Kentucky Fried Libraries: Battered and Chewed Up in the Digital Marketplace

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Committee on Institutional Cooperation
A-maizing libraries
Marylanders get busy
And beautiful libraries
So the provost sent money

And the vendors swarmed around the libraries

And the farmers came to read and learn.
Size Matters Used to Matter

Omnis Sed Pessimus Litteraturae
Splendid Isolation

Meteora, Greece
A shrine to knowledge

Isolated
Protected
Orthodox
Monopolistic
Expensive
Sacred
Autonomous
Back in Black...and doing the lord’s work
“You see, this phone system consists of a multibillion-dollar matrix of space age technology that is so sophisticated even we can't handle it. But that's your problem, isn't it? So, the next time you complain about your phone service, why don't you try using two Dixie cups with a string? We don't care. We don't have to. We're the Phone Company”
Disintermediation hurts

- Amazon
- Google
- Google Scholar
- HathiTrust
- JSTOR
  - Early Journal Content
  - Register and Read
- YouTube
- Wikipedia
- DeepDyve
- Blogs
- Twitter
- Facebook
- arXiv
- P2P Filesharing
- Vouchers
Are libraries toast?

Probably not...

...but they are feeling the **HEAT**
Perverse Incentives

- Collection size
- Unique items
- Perfect metadata
- Bigger buildings
- Current subscriptions
- Local systems
- More staff
- Bigger budgets

Who benefits from bigger library budgets?

Libraries don’t need more money…

THEY NEED MORE USER UPTAKE AND GREATER USER ENGAGEMENT
Out of the Red

Costs

Benefits

Failure

Success

Years

Millions of Dollars
Follow the money

UMD Expenditures: 1992-2012

Expenditures

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Staff</th>
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<td>2012</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Iowa and UW Expenditures: 2000-2012

IOWA

- Total
- Materials
- Salaries

WISCONSIN

- Total
- Salaries
- Materials
UMD Initial Circulations: 2000-2013

Initial Circulations

Thousands


Check it out!
What provosts want

Crank up the benefits
Clamp down on costs

- Eliminate operational inefficiencies
- Reduce back-office expenditures
- Divest of low-value standards and services
- Seek out “at scale” opportunities to manage operational functions
Build partnerships

Shed operational costs through investments in shared infrastructure

Eliminate redundancy

Scale up and out

Shift cost at every opportunity from low-value, back-office activity to customer-facing activities

Imitate, assimilate, and aggregate
Google Digitization
Documents Digitization
HathiTrust
Licensing
Large-Scale Acquisitions
Shared Print Repository
Resource Sharing
Scholarly Communication

More generally:
• Return savings
• Leverage unique resources
• Seed innovation
• Amplify CIC voices
Kentucky Fried Libraries

Independence and autonomy are not our friends

Differentiation—in most areas—is not our friend

Hatching new models for library management

Franchises
Chains
Mergers and acquisitions
Buyer’s coops
Partnerships
Wholly owned subsidiaries
An “At-Scale” Library Vision

- Shifting gears—and resources—to more centralized work groups
- Think of ourselves as part of a national infrastructure for managing scholarly resources
- Replace local practice with integrated standards

Cataloging?  Publishing?
Preservation?  Information Technology?
Archiving?  Digitization?
Selection?  Licensing?
A One-Two knockout punch

POW! Team up to cut costs

BAM! Differentiate in delivering services
Libraries are for users

Turn non-users into users

Turn users into super users

Every staff member is about getting users to act and act NOW!

Get out of the scriptorium…

Go and save souls
Where are we going?

- Libraries
- Books
- Reading
- Research
- Information Literacy
- GET SMARTER
- GET A’S
- GET PUBLISHED
- GET TENURE
- EARN ACADEMIC RESPECT
- MANAGE PERSONAL FINANCES

Market to the insecurities of your customers
“I’m here on a mission of mercy”

Libraries manage campus outreach with all the sophistication of a Girl Scout cookie drive.
Brushing Out the Blemishes

Make the Library the cosmetics counter of the campus

Prime space
Expert staff
High touch services
High Touch, High Value Services

• Publishing agent
• Dissertation counseling
• Tenure mentoring
• Academic Success Center
• Test preparation
• Job counseling
• Instructional technology support
• Presentation consulting
• Data management/analysis
• Grant seeking/management
• Financial literacy
- National brands
- Low margins
- Self-service
- Brands carried convey value to the store

- Specialty brands
- High margins
- Service oriented
- Store brand conveys value to the store
Libraries need to compete for users.

Libraries are great and useful institutions, but they are only “useful” to the extent that they are ACTUALLY USED.

Go forth and create USERS!
Everyone lives by selling something

Embrace the role—make yourselves irresistible to users

Team up with your suppliers

Measure and celebrate successes

Fix the failures

Our products are content and services. Our goal is help our customers succeed.
Cleaning House—some needed fixes

• Define a customer-centric mission: e.g., ensure that campus constituents achieve their academic aspirations

• Set measurable goals: e.g., increase use of pre-1996 STEM journal backfiles by 5%

• Convert librarians from buyers to sellers

• Redirect dollars from acquiring stuff to acquiring customers

• Revisit librarian skills, management, incentives and accountability in the context of customer satisfaction
That Championship Season

The secret to winning librarianship:

Score points with users

Guard against unnecessary costs
Your turn... finally!
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