Research, Teaching & Learning

Scholarship and Libraries in Transition: A Dialogue about the Impacts of Mass Digitization Projects

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Mass digitization is an old story with journal formats.

- Significant volume of content since late 90’s
- Research libraries increasingly deploy and have experience with digital format journals
- Perceived value is high
- Mental model of large scale digitization has shaped by journal articles and article-finding tools
E-journals could be absorbed by library practice more easily than e-books

- Databases were a clear improvement over print indexes
- Article vs bibliographic item
- Separate systems the norm
- Bibliographic instruction reinforces print book use
- Traditional higher education reinforces print book use
To date, E-books have not achieved a similar status.

- Out-of-copyright works have small audiences
- Markets often less well defined
- Popularity with researchers and learners less vivid
- Producers more diffuse and conservative
- Business models have struggled
- Have limited data to guide service development
The MIT Libraries surveyed faculty, students, and researchers, late 2005.

- We asked
  - What resources and services were important
  - How they seek and use information, esp.
    - Articles
    - Books
    - Facts
  - Priorities for resource and service enhancements

- We got
  - 46% response rate
  - Thousands of comments
  - Volunteers
Where e-resources are available, people vote with their mice.

- 85% regularly use online resources
- Of those who use e-resources at least 1/week
  - 43% in a library
  - 55% elsewhere at MIT
  - 36% off campus
- 32% were aware that they could use Google Scholar to access Libraries subscriptions
- 61% thought this feature was very important or essential
Resources themselves rank lower than finding tools in importance.

Rank order:
1. Barton (ILS)
2. VERA (ejournal and database gateway)
3. E-resources themselves
4. Print resources themselves

But Google Scholar now ranks 11th
Web sites consulted most frequently in studies or work

- Course management system(s)
- Libraries
- Google
- MIT home page
- Departmental home pages
When looking for full articles

- **Top three places:**
  1. Vera (Libraries gateway to e-subscriptions)
  2. Google/Google Scholar
  3. Barton (Libraries online catalog)

- **Bottom places:**
  1. Other search engines
  2. Print indexes
When looking for books

• Top three places:
  1. Barton (Libraries online catalog)
  2. Amazon
  3. Google

• Bottom places:
  1. E-book databases or gateways
When looking for facts

• Top three places:
  1. Google
  2. Wikipedia
  3. Printed handbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.

• Bottom places:
  1. Individual databases
  2. Library staff
What students, faculty, and researchers want next:

1. A single interface to search across a variety of information sources
2. Expanded online content, especially older materials
3. More access to all library material via commercial search engines
4. A “wizard” to help choose the best tools for a topic
What might we learn from these responses

- Want help sorting through the chaos; the right kind of assistance matters
- People know that some high-value information may not be freely available
- Integration across sources is a priority
- Course management systems have become an information source
- People want to help design (or self-design) solutions
Ongoing market research will be necessary

• Could we develop standard questions?
  – What would they be…
• We should develop time series
• We must run the right experiments
• We need to maintain domain expertise
• We should devise/promote economic models that work for the academy