A Prediction of Some Library Administrative Changes in the Next Decade

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The theme of this conference, as you know, is developing library effectiveness and this paper is of a prediction on some library administrative changes in the next decade. I am not going to try a prediction similar to that of H.G. Wells in The New Utopia. He records that each year a committee selects the ugliest building in the town and arranges for it to be destroyed. His idea would seem at first ridiculous, but in practice he saw that it would work as a cheap practical device for the education of architects, builders, engineers, opulent persons and the general body of the public. This is an unusual role for me to predict change, for I usually preach that change should come about by establishing the need for change and therefore changes in one's procedures, activities etc. will be meaningful and these changes or setting of goals should be by a systematic approach. In this way there is increased effectiveness which will justify the libraries continued support based on fact. In the 1930s, Louis Round Wilson stated that the next ten years would witness the development of a body of costs and measures which would justify the library's support based on fact rather than on unproven assumptions and assist librarians in obtaining financial support. Now, some 47 years later, I am standing here saying the same thing. There is still a long way to go to achieve this essential aim. I suggest developments of this kind should be a continual process, especially in regard to the major changes which have and are continuing to be implemented.

At this point I would like to define in a management context the word effectiveness, which is so often taken to mean efficiency.

They are two entirely different things which are often confused. One can do a job in a non-efficient way and yet still provide society with a valuable service or one can do a job efficiently and yet contribute nothing to society. In the first case people need what is provided, in the second case nobody needs the output, however efficiently it is produced. Effectiveness is doing the right thing to achieve your objectives. The ideal is of course to combine efficiency with a socially economically desirable end. It was the very recognition of these basic simple facts which led to the development of scientific management.

Change in organisations is essential if it is to be dynamic and keep in step with the expressed needs and wants of those for whom it exists. It is as vital as the circulation of the blood if it is to survive. However introducing change just because a change would be nice is dangerous in an organisational concept. This change for change's sake, can lead to much dissatisfaction both among employees and those using the organisation. Remember what I said about efficiency and effectiveness, therefore any change must be for improvement.

It does not take me to tell you how libraries have grown, but as a result they are in a position very similar to that of industry in the late 1930s when industries developed from small organisations requiring small administrative staffs with the decision for change, goals, objectives etc. And the justification being the responsibility of the owner of the company. They have, of course, expanded into large complex organisations which require greater administrative support, staff more involved in the administrative processes, having to justify their course of action to a greater number of people - top management, shareholders, etc. Libraries have expanded in the same way in order to keep in step with the expansion of the universities. This growth has naturally led to greater interest
being taken by those formidable characters who control financial resources.

What, in my opinion, has not kept in step with the growth in libraries, and this is where I start on my personal assumptions and predictions, is in the area of administration and the ability to demonstrate library effectiveness. That is not to say that there is no administration but I feel that librarianship as a profession has been a separate and very distinctive field, administration and management know-how being of minor importance and looked upon as something to be done, in order to provide information on the running of the library usually of a historical nature.

Professionalism has as its primary function the protection and maintenance of standards for creative activities, administration has as its primary function the effective and efficient coordination of activities towards a common goal. There are, therefore, two functions which I see that should be inherent in the role of librarianship and which is why the profession should develop managerial skills. If you introduce two distinct and separate roles, the librarian and the administrator, then the most important component will be lost which is the expertise of the professional in the administrative game. The professional must be a capable administrator, otherwise I can see that the professional will be managed by administrators who will be without that necessary professional expertise.

To meet these needs I predict that the next decade will see one of two things. One, a greater number of administrators will enter the profession and use their managerial skills without the benefit of the all important knowledge of a professional calling. If this happens it will be a bad day for the library profession. The alternative is for the professionals to develop their knowledge in this area of administration. The programme for this workshop indicates to my mind the way librarians are heading. For the topics to be covered in the next few days are dealing with operating organisations in this very difficult non profit area, strategies for improving performance, library effectiveness, statistics, exploitation of services, reader education, personnel, and that pressing problem of the future size of libraries. I think this is the right way- librarians deciding the administrative requirement. The question for you, of course, is which direction do you take?

The next decade should see the development of meaningful, and I stress the word meaningful, measures of effectiveness which will be used to decide which relative future goals should be achieved. The introduction of automated procedures should, if they are installed in the correct manner, greatly assist in producing some of these various performance measures.

Future developments as I see them will be in five areas.

Evaluation of the service. This I consider to be the all important area if you are to withstand outside criticisms and pressures for cuts or even maintaining your present standards of staffing, finance, etc. This is also a requirement if you are to be able to justify an increase in the present level of service etc. This can only be done by a systematic approach in evaluating all the processes, services, etc. which are provided. An approach to this should be to develop measures of input - what goes into the system, output - what comes out of the system together with impact - the effect of the system to the users of the system, or in other words the profit or end products of the various services etc. provided. In this area of evaluation I predict the development of studies to provide measurement methodologies best suited for the purpose of measuring indicators of input, output and impact. Once this is done then the task of setting meaningful and required goals for improvement will be easier to justify.

Automation. We have seen the rapid development of automation in libraries. Up to now I feel this development has mainly been to automate particular segments of the library system. I see this as having been an essential step in the right direction towards more sophisticated applications which are capable of being developed to produce meaningful management information.
These developing library automated systems are well aware that a properly designed system is capable of providing valuable management information. This management information would support the evaluation I have mentioned, especially in relation to impact measures. For example, take the issue system. The automated system is capable of providing, in addition to the more conventional issue statistics, a great deal of information on the users' use of the library which was difficult to get from a manual system. I see from the programme, Professor Evans is giving a paper on this particular topic and I am sure he will ably demonstrate this. Much, of course, depends on the design of the system and other back-up systems. I do not think that information of this type is too difficult to find and any good analyst or programmer should be able to do the work involved. The question in many libraries would be, is such a person available? Until now this has not been possible without a great investment of work and time and in many cases requiring research effort and separate study. Another area in which there is considerable progress now, and will continue, is that of the automated cataloguing facilities; national, regional, etc. There is a great deal of experimentation being done at present and this will continue to the benefit of administration for some considerable time to come.

The library working environment. I bring this in at this point because with the introduction of computer applications to the library scene it will undoubtedly change the type of professional and administrative work procedures. Much greater emphasis will need to be placed on the question of retraining present staff or the employment of persons from outside the profession. What I previously said about the professionals and the administrators will apply in this case - the professional library and the computer person.

Introduction of new administrative techniques will undoubtedly change the role of librarians at all levels. Automation has not generally resulted, as far as libraries are concerned, in a significant reduction in the number of staff employed. What it has done is to give a new work dimension to librarianship. Automation will create a change in the type of work involved, and in many cases reduce what once was a skilled task to a clerical one. This, as I am sure you are all aware, will create a lack of job satisfaction and unless a fresh look is taken at the role of the librarian, and a re-appraisal of the levels of work, job descriptions, and the organisation objectives etc. is carried out, then it could be that all you have achieved in the past to create a profession, in the true sense of the word, would diminish. To avoid this it will be necessary to build on your present strengths, to acquire additional skills, place a greater emphasis on reader services and establish the library and its librarians as one of the most useful and necessary parts of the educational role of the university.

Today, many people are only beginning to accept the fact that librarians are not just people who issue books, but that there is a considerable and capable body of knowledge concentrated in a library building and this volume of knowledge consists of people of high calibre, competent of supporting education. The academics must be made to realise that the library is not just a part of the university services but is a major teaching department in its own right. I am sure that if this fact was accepted, the library would not be the first to have financial restraints placed upon it. Why is it the library is always the first place selected for cuts and is constantly being requested to conserve - not books but money. It is about time some academics were hit below the belt, and I suggest this is done by proving and justifying the library's existence by fact.

Library schools will have to place a greater emphasis on administration and automation if their students are to enter the ranks of the profession at a level according to their educational qualifications. The teaching of the more professional-type subjects should be according to the extent of their use in libraries. In other words, prepare them for their future job involvement. This could be at three distinct levels - librarianship, with emphasis on the library in a teaching role, automation, and practical administration and management styles.

Inter-library comparisons and databanks. With the increasing need for management information the next decade will see the creation of centres for want of a better word - whose task will be to provide management information for inter-library comparative
purposes. In the past, it has usually been the practice to carry out one off studies in individual libraries to elicit this type of information, to assist in the decision making processes. If this type of databank is established it should be possible to provide a library with the means to compare its performance with that of other libraries, see reasons for the differences in performance, and give guidance on the line of action required for improvement.

Comparisons will provide the ability to compare systematically the performance of various types of work with that of other similar institutions thus indicating the best line of action for improvement. Comparisons are of particular value in that they provide an overall review of performance backed by information on various areas. They also reveal hidden weaknesses and identify the strengths which must be built upon. Pooling information in this way it will assist the librarian in his role and place libraries in a position to combat the often incorrect assumptions made by governing bodies.

The fifth area in which I see change involving administrative change will be the question of size of library in relation to buildings, storage and relegation of material.

The restriction on budgets will undoubtedly make this one of the foremost topics in the next few years and great interest will be taken in the way in which libraries solve their problems and the administrative involvement - questions regarding the selection of material for relegation, costs involved, space saving alternative forms of storage, the effect of relegation on the library user, the optimum size library etc.

In Britain, these questions have assumed new and vital importance following the publication of the Atkinson working party report on capital provision for university libraries. We at the LMRU at Loughborough are about to embark on a number of projects designed to provide more specific information on these questions. In one way or another, all of these projects are concerned with establishing the library's administrative effectiveness. At this stage we see seven main areas for development: selection; acquisition and relegation; inter-library lending; storage of library materials; space requirements for books and readers; studies in the library response to the UGC report; library management databank. The other thing we will be doing is to develop courses and teach library management and statistics.

In brief, therefore, I see administrative changes being brought about by an increased need for information in order to produce measures of effectiveness which are essential if you are to sustain and justify the library's support and increase its effectiveness. Librarians must develop managerial skills if they are not to be superimposed by a management with little or no library professional experience. Similarly, with the increased use of automation in libraries, librarians should acquire a greater knowledge of this particular field.

The use of automated procedures will provide a new dimension to the provision of management information. Administrative changes brought about by automation will require librarians to not only rethink their role but involve themselves in more education. Library schools will have to rethink their programmes and become more involved in library management and automation on a practical basis. The requirement for libraries to have the ability to compare performance is long overdue and will be attempted by the use of databanks.

I would just like to conclude by saying that no organisation can remain as it is and comply with the changing patterns from outside. If libraries are to answer the needs of users and continue to be accepted as a professional enterprise, they must change, but the change must be towards increased effectiveness combined with efficiency.
DISCUSSION

Mr G.A. Hamel: You said we should start by the evaluation of services. And I have always
been under the impression that you should first of all define your objectives. And are
these objectives, not in fact, the criteria for evaluating? I would like to know how do
you evaluate services if you have no criteria or objectives?

Schofield: Well, I think you have to develop the criteria of evaluation. You have to find
out what measures you can use. The reason I put evaluation before setting objectives is
that if you evaluate your system, your evaluation will give you areas for increasing your
effectiveness in order to set your objectives.

I think there is this definite need for evaluation. In a way I think this is where libraries,
in general, have failed in the past.

Prof. R.C. Simon: Can we alone, as librarians, accomplish what you suggested?

Schofield: I would think yes. And this is what I think librarians ought to be doing, getting
more involved in this administrative role, because you have the professional expertise.

Simon: To be a bit more specific. I've discovered through my own experience that we
have to influence care-feeding of champions from outside our own discipline, who, when
they speak in our cause, will be listened to more than we are when we speak.

Schofield: Yes, it's a question of politics. But I always think that the best way of
handling this sort of political situation is by creating your own ammunition.

Drs. J.N. Schippers: Mr Chairman, I think that Mr Schofield perhaps should have stressed
more, in talking about management information coming from automated information
systems, that automatic systems don't give management information automatically. The
librarian will have to define exactly what he wants and needs, and a management
information system will have to be tailored to the personal needs of the management.

Schofield: Obviously, getting the right type of management information will mean a
great deal of work. For instance, the issue-system: there was an awful lot of information
you can get from an issue-system. If I may run down a very quick list here: items in
heavy demand, hard-core items, the usual reservations, recalls, renewals, overdues, items
never used; use of items on reading-lists; use by subject and classification; the number of
issues by collection, if our collection is split: use in relation to source of
recommendation; (and now we're getting into some very useful areas!) uses per hundred
volumes; uses related to total accessions by years of accession: .... and you can go on ad
infinitum. All this is useful management information, which should be considered when
you are designing any automated system. Let's say, what is the maximum I can get out of
that system? You have your general objective, but then, as a side effect on that
feedback, you can get some very useful management information. This, I think,
illustrates my point about automation and management information.

Prof. A.J. Evans: I wonder if we are in some danger of looking at library management in
a similar way to industrial management. In an industrial situation you collect together
various components and produce a product. In the library situation, you buy, in fact, the
product that you are going to distribute - and you buy it really untested, untried, guessing
as to whether it's going to be used. And we've really tended to look at many of these
management techniques, I think, in this way. Similarly, Mr Schofield mentioned output
and impact. Although in industry the impact of a product often depends on the
advertising and on the salesman, it's a different impact in the library situation; the
impact of your staff, of your actual personalities, and of contact between two people
with their own ideas comes into the situation far more, and yet we're trying to use
basically similar techniques to those used in industry for other purposes.

Schofield: I partly agree, but to come back to the impact measures, you well know the
effect of the Atkinson report. It was based on little knowledge of the impact a library
has on the user. When they are talking about relegation of material, there's very little information known about relegating material, which material to relegate, the impact of that material on the user and so on. And these are the type of impact measures I'm talking about, very simplistic. The impact of selection by type of person recommending (e.g. academic staff, librarian) can produce an impact measure by looking at use related to type of acquisition or recommendation.

Mr R.F. Eatwell: I think that we may be in danger of spending too much time and money on information, though some is necessary. I think we have got to state, in our view, how the libraries are effective, not by taking materials away from the academics, this would lead to more departmental libraries, which, of course, means more expense and more inefficiency.

I also think, that we shouldn't lamely say that we are non profit-making. We are profit-making; I'm sure of this. We don't actually produce any money, apart from Xeroxes etc, but we do make a non-measurable profit in the academic usefulness that's given to our students and our staff.

Schofield: I'll change my word to non-measurable profit-making then.

Dr J.A. Sydler: Our problem here with computers is, I feel, that we tend to go around and get figures, just as they did in industry in the early sixties, when stacks of computer print ended up in the wastepaper baskets or in the archives. As library managers, we should obtain only that information which is significant for us at any one time. Another vital point concerns the planning cycle. In management consultancy, the first thing we used to do, when we came into any firm, was to find out what was happening in that firm. And I think that this is an essential first point, and from there you can start to evaluate. Within your cycle there are other little cycles taking place, like determining aims and objectives. Aims and objectives change and are continuous processes, and you may get different stages in different parts of the library. I don't say that every year we have to re-evaluate and to re-plan, but I think (I hope you accept this as a comment to your management cycle) that we've got to go back one stage - and that is to find out what's happening now, because we may not need to change.

Schofield: Well, as for my finding out what the organization is doing; I sort of define that by evaluation. In that way we agree. Evaluation to me is finding out what is going on. Having found out what is going on, you then set your objectives.

Simon: A very quick question in the area of concept or conceptualization. There are perhaps three major groups in the information aspect of the library picture. Very broadly they have been identified as the users, the funders, and the servicers. These groups have their own concepts. I would like to ask the speaker's opinion on where indeed harmony can be achieved, and how it can be achieved.

Schofield: I think that the harmony between the servicers and the funders can be achieved by justification, i.e. production of information to support one's claim. I think the harmony between the servicers, funders and users can be achieved by examining the users' levels of satisfaction, and by trying to increase the effectiveness of the services you are providing. This is how I would see some element of harmony coming into being.

Mr T.S. Tanzer: Do you consider that there is a certain form of incompatibility - or potential incompatibility - between the personality of a librarian and the personality of the manager?

Schofield: A leading question! Well, I don't think there's any conflict here in the matter of personality. I've always been in management and I now consider myself to be a sort of half-librarian. All I would like to see is that the librarian develops managerial skill.

Mr. C.G. Wood: I would like to know from our European colleagues here how they cope insofar as many of their people who have influence at user level are developed away from the main scene into the institutes. And, therefore, there is a degree of indirectness of
influence, which we in the U.K. do not have.

Hamel: In the Netherlands, we often have branch libraries around the main library. Within the university technical libraries at Eindhoven and at Twente the users are represented in an advisory committee, which advises the librarian heading the branch library. From the advisory committee of these branch libraries people are chosen to give advice to the chief librarian. And so, there is a certain hierarchy in advice. Thus we collect information from the users and - the other way around - we have the possibility of influencing these main users in spreading a certain philosophy which is being held centrally. I think that this two-way system works rather well.

1. Introductions the rationale for improved planning process

In library management, planning and decision-making occur at least two levels - strategic and operational. Strategic planning involves decisions regarding the allocation of resources over an extended period of time and the long-term relationships of the library with its environment. Operational planning involves a much shorter time frame and the resolution of specific problems, usually of an internal nature.

For a number of reasons, libraries are experimenting to improve both types of planning. Management must make strategic decisions to respond to current and anticipated changes in the environment, including stabilized budgets, inflation, and a continuing information explosion. These changes prevent most libraries from maintaining equivalency in historical collection patterns and strengths. In addition, emerging staff needs, expectations, and values are forcing new definitions of managerial roles and effectiveness. Changing patterns of library use and user interests also are providing opportunities to redefine and strengthen basic library service. Out of a mix of these pressures, forces, and opportunities, libraries are finding that the current concept of the primary purposes of large, research libraries may not be economically feasible or workable in the future. As a result, library managers need planning processes that can help resolve the dilemma of attempting to do more with less.

Specifically, management might well have to make strategic decisions concerning the financial and performance implications of initiating machine-based information services, building remote storage facilities, or implementing computer-based circulation systems. Such actions need to be reviewed in terms of the potential benefits to the library and the cost of their design and implementation. Furthermore, in a period of stable budgets, doing something new or different requires giving up something else to compensate. This forces hard executive decision that must be justified and defended.

One thing is clear about these strategic decisions. They occur in relatively open system environments - systems whose variables cannot be quantified and sophisticated computation techniques cannot be applied. Long-range decisions facing libraries must take into account environmental, technological, and social forces that are not susceptible to rigid definition and precise manipulation within a simple problem-solving procedure. Hard information on these forces is not available readily, and staff willingness to accommodate new directions must be carefully cultivated. Decision-makers must examine and fundamental concerns regarding the role and objectives of libraries and provide the leadership that can result in resolution of sub-problems and the integration of these solutions into a total system.

Operational planning, on the other hand, is concerned with a much shorter time frame and the resolution of specific problems with fewer variables. For example, given a reduction in the current budget, managers can take advantage of quantifiable and computational techniques to determine where cuts can be made as to not to interfere with performance.

A recent survey of American libraries (1) indicated that a general approach to accommodating budget cuts includes decisions to reduce duplicate serial subscriptions,