

# History Has Its Eyes on You: Lighthouses and Libraries Weathering Storms of Change

*Corey Seeman*

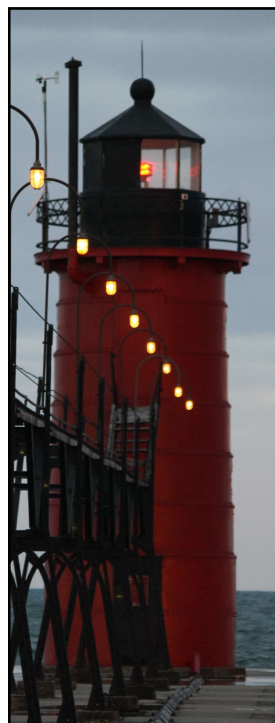
*University of Michigan*

*Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference*

*Oak Park, Illinois – June 9, 2017*

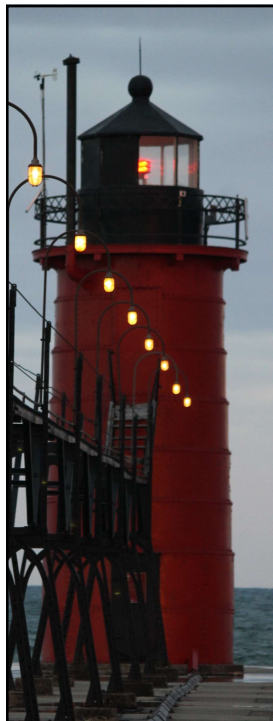
<http://tinyurl.com/SeemanGLRS2017>

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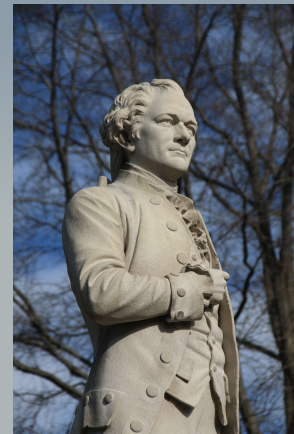
## Program Outline

- Introduction
- Lighthouses Then and Now
- Lighthouses as “Public Good”
- Libraries as “Public Good”
- Connections for Librarians
- Future Challenges for Resource Sharing
- Envisioning the Library of the Future



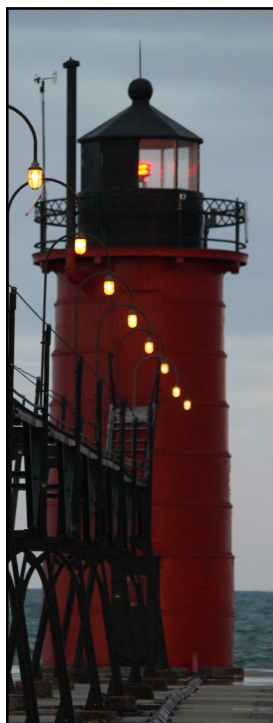
## About the title....

- Comes from Lin-Manuel Miranda's Brilliant Musical, *Hamilton*.
- Lines, Song titles, and themes can be used in practically any context (3<sup>rd</sup> time I have used it in my presentations).
- George Washington sings to Hamilton as he hands him his first command before the Battle of Yorktown.
- And it does make sense to start here because Alexander Hamilton created the Coast Guard.



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## Lighthouses Then and Now

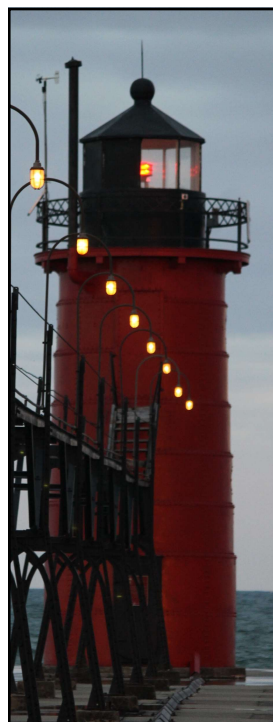


- Boston Light – first lighthouse in the United States (first lit in 1716)
- Sandy Hook NJ is the oldest working light (1764)
- Fort Gratiot – Oldest in the Midwest (1829)



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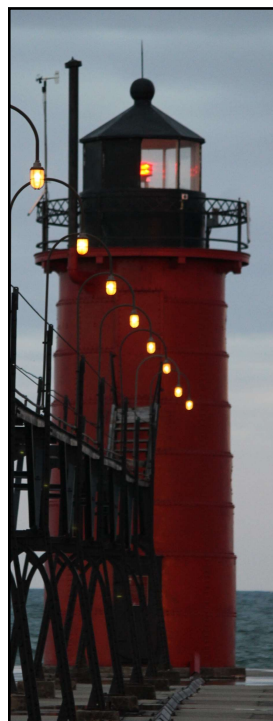
## Lighthouses Then and Now

- Long, long before Boston, Sandy Hook and Fort Gratiot, there was a lighthouse in Alexandria (Pharos of Alexandria), Egypt that was one of the Seven Wonders of the Western World.
- It is estimated that it stood 103-118 meters tall – or 2x taller than Old Barney (NJ) – our 4<sup>th</sup> tallest light.
- Also in Alexandria was possibly the most famous library of all times.



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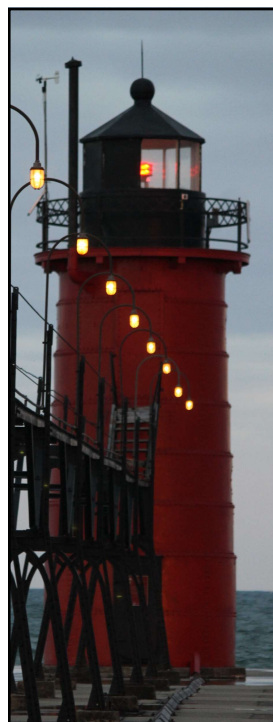
## Lighthouses Then and Now

- Location of lighthouses along the ocean shores and great lakes were strategic.
- Lights were naturally placed in harbors (often range lights) and along the shore.
- Lights are typically 20 miles apart because light could be seen around 10 miles.
- Each light had their own signature pattern for the lamp as well as a unique pattern for daytime identification.



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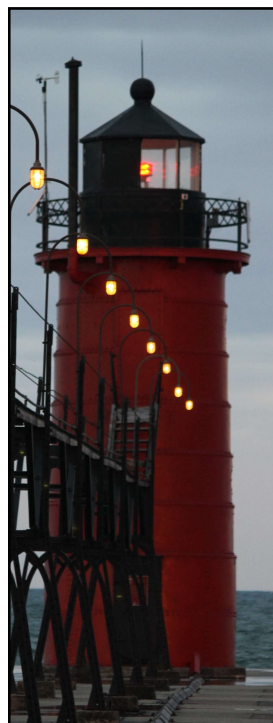
## Lighthouses Then and Now

- Lighthouse automation changed everything. Electrical lights were introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Automation of lights started as early as the 1920s, but took place in greater fashion after World War II.



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## Lighthouses Then and Now

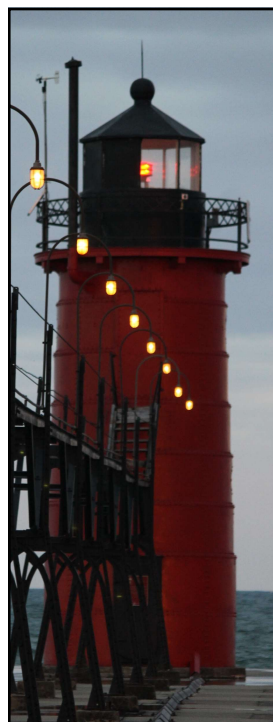
- Ship radar and navigation tools have become more sophisticated.
- Even smaller vessels are *likely* to have GPS tools to help them find safe harbor.



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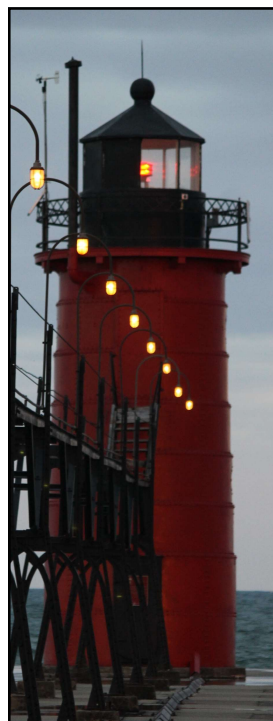
## Lighthouses Then and Now

- Changing roles and function of lighthouses.
- Now, primarily historic sites and tourist attractions.
- Some through State Parks and National Park Service.
- Buildings are not well suited for repurposing.
- Transition from life saving to educational and cultural roles.



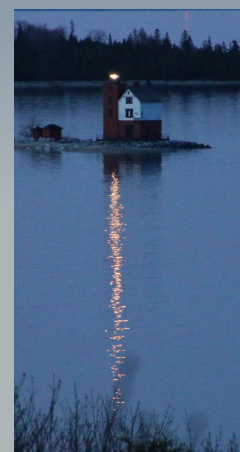
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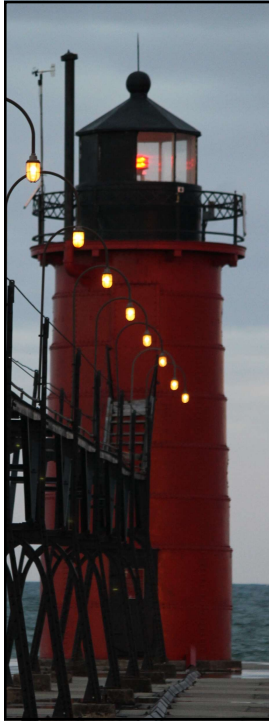
## Lighthouses Then and Now

- While their functions and value have changed, the lights are still lit at night.
- There is a value in providing these aids to navigation.
- There may be small vessels that do not have advanced radar that larger ships have.
- To argue that we do not need lighthouses is to argue that all books are online. Not there yet.



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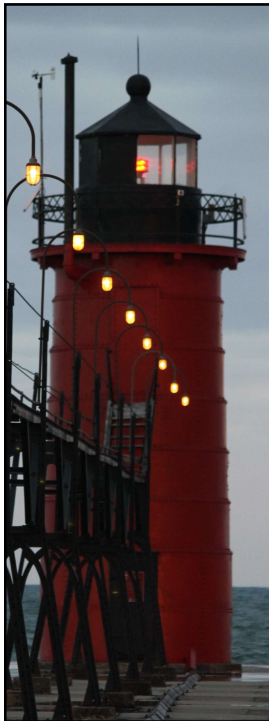


## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- What is a “Public Good”?
- Traditional economists saw lighthouses as a “public good”
- John Stuart Mill in *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) stated:
  - “it is a proper office of government to build and maintain lighthouses, establish buoys, etc. for the security of navigation: for since it is impossible that the ships at sea which are benefited by a lighthouse, should be made to pay a toll on the occasion of its use, no one would build lighthouses for motives of personal interest...” (from Coase, 1974)

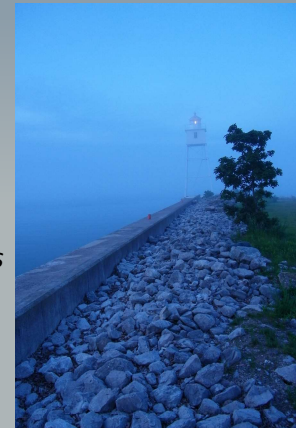
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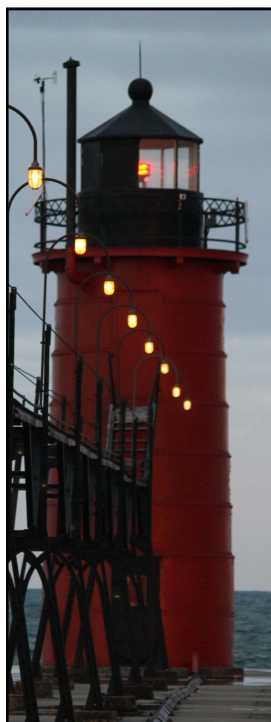
## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- Paul Samuelson in his *Economics: An Introductory Analysis* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed, 1964) stated:
  - “Take our earlier case of a lighthouse to warn against rocks. Its beam helps everyone in sight. A businessman could not build it for a profit, since he cannot claim a price for each user. This certainly is the kind of activity that governments would naturally undertake.” (from Coase, 1974)
- Other examples from economists including Henry Sidgwick, & A. C. Pigou are shared as well.



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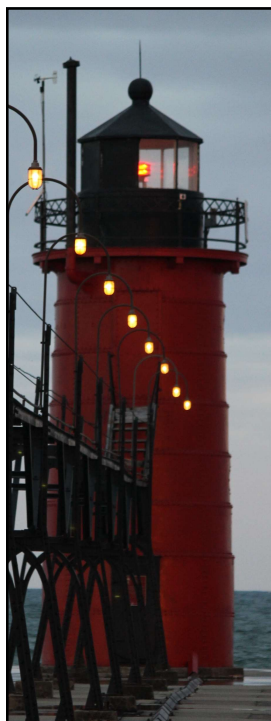


## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- In his challenge to the notion of the lighthouse as a “public good”, Coase looked at the British Lighthouse System in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Coase connected that the lighthouses in the UK were managed by Trinity House, a private corporation charged by royal charter over 500 years ago (<https://www.trinityhouse.co.uk/about-us/trinity-house-faq>)
- So if the British lighthouses are managed by a private corporation, are their management a “public good?”

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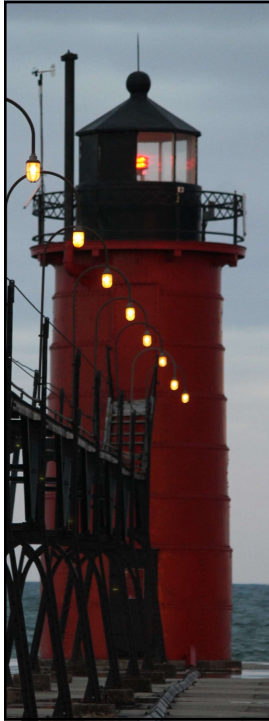


## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- Barnett, William, and Walter Block. "Coase and Van Zandt on Lighthouses." *Public Finance Review* 35.6 (2007): 710.
- Block, Walter, and William Barnett. "Coase and Bertrand on Lighthouses." *Public Choice* 140.1/2 (2009): 1.
- Coase, Ronald H. "The Lighthouse in Economics." *The Journal of Law and Economics* 17.2 (1974): 357-76.
- Conway, Hannah Caroline. "Illuminating Science: The Lighthouse as Public Good and the Role of the Scientific Expert in Nineteenth-Century British Lighthouse Reform." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015.
- Elodie Bertrand. "The Coasean Analysis of Lighthouse Financing: Myths and Realities." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 30.3 (2006; 2005): 389.
- Krause, Martin. "Buoys and Beacons in Economics." *Journal of Private Enterprise* 30.1 (2015): 45.
- Laurent Carnis. "The Political Economy of Lighthouses: Some further Considerations." *Journal des Économistes et des Études Humaines* 20.2 (2014): 143.
- Lindberg, Erik. "From Private to Public Provision of Public Goods: English Lighthouses between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *Journal of Policy History* 25.04 (2013): 538-56.
- Van Zandt, David E. "The Lessons of the Lighthouse: "Government" Or "Private" Provision of Goods." *The Journal of Legal Studies* 22.1 (1993): 47-72.

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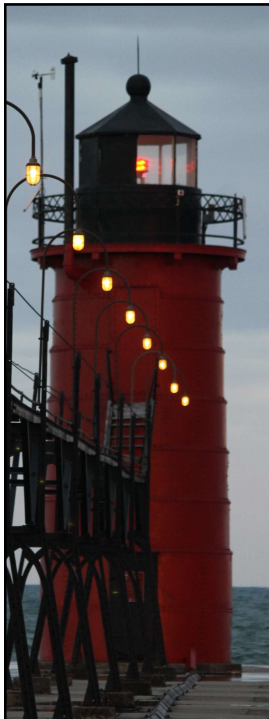
## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- However, the tradition in the United States is for publicly funded and managed aids to navigation.
- 1789-1910 - United States Lighthouse Establishment & United States Lighthouse Board - Department of the Treasury (9th law passed by Congress)
- 1910-1939 - Bureau of Lighthouses - Department of Commerce
- 1939 - Joined the United States Coast Guard - Department of the Treasury (etc.)
  - <http://www.terrypepper.com/lights/lists/chronology.htm>



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## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

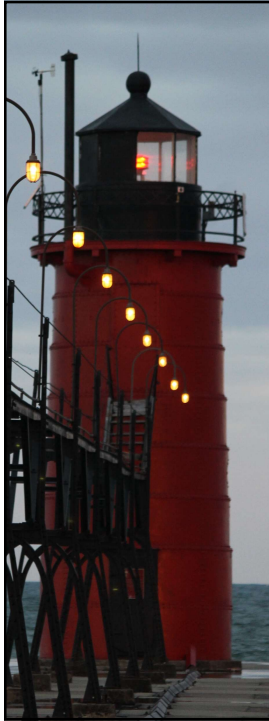
- There is no question that maintaining buoys, towers, lights, lighthouses, daymarks and shapes is an expensive and labor-intensive undertaking. But the unalterable fact is that these physical aids are essential to the safety of navigation on our waterways. Funding this infrastructure is always going to be a challenge. It is my opinion that the Coast Guard is the best organization to provide national-international continuity, and they should receive sufficient funding to provide for the continued maintenance of these critical navigation items.

*Captain Lynn Korwatch (executive director of the Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region) hearing before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, February 4, 2014.*

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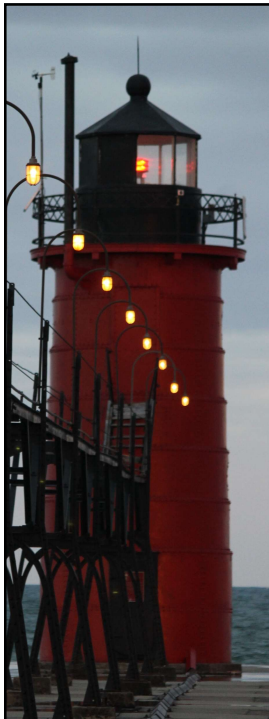


## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- Core element in this discussion is “nonexcludability”
- “In its purest form, non-excludability means that once a good has been created, it is impossible to prevent other people from gaining access to it (or more realistically, is extremely costly to do so).”
  - Blakeley, N., Lewis, G., & Mills, D. (2005). *The Economics of Knowledge: What makes ideas special for economic growth?* New Zealand Treasury.
- Excludability is when you can prevent consumers from getting access to a good or service who have not paid for it.

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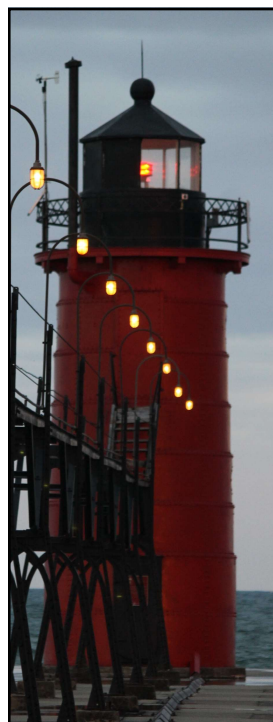
## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- If we think about the true nature of a “Public Good” – it is about providing a service for people who extend beyond who will pay taxes or fees.
- Faro Paredón (Ciego de Avila Province, Cuba) – not near a port and serves as a beacon for all ships traveling north of Cuba. First lit in 1859.



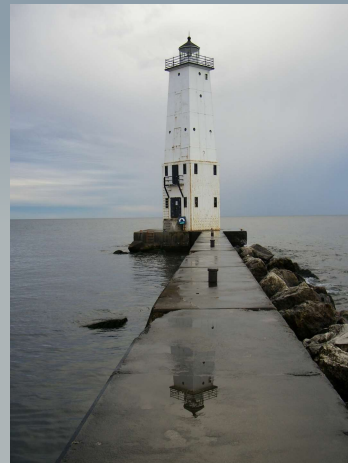
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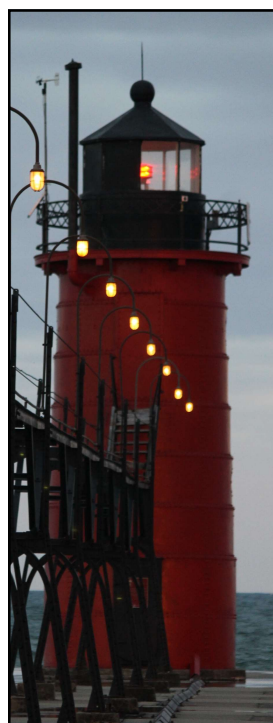
## Lighthouses as a “Public Good”

- Despite the general recognition that lighthouses are an important aspect of a community, they are not funded without restraint.
- The fact that we cannot have maritime travel without them, does not mean that they are impervious to change.
- Constant reflection is needed to chart the course forward.



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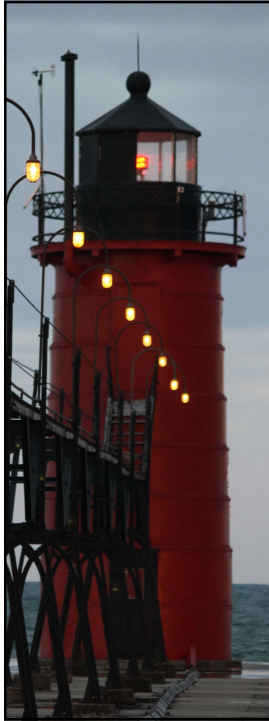
## Libraries as a “Public Good”

- How many times have we heard that libraries are the “heart of the institution”?
- We are not revenue driven – in fact, we are revenue-adverse.
- We look at community outreach at Universities – a large percentage of work for the public good comes from libraries and archives.
- Our goals are to provide services for patrons who are with us now as well as those who will come years from now.



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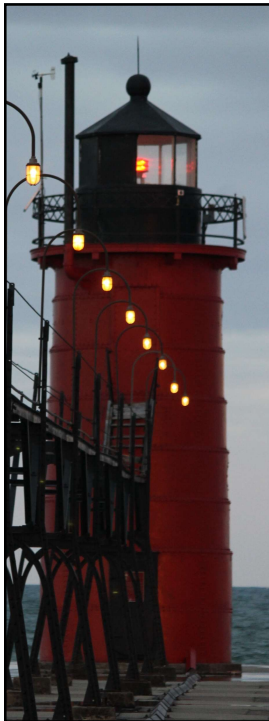
## Libraries as a “Public Good”

- “Social Justice” Mission for libraries.
- Universities need libraries as a means of acquiring information for the diverse activities on campus.
- Because something is a public good, does that ensure their longevity?



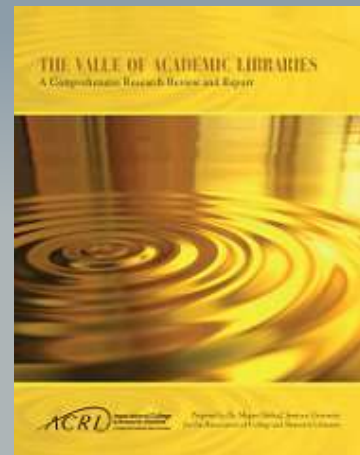
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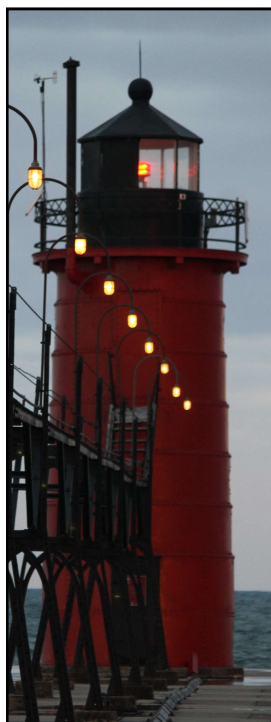
## Libraries as a “Public Good”

- ACRL Publication 2010
- Oakleaf, M. J. (2010). *The Value of Academic Libraries: A comprehensive research review and report* Association of College and Research Libraries
- Does this reflect a “tipping point”?



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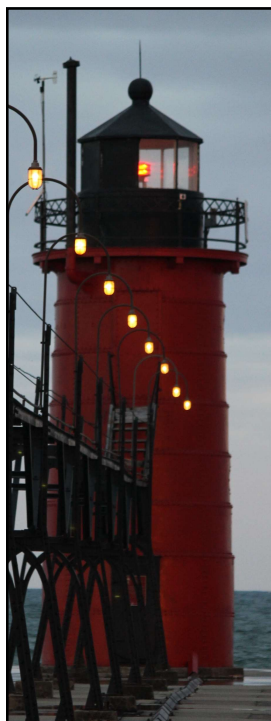


## Connections for Librarians

- So where are the connections between Lighthouses and Libraries, especially during dramatic change? Plenty!
- Perception is Reality
- Free Rider Problem
- Different Dynamics of Building Use
- Imagery is Important
- Embracing the Change

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## Connections for Librarians

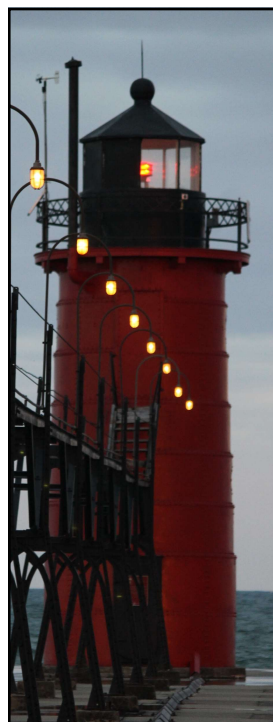
- **Perception is Reality**
- Administrators are looking at space and wondering if it is being used the best it can be?
- Librarians criticize Greta Van Susteren plenty after 'vanity projects' comments
- <http://ihenow.com/2ejbBbP>



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## Connections for Librarians

- **Perception is Reality**
- Travel + Leisure Photo Contest – June 4th

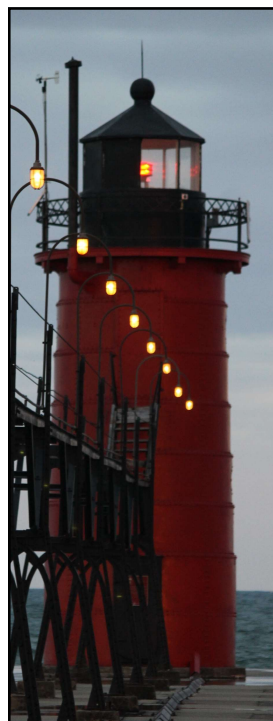
2017 MOST BEAUTIFUL COLLEGE CONTEST

[View Photos »](#) [Enter Now »](#)

Think your alma mater should top the list? We want to see your best photos from college campuses around the country. Whether it's a breathtaking commons design or jaw-dropping library architecture, show off why your campus deserves the title (and bragging rights) of America's Most Beautiful Campus.

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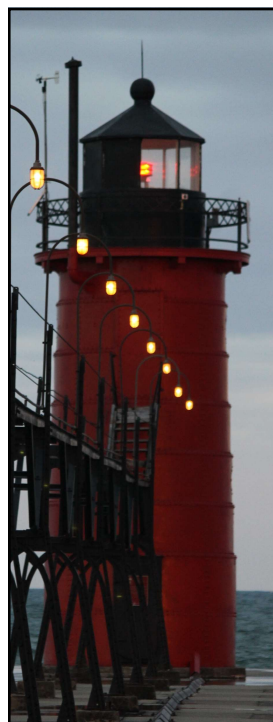
## Connections for Librarians

- **Free Rider Problem**
- Plagues both lighthouses and libraries.
- Large central expenses fund either without true understanding or context of what it costs to operate
- Many expenditures in areas that are not relevant



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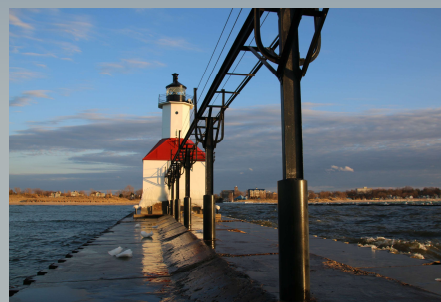
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## Connections for Librarians

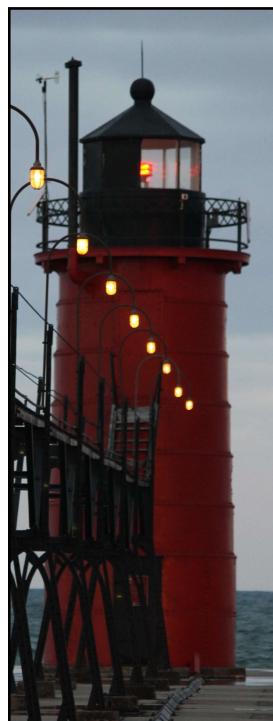
### Different Dynamics of Building Use

- Lighthouses
  - Beautiful
  - Historic
  - Historically significant as architecture
  - No real other purpose except as a home



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## Connections for Librarians

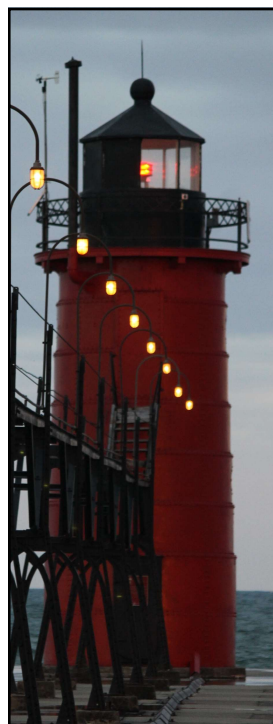
### Different Dynamics of Building Use

- Libraries
  - Large
  - Easily repurposed
  - Perception of better use of space by administrators.
  - Easily flipped into large student space
  - Easily flipped into staff or lab space
  - Easily flipped into anything....



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## Connections for Librarians

- **Imagery is Important**
- Lighthouses lead you to safety & safe harbor.
- Symbols of harbor communities (Ludington, Michigan)
- Lighthouses can help when you are lost – provided you see them.

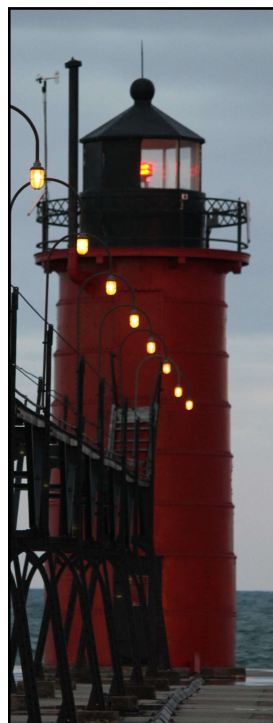


### 1 | Scenic Harbor Community

It's not going to come as a surprise that one of the best things about living in the Ludington Area is the ambiance of small town living on Lake Michigan. Like visitors, locals enjoy frequenting the beach, walking the break wall to visit the lighthouse, and pulling up in the beach parking lot to watch the sun disappear beyond the horizon. Only we get to do it every day of the year!

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## Connections for Librarians

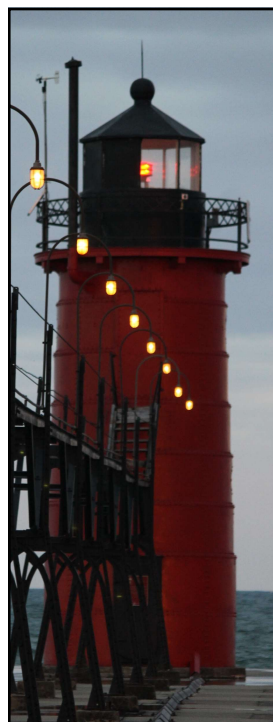
- **Imagery is Important**
- Libraries have books.
- Libraries are your connection for information.
- The fountain of wisdom flows through books.
- Libraries can help when you are lost – provided you connect with them.



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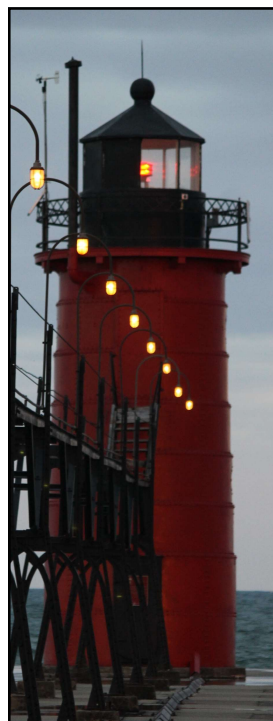
## Connections for Librarians

- **Embrace the change**
- Automation started changing lighthouse staffing needs after World War I.
- Automation accelerated after World War II.
- Changing technology enabled lighthouses to operate lighthouses with occasional visits.
- Lighthouses have transitioned to historical sites and museums.



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## Connections for Librarians

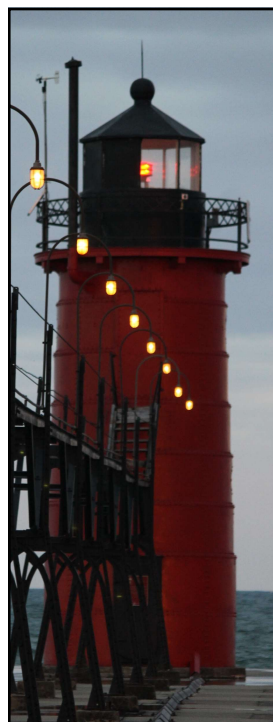
- **Embrace the change**
- Whether we want it or not, things are changing for libraries and on our campuses and communities.
- Education is also changing for higher education in general (Purdue recent purchase of Kaplan University).
- Space demands on campuses that will see us with less real estate.



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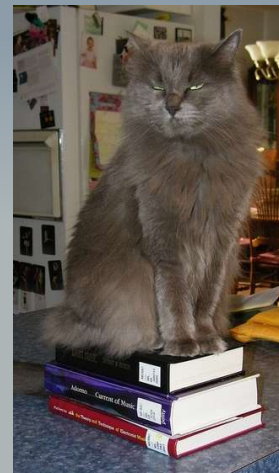
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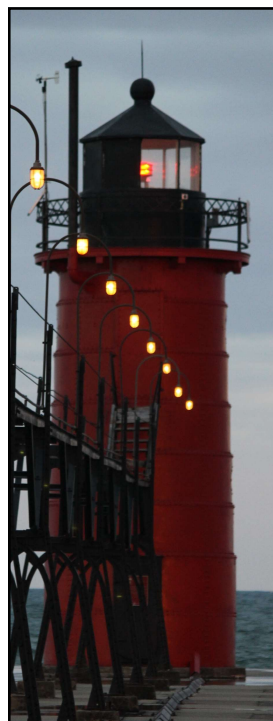
## Connections for Librarians

- **Embrace the change**
- NOT a library problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Changes in the last 50 years:
  - Copy cataloging
  - Local online catalogs & shared systems
  - Expanded access (TOC, more subject headings)
  - Shared catalogs (MeLCat, etc.)
  - Discovery layers
  - Working papers management → digital repositories
  - Coffee and food in the library



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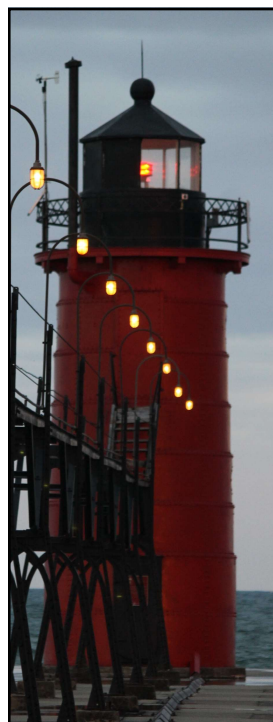
## Connections for Librarians

- **Embrace the change**
- The Library's challenge is to stay relevant and service oriented, even without all the resources and tools once at our disposal.
- Unlike lighthouses, we don't want libraries to be relegated to museums.
- Who lives, who dies, who tells your story



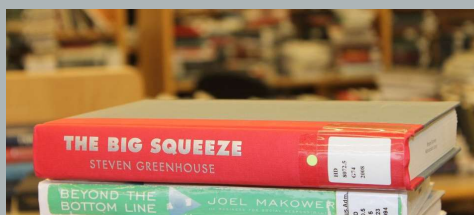
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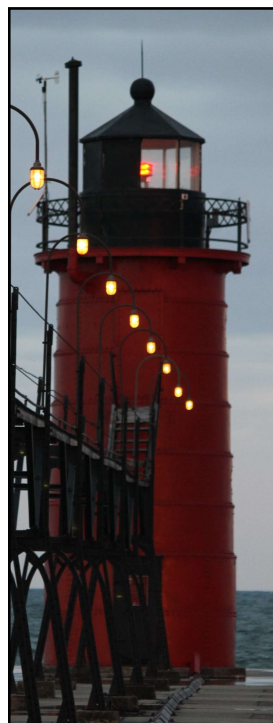
## Future Challenges for Resource Sharing

- Challenge for libraries are great both now and in the near future.
- There is almost always a higher priority for space than the retention of print resources.
- Administrator question - If something has not been scanned yet – is it valuable?
- Our community does not care where it comes from...



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## Future Challenges for Resource Sharing

- Just as a lighthouse cannot protect the shore where they are not located, can libraries support research where they do not have collections?
- Mansueto Library at Univ. of Chicago is a dream that we all have. Our desire to hold on to the past while embracing the future. It is a dream that many if not most cannot afford.




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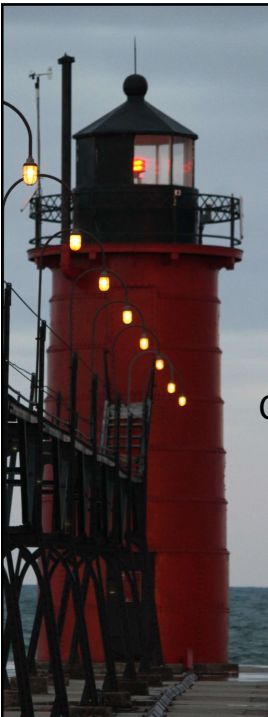


## Future Challenges for Resource Sharing

- Original vs. digital copy
- Do we have the rights to share?
- Squirrels at the Met (NYC)
- Bottle from Salem, NC - ca. 1790–1805.
- Snuffbox from Germany (Schrezheim manufactory), ca. 1761-1770. In Gallery 538 – closed the day I went.

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## Future Challenges for Resource Sharing

**Future Use**

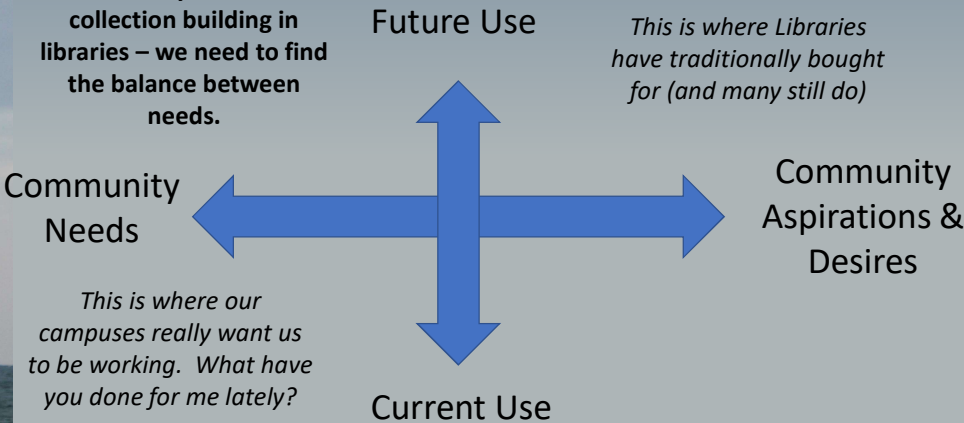
*This is my vision of collection building in libraries – we need to find the balance between needs.*

*This is where Libraries have traditionally bought for (and many still do)*

**Community Needs** ← → **Community Aspirations & Desires**

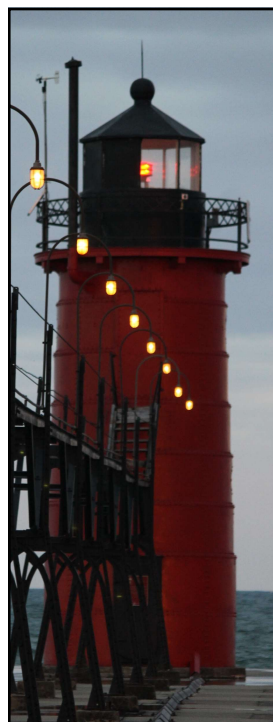
*This is where our campuses really want us to be working. What have you done for me lately?*

**Current Use**



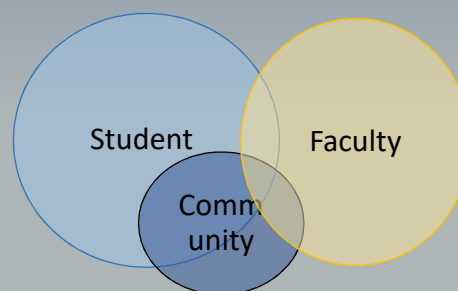
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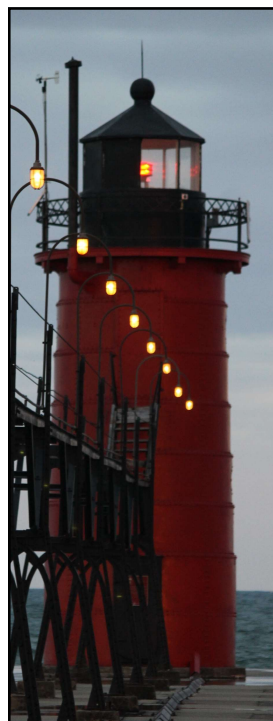
## Future Challenges for Resource Sharing

- Library challenge is that we have multiple stakeholders and they have different needs – especially for business.
- Faculty needs – scholarly journals, articles, books , datasets
- Student needs – articles, company & industry information, market reports
- Community – Mostly similar to student needs



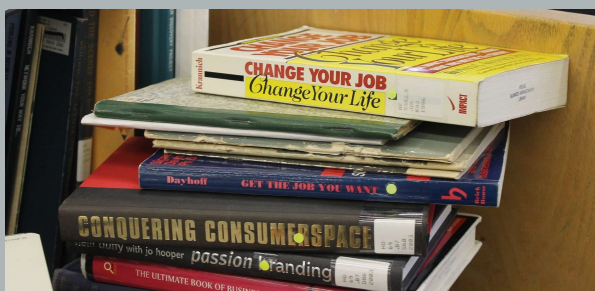
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## Future Challenges for Resource Sharing

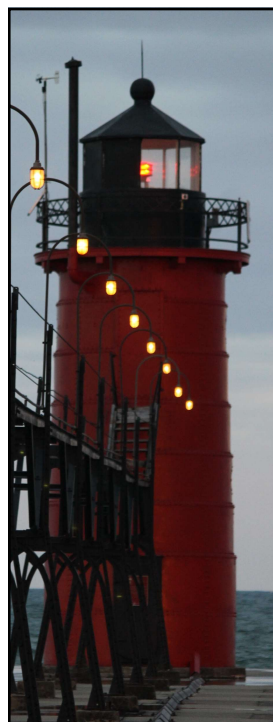
- Building collections for use over a 10 year window is what makes resource sharing work well.
- However, our governing bodies will not be keen on buying items that sit on a shelf just in case.
- We invest heavily in discovery platforms to get people to use these resources – the ultimate “low class problem.”



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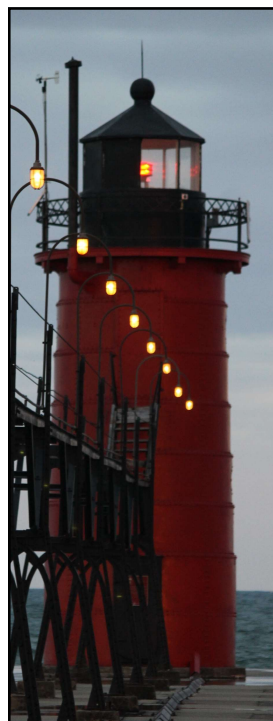
## Envisioning the Library of the Future

- History has its eyes on us!
- Just as a lighthouse keeper could not turn his or her back on a storm, we cannot turn our backs on our community's needs.
- **Our services must reflect our community's unique needs**



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## Envisioning the Library of the Future

### • A Physical Space

- Study
- Print Materials
- Interaction Spaces
- Walk-in Access
- Some of this can be done by others.



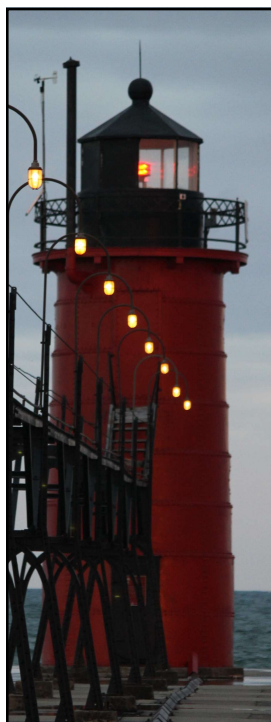
### • An Ethereal Space

- 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 cannot be done by others



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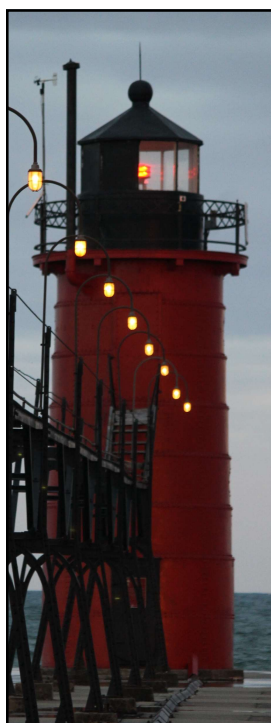
## Envisioning the Library of the Future

- 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**



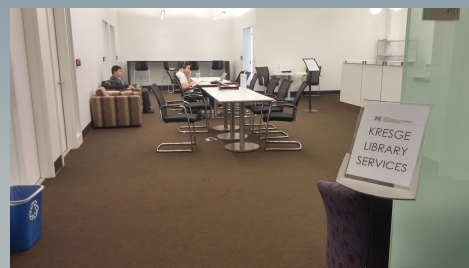
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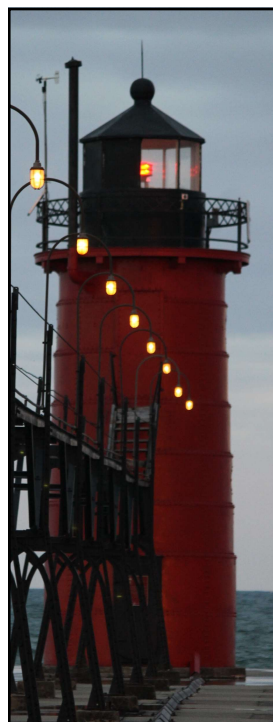
## Envisioning the Library of the Future

- “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
- The library did not close, but become virtually unrecognizable.
- You do not always choose your path, but how you respond.



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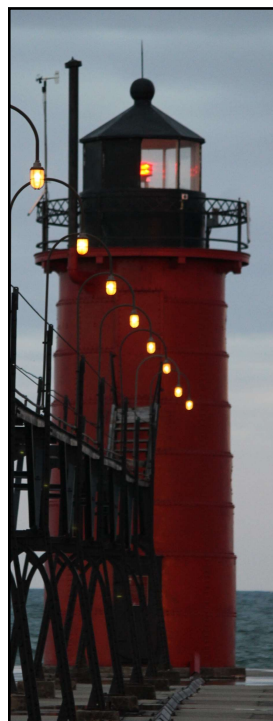
## Envisioning the Library of the Future

- When changes take place all at once, it forces you to take the leap.
- Our library of the future is different and we have made mistakes...
- ...but come on in, the water's fine!



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## Questions & Thank You

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Corey's Web Home: [www-personal.umich.edu/~cseeman/](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~cseeman/)



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