

WHEN IS A LIBRARY NO LONGER A LIBRARY? THE FUTURE OF ALL-DIGITAL ACADEMIC LIBRARIES.

VIRTUAL DISCUSSION (WEBEX)

MARCH 1, 2018, 2-3PM EASTERN / 1-2PM CENTRAL

KATE BERNARD (FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY) & COREY SEEMAN (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN)

ACRL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES SECTION (ULS)

FUTURE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES VIRTUAL DISCUSSION FORUM

[HTTP://ACRL.LIBGUIDES.COM/ULS/DGS/PROGRAMS](http://acrl.libguides.com/uls/dgs/programs)

WHEN IS A LIBRARY NO LONGER A LIBRARY? THE FUTURE OF ALL-DIGITAL ACADEMIC LIBRARIES.

PASSING FROM 'TRADITIONAL' TO MODERN

COREY SEEMAN - UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

FUTURE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES VIRTUAL DISCUSSION FORUM

ACRL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES SECTION (ULS) - MARCH 1, 2018

[HTTP://TINYURL.COM/CSEEMAN2018ULS](http://tinyurl.com/cseeman2018uls)

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INTRODUCTION

- Director, Kresge Library Services (independent library at Michigan reporting to the Ross School of Business) since October 2006
- Previously served as an archivist, library software trainer, cataloger, and academic administrator over technical services and collections (a lot of “back office” responsibilities).
- **Guided Kresge Library through a transformation from a traditional library to a bookless and mostly “space-less” ethereal library (2013-2016)**
- Spent 3 weeks and 1 day working in the JC Penney Manager Training Program....
- In my “other life”, I am passionate about cooking, writing (trying fiction and creative non-fiction), and photography – especially squirrels
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/cseeman/>



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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

- Let’s think about your current library...
 - And take away your print volumes
 - Now, take away your book stacks
 - Finally, lets move student space out of a library
- What do you have left?
- These are the elements that are most associated with libraries – its our identity!
- *These questions are critical as you envision a second act for your library in the post print age*



Empty Shelves at Kresge Library After the Books Left

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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

- As we think about libraries today – we are envisioning places that students can relax and work.
- Comfortable places where people want to visit.



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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

- "Business has always been subject to uncertainties and change. It is affected by the elements, by wars, by mass movements, by changes in the wants and desires of consumers and by government regulation. Above all, competition tends continually to modify the business structure. New methods, new products and new processes introduce new elements that undermine the supremacy of one industry or firm or even a whole system of doing business. And the trend toward increasing regulation of business by governmental bodies here and abroad must not be ignored. **In short, one generalization that truly applies to all business is: Change is continuous and inevitable.**" (bold added)
 - Quote is from: Coman, Edwin T. Sources of Business Information. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1949.
 - However, we have been subjected to change for years and years...and will be subjected to change for years hence

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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

- Librarians are fantastic about envisioning change when **they** are leading the way
- We have done a good job of embracing the new electronic environment in a hybrid fashion with traditional print volumes and physical media
- Change in libraries will more likely be a change that is thrust upon us
 - Are we ready to manage through real change?
 - Are we ready to give up services and resources our space will no longer accommodate?
 - Are we ready to embrace the change being asked – or demanded of us?
 - Do our campus administrators see the same needs and values in having a traditional library that we have in the profession?



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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

- Summer 2013 – Scope of plans shared
- September 2013 – Gift announced
- Early 2014 – Plans developed
- End of Winter Term – Started vacating the building
- June 2014 – Moved to MOtown
- July 2014 – Print moved out
- Fall 2014 – Rebuilding Kresge Library Services
- Winter 2015 – Kresge Value Proposition Meetings Started
- Summer/Fall 2016 – Completion and move in to the new space
- December 2017 – Addition of new Ref Desk



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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

- “A completely re-thought Kresge Library Services, transitions from a collection of physical reference materials to a full suite of information resources and research services, guided by expert staff.” – Ross Dividend, Fall 2016 (Ross Alumni Magazine)
- The library did not close, but become **virtually unrecognizable**
- Library suite features no door – its open the hours of the building giving students more access to this space without needing to staff it



The NEW Kresge Library Services at the University of Michigan

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CHANGING TO A “MODERN LIBRARY”

• A Physical Space

- Study
- Print Materials
- Interaction Spaces
- Walk-in Access
- Some of these services may be easily done by others



The OLD Kresge Library

• An Ethereal Space

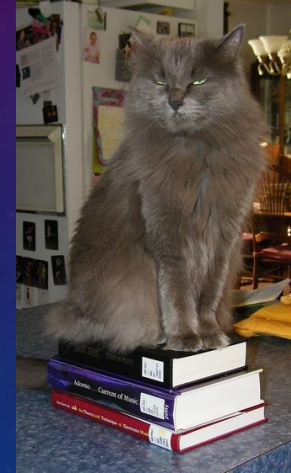
- This is where we **connect** with our community.
- This is where we **provide clarity** to a complicated information universe.
- This is where we **contribute** as a “Value-Add.”
- This is where we do ‘library’ work.
- This work cannot be done as well by others.
- This work is not-space dependent.

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BIG QUESTIONS FOR LIBRARIES TRANSITIONING TO AN ALL-DIGITAL FOCUS

- **Identify the opportunities and challenges facing all-digital academic libraries.**
 - When you lose your print collection – you lose tasks associated with managing that collection.
 - Are there new opportunities to provide services with the staff who no longer run circ or shelving?
 - At Kresge, we created an Exam and Assignment return and review program – something we could not do if we still managed a print collection.
 - No library has everything they need – without physical objects – the resources you are missing will go up.
 - Not all subjects lend themselves well to digital-only approach.

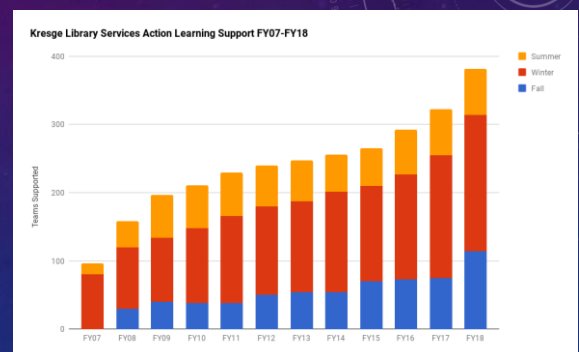


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BIG QUESTIONS FOR LIBRARIES TRANSITIONING TO AN ALL-DIGITAL FOCUS

- **Examine how an all-digital environment requires a rethinking about how academic libraries contribute to a campus.**
 - Your future may be hitched to 'service.'
 - We have seen an increase in our support of action-learning or experiential learning programs.
 - This is not work that can be done by others – so that is good!



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BIG QUESTIONS FOR LIBRARIES TRANSITIONING TO AN ALL-DIGITAL FOCUS

- **Discuss what opportunities might be available for other libraries who are encountering these kinds of changes in their environments.**
 - Every academic institution is unique – though with similar attributes.
 - You need to balance between the needs of the faculty and students (if they do not rely on the same items).
 - Rather than see what we did at Kresge or what Kate did at Florida Polytechnic – see what services and opportunities might exist on your campus.



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BIG QUESTIONS FOR LIBRARIES TRANSITIONING TO AN ALL-DIGITAL FOCUS

- **Develop strategies for supporting library staff through periods of rapid change.**
 - “Change is continuous and inevitable”
 - Administrators have to support the staff first and foremost
 - We need to be empathetic to both our staff and our patrons through these changes
 - Share information as fast as you can – even if it is incomplete
 - ‘Do not get married to the results’
 - Support risk taking in solution crafting



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BIG QUESTIONS FOR LIBRARIES TRANSITIONING TO AN ALL-DIGITAL FOCUS

- At Kresge, the “Ethereal Library’s” value proposition is:
 - Live within the restrictions of virtually no collection space.
 - Figure out new collaboration mechanisms to serve our community.
 - **Focus on what we can do vs. what we have done.**
 - **Forget the dead, take care of the living!**



Squirrel at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

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THANK YOU

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Slides: tinyurl.com/CSEEMAN2018ULS

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<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~cseeman/>

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<https://www.bus.umich.edu/kresgelibrary/>



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