At Brunning: People & Technology--At the Only Edge that Means Anything/How we Understand What We Do

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Comparing SAGs at different types of academic libraries, such as community colleges, research universities, and liberal arts institutions. A holistic review of advisory groups beyond academia, including public and school libraries, might be of interest. In addition, assessment of SAGs is an area that is relatively under-studied. Future research could include tracking the success of outreach efforts suggested by SAGs, for example by measuring the knowledge of library policies and their popularity across campus. Libraries that use Lib-QUAL or other assessment tools and create a SAG could compare student satisfaction before and after the SAG’s creation. A focus on SAG members could also be illuminating—librarians could study students to determine if membership affects student retention, academic achievement, information literacy skills, or other measures of student success. Overall, any attempt to measure the efficacy of SAGs as outreach and community-building tools, perhaps in comparison to the efficacy of SAGs as outreach and communication tools and create a SAG could compare student satisfaction before and after the SAG’s creation. A focus on SAG members could also be illuminating—librarians could study students to determine if membership affects student retention, academic achievement, information literacy skills, or other measures of student success. Overall, any attempt to measure the efficacy of SAGs as outreach and community-building tools, perhaps in comparison to the efficacy of SAGs as outreach and community-building tools, perhaps in comparison to other outreach options, would be a worthwhile addition to current library literature. For more on our research with SAGs at NYUAD, read the IGI Global article “Friends with Benefits: Fostering Community in an Academic Library with a Student Advisory Group.”

References


as slowly and comprehensively as a couple picking a home on HGTV’s House Hunters.

“I’m crazy jealous, Sir, crazy jealous. My iPhone 6 is showing wear, my Tweets ever so slow…”

Now now I cooed. Just think we could be one of them, as I pointed to a thrifty couple off to Hawaii for their 50th anniversary and buying twin Samsung Galaxies. We laughed quietly. Samsungs. Hawaii. So droid…

We are chosen, we the owners of iPhones, chosen. We are members of the Apple Nation, an eco-system based on the highest value and worth of immaculate glass, sheathed in the best plastic money can buy, uber designed so that thinking is computing is believing.

There are two moments in life now when transcendent merges with the innate, when life thinking is computing is believing. Plastic money can buy, uber designed so that worth of immaculate glass, sheathed in the best twin Samsung Galaxies. We laughed quietly. one of them, as I pointed to a thrifty couple off iPhone 6 is showing wear, my Tweets ever so slowly and comprehensively as a couple

Postscript: The iPhone 6S Plus is an incredible device, sized nicely to still carry around like the slender smartphone yet big enough to allow a larger screen and other onboard hardware that improve already great features — better camera, better speaker, better microphone. If foreign students, especially Chinese students, who use their phones almost exclusively as computers, do foretell the direction of library computing, we’ve taken the wrong turn. Given how my Chinese students’ eyes pop at the sight of my iPhone 6S Plus — while they research, read, write their coursework — what better way to go out of style in style but with Apple’s latest bon mot in handheld computing…

Let’s Read

Public Library and Other Stories by Ali Smith (Hamish Hamilton, 240 pages). There isn’t a short story called Public Library however much we wish — it’s such an elegant crystalline title. The public library is everywhere yet not there. Stories are about people who grew up with a public library and mourn its demise in today’s UK. It’s about the thrill of a first library card, an adult ticket for getting books to read. It’s about finding freedom in the democracy of the library’s spaces, reading books that inspired, taught, and empowered one with knowledge that was more than one’s self. A major theme throughout is the serendipity of discovery in a library’s stacks and its adult parent distraction. And throughout is the author’s concern with a bureaucracy — modern officialdom — a faceless system that substitutes automated voices for reference, stressing efficiency and cost savings over joy and common “human” sense. Ali Smith wrote these stories over a twelve-year period that saw closing over 1,000 UK public libraries. It documents the toll obliquely and forever in smart, concise stories.

Part of Our Lives: A People’s History of the American Public Library by Wayne Wiegand (Oxford University Press). Wiegand, a historian and library science professor, chronicles the history of American public libraries from the view of its patrons — the kids, parents, adults, teachers, and city officials — who’ve played an instrumental role in creating a challenged but enduring American institution. Wiegand digs deep into memoirs, official papers, newspapers to bring to light many facts often hidden by our assumptions. He’s not a fan of city leaders, politicians, library directors who often shortchange users in the name of efficiency or political expediency. He finds the average library and librarian colder than they need or should be. This sangfroid, however, is balanced by genuine love for learning, reading, and doing stuff at the public library, enough to preserve a steady if challenged hold in American community life.


Drones, Robots, Autonomous Vehicles — 2015 marks the year Artificial Intelligence (AI) went mainstream. A day did not pass without a news story on our future of driverless cars, drone delivery of goods, thinking services brought to us by IBM Watson, or the toll of Robots and their toll on the labor force. Some of us love the thought of a world where we are served; like Oblomov we like the leisure above all struggle. Others are just smitten by the efficiency, the sustainability gains, the idea that we’ve mapped the genome as applied to everything we think and do.

Unread books — with the recent appellate court decision affirming Google’s right to scan 20 million library books without payment to authors, fair use now extended to snippets revealed at Google’s algorithmic wisdom — Google’s all-knowing eye rather than yours — we move closer to understanding Umberto Eco’s decades-old idea of the unread book. Unread books are where the action is, an antilibrary of what you don’t know. It’s out there, waiting for you to read if only you can find it. For centuries this meant finding the book, on its shelf, in a library. Eco is a demanding reader — knowledge is what remains to be read. Google can add billions of books but we don’t approach Eco’s goal. It’s asymptotically unreachable under the current understanding.

Bureaucrats and books — it’s the new B&B but don’t order it from your bartender. Books and bureaucrats is the new actionable concept? — the snippet goes forward from the Google Book Settlement as a new form of publishing and reading. It’s an automated abstract nothing new about that yet its length, easily one or two average chapters minus continuity. Brings a whole new meaning to learning and reading. Yes, he’s smart but what he knows seems, well, so chopped up, like he just skimmed it all.

Improbable Library — Or improbable libraries. A photographic essay by a UK journalist and son of two librarians denotes odd instances in the digital era of place and books and commutes astonishing ways librarians around the world are reaching readers.

Martian Librarian — could be played by Matt Damon, why not? But now born on the red planet, schooled in the planetary decimal system, and newly arrived on earth pondering all the libraries found in the Mars like industrial parks of a print-less planet Earth. Martian Librarian finds poster board and fashions signage above a large industrialized door of the even larger sheet metal warehouse. Public Library. Wayward books — Writer and librarian Barbara Fister advised us in 2004 to avoid describing our Internet response to warehousing books as warehousing our books. A decade later our books are off-site, warehoused, and it’s been a good business for those that build them and a fait accompli without much fuss. Worried Fister, our warehouses admit our stock-in-trade, books, are more storage than hot business ready for retail. In 2004 it was rhetorical, in 2015 phenomenological books in themselves existing for themselves, existing practically speaking as meta-data in our catalogs. This is retail in reverse, what results in Dollar Stores. Dark Internet — Mom refused to let us watch Dark Shadows, you know, the spooky soap opera of the 60s, which played on the portable Sylvania TV next to your sister’s Princess phone. Ah, by today’s standards and its Dark Internet — home of human organ sales, human trafficking, human baby factories — it seems an idyllic time of innocent neck puncturing and innocent devily in dark rooms, away from Mom and a bright brilliant afternoon after school. Be aware of the dark Internet, its parallel universe where the post-Google library may relocate, where unjacked jackets of best sellers await the bit torrent librarian’s cataloging and circulating. “Kids, you aren’t in that dark library are you? Mom texts from anywhere.” No, we’re just playing Dark Shadows on Netflix… Snippets — over a decade in becoming — should we call it law, practice, publishing concept? — the snippet goes forward from the Google Book Settlement as a new form of publishing and reading. It’s an automated abstract nothing new about that yet its length, easily one or two average chapters minus continuity. Brings a whole new meaning to learning and reading. Yes, he’s smart but what he knows seems, well, so chopped up, like he just skimmed it all.

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