Living on the LAM: Libraries, Archives and Museums in the Digital Age

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Living on the LAM:
Libraires, Archives and Museums in the Digital Age
The LAM:

Lam – in flight, usually in the sense of a fugitive

L.A.M. – Libraries, Archives, and Museums (Cultural Heritage Institutions)
Lam vs L.A.M.

Libraries, Archives, and Museums are facing unprecedented change in the digital age.

Is there a role for these historically stable cultural heritage institutions in the age of Google and the global web or are they fugitives that will be caught, incarcerated and eventually disappear?
Libraries: the next 10 years

- E-journals are dominant, newspapers will disappear
- Mass digitization of library collections (besides Google Books)
- Downsizing of local print collections but the rise of large scale print repositories
- E-books will reach critical mass
- Music CDs and VHS and DVD will disappear – move to streaming
- Special Collections will become more prominent - unique content
- Fascination with the object
- Large scale digital libraries such as Europeana and Digital Public Library of America
Libraries: the next 10 years

- Transformation of library spaces
- Shift in library services (reference to consultation)
- New roles for librarians (research and data based)
- Radical collaboration between libraries
- Mobile is the norm
- Open access will grow and publishing ecosystem will change radically
- Self-publishing will increase radically
- Linked Open Data and data reuse
- Move from search to discovery
- Data sets
- Data management and data curation
Challenges for Libraries

• Connecting users to our resources
• Dependence on Google/Bing or other commercial entities
• Invisibility
• Lack of Information literacy skills on the part of users
• Intellectual property, copyright, and DRM
• Social media
• Changes in scholarship – blogs, webpages, media journals, open access,
• Access vs. Ownership
• Collection stewardship/preservation
• Budget
• Professional development
Challenges for Libraries

- Collecting the uncollectable (grey literature, the web, digital ephemera, Twitter, large scale digital things (astronomy, etc)
- Demise of the university press as we know it
- Changing roles of publishers in general and rise of self publishing
- Changes in journal publishing
- Difficulty in developing and curating an e-collection (changing pricing models, DRM, etc)
- Publishers doing direct marketing
- Publishers refusing to sell e-content to libraries
- Data management
Archives: the next 10 years

- Archives as key collections of primary source materials will become more important to scholarship (especially undergrads)
- Archives will digitize many of their collections to promote discovery and access (sometimes for commercial gain)
- Archives will begin to collect (willingly or unwillingly) digital archival collections
- Archivists need to figure out how to collect and curate digital collections
Challenges for Archives

• Huge backlogs of unprocessed physical collections that are undiscoverable and unusable (staffing issues)
• Archives are legacy collections (often donated by families). In a digital environment this will be harder to capture and donate.
• Archival collections contain many ephemeral items that provide the social context for a research project as well as primary source materials (letters, diaries, etc). With so much of today’s social context being digital ephemera, much of this may not be captured or capturable.
• Many archives have not figured out how to archive and or preserve digital materials (especially if there are obsolete formats)
• Collecting and preserving digital archives at scale is difficult and costly (e.g. White House web, presidential papers, etc)
Museums : the next 10 years

• Museums will digitize their collections to provide access and discovery
• Museums will begin collecting digital art and culture
• Digital exhibits will increase
• Rise of virtual museums
• Augmented reality will enhance physical exhibits
• Museums will increase their marketing to connect to other cultural/entertainment venues to draw in customers (physical and virtual)
• Museums and individuals will build virtual exhibits that will cross museum borders (e.g. curate a digital exhibit that includes for example work from Colby, the Met, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).
Challenges for Museums

- Mass digitization of their collections
- Making their digital collections discoverable
- Collecting and curating digital art and culture
- Integrating digital and physical collections
- Competing with collectors for art and artifacts
- New competencies for staff to deal with digital collections
Challenges and Opportunities for Faculty

- Global research will become easier and more complex
- Forms of scholarship will expand, change, and old forms may die
- Working with students will become increasingly complex
- Information skills for both researcher and student will become more important
- Faculty will be able to make their research have a broader reach through new tools and services
- Faculty will increasingly want additional support services for information, technology, and data management
- It will be easier for faculty to embed resources, services, and expertise into their courses.
- New forms of pedagogy, student engagement, and assignments are likely to emerge
Challenges and Opportunities for Students

• Student expectations that all information is digital and accessible
• Student demand for more global, non-western, non-traditional information will increase
• Lack of sophisticated Information skills
• Copyright, intellectual property, and digital rights management
• Students will push the envelope on new types of assignments and scholarship
• Ability to study, research, and collaborate locally and globally simultaneously
• “Writing and communication skills” will be increasingly important across a variety of media
Challenges and Opportunities for Librarians, Archivists, and Museum Staff

- Potential for greater opportunities to work with faculty and students
- Opportunities to develop new roles
- Opportunities for building local, regional, national, and international alliances that will make a greater array of rich resources to students and faculty.
- Opportunity to play a key educational role in helping students build robust Information skills
- Opportunities to engage faculty, students, researchers abroad with complex physical and digital primary sources
- Opportunities to involve students and researchers in digitization and metadata enrichment of archival materials
- Opportunities for museum integration into local and regional curricula while allowing others to integrate these resources at the national and international level
- Opportunities for museum staff, archival staff, and librarians to help students develop complex digital exhibits and curatorial skills
In Conclusion

Libraries, Archives, and Museums are likely to be here for the foreseeable future though they will definitely change. We may need to develop new metaphors to describe them.

- Library as collection, coffee house, global community, brain, ideas and engagement, destination, and global bookstore are a few possibilities
- Archives as history vault, treasure chest, scholars portal
- Museums as store, exploratorium, classroom, cathedral, window to the world