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People Profile: David Tyckoson

Editor

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way to arrange materials based on topic, placing like materials together within some overall organizational scheme. Although subject classification systems had been in use in a number of libraries prior to the publication of Dewey's numerical approach, his is the one that really caught on. Although the idea of categorizing all of the world's knowledge into ten broad classes was both audacious and imperfect, it established a framework that provided browsability for collections and that is still in use in many libraries today. In fact, this innovation is so well known that it became a symbol of libraries for the general public. When you meet people and tell them that you are a librarian, how many times do they say, "Oh, then you must know the Dewey Decimal System"?

7. What: Telephone

Who: Invented by Alexander Graham Bell

When: Patented 1877, adopted by libraries in the early twentieth century

Why: Before the invention of the telephone, there were only two ways to communicate with a library: going into the building in person or writing the librarian a letter. These two options required either effort or time on behalf of the potential library user. After the advent of telephony, it was possible to communicate in real time with the librarian from remote locations. In fact, this technology made it possible for anyone, anywhere, to communicate live with any library, anywhere. This invention opened up a new level of service, allowing people to find out if the library contained a specific book or journal or to get an answer to a factual question without having to take the time to visit the library. Libraries began promoting remote telephone services, and some libraries, especially big city public libraries, developed large remote reference departments dedicated to this service. Today's Questionpoint and instant messaging services are direct descendants of these early telephone reference services.

8. What: Microfilm

Who: Eastman Kodak

When: 1930s

Why: Although microfilm is generally regarded today as one of the least appealing formats for information storage, it was in fact a big breakthrough in information technology. Photographing documents onto film that could be read on special readers helped libraries solve three problems: storage, preservation, and access. By acquiring microfilm, libraries saved space by eliminating large numbers of bound volumes. Microfilm not only saved space, but also saved the information itself, especially for newspapers printed on highly acidic paper. If not for microfilm, the information would literally have dissolved into history. Microfilm also proved especially useful in distributing unique information from rare and archival materials. Items that are available in only a few libraries in their original print formats could be made

available in many collections with the aid of microfilm. For example, very few collections would have the early American periodicals series without this technology. Microfilm may be little, but it certainly has had a big impact.

9. What: Photocopier

Who: Xerox

When: 1955

Why: The first general office copiers were produced in 1955, and they became standard features in libraries over the subsequent two decades. The photocopier radically changed the way that users interacted with library collections. Before copiers, users had to either check books out to take home and read, or else they had to write down their interpretation of the contents by hand. After copiers, users could get an exact reproduction of a page for only a small fee. As copiers became more prevalent, libraries became less about reading and more about reproducing. In fact, many

users seem to feel that copying is the same as reading and that the copying process is equivalent to the learning process. Combined with printing technology, photocopying has made the concept of the paperless society more of a myth than a reality.

10. What: Data Processing (computers)

Who: IBM and other mainframe manufacturers

When: 1960s-1970s

Why: To the modern eye, no technology has had a greater impact on libraries than the computer. What we do today to manipulate text, data, images, audio, and video had its roots in the data-processing experiments of the 1960s. Early attempts at automating circulation data and journal indexes have evolved into the sophisticated online catalogs, databases, and Websites of today. This technology has

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against the grain people profile

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David A. Tyckoson

BORN & LIVED: Born: Evanston, IL. Lived in Illinois, Ohio, Iowa, New York, and now California.

EARLY LIFE: Nerdy teenager.

FAMILY: Wife, no children, two cats.

EDUCATION: B.S. in Physics, M.L.S., both from **University of Illinois**.

FIRST JOB: Science Librarian, **Miami University**, Oxford Ohio (first professional job).

FIRST TEENAGE JOB: McDonald's.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Reference Librarian, Head of Reference, Head of Public Services.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Raide trains.

FAVORITE BOOKS: *Harry Potter*.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Bad customer service.

PHILOSOPHY: Use the tools of today to continue the traditions of the past.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Received **Isadore Gilbert Mudge Award**, the "lifetime achievement" award for reference librarians.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Complete book on the reference interview.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I assume that you are referring to the publishing industry. I see things much as they are now, with somewhat fewer players involved.

The big will get bigger (**Thomson, Elsevier**) as they acquire smaller companies. Their library-oriented products will get more expensive, but more comprehensive.

The general publishing industry will become bigger as well.

Bookstores as place will diminish as people buy (and sometimes receive) their products online.

A few scholarly journals will disappear, but most will still be around (almost entirely in electronic form) and will be an even larger burden on library budgets. 🐼

