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**The Ethereal Library:
Thinking Creatively
When You Have
No Space To Think**



Southeastern Michigan League of Libraries Fall Meeting
November 21, 2014 – Madonna University
Corey Seeman – Kresge Library Services
(University of Michigan)

Overview

- Two Spaces of the Library
- About Kresge and Ross Construction
- Planning and Rebuilding
- Parameters of the Ethereal Library (6P Approach)
- The Big Changes
- Providing Value With New Constraints
- Closing Thoughts & Questions

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The Two Spaces of the Library

- In Library as Space Program in 2013 (Michigan Library Association) – I shared the notion that the Library had two spaces:
 - ~ A physical space
 - ~ An ethereal space
- They provide distinct functions and benefits to the communities we serve.
- Both can be critical for the members of the library's communities.

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Physical Space

- Physical space is used for:
 - ~ Study
 - ~ Print Materials
 - ~ Interaction Spaces
 - ~ Walk-in Access
- For many functions - a physical space can be managed just as well by others.
- Print collections might be 2% of the usage – but 50% of the perception of the library

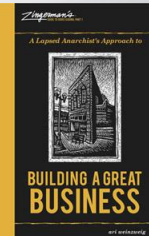


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Ethereal Space

- 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 SHINE!



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Ethereal Space

- With nearly 98% of our usage from electronic resources* – librarians and library staff can operate from *almost* anywhere
- As Gershwin said well – with ethereal space – “*They Can't Take That Away from Me*”

* *The Business Library Experience*



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If You Could Have Only One Space?

- Would you elect to save your physical or ethereal space?
- What if the decision was made for you?
- Space is a luxury on academic campuses – and with that – we lost ours.
- Some engagement, but no open discussion with the community.
- With a large construction project, we lost both student and collection space...

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Kresge Business Administration Library

- Built in mid 1980s to serve the research and curricular needs of the Ross School of Business
- We are open 108 hours during the Fall and Winter Terms.
- Seating for nearly 700 students.
- Very visible, located in the center of the Ross Complex (27K square feet).
- We have a collection of over 140,000 volumes in Ann Arbor and Flint (where they are stored at the University of Michigan-Flint)
- Constant state of “Library Erosion”

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Ross Construction Project

- 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 MObown
- July 2014 – Print moved out
- Fall 2014 – Rebuilding Kresge Library Services

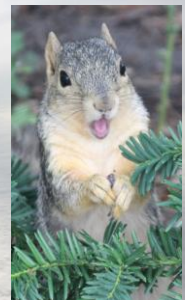


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Losing Your Physical Space

- You have to come to grips with what this means
- We are not a student destination any longer for study
- We cannot be format agnostic in collecting
- You cannot dwell on the past – you have to...well...



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Establishing Priorities

- Corey's planning priorities:
 1. Staff
 2. Services
 3. Stuff (*and spend*)
 4. Space
- Build services based on what you *have*, not what you *had*.
- We had no choice but to build an Ethereal Library!



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...And Building for the New

- Parameters of the Ethereal Library (6P Approach)
 - Philosophical
 - Patient
 - Positive
 - Proactive
 - Perform
 - Ms. Pirkola's Rules

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6P Approach: Philosophical

- This is an opportunity to also be freed from what worked and did not work from the past.
- With less space – do not try to recapture everything you did – it will not work.
- Don't be bound by the past – “Forget the Alamo” – Lone Star (John Sayles – 1996)
- Systems Lesson - Seeman, C. (2002). *Invisible fences: A shocking theory for re-examining work flow. Computers in Libraries*, 22(7), 24-30.

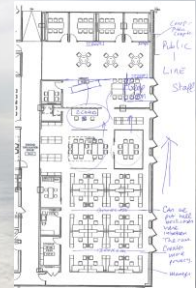


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6P Approach: Philosophical

- This is the time to think about what our value is and how to continue with the new constraints.
- Brain-storming about creating service points – real and virtual.
- Failure is an option – it allows us to be entrepreneurial and try things out.
- Allows us to change the vision for the new staff space.
- Build as you go!



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6P Approach: Patient

- Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' Five Stages
 - ~ Denial
 - ~ Anger
 - ~ Bargaining
 - ~ Depression
 - ~ Acceptance
- Everyone is moving through this at their own pace – Important for this level of change.
- Every time someone says “Change is Hard” – it becomes harder...



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6P Approach: Patient

- Don't expect to have everything mapped out on day 1, or day 100 for that matter!
- Things cannot change overnight.
- A “born digital” library is *much easier* to build than a “becoming digital” library.



Quick Change at Toledo Mud Hens – September 2009

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6P Approach: Positive

- It is very easy to be mired in self-doubt with this type of contraction.
- The image of loss cannot be your brand or how you are seen.
- Important to not dwell on decisions that do not benefit you in these projects.



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6P Approach: Positive

- There are also some actual positives about not having a public space.
- No longer have to worry about evenings and weekends in bad Michigan weather...

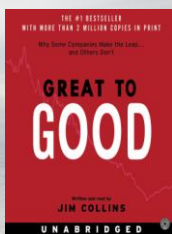


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6P Approach: Positive

- Positive approach to a situation is about making the best of it – *this takes a while to get to.*
- How can we continue to meet the needs of the school and the number of communities we serve?
- Our work is reflective of us more than our situation.
- Despite everything - rather be happy than angry.



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6P Approach: Proactive

- The biggest issue is that we will be out of sight.
- We need to be more proactive about doing outreach and connecting with faculty and students.
- We use all virtual reference systems (chat & email) – need to push them more.
- ***Being visible is our biggest need right now.***



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6P Approach: Proactive

- I have been a strong proponent of the Reference Desk – even as many libraries are moving away from that.
- We experimented with a reference service point at Tozzi Center, but it was not ideal.
- We were given the front desk in the Ross Modular Offices – flipped it from Welcome Desk to Reference Desk.
- Having visible staff is important – but they need a good place to work from!



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6P Approach: Proactive

- Print Coursepack (TEXTPAK) pickup at “Kresge Library Annex” – Legal Research 102 (short walk).
- We are using this time to fundamentally change how we operate.



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6P Approach: Perform

- In this change, there was never an issue about Kresge Library as a service point.
- That was what *kept us going.*
- That has to be what *keeps us going.*



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6P Approach: Perform

- Kresge Library has been the Service ‘champs’ at Ross.
- Great source of internal pride and motivation.
- This is the reason why our work (and staff) are separated out from the space.

	2010	2011	2012	2013
BBA Kresge	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.2*
BBA Other Services	5.68	5.68	5.66	5.77
MBA Kresge	6.2	6.4	6.3	6.4
MBA Other Services	5.12	5.44	5.48	5.55

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6P Approach: Perform

- Since we have lost our space – it is all about service.
- We need to be creative in how we deliver services to our community.
- Pay close attention to what they need.
- Experiment and change are critical elements.



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6P Approach: Ms. Pirkola's Rules

- Flexibility!
- It has to work in all directions.
- We also need to be flexible with staff as they learn to work with these new confines.



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6P Approach: Ms. Pirkola's Rules

- Balance is critical
- Empathy for patrons and staff need to be balanced against each other.
 - ~ The more we provide for patrons, the more we lean on staff.
 - ~ The more we provide for the staff, the less we provide for patrons.



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The Big Changes

Managing associated changes to services for the Ross Community



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The Big Changes – Existing Programs

- Embedded Librarian program for MAP and Action-Learning continues at Kresge.
- New embedded librarians for entry core class for all BBA Sophomores (500). Librarians are assigned to every section (14) to support their research on a company & response to a social issue. (MERGE)
- Faculty Research Service
- Continue to support other student research (coursework, clubs, careers, case competitions & curiosity)

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The Big Changes – Existing Programs

- Coursepack & Curriculum Support – Moved to Study.net with Kresge Support.
- Previously a print solution – but we did not have a large enough distribution point during construction.
- Community and Alumni assistance (without walk-in access).
- Move remaining print holdings to electronic access.

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The Big Changes – New Programs

- Exam/Assignment Program
 - ~ Many faculty do not want to hand back assignments in class.
 - ~ Some faculty also do not let students keep completed exams.
 - ~ This service ran as a pilot in Winter Term and will go to the Library in the Fall.

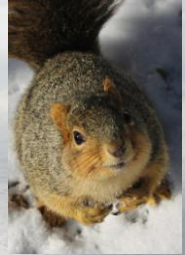


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The Big Changes – New Programs

- Modular Office Welcome Desk
→ became Kresge Reference Desk.
- Pickup Location for ILL and Other Deliveries from University Library
- Added Global MBA to our course materials operation
- Evening/Weekend Remote Reference



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Providing Value With New Constraints

- Great deal of discussion about the “value” of the academic library.
- The need for this discussion could be an indication that we’ve reached a “tipping point.”
- If we think about the changes to other industries (automotives, pharmaceuticals, journalism, etc.), few are operating as they’d like.

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Providing Value With New Constraints

- Our “old” value proposition:
 - ~ Space for students to study
 - ~ Space for physical collections (in all formats)
 - ~ Strong historical collection
 - ~ Strong electronic collections

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Providing Value With New Constraints

- Our “new” value proposition must:
 - ~ Live within the restrictions of virtually no collection space.
 - ~ Figure out new collaboration mechanisms to serve our community.
 - ~ Move away from the model where we provided student study space.
 - ~ Focus on what we can do vs. what we have done.

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Providing Value With New Constraints

- Our “new” value proposition remains:
 - ~ Using the resources at our disposal, we will support the curricular and research needs of the Ross Community.
 - ~ We will acquire resources only where we have the means to store or manage them.
 - ~ Seek out new opportunities to provide services for the school & campus.
 - ~ Embrace our new reality.

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Closing Thoughts & Questions

- Big Win on Staffing
- What does the future hold?
- Where is the Long Tail?
- What's in a Name?
- Are we the Canary in the coal Mine?



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Big Win on Staffing

- The premise with this reduction has been space and space alone.
- We have been able to move forward with redeployed staff
- No full-time staff losses related to this move.
- Temporary Staff counts way down (no need for full evening staff).



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What does the future hold?

- Few certainties for academic libraries.
- I believe that most libraries will continue to lose space until it is mostly gone.
- We need to be nimble and flexible to meet the needs of the school – this secures the future of the library.
- We need to be focused on the end-user of the library resources.

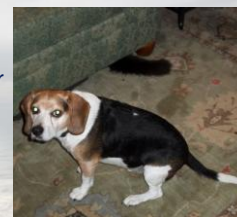


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Where is the Long Tail?

- Print collections are built on needs both now and down the road.
- Many items are used in 10 or 20 years – but will libraries have space to see that materialize?
- Long-term ROI appears to contract in an electronic-only Information environment.



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What's in a Name?

- Changing our name to Kresge Library Services
- We are no longer a “destination” or a library in the traditional sense.
- The print holdings were 2% of our use, but 50% of our perception.
- Even though “Kresge” will belong to the building – “Kresge Library” has great brand recognition at Ross.



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The Canary in the Coal Mine

- Are departmental/branch libraries the “canary in the coal mine?”
- Is the canary just sleeping?
- Our space contraction appears to be the future of libraries everywhere – we just had it happen all at once.
- We were saved by service!
- Should we just be happy with what we have left...like a squirrel with a churro.



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Thank You



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