

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?

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Presentation Overview

- The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries
- The Self-Service Mindset
- General Thoughts on Hospitality
- What Does Hospitality Look Like at Kresge Library
- Challenges of a Hospitable Library
- What Does it all mean (Assessment and Beyond)?

The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Redefining the Academic Library: Managing the Migration to Digital Information Services (2011, Education Advisory Board)
- <http://www.theconferencecircuit.com/wp-content/uploads/Provosts-Report-on-Academic-Libraries2.pdf>
- Brad Eden Talked about this at Charleston 2011 in the closing Plenary Session

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Some Highlights (or lowlights) from the report
- “Writing Our Own Obituary” - by 2015:
 - ~ Patrons go elsewhere for information
 - ~ No need for traditional librarians
 - ~ Library will need to be a space for more than just books

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- “Size Doesn’t Matter”
 - ~ We need to change traditional metrics (such as collection size to measure the scope and impact of libraries)
 - ~ Local Physical Distribution Models Displaced by Remote and Fully Digital Approaches

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- The “Lonely Reference Librarian”
 - ~ From ACRL Stats 1998 vs. 2008
 - ~ Circulation Down between 12-34%
 - ~ Reference Requests Down between 13-71%
- Changing from “just-in-case” to “just-in-time” purchasing/collection development.

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Libraries are the most valuable space on campus & the majority is devoted to a 'legacy' print collection.
- "Repurposing the Warehouse"
- "Coming Out from Behind the Desk"
 - ~ Barriers include hesitance from librarians/library staff and reluctance from faculty who might question their need.

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Ending Points:
- Sustainable Collection Management
 - ~ Rightsizing the print collection
 - ~ Aligning Purchasing with Demand
 - ~ Reducing Scholarly Pub. Costs
- Redeploying Library Staff
 - ~ Outsourcing Lower-value activity
 - ~ Embedding High-Value Service

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Is it all bad news?
- Definitely a “Chicken Little” feel to the report – but it is how our Provosts probably feel about us.
- They view us as **underutilized real estate**.
- **Library – Service = Storage**

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- But remember that while focus groups are Important – but they are just groups....
- From the 2012 OSCAR broadcast:
- <http://ifitshipitshere.blogspot.com.au/2012/02/focus-grouping-wizard-of-oz-sketch-from.html>

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Self-Service Mindset

- With the advent of electronic resources and discovery layers – we have worked very hard to make the library mostly self-service.
 - ~ ***That is great when people know what they want.***
 - ~ ***This is not so great when people don't know what they need.***
- This is when we have a problem OR an **Opportunity.**

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Self-Service - Adios Middle Man

- Along with the Self-Service mentality, we have sought to remove the middle-man.
- This includes removing the reference desk and encouraging email contact with the library.
- While most want to work independently, they also want to easily get help when they need it.

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Self-Service - Independent Users

- Discovery layers work great when people know what they want.
- Discovery layers might not work so well when people are not sure what they are looking for (driven by the scope of the question – not the intelligence of the user)
- We need to be understanding of users in their point of need.
- **Is this a teachable moment?**

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Self-Service - Independent Users

- As we move from physical and discrete collections in libraries to electronic and more ethereal, people might need us **MORE THAN EVER!**
- Not everything is an easy “look up” question – this will bring students and faculty to the library for help.
- Not all questions are the same!

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General Thoughts on Hospitality

- Hospitality, n. The virtue which induces us to feed and lodge certain persons who are not in need of food and lodging.
~Humorist Ambrose Bierce, 1911
- Hospitality is making your guests feel at home, even though you wish they were.
~ Unknown
- Share with God's people who are in need.
Practice hospitality.
~Romans 12:13

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General Thoughts on Hospitality

- Not very well found in the Library Literature.
- While librarians are often highly service oriented, this has a different and almost pandering connotation.
- Librarians are amazing at providing service.
- In many academic settings, the libraries are the element that people are most fond of in reviews and surveys.

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What is Hospitality at Disney?

- Disney Model
 - ~ Excellent customer service.
 - ~ Excellent attention to detail.
 - ~ Things just run beautifully smooth.
 - ~ You really feel like they care about every person.
 - ~ You really feel that they care about YOU!

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What is Hospitality at Disney?

- Disney Model
 - ~ They are bending over backwards for people who have already “purchased” a vacation or experience.
 - ~ Working for repeat business and our ability to spread the word to others.

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What is Hospitality at Nordstrom?

- Employee Handbook is one card.
- “Our number one goal is to provide outstanding customer service.”
- Our only rule: “Use good judgment in all situations.”
- See Spector’s The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence, 2005.
- <http://about.nordstrom.com/careers/culture.asp>

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What is Hospitality Over HOF Weekend?

- Hall of Fame Hospitality Desk.
- Over Hall of Fame Weekend, the “Hospitality Desk” manages all events.
- Used to be called Information Desk.
- Name was changed to the Hospitality Desk and Crew instill a culture of **taking care of people**.
- Not just guests, but also co-workers.
- The goal is to make things right.

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What is Hospitality at Your House?

- We often associate hospitality with travel, dining and high cost activities
- But what about guests at your house?
 - ~ You still offer them drinks
 - ~ You consider what they need when they are over
- *Mi casa es su casa*
- Sports References aside – The Library is MY HOUSE!

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About Kresge Library

- Kresge Library: Independent Library at University of Michigan - Ross School of Business (3700 FTE)
- Staff of 21 FT people (8 librarians, 13 staff) with 4.5 FTE of temporary staff
- Open 108 service hours a week
- <http://tinyurl.com/KresgeLibrary>

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What is Our Library?

- Books and Journal storage?
- Are we welcoming to people who are unfamiliar with our operations, services and facility? – Strangers?
- What do we do to welcome people to the University early on – then what do we do down the road

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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- Joined the library in 2005 and became the director in 2006
- My goal as director has been to create the library I would want to use
- Hospitality and Empathy are KEY TERMS!
- I am more concerned about what our students and faculty need than what libraries are doing elsewhere

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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- We are a very different academic library
- Very strong proponent of the Nordstrom Way
- Always encourage staff to take care of the problem as best we can and sort out details later
- We want to be the service champions at the Ross School

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Embedded Librarians for MAP

- This is not one of my ideas – but it grew as the school developed
- Action-based Learning programs like MAP involve student groups working with corporate, governmental and nonprofit organizations
- They often need very specialized research assistance
- We assign librarians to each group to make it easier for the teams.

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Strat 502

- Core class for MBA students in their first term.
- Assignment to look at one industry and two companies.
- While we provide research tools – we are quick to encourage people to come in for specialized assistance.
- “Walk you down the aisle” vs. pointing.

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Needs Supplies?

- Similar to many hotels that provide toothbrushes, etc. to travelers who forget items.
- We provide office supplies (name tents, envelopes, paper (for case interviews), pens, earplugs).
- We used to charge (cost recovery) – but it was more work to track the money

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Supporting Recruiting at Ross

- Recruiters have interviews in our building
- They need all sorts of services:
 - ~ Unlocking offices
 - ~ Providing a calculator for students for case interview
 - ~ Printing items
 - ~ Power cord for a recruiter's Blackberry

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The %^&%*^&% Fax Machine

- We traditionally had a fax machine (or two) at Kresge Library for students to use.
- When it no longer worked, it was not be replaced – but the need existed.
- We ended up doing the faxes – but we “blinked” and bought a new machine – to be installed this week.



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What did not work?

- Some things were tried and discontinued
- Maybe they were not popular...or too popular to support.
- Being entrepreneurial means trying things out and seeing what is received well by the school.

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What did not work? Late Night Copying

- We had faculty who wanted a service that would be available into the evening for last minute copies – typically for class.
- Since we were open the latest of any unit, we took this on.
- Established guidelines that we could support, but we misread the market
- Almost no request came in. Still “on the books”

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What did not work? Coat Check

- Students were hesitant to take jackets and book bags to the Interview waiting area.
- They left them in the library while they went on their interview and we noticed an increase in thefts
- We created a coat check at the Circ Desk.
- It became too big a distraction and we ended up cancelling the program.

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What does Hospitality Mean at Kresge?

- It means serving the students, faculty and other staff the best we can.
- It means listening to their needs without considering what other libraries are doing.
- It means not being bogged down with what other departments are doing.
- It also means that we cannot take on everything (coat check & printing support).

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What does Hospitality Mean at Kresge?

- **Being hospitable and flexible with staff.**
- Corey's theory
 - ~ *If I am flexible with you, please be flexible with our patrons.*
 - ~ *If I am not flexible with you, then you will not be expected to be flexible with our patrons.*
- Nothing can happen without that.
- Ties to Positive Organizational Scholarship

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What does Hospitality Mean at Kresge?

- It means that no one will EVER get in trouble helping our community.
- It means that the customer is always our first → “I am Third”
- It also means that we cannot do all things for all people.
- “Do we provide a 4 star service when a 3 star service will do?” – Former dean at Ross School of Business.

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Challenges of a Hospitable Library

- We might ask 'why are we doing this?'
- Especially true for 'non-traditional' services
 - ~ **Are we doing things for our colleagues or our customers? This is the million dollar question.**
 - ~ Also, what other are doing is important, but not to be replicated. It might not be what our patrons want and/or need.

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Challenges of a Hospitable Library

- We need to instill **Confidence** in our staff
- We need to be OK that we will not always be right OR always be able to get the patron exactly what they want.
- It comes from knowing that you did your best and that (either way) you explained what is happening to the patron.
- Failure is part of the learning curve.

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Challenges of a Hospitable Library

- Where does a library 'draw the line?'
 - ~ This is a huge challenge in libraries.
 - ~ When we work in traditional roles, we do not question the value of that work.
 - ~ When we venture into new *patron-driven services*, then we find ourselves doing all sorts of things.
 - ~ Our success will breed additional requests – this is actually a good thing!

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Measuring & Assessment

- This is really tricky when looking at cultural changes.
- Focus on cultivation – do not look for immediate rewards
- **Reward intent, not results**
- Be nimble and seek out ways to help
- The Ultimate question – What is your overall numbers of referrals.

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Measuring & Assessment

- Consider each question that comes in tells you much about the way that you are used in reality and seen from the outside.
- Are questions coming from both regular users and new users.
- People ask you non-library questions – it is really because they are not getting help elsewhere.

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Measuring & Assessment

- We tend to look at what other people are doing.
- We should be solely focused on how we can support our patrons in the way that they need.
- Academic libraries are similar – but there are fundamental differences (like Movies)

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Measuring & Assessment

- Look at Outcomes – not outputs
- Do not dwell on “metrics” and “dashboard Indicators” – They can not reflect the true value of what you are doing.
- You may not see immediate results!

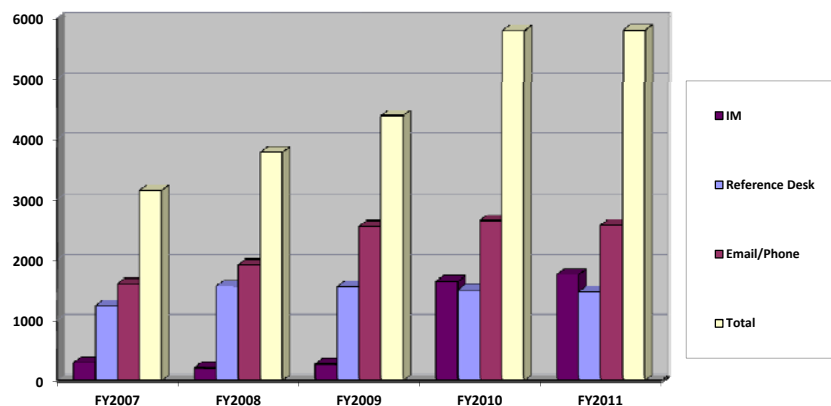


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Measuring & Assessment

Total Reference Transactions at Kresge Library (FY2007-FY2011)



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Some Readings

- Johnson, Eric and Michelle M. Kazmer, (2011) "Library Hospitality: Some Preliminary Considerations", Library Quarterly, The, Vol. 81, No. 4, pp. 383-403
- Kirstin Steele, (2010) "Positive organizational practice and resources", Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances, The, Vol. 23 Iss: 3, pp.122 – 124
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