisted by expert systems. As a more user-sensitive information "system," the library's products and services would be highly visible, and hence more readily measurable and accountable.

The boundary conditions that formed the underlying assumptions for development of the vision included the campus itself, faculty, and students; the information industry; governmental influences and policies; technological developments; and trends in scholarship, publishing, and research.

The authors outlined the change agents that would be involved in determining the future of research libraries and the steps that might be taken to ensure that the library is shaped consciously, rather than being buffeted by the winds of change. The change agents identified include first and foremost librarians themselves, working collaboratively with other information professionals, campus scholars and administrators,

publishers, information producers, government officials, and others. The transitional steps that were suggested focus on development and promotion of a future vision for the library, strategic planning, if necessary, at the interinstitutional level, reexamination of current funding algorithms, and numerous collaborative efforts undertaken by those who have a stake in the future of research libraries.

The authors offered their model in order to stimulate discussion and encourage reconceptualization of research libraries in light of forthcoming technological, societal, and economic changes. They did not present their model as definitive, asserting that there will be more, not less, diversity among research libraries in the future. Clarification, delineation of varying models and strategic visions, and identification of transitional problems and solutions are essential to achieve the collaborative and fluid concepts they envisioned. Following are five reactions to the original article.—*Eds.*

\*"The Model Research Library: Planning for the Future," by Anne Woodsworth, Nancy Allen, Irene Hoadley, June Lester, Pat Molholt, Danuta Nitecki, and Lou Wetherbee. *JAL* (July 1989), pp. 132-138.

# Collaboration, Not Competition, with Other Information Providers

by David F. Bishop

**"It is important to recognize that the future the authors have described for the library is one highly sought by other groups within the university. Therefore, aggressive pursuit of a central role in developing information policy should be the responsibility of all librarians."**

The lead article raises a number of important issues, many of which need to be pursued in more detail. Of the issues that were identified, I believe none is more important than the role of the library in the university of the future. The authors predict that "the library will be a more integral part of the teaching, learning, and research processes in the university and, as a result, will lose some of its current insularity." While this prediction is clearly desirable from the librarians' point of view, it cannot be assumed to be a given. (In fact, the authors acknowledge this when, in describing the future, they say that "competing forces within universities will seek control of information policies and funds.")

## One Among Many

In describing the future of university information systems it would be possible to develop a scenario, similar to the one which the authors describe, without the library serving in a central role but rather being one among numerous providers of information. In this altered scenario, the coordination and policy role could be performed by one of a number of agencies including the computing center, the telecommunications office, or, in a more decentralized model, the various schools and colleges.

In the near future, different information delivery patterns will begin to emerge in universities. The role of the library in these early examples will be crucial because general university patterns for dealing with information delivery will likely be based on these early examples. If patterns in bellwether universities occur that do not include the library as a major player, a trend could be established that would result in the expectation or assumption that the role of the library should be limited to one of a secondary or support nature. It is important to recognize that the future the authors have described for the library is one highly sought by other groups within the univer-

sity. Therefore, aggressive pursuit of a central role in developing information policy should be the responsibility of all librarians.

## Significant Differences

To understand the role of the research library in the university of the future, it is useful to examine the past. In spite of some concerns about the lack of involvement by librarians in the university decision-making process, librarians have, by and large, had a fairly important role, particularly when compared with the role of our computing colleagues. While patterns vary from institution to institution, library directors generally have dean or dean-like status. Computing administrators, on the other hand, often have been attached to business affairs or research units and have not had the direct involvement in academic matters that library directors have enjoyed.

There are a number of possible reasons for this difference. It could be because libraries have been a part of universities from the beginning and are seen as an integral part of the academic function. It could be that academic officers have been less comfortable administering computing activities and therefore have found places for them in the organization where there was a greater likelihood of computing expertise. It also could be that there is a fundamental difference between the role of librarians and that of computing and telecommunications staff: librarians not only have a responsibility for providing access capacity to information and services but are also involved in the crucial decisions concerning the identification and selection of the information that is provided.

If, in fact, the significant difference between librarians and other information and computing providers is the involvement with the content of the information, then a crucial question is whether that involvement by librarians will continue in the future. The authors say that "the



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value of a library will not be measured by the size, depth, or breadth of the collections owned but rather by its ability to provide access to information in all formats." I believe this is true, but does it move the library toward the role of a disinterested provider? And if that is the case, does this different role lessen the argument for librarian involvement in developing university information policy?

### Information Czars?

I believe intuitively that a new form of collection management will replace the

present system of materials acquisitions. I also believe that the responsibilities of the librarian for evaluating and selecting remote information sources, and for developing strategies to assist users who must confront the mountains of information that will be available in the future, will be far more important and necessary roles than we can presently imagine.

Clearly, libraries and librarians should be players—and I would argue major players—in the management of information in the university of the future. I

doubt that librarians will become information czars; I believe that the responsibility for managing information in the university will be one that is shared. As librarians we must be prepared to collaborate and cooperate, not compete, with other information providers. Also, we must remember that the role of evaluating, selecting, and providing access to information will be as much a part of the library of the future as it has been of the library of the past.

## The New Prime Directive: User Convenience

by Kathleen M. Heim

I found myself reacting to the proposed "model research library" from three perspectives: (1) as a six-year veteran of university administration at a Carnegie Research I Land Grant/Sea Grant institution with responsibilities that have included managing an academic unit, chairing the campus promotion and tenure criteria committee, and developing university-wide planning documents; (2) as an active scholar in need of interdisciplinary materials both current and retrospective; and (3) as an educator of librarians. Thus, my response is tempered by administrative, scholarly, and educational concerns.

### Mission

The mission of the research library as conceptualized by the seven visionaries does not mention the "~~service~~" component of the university. Although some research universities may not embrace the tripartite "Land-Grant" mandate of research, teaching, and public service, many do. The public service mission should be incorporated into the research library's overall mission statement. While public service may be interpreted in many ways, the most straightforward characterization is that it is the university's responsibility to translate new knowledge into public policies and practices. Increasingly, academic institutions are affirming this concept and making it more robust.

The omission of intended users in the mission statement is also disturbing. Integrating the library and its services

into the research, teaching, and administrative functions of the university is an excellent mission but the end users are certainly important enough to be mentioned. And, as noted above, if the public service mission of the university is also integrated, the real end users are all affected by the development of new knowledge whether within or external to the university-based community.

Finally, using the term "actors" in the mission statement strikes me as sexist (yes, even though only 1.2 percent of all university administrators are women), convoluted (is it all really a drama?), and just plain jargon.

### Programs and Services

Because predicted changes are at the foundation of this visionary paper, some of these changes bear comment. At the outset, however, some realism might be interjected. Many of the predictions could be implemented today if funds were available. Pragmatism dictates that the article should have highlighted fiscal requirements early on. Without some reassurance that the monies available to implement change will be sought aggressively, an air of unreality pervades the model.

**User Services.** Users described seem to be faculty and scholars. Students are implied users—as a result of the library's support of the teaching function—but are not focused upon as users with needs. This is ironic in a period when national policy has affirmed a renewed commit-



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ment to student outcomes.<sup>1</sup> The partnership of librarians working in concert with discipline-based scholars is exactly what these scholars want and need, but the partnership should be extended to students—which is implicit but not strongly stated.

**Collections.** A word must be said about the nature of research and timeliness. Scholars will balk if most material is days away. Strong efforts must be made to ensure same-day access through work stations or the partnership will crumble. Today, when a simple interlibrary loan can still take several weeks, I have my doubts about the ability of libraries to provide this service. A bird in the hand is still worth two in the bush. Provision must be made for speedy retrieval!

**Facilities.** The section on facilities seems to contradict the work-station notion. While issues of ownership versus access should be considered, most scholars would be pleased to have quick and efficient access as the driving principle. Facilities do take a back seat to information, and rightly so in the library of the future.

**Staffing.** The level of demand for paragons who will have political acumen, risk-taking natures, subject expertise, and well-developed interpersonal skills far exceeds the supply. Large academic libraries may attract the largest percentage of students who exhibit these characteristics, but they will need adequate financing and good career-development plans to keep them.<sup>2</sup> If fewer of those staffing libraries will have library and information science credentials, an alternative mechanism for organizational entry should be constructed as the future draws nearer.

**Administration.** Matrix management in research libraries may well provide a model for the rest of the university. With library goals clearer than those of academic units, this aspect of the future of the library should provide a blueprint for overall university governance. Current library administrations should move quickly to flatten hierarchical structures—this may send a message to university administrators who persist in heightening the pyramid.

### Boundary Conditions

**The university.** Students at research institutions may be assumed to have different characteristics than the student body in general. Decentralization and distance learning certainly are growing in

U.S. higher education, but it is at research institutions that we can expect the traditional university model to prevail the longest. Research institutions attract strongly motivated students with their richer support in terms of scholarships, grants, and disciplinary commitment. The most strongly research-oriented faculty and students are less likely to be "low quality," to exhibit an interest in interdisciplinarity, or to adopt corporate attitudes. These characteristics seem to be much more likely at nondoctoral institutions or community colleges. The research library will be working with the one type of university community that will adhere to traditional models longer than any other.

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**The library.** The common characteristics that Woodsworth et al. expect to be exhibited by future research libraries will cause joy and hope among the university community. Even today very few research libraries cope with nonprint media (including statistical data files)—the promise of their incorporation with print resources is the best news I have ever had. The fact that user convenience will drive packaging of information is a concept so unique and unusual to research libraries that it ought to be the slogan for the nineties. Faculties will dance in the streets at this innovation! The libraries that put users first will make national headlines.

**The government.** Increasing involvement in information policy development will definitely move those libraries with administrators astute enough to become involved to the central place within the university and all government. After all, for most states there are no stronger intellectual resources than can be found in the libraries at their research institutions. Library directors should seek to be placed on governmental commissions that will set policy.<sup>3</sup>

**Information industry.** Most campuses at research institutions are now forming technology transfer units, but few of these are working closely with library administrators. To meet the challenges outlined vis-à-vis the information industry, those now directing research libraries should establish interactions with these units.

**Fiscal factors.** As noted above, fiscal problems need to be addressed at the outset if libraries are to gain hegemony in information policy-making within universities. Most of the possibilities outlined in the paper can be implemented if resources could be deployed. Probably more than any other factor, the political acumen of directors will either squelch or activate these ideas.

**Information technology.** Libraries have anticipated network development through human as well as technological advances. At this juncture it is important that research libraries demonstrate their infrastructure to other components of the academic enterprise in order to present working models.

### Turning the Model into Reality: A New Prime Directive

The article lists some initial steps that research libraries can take today to achieve the model. The steps are logical and yet overwhelming. However, no step is impossible. The first step proposed, "Articulate and promote on campus a concept or vision of the library that better defines its unique role as an information provider," is key to all. But accomplishment of this step requires a new prime directive alluded to already: *user convenience*. While some smaller libraries have achieved this, the user is often forgotten within research libraries. Rather than interact with the library staff, faculty have deployed an intermediate army of graduate assistants to protect their delicate sensibilities from the harsh realities of information retrieval. If user convenience (whoever the user might be—faculty, students, government officials) is enhanced and faculty users again seek out library services, the word will spread and all else will fall into place.

Of course, it's obvious (but cannot be said enough) that those within the library must ascribe to the new broadened vision and make it everyone's reality. As with so much else, this takes us back to people, as the framers of the article are well aware. As a librarian educator I concur with the need for partnerships between libraries

and schools of library and information science, as well as with the need to recruit the best and brightest into our profession.<sup>4</sup> In addition, forging information policy and positioning key library personnel in policy-making roles is critical to implementing the library of the future.

The paper is a dense and rich one. It should be used in planning sessions for ARL-member libraries. The writers are so obviously imbued with understanding of technological, sociological, and human factors that it takes two readings to see that their vision of the future really boils

down to user convenience. This simple distillation should make other predictions work. All the technologies, all the positioning, all the resources bring the research library ahead of all other components in the university enterprise in striving to attain the simple directive of empowering those they serve to get on with the development of new knowledge and policies that will improve the world.

### References

<sup>1</sup>NASULGC, Subcommittee on Assessment, "Proposed Statement of Principles on Student

Outcomes Assessment." November 1, 1988.

<sup>2</sup>Kathleen M. Heim and William E. Moen, *Occupational Entry: LISSADA Study* (Chicago: ALA, 1989). See sections on students' aspirations vis-à-vis type of library positions desired.

<sup>3</sup>Kathleen M. Heim, "National Information Policy and a Mandate for Oversight by the Information Profession" *Government Publications Review* 13 (1986): 21-37.

<sup>4</sup>Phyllis J. Hudson, "Recruitment for Academic Librarianship," in *Librarians for the New Millennium*, ed. William E. Moen and Kathleen M. Heim (Chicago: ALA, 1988): 72-82.

## Closing the Gap between Desirability and Achievability

by Duane E. Webster

**"Projecting the present into the future is easier than conceiving a radically transformed future. The success of the authors in designing a challenging, yet achievable future is laudable."**



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**B**uilding images of a preferred future for research libraries is an essential task for library leaders. The creative work of this talented group of librarians contributes to the growing body of literature on visions for the future and extends the boundaries of current thinking about the exciting potential of research libraries. Studies conducted through the ARL Office of Management Services (OMS) both support and contribute to the ideas set forth in this finely crafted vision.

Five years ago, a Leadership Development Program was initiated by the OMS.<sup>1</sup> This program provides a strategic planning process for large research libraries, using an envisioning method to encourage strategic thinking by senior managers in ARL-member libraries. The process consists of four analytical activities conducted as part of a three day planning conference. These activities include:

1. a historical review of factors shaping the library;
2. an assessment of the current environment which identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats;
3. an analysis of alternative futures based on models developed at ARL; and
4. the design of a preferred future research library that incorporates the previous analyses.

To date, ten research libraries have completed the program and each produced a vision of a preferred future.

The analysis of alternative futures uses four models, first prepared for discussion by ARL directors at a membership meeting in 1984.<sup>2</sup> Although these models are much simpler in concept than the CLR-sponsored conference model presented in this symposium, they are, similarly, based on past experience from the field and professional preferences for the future. The ARL models suggest several observations that may serve to build on the work of the CLR conference participants.

### Parallel Systems

First, a radically different future for research libraries is highly unlikely. The vision presented by the authors of the lead article (and as option two in the OMS Leadership Development Program) suggests an evolutionary change process in the foreseeable future, in which research libraries must operate parallel systems of traditional access to information in print media and new electronic access to information in a variety of nontraditional formats.

Second, most library leaders think this vision of parallel systems faces extraordinary obstacles to success in integrating the library into the research and instructional processes of the future university. This parallel systems model is very difficult to achieve and may even contain the seeds of its own destruction, e.g.,

- Inadequate funding for the investment needed to make either system work well;

- overextension and burnout of staff who try to compensate for inadequate funding;
- reliance on both local user constituencies and parent institutions that are slow to change and have difficulty seeing beyond immediate concerns; and
- the profiteering nature of the publishing industry which operates with a conflicting set of values that ultimately serves to undermine the service philosophies set forth in the models.

The leadership challenge in making this model succeed is described in the recent *Library Journal* article by Anne Woodsworth.<sup>3</sup>

### Probability vs. Desirability

Third, there is a gap between what library leaders believe is likely to happen in the future and what is desirable. Typically identified as the most desirable future is a scenario that includes

- flexible organizations facilitating staff growth and increased contribution to the university missions;
- rich and diverse local collections with integrated traditional and nontraditional resources;

- efficient access to the world's recorded knowledge including ready retrieval of items needed locally; and
- active collaboration between an increasingly sophisticated user population and a library profession committed to the highest levels of personal service.

This desirable future is based on a dynamic service model tailored to the needs of specific disciplines. The desirable future, however, seems to differ from the likely future. Current operating problems such as deteriorating facilities, skyrocketing costs of information resources, the proliferation of information and information formats, expensive technology which is quickly obsolete, underpaid and overcommitted staff, low success rates in providing quick access to needed materials, the enbrittlement of significant portions of the collections, and concern with public service capabilities are capturing the attention of most leaders. Reacting to the problems of the moment has limited our ability to shape a more desirable future.

A final observation is that thinking imaginatively about the future of research

libraries is hard work. Projecting the present into the future is easier than conceiving a radically transformed future. The success of the authors in designing a challenging, yet achievable future is laudable. As more people become involved in thinking about the implications of this model, a wider spectrum of additional alternative futures will emerge. The success of the research library profession in preparing for an uncertain future relies upon the active involvement of more librarians in finding creative ways to merge the likely and the desirable future of scholarly exchange.

### References

- <sup>1</sup>"Academic Library Program: Leadership Development Program," in *Office of Management Studies Annual Report 1986* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1986), p. 7.
- <sup>2</sup>Duane E. Webster, "Organizational Futures: Staffing Research Libraries in the 1990s," in *Minutes of the 105th Meeting* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1985).
- <sup>3</sup>Anne Woodsworth, "Getting Off the Library Merry-Go-Round," *Library Journal* (May 1, 1989): 35-38.

## The Ideal Research Library: Planning for the Future

by D. Kaye Gapen



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I am happy to see the development of this scenario, which I believe very much to be on target. Based upon our experiences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison I can respond to the authors on three levels. First, my primary focus for looking at the prime cause of changing university library missions is "Use," which is somewhat addressed in the article, but could be more clearly stated in order to deal with the results of addressing that issue. Second, experiences at Madison permit me to elaborate on some of the points made in the paper. Third, I believe there are some key elements related to the impact of technology on scholarly communication, with concomitant effects on libraries, which the authors have left out.

### Focusing on Use

Librarians have always had difficulty determining, in any methodologically

sound manner, how our collections and services are used. We have similar difficulties in determining whether or not our program designs are responsive to real needs. In recent years, we have sensed that the use of collections and services is changing—e.g., we can describe the interdisciplinary use of libraries fairly adequately, as well as the changing patterns of scholarly communication—but the university community in general is not yet able to determine how the use of technologies is changing us as people and as members of the academic community.

The reasons, then, for looking at organizational, fiscal, administrative, and other structures is to try and focus our resources within the context of complex and, as yet, unpredictable changing user patterns. If we are to be sensitive to these changing patterns of use and of personality, we must have an organizational struc-



ture which focuses on use. Within this context, then, I can agree completely with the authors when they state "In order to respond quickly to changing user needs, budget control, decision making, and accountability will reside at the level of the service cluster." I do not believe that this focus can be stressed too highly today.

There are a few other implications of this focus which the paper does not address. The past history of functionally based organizational structures resulted in very few interconnections made in cataloging, reference services, and acquisitions. This split cannot continue if we are to make strides in being effective in responding to and guiding user patterns and needs. Functions must come together in our organizational structures—particularly at the discipline-based cluster level where all of the major functional decision makers can be represented and work together. This leads, inevitably, to functional cross-over with individual librarians maintaining primary specialities, but moving as well into actions which are part of other functions.

### Elaborating Some Points

In terms of elaboration, I would add comments in the following areas.

1. "Collaboration" is the key word, but not only with faculty members. Collaboration must start with university staff members who help faculty develop courseware, then with university staff members charged with maintaining the campus computer and telecommunications infrastructure, and then with faculty members. Only through this collaboration will we be able to provide faculty members the infrastructure they need. We can already see possible contention among these

various staffing components for authority and administration of information technologies. This contention can only be divisive, and librarians can help to resolve it if we accept and exercise our responsibility for leadership in information management, for providing the platform for increasing information literacy, and for acting with those responsible for the channels of communication on the campus.

2. We will have a closer tie to instruction than we have had in the past and we need to add the facility to develop courseware to our skills. We should also gain familiarity with the results of research in the cognitive sciences.
3. There are major implications in the library of the future for responsibility shifts upward and downward; we need to be exploring actively the potentials and pitfalls of these shifts.
4. We will be greatly challenged to incorporate other professionals into the library in this information age—challenged to accept them equally as colleagues and challenged to construct a fair and equitable set of criteria for promotion, tenure, and merit evaluation.
5. The importance of retraining, staff development, and attitudinal adjustments cannot be understated. Not only do we need new knowledge and skills, but the attitudes and philosophies which have become mythic in importance to the profession must be reexamined and refined. We are being asked to be leaders in a continuing context of restrained resources. We cannot hold onto old beliefs unless they are workable within this new context. We cannot provide the leadership needed, nor can we generalize our

present skills to new situations until we have reexamined our past in order to build the base of new beliefs for the future.

### What the Authors Didn't Say

Finally, the authors have not addressed at all the increased importance of bibliographic instruction and library education as we attempt to deal with the increasing complexities of information and collection resources. Information literacy and the ability to think critically are as important as all of the other literacies. We must expand our notion of library education and bibliographic instruction if we are to meet the needs of students on our campuses. We must expand our notion of library education and bibliographic instruction if we are to enable the majority of faculty members to supply their own information resources. This allows the library to focus our staff resources on the 20 percent or so of faculty who need expert assistance in meeting their information needs.

Thus, we are faced with a whole series of short-term decisions which have long-term ramifications. To make the best long-term decisions today we have to be willing to avoid doing some things (which seem to be of utmost importance now) so that we can build some of the capabilities which are absolutely necessary tomorrow. This is where we know, first and foremost, that our attitudes need to be reexamined and our ability to take risks strengthened. Finally, leadership under these circumstances means that we will be providing capabilities—for the campus community and the state—which are often not yet recognized as necessary. The authors could have been even more emphatic in exhorting us to fulfill this leadership function.



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## Encouraging the Dreamers

by Gene T. Sherron

You know you are getting old when you have no more dreams, only memories.<sup>1</sup>  
—Walter Fauntroy

If for no other reason than to encourage dreamers and dreaming, the article on the research library of the 21st century should be read, debated, and refined. To begin the debate, we might ask ourselves,

"What brings about change in the structure of a library?" The symposium claims that the model was derived "after consideration of future boundary conditions and premises about the university, the information industry, technological developments, and governmental priorities." The authors imply that these are the principal components that will affect the out-

come of this new library concept. All of these factors are "institutions."

### A Missing Factor

May I suggest that the component list is missing the major player? What about *people*? "Change agents" have always been people, not institutions. Toward the end of the article, it is implied that the library director might just have to become that change agent and evangelize the staff, the administration, and the campus at large in promotion of this dream.

But, why would the campus buy into something like this? Quite often, our stodgy "medieval" universities change only when economics or interuniversity competition are at issue. What might give economic cause to change the way university research libraries do business? Perhaps a major technological breakthrough that would transform us from a print to an electronic medium. But, you say, "We already have this technology!" Not really. We have the technology to store information in electronic form, yet we are a long way from the kinds of "standardization of information products and technology" wished for in the article. Are we even close?

### Using Today's Technology

The symposium participants noted that, due to the nature of the publishing industry, the "best seller" products and technologies would end up in the private sector, and the libraries would be left with the esoteric, unusual, and rare information. It might be true that a small portion of the holdings of a research library will fall into the latter category, but the publishing industry will have to continue to deliver its products to the library sector and, one of these days, it will be in electronic form. The media could be CD-ROM, optical disk, or film/video, but the critical aspect is that it will be stored and

accessed using computer technology. As alluded to above, we have that technology today; but it isn't standardized or generally available. When it becomes commonplace to order items from a publisher on a laser disk or to simply download items directly from the publisher's computer to ours, the model research library will become a reality.

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**"... although the technology currently exists that will allow us to do the nifty things that underpin the mechanics of tomorrow's library, it is our conservative nature to only use what works now."**

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Now when might we expect this? To answer that question, let's pose several others. What is your mental picture of the research library of the 1960s? Is it profoundly different than today's? Will the next 30 years bring more changes? Since the rate of current technological change is usually described as an exponential curve, we may experience an acceleration in the rate of change in the decades to come.

Yet when it comes to making changes in our universities, I believe that the technology we will use tomorrow is the technology we know works today. That is because, although the technology currently exists that will allow us to do the nifty things that underpin the mechanics of tomorrow's library, it is our conservative nature to only use what works now. This brings us full circle back to the people part of the model. All too often, we catch ourselves dreaming of the wonderful changes that technology offers only to be awakened by the reality that we can

proceed no faster than individuals can assimilate and integrate the changes made possible by this new technology.

### Institutional Mentality

How about one more inhibitor to change? We have chosen to operate in that wonderfully free-thinking, innovative, cutting-edge part of our society that is called "academia." But at the administration's decision-making level, we know that the institutional mentality operates to the right of conservative and at the speed of a turtle. At the operating level (e.g., in the library) we find ourselves wanting to apply new concepts and technology only to be faced with an inflexible administration that tends not to reward us on the basis of trying "new ideas," and confirms that mentality through constrained budgets.

So, we are obliged to take off our rose-colored glasses and ask whether or not this model research library will be the norm on campuses in the year 2020. The vision expressed in this paper is not "pie in the sky"; the technology is here today to support it. Neither the publishing industry nor the universities have fully embraced a significant change in the ways libraries could do business, but the pace and acceptance of change has been picking up in the latter part of this century to the point of making me feel optimistic.

In the meantime, I accept the challenge of the writers of this article to "promote, experiment, articulate, foster, and broadcast a vision of the future." Failing to do so, we will know that we are getting old, for we will have stopped dreaming.

### References

<sup>1</sup>Walter E. Fauntroy, "Maximizing Human Potential," a speech given at Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, January 13, 1989.

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