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The Desk Set 50 Years Later

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Medical Library



Library as Place

What will become of the library as place if patrons can access all services and materials online? To attract people to the physical building of the library, many libraries have made physical changes to the building. They have cafes and allow food, drink, and cell phone usage in the library. Libraries continue to be places that provide a bridge to the digital divide, making computers, software, and internet access available to a public that cannot afford to buy their own. And instead of the librarian waiting for patrons to come to the library, many academic and special libraries have instituted liaison programs that involve librarians leaving the library to bring services to patrons in their environments.

Owning VS Licensing

While there is a lot of good information available online for free, it isn't all free. Librarians have to juggle their small budgets to determine what is most necessary to buy and what isn't. In the days of all print, once the library purchased an item, it belonged to the library forever. For online materials the library is paying for a license to access the material, not ownership, meaning the library could lose access if they do not continue to pay for the license. And a new practice by journal publishers is to bundle journal titles into large costly packages forcing libraries to pay for journals their patrons do not need in order to get the ones they do.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 has been characterized as a socially constructed information environment. That environment is especially welcoming to those whose mobility is limited by disabilities as well as those who suffer from chronic illness. The most popular communities in MySpace relate to chronic illness. (Seeman)

Copyright

Librarians now must have a good understanding of the intricacies of copyright law for e-reserves, transfer of information, blogs, digitization projects, and to help patrons negotiate acceptable use of various materials in education and publication. To gain this knowledge, most librarians attend workshops outside of work and expand on what is learned with self study because most library school curriculums do not require a class on copyright or even offer one. A new alternative to copyright restrictions has been created with Creative Commons. It is the co-op of copyright and was developed to allow artists the ability to keep copyright while making their works accessible and searchable online and allowing some uses as defined by an applied license.

Future

Bigger Questions
Studies show that while librarians receive fewer questions, questions are more complex and take more time to research and answer. (Shipman) The proliferation of digitally accessible information reveals that society's knowledge as a whole is expanding, leaving us time to develop more complicated questions.

Web as Searchable Catalog
The Indexing Initiative by the National Library of Medicine may provide a way to capture the rapidly increasing amount of authoritative information online into searchable ontological frameworks.

Mashups
Information is produced in disparate media. WikiProteins culls from disparate sources that all speak to a specific gene into one viewable place – lending a new perspective and allowing for the next question to be asked and the next scientific discovery to be made.

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