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Digital Conversations--The Library is Dead. Long Live the Library!

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Digital Conversations — The Library is Dead. Long Live the Library!

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and **Todd Kelley** (Vice President for Library and Information Services, Carthage College) <tkelley@carthage.edu>

Column Editors' Note: *Greetings. As we stated at the outset of the Digital Conversations series, this will be an actual conversation — and we want you to join in! To that end, we have started recording our conversations and making them available for your perusal. You can go to our link <http://www.carthage.edu/media/chilsen-kelley-conversation-3.html>, or scan our QR code and watch the full conversation. Once there, we encourage you to join in the conversation as well. — PC & TK*



Todd Kelley: Paul, you are a great collaborator because you are a hedgehog specialist who approaches teaching in a fox-like way! You remember the essay by **Isaiah Berlin**?

Paul Chilsen: Yes...The hedgehog knows one thing but the fox knows many things.

Todd: Right — I use it as a representation of a liberal arts education. Our graduates know their discipline majors, but they also know how to connect their specialties to many things because of the breadth of their education and the way that we structure the curriculum. The fox-like connection that we are helping them to make is with information and technology for communication and expression.

Paul: Well I would say that we want them to be able to make those multi-lens connections. If we've done our jobs well, they should have that critical ability. That is a vital component of a liberal arts education. The literacy skills involve finding and evaluating information and the fluency skills involve communicating their knowledge.

Todd: In the print era, students would communicate what they knew with their instructor, and very often it was via a "paper." Today there are many more options. You are a specialist in film and media, but you are really interested in how all our students can communicate broadly with the varied forms of communication and the tools that are available today on the Web. Students can reach a global audience with many of the communication tools and venues that are easily within their reach.

Paul: True. I think I know where you're going with this and as always, I'm curious to explore it further. But first, I wonder if we ought to explain our title a bit, this time around? It's fairly provocative.

Todd: Well, that's what we are going to do in this piece — explore that notion.

Paul: Right. We don't think libraries are dead. Quite the opposite. They are very much alive. They are just alive in new ways.

Todd: Exactly! That's what we are here to explore — those new ways. During the print era, the Library took on its importance as a destination based on what it contained. Information was much more precious than it is in the digital age. Much of the information that is needed today resides in the information

cloud and can only be reached via the Internet. The digital library is outside the walls of the Library. Today libraries are more for people than for the storage of material. Libraries are connective spaces and organizations made up of people whose expertise is information and its new medium, computer technology. The digital library depends upon our unlimited broadband connection, computing devices, and wireless access.

Paul: Ok, so let's set about doing that. Back to the fox and the hedgehog — I get the reference but can you give an example of what you're thinking? A student example...?

Todd: Yes one of our students named **Scott** just updated the Wikipedia entry on the role of Pittsburgh compound B (PiB) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pittsburgh_compound_B] in investigational studies of Alzheimer's disease. He did some fantastic work as part of an experimental course that we are teaching in Library and Information Services to help students develop their communication skills for a global audience.

As this example demonstrates, there is an increased openness of platforms for communication. My personal perception is that some online journalism is starting to look more educational and scholarship is looking a little more accessible. That might be a good thing if it is true.

Paul: I agree. I think it is a good thing. And I love this point. I'm reminded of an anecdote from when I taught Public Speaking: I remember for a process speech, a student from the sciences went up and just read his paper. His head was down most of the time, reading. I talked to him alone afterwards to discuss his presentation. I explained that in Public Speaking, you need to always be thinking about audience. He insisted that he was — that at scientific conferences where he would present such a paper, his plain (he may

even have said "boring") presentation of his paper was completely acceptable. I opined that the world is really no longer limited to his presentations at scientific conferences, and that even if it were, the expectations of every audience are becoming more sophisticated, more able-minded, more connected. As a public speaker, I explained, it is incumbent upon him to present his information to the audience. I offered that the audience already knows how to read — it is up to him to use the media at his disposal to more effectively communicate his ideas.

He ultimately stuck to his guns, so I don't think I converted him. It does provide an example however of how scholarly work is changing. It is becoming more accessible, and in a liberal arts setting, we must imbue our students with the notion that they have to engage the multiple lenses of the fox in order to be effective communicators in this media-saturated, digitally native world.

Todd: That's a great story. And highly illustrative of how things are changing — for the better, I agree.

Paul: We of course are not talking about the specifics of any one discipline or any one academic pursuit — or even any singular pursuit at all. We're talking about all of it. But in our *Digital Conversation*, we want to talk about how libraries are changing. Perhaps Todd, just a bit of history, for context...

Todd: Of course!



Historically libraries have been mostly local resources, except perhaps for the libraries at the great research universities like **Columbia University**. For example, you have probably seen iconic **Low Memorial Library** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Low_Memorial_Li

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brary] in many feature films. It is the library where my grandfather met my grandmother in 1915 when he was an undergraduate. What is ironic though is that **Low Library**, arguably the most iconic academic library of the 20th Century stopped being a library in 1935 because **Columbia University** ran out of space 40 years after it was completed. It has been used for University offices ever since.

For much of the 20th century a number of universities looked beyond the needs of their own campuses and tried their best to curate the world's scholarly information, but it was difficult — at best — to do. They “threw in the towel” by the early 1980s and started to do what college libraries had been doing for some time, curating the collection to the research and teaching needs of the programs, departments, and faculty.

I believe that developments in 1967 may have already set the stage for those who were looking ahead at the future of information services. 1967 was the year that **Henriette Avram** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henriette_Avram] developed the MARC at the **Library of Congress** and **Fred Kilgour** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Kilgour] started the **Ohio Computer Library Center** [<http://www.oclc.org/>]. **Henriette** was a computer scientist who became a librarian and **Fred** was a librarian who became a technologist. I guess that today they would be described as blended librarians!



Henriette Avram



Fred Kilgour

The historical function of libraries to store material for possible use by local readers is starting to look somewhat archaic now. Over the past five years the **Hedberg Library** at **Carthage** has changed dramatically. In 2009 our library provided almost 200,000 distinct resources. About 75% of these resources were on site in the stacks, while about 25% were in the cloud. In 2014, just five years later, we have tripled the number of resources to 600,000. We still have about the same number of resources on site, but now 75% of our resources are in the cloud, and those are just the ones that we pay for. If we added in the open access and freely available resources that are in our catalog, the percent in the cloud would be even higher.

The idea of using valuable space in the center of campus to store print material that *might* be used doesn't seem wise. As I said earlier, libraries today are more for people than for storage. As my chart demonstrates, our library is now even more dependent upon solid broadband connections, a great interface, and personal computing devices more than shelf space in the **Hedberg Library**.

When we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the **Hedberg Library** in 2012, **Mr. Hedberg**, the lead donor for the construction of the Library, asked me about the centrality of the library when the library becomes digital. We are getting close to that point now. Our reference sources are almost entirely online, and our bound journals have been largely supplanted by **JSTOR**, **Project Muse**, and other online sources. Now we are starting to look at the overlap between the books in our general collection and eBook collections like the **Hathi Trust**.

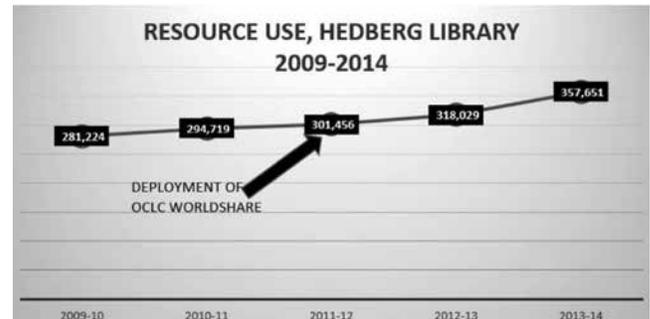
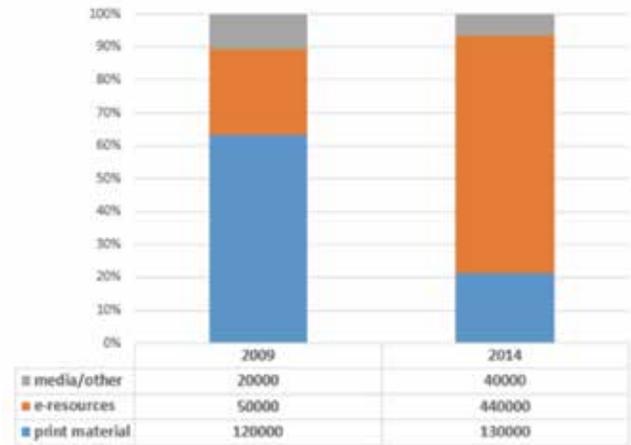
All of this work over the past five years added to our current efforts to examine the general collection allows us to consider a question from **Mr. Hedberg**. How will we use the space to keep the **Hedberg Library** at the center of campus? It seems as though the answer hinges on the right combination of people, resources, ambiance, collaborative services, and activity zones. Historically, library organizations are very experienced with people, resources, and inspirational space, but less so with collaborative services and activity zones, although librarians have great experience with collaboration.

Paul: Some naysayers might raise a whole litany of objections to this of course. “But I love books! I need to touch and feel my research. I can't curl up with a Nook all that well.” Or my favorite cartoon where someone is reading the newspaper on a computer at a diner, and another person leans over asking,

“Can you hand me the sports section?” What do we do about the tactile nature of books? Or more broadly, what happens if someone pulls the plug?

Todd: It is not print vs. eBooks. We need them both. As you say Paul, there are times that we read print books for pleasure that may not be as tactile or personal on a device. For the most part however, libraries are seeing increases in the use of e-resources. Last year the use of e-resources provided by the **Hedberg Library** jumped almost 13% from the year before. Increases in previous years were in the single digits.

Comparison of Hedberg Library Resources by Format 2009 and 2014



Growth in the USE of e-resources provided by the Hedberg Library Carthage College, 2009-2014

We believe that this significant increase is due to three factors:

- 1) The noteworthy increases we made over the last few years in the number of e-resources that **Hedberg Library** provides.
- 2) The discovery tool that **Carthage** uses is the “Google of scholarly information.” It is easy to use and includes almost all of our e-resources in one search interface.
- 3) Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, many of our students are coming to **Carthage** from great high schools and many use e-resources almost exclusively for their work. They are attuned to the e-scene, both socially and culturally.

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Paul: That makes sense. Beautifully and articulately laid out — on par with your usual depth and insight! Thank you for the context.

Now, I'd like to steer us back to a course we were on earlier. You mentioned that even though I'm a specialist in film and media — a hedgehog in that respect — I'm really very interested in how all our students can more effectively communicate with the varied forms of digital media that are available today. How do we make them foxes in that way? If we are to imbue our students with the notion that they can and even *must* reach a global audience with the communication tools within their reach, then as educators, we must of course, ensure their easy access to do so. But we also must *train* and *teach* them how to effectively use those tools. It's not enough to just hand out \$1000 pencils, as it were; we must show them how to more effectively use these tools.

Todd: I think the new library is the lynchpin — the key. Because — if the new library is imagined and executed correctly — there, freed from the constraints of disciplinary rigor and focus, students can truly explore and create.

Paul: The library truly becomes a place where they can work together to better articulate their points, more deeply and confidently support their research and findings, and more resolutely affirm the ground they are staking.

This leads back to what you were saying about the library being for people, not books. We've talked in the past about what that might look like, but can we dream a bit more? Can we talk about some of the current trends out in the world that we might cherry-pick to begin to connect these lofty ideas to students in a more your-backyard kind of way? What's already being done that we may embrace and even exploit to people's ultimate benefit?

Todd: I did a little research, and I know you have too, on the idea of makerspace. It seems this term has been now associated with public libraries and co-op places for people to make things in a very general way — sort of a blend of inventing, tinkering, and crafting — that doesn't quite encapsulate what we are talking about. There's nothing wrong with the current makerspace idea of course, it's just that I think we need something more explicitly related to digital knowledge creation and digital fluency

for global communication at our institution. Perhaps we need our own branding.

Paul: I know hacking is a trending term, but it too has downfalls — the word "hack" has obvious negative connotations and again, it has become a term that's more organic: my son mentioned the other day that he hacked someone's longboard move into his own thing. So, we should come up with a new way to refer to this new kind of makerspace. I came up with this: iCAN — which stands for "i Create, Access, Network."

Todd: I like that name quite a bit Paul. It seems to build off your Rosebud Institute vision statement of "Creating those who can." That's what these spaces could do — carve out places for students of all types to use the resources — together.

Paul: Exactly. In these iCAN spaces — in libraries specifically — people could go in and work together. They'd be specifically set up for collaborating on academic and scholarly work. Easy, super-fast cloud access, all apps at your fingertips, high-resolution displays, excellent sound quality, cameras, conferencing capabilities, full text, image and motion editing capability — the whole nine yards. What else? What am I leaving out?

Todd: Food. You're leaving out food Paul. Everyone knows that students work best when they're eating pizza! Food is a big part of inspiration. But seriously, the inclusion of iCAN space for knowledge creation is clearly a direction we want to go. I am wondering whether library and information organizations like ours can use it as leverage to create a nexus of collaboration that includes other units and programs that have specific goals for student success. The programs and initiatives that I am focusing on are recognized as high impact practices, such as the first year experience, the senior seminar courses and capstone projects, faculty and student learning communities, undergraduate research, and global and experiential learning. What do you think?

Paul: It seems an excellent vision and those seem appropriately impactful targets. Is there a place Todd that is doing this in any way so far? I'm curious if you know of anywhere that this is happening or where at least parts of it are happening.

Todd: I too am curious about that and wonder if our readers might let us know. It would be helpful to build a list of college libraries that are engaged in integrating support for

high impact practices into the library building and the library and information services organization. My friend and colleague **Joan Lippincott** from the **Coalition for Networked Information** [<http://www.cni.org/>] has talked about initiatives at the **University of Pennsylvania's** Weigle Information Commons [<http://commons.library.upenn.edu/study-spaces/collaborative-workspace>] that appear to reflect our vision here, and there is the work of librarian colleagues at **UW-Madison**, but I am also interested in hearing from other college librarians.

Paul: Again, we turn to you — our readers and viewers...and listeners — and ask you to join in this *Digital Conversation*. Let us know where you see this happening. Please share with us, either on email or follow the link or QR.

Todd: We started out this conversation with the hedgehog and the fox, or the productive tension between the specialist and multiple perspectives. We have come back to this idea as we think about the development and future role of the library and the information services organization. Of course, the library is not dead — not by a long shot. It's very much alive, but it's alive in many new and vital ways.

Paul: I don't often play the nostalgist, but I have a brief anecdote. I'm reminded of the time when I was a young boy and my mother would take us to the library. It was always a hotly anticipated event. We were a family of eight kids. A large portion of the brood would pile into the station wagon and make our way down to the beautiful, neoclassical building with huge, important-looking stone steps and stalwart columns. We would enter with awe, knowing we had the next couple hours to do nothing but explore.

It was a special time. There were all those books — rows and rows of books — and so many little nooks and crannies where we could curl up with wonder.

While the emotion may be similar for people today, the specifics of the experience are necessarily changing. In this case, change is inevitable. Change is good. Change is alive.

Todd: Indeed it is. A great note to end our conversation. I hope that we continue to hear from more readers Paul. It has been fun talking with you as always.

Paul: The Library is dead. Long live the Library! 🐻

Rumors from page 28

Advocacy - electronic, \$5,000,000 - \$15,000,000. Five judges were very impressed with the depth and breadth of all of the work submitted. There were 374 entries (120 were electronic) and the competition was extremely tight. Congratulation to the entire hard-working team!!!

Was sorry to see that a signed copy of *To Kill A Mockingbird* has disappeared from **Blue**

Bicycle Books in Charleston. **BBB** is right across the street from the Francis Marion Hotel. Have you visited it? You will remember that **Jonathan Sanchez**, the owner of **Blue Bicycle Books** was the roommate of **Leah Hinds'** husband **Patrick** once upon a time!

Exciting to have an article in the **ATG NewsChannel** on the recent purchase of **SIPX** by **ProQuest** by **Nancy Herther**. And in print an interview with **Rick Lugg** and **Ruth Fischer** about the recent purchase of **Sustained Collection Services** by **OCLC** in this print issue, p.42.

Speaking of interviews, hope that you are reading the interviews by **Richard Poynder** on the **ATG NewsChannel**. We have arranged to co-publish the next four Q&A interviews of **Richard Poynder** and his **Open & Shut** blog. As many of you know, **Richard** is an independent journalist and blogger specializing in information technology, scholarly communication, open access and open science. Thanks to the bam-zowie **Matthew Ismail** whose idea this was! <http://www.against-the-grain.com/2015/04/the-life-and-death-of-an-open-access-journal-qa-with-librarian-marcus-banks-by-richard-poynder/>

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