

# Save the Time of the Reader: Using S. R. Ranganathan's Fourth Law to Build the Business Library of the Future

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## Program Outline

- Change Management & the “Modern Library”
- Dr. Ranganathan's Fourth Law
- Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research
- A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law
- Building the Library of the Future & Closing Thoughts
- Questions



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## Change Management & the “Modern Library”

- Let’s think about our current library...
- And take away your print volumes
- Now, take away your book stacks
- Finally, let’s move student space out of a library
- What do you have left?



*Empty Shelves at Kresge Library  
After the Books Left*

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## Change Management & the “Modern Library”

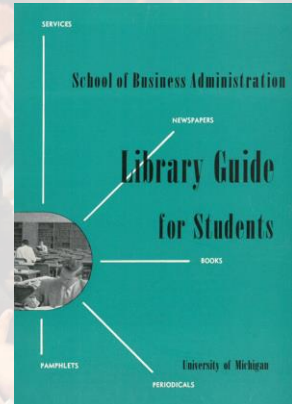
- "Business has always been subject to uncertainties and change. It is affected by the elements, by wars, by mass movements, by changes in the wants and desires of consumers and by government regulation. Above all, competition tends continually to modify the business structure. New methods, new products 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."

*Charleston Conference 2017 - Seeman - History Has Its Eyes on You*

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## Change Management & the “Modern Library”

- Quote is from: Coman, Edwin T. Sources of Business Information. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1949.
- It is very easy to think about change only in our world
- However, we have been subjected to change for years and years...
- ...and will be subjected to change for years into the future



*Charleston Conference 2017 - Seeman - History Has Its Eyes on You*

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## Change Management & the “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
- These incremental changes can add up when pieced together...



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## Change Management & the “Modern Library”

- HOWEVER, we are likely still behind where our patrons are and where they likely WISH we are
- Because we collect for the ‘long term,’ we are likely far more conservative than we should be
- We may be challenged in taking on projects and roles that may not be our ideal situation
- This may lead us to strange combinations as well - like business students playing American football



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## Change Management & the “Modern Library”

- 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?



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## Change Management & the “Modern Library”

- For many of our patrons, libraries are nothing more than waiting rooms where they can be productive
- They want a place to...
  - charge electronics
  - study or do work
  - relax
  - sit
  - collaborate
- They are typically very malleable



Waiting for a flight at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport  
– November 6, 2017

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## Dr. Ranganathan's Fourth Law

- Dr. Ranganathan's Five Laws (1931)
  - First Law: Books are for use
  - Second Law: Every reader his / her book
  - Third Law: Every book its reader
  - **Fourth Law: Save the time of the reader**
  - Fifth Law: The library is a growing organism

### The Five Laws of Library Science

BY  
S. R. RANGANATHAN, M.A., L.T., F.L.A.  
LIBRARIAN, MADRAS UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
SECRETARY, MADRAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
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WITH A FOREWORD

BY  
SIR P. S. SIVASWAMI AYYER, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY  
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MADRAS  
THE MADRAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
LONDON: EDWARD GOLDSTON, LTD.  
1931

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## Dr. Ranganathan's Fourth Law

- Fourth Law: Save the time of the reader
- This can be considered a technical services law as it focuses on cataloging and acquisitions
- Reference is included here but may be less critical than organization of books
- You save time by helping readers find what they are looking for



A STANDARD UNIT OF BOOK-BACK WITH SIGNAL GUIDE.

To face p. 247.

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## Dr. Ranganathan's Fourth Law

- The world of libraries in 1931 were dominated by closed stacks systems where card catalogs were all that could be used to locate items
- The open vs. closed stacks dilemma is coming back as we have so many volumes offsite
- Dr. Ranganathan focused on the way that books are organized as the focus of this law

**SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER**—that is the Fourth Law of Library Science. Perhaps this law is not so self-evident as the others. None the less, it has been responsible for many reforms in library administration and has a great potentiality for effecting many more reforms in the future. Perhaps the most convenient method of studying the consequences of this law will be to follow a reader from the moment he enters the library to the moment he leaves it, critically examining each process, which he has to go through, with an eye to the economy of time that can be effected at each stage.

Ranganathan, S. R. 1892-1972. *The Five Laws of Library Science*. Madras: The Madras Library Association, 1931. p337

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## Dr. Ranganathan's Fourth Law

- If collections are well documented and described, items may more easily be found (or discovered) and used
- It is not only the way that it is interpreted – but also laid out in his 1931 book
- Reference services would be available as needed



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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

- The conundrum of business librarianship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Business education is dominated by case studies, which provide discrete lessons and use data to illustrate points
- Cases have learning objectives and popular ones may reflect upon events that have taken place years and year ago



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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

- Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, are exploring new ways and new markets – many of which have not been fully explored or even understood
- Entrepreneurial thinking is not adding a fee on an existing service
- Or coming up with a simple idea for a new store – like a cupcake shop (a few years ago – very popular in the states)



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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

- Library instruction works well when the type of information needed matches the structure or organization of the data
- Library instruction works well (like cases) when the problems can be simulated with example issues (Karate Kid)
- Library instruction has shortcomings when the information needs go beyond what can be shown in a structured format
- Library instruction has shortcomings also when the needs go beyond the walls of the library
- Entrepreneurship should be somewhere new...if there is a report – then it is not as unique as you think it is

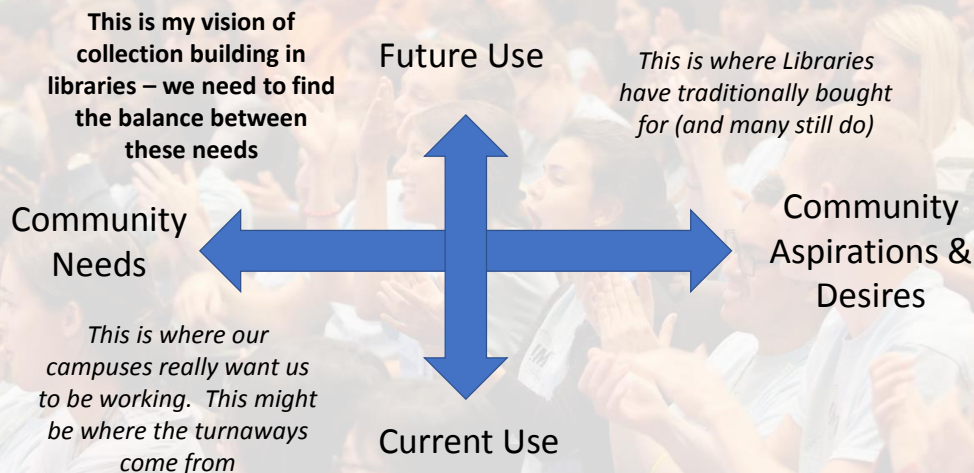


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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

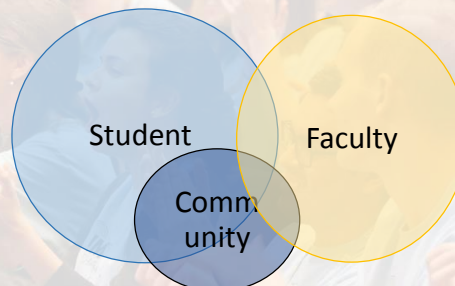


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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

- 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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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

- Michigan Ross approach
- The educational opportunities we provide need to mirror the world of business
- We need to teach students how to manage through **Ambiguity and Complexity**
- Students need to understand VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity & Ambiguity)
- We do this through experiential learning programs
- This is a great opportunity for the Kresge Library



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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research

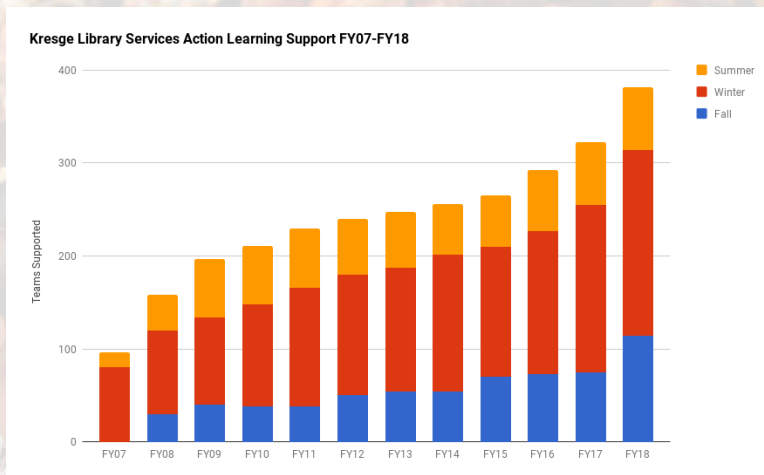
- Kresge Library has long supported action-learning at Ross – our signature learning program
- MAP (Multidisciplinary Action Projects) brings together 4-6 students to work as a team to solve a real-world problem
- Each team works with 2 faculty members, peer coach, communications coach and **a Librarian**
- The Kresge Embedded Librarian program fits the core mission of the school and has a librarian working with all student teams
- We have changed our staffing to ensure we had sufficient librarians to support these programs



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## Challenge of Supporting Business Education and Entrepreneurial Research



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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law

- **Fourth Law: Save the time of the reader**
- There are MANY different ways to save the time of the reader:
  - Help them find resources they need
  - Help them track down articles they cannot locate
  - Help them understand the value of particular resources
  - Provide reference services to ensure students can spend more time doing the analysis
  - Understand that their information needs may not be in traditional library resources

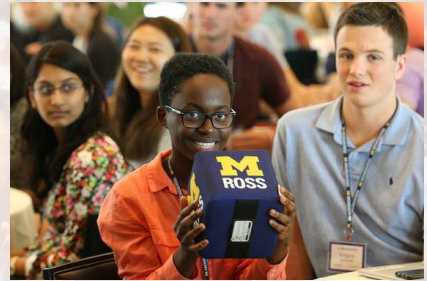


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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law

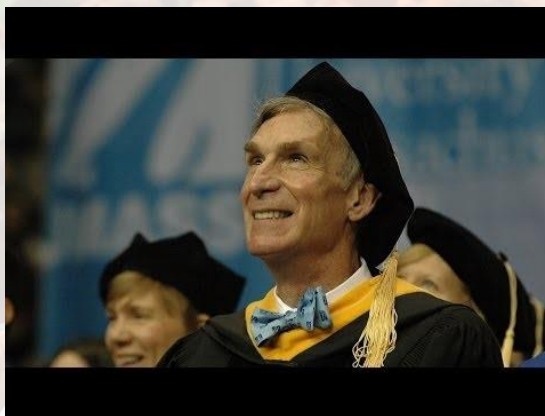
- Fourth Law: Save the time of the reader
- The biggest challenge in supporting business research is that the nature of the questions may not match the organization of the information
- Our students and researchers need assistance to craft and explore business resources to provide them with tools to answer their questions
- This is the 'value-add' of the librarian



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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law



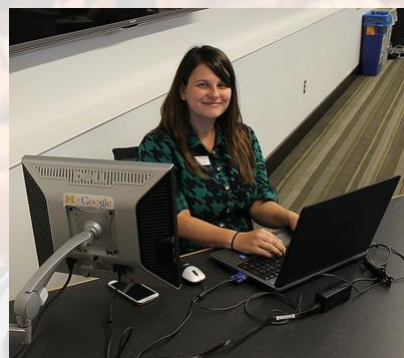
- “Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don't.” — Bill Nye (University of Massachusetts Lowell 2014 graduation)
- Everyone can do something that you can't do....
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzWX-qu5fRA>

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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law

- Librarians are very good at finding resources
- We are good at moving beyond the limits of metadata searching (as in a catalog or A&I database) and narrowing down results in full-text searching
- Lets focus on that and stop running away from helping our patrons



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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law

- Build relationships with our patrons
- When supporting MAP teams at Michigan Ross, each team works with an assigned librarian
- One of the BEST ways we save the time of the reader is through that arrangement
- When working with a dedicated librarian, students do not have to repeat what they are looking for
- They also do not need to worry about getting the same material repeatedly
- Relationships > Transactions



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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law

- The electronic library environment has created great strides in creative self-sufficient users
- We have been pushing self-service in the profession
- This is desired by our users when they have known-item searches (particular book, article or report)
- But what happens when they have an unknown-item search?
- This service to our researchers IS the future of the library



*Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta  
International Airport July 11,  
2012*

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## A Public-Service Approach to the Fourth Law

- Topic like Logistics & Supply Chain
- These are complicated for people in the field – let alone students and entrepreneurs
- In order to save the time of the reader, we
  - Aspire to understand the problem
  - Seek out information that helps solve the issue
  - Connect with the user and share resources that may help
  - Reconnect if the resources were not useful
  - Lead, not point



*Boeing Dreamlifter (modified  
747) at Charleston, South  
Carolina USA – November 10,  
2017*

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## Building the Library of the Future & Closing Thoughts

### • 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

*Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference 2017 - Seeman*

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## Building the Library of the Future & Closing Thoughts

### • 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*

*Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference 2017 - Seeman*

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## Building the Library of the Future & Closing Thoughts

- “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
- You do not always choose your path, but how you respond



*The NEW Kresge Library Services at the University of Michigan*

*Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference 2017 - Seeman*

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## Questions & Thank You

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