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## Sleepless Nights Imagining Blueprints and Crimes

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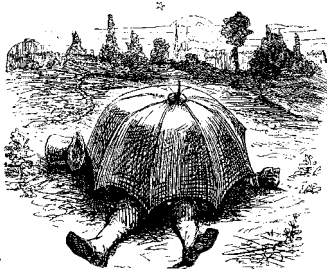
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# Sleepless Nights Imagining Blueprints and Cranes...

by Maggie Farrell (Dean of Libraries, Clemson University) <maggie4@clemson.edu>

During the day, the bustle of my position as Dean of Libraries keeps me running from meeting to task to email to project development and back to meetings. The juggle of activities can be overwhelming but typically energizing as our library program engages with the university to advance teaching, learning, and research. I am fortunate; the Libraries at **Clemson University** are center stage within campus life and are deeply regarded by the university community for outstanding librarians and staff. It is during the quiet of the night that worries appear as to if we can build the services that contribute to the education of our students, how we might construct a scaffold of research services, how we will build on traditional services to create a new structure that supports data manipulation and visualization, and how we repurpose limited budgets to take on new initiatives. The foundation of all these questions is how we might transform from traditional librarianship to create services, collections, and buildings that support the modern needs of our students and faculty. At night, visions of blueprints, scaffolding, cranes, and tools appear as I wonder how we will accomplish so much with limited time, funding, and positions. The only way to move forward is internal transformation of operations, employee skills, and eliminating good but less critical operations to embrace a new future. How are libraries able to truly evolve to meet current needs of our patrons?

As one contemplates the future of the library, vision is critical. What are the goals? Where does the library want to go in supporting the university or community? How does the library fit within the broader institutional goals and objectives? The first step in building the future is to establish the vision for the library. This will guide the or-



ganization in determining their direction. The supporting objectives will create the blueprint for building library services. Just as with any construction plan, the plan will outline what resources are necessary and for libraries, those resources include funding, staffing, technology, equipment, and facilities. Most construction projects are developed with a team of experts and the same applies to libraries as librarians and library workers need to be engaged in the development of the blueprint. Their expertise is essential to develop realistic objectives in addition to securing employee buy-in to the future of the library. Before starting any project, the vision and plan will be fundamental as it will outline the work that needs to be undertaken.

With any construction or renovation project, one must decide what should be removed in order to make space for an initiative or new service. This takes skill as it is difficult to imagine a different set of services or to eliminate a process or service regardless of its usefulness. Home renovation projects are fascinating as the expert determines that a wall can be removed or a door relocated. Librarians should be assured that it is difficult to see beyond the daily responsibilities to eliminate a process that might open up a new initiative. And it might be a perfectly good process just as the wall in a house might be a perfectly good wall but tearing down a wall may open up space just as eliminating a service may open up staff to different services. External consultants, brainstorming, and seeking constituent input

are some methods that may assist librarians in imagining different services and determining if any existing services or processes are not as vital. The blueprint also helps in such situations as it focuses operations on priority goals and helps librarians to imagine the finished work.

Every construction job requires unique skills and expertise. In building a home, an electrician does not work on the plumbing. The building plan determines what expertise is necessary for the construction. So too in libraries — we need a variety of experts that can support our work and the challenge is likely in the developing areas in which librarians are innovating new services. Currently, libraries are expanding digital collections, developing data management plans, implementing services that visualize data, connecting with patrons through online services, developing new metadata schemes, electronically connecting disparate collections, and delivering information from around the globe to the desktop. Just as our homes have changed from manual furnaces (remember having to light the furnace?!) to home temperatures controlled by your phone, these services do not sound like your dad's library. It is an exciting time to be a librarian but it is also daunting as new services and types of collections either add to existing services or replace services. Catalogers are challenged to describe data including new information such as rights management. Reference librarians connect with patrons virtually and may never guide a student face to face. Libraries are purchasing less print materials but have to manage a complex information environment to connect disparate databases and citations for desktop delivery. Librarians are connecting digital objects to GIS and to other digital collections. To build the library of the future, we need specific skills and expertise to enable our construction.

Unlike construction in which contractors are hired for particular jobs, libraries are already staffed and a library cannot, nor should not, just replace existing personnel with different employees. How does a library transition to new skill sets? What incentives do libraries have to assist librarians and library workers to take on new challenges or to reward outstanding initiatives? What professional development opportunities exist for personnel to develop new skills? Just as it is not easy for a plumber to become an electrician, a cataloger may need support in moving from cataloging print materials to cataloging digital objects and data sets.

Perhaps developing and keeping expertise is one of the most significant challenges facing library management today. Certainly declining budgets are a primary concern but within our budget authority, how do managers motivate and encourage personnel to learn new skills? Going back to the construction blueprint helps. Librarians and library workers who understand the vision and objectives of the plan are more likely to contribute toward its success. The planning process should be inclusive so that personnel are engaged in developing the strategies to advance the libraries. With clear direction and support from within the organization, libraries can make significant strides

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## Making Open Access / Open Data ... from page 24

on different platforms, it is also hard for a researcher to know how their work is being used and therefore to demonstrate impact.

Measuring usage is also important for librarians who want to know how their subscribed content is being used. For publishers, the signals we get from how researchers interact with content helps us enhance our platforms and services for the wider research community. These considerations have motivated **CrossRef** and **COUNTER** to look at DUL to enable parties to transmit sensitive data on user content interactions directly to authorised end points. The technical infrastructure needed to support

this is in development now, alongside multiple stakeholder dialogues, to ensure the relevant standards and protocols to make DUL a success are taken into account.

There's a tremendous amount of progress being made in scholarly publishing today as more head down the collaboration road together. Is your institution going along for the ride? 🌱

### Endnotes

1. <https://www.chorusaccess.org/>
2. <https://www.chorusaccess.org/>
3. <https://www.elsevier.com/connect/open-access-policy-propelled-the-uk-ahead-of-global-trends>

in developing and attracting the expertise that they need to be successful. A manager should seek ways to support professional development. Such support may include professional time in attending local workshops and online courses or webinars. Funding for training and travel will assist employees who need to seek coursework or training away from the local community. State library and regional associations not only provide professional development but assist personnel in connecting with other professionals in their field. There are non-library professional development opportunities as well such as technology conferences and subject discipline meetings. If library funding is tight, associations often have scholarships, universities may have employee support funds, and cities may have a training budget. An inexpensive professional development activity is sending a team of employees to libraries in the region, especially those libraries that are undertaking similar initiatives. Or host a personnel from another library to share their expertise and experiences as a way to learn more about a project or process. Finding options that work for your library may require creativity but there are successful methods for building new skill sets that will support library objectives.

In addition to professional development, a manager may update a position description to incorporate new responsibilities. Adopting new procedures, responsibilities, and applications may be outlined in a position description or articulated as expectations within a

performance review. With a shared vision, professional development support, and accurate position descriptions, a manager is able to lead personnel to transform their services and operations. New employees will complement existing skills strengthening the overall team in achieving the goals of the organization.

On a construction site, there are a variety of tools and equipment to accomplish the work. As in organizations, there are a variety of software, hardware, and equipment to facilitate the work of libraries. These tools are essential to achieve the objectives but typically ever changing and expensive! Part of the planning process must include strategies to purchase or develop the infrastructure that will be necessary to accomplish the initiative. This is a challenge particularly for technology because it is fluid and requires a replacement cycle. Typically, libraries have not been fully funded for technological innovation, so directing existing funding is required meaning that a manager must carve it out of existing budgets — or frankly take it from another operation. Imagine taking a screwdriver from a construction worker and giving it to another worker! The planning process helps such decisions in determining the allocation of limited resources and developing buy-in from personnel who may not like the decisions but hopefully understand the reasoning.

During construction, it is inevitable that changes will be necessary. Budgets may shift, employees may leave an organization, delays occur, and mistakes happen. Construction projects typically have contingency budgets and flex within the timetable. Emergency budgets and time flexibility are usually not within a library's operations but the concept

of being flexible and adjusting to changing conditions is a good quality for any organization. Particularly for organizations that are in transition, individuals need to be nimble to adjust to circumstances.

As with any new building, there are ongoing costs to sustain the initial investment. When developing a new initiative, planning needs to include sustainability costs such as technology replacement, continued professional development, and operational funding. Buildings require constant maintenance so following a transformation, managers need to account for and plan for the continued costs to sustain the change. Failure to do so may result in an organization falling back to its previous state or that the initiative has a great start but falls into disrepair.

Finishing a construction project brings great relief and satisfaction. Working through various details, putting up with construction, dealing with delays, and reworking budgets are stressful but the end result is worth the pain. Yet once it is complete, it is time to work on the next project or perhaps start to renovate. So too for organizations as you realize how much more you know now or perhaps some time has passed and it is time to reexamine the initiative. Organizations are organic institutions that change and evolve over time. New personnel join an organization, others retire, technology advances, budgets shift, and leadership changes. All of these adjustments mean continual sleepless nights — wondering how individuals will adapt new skills, budgets will hold out, and transformations occur. A manager tosses and turns while seeing blueprints, cranes, equipment, and budgets striving to stay ahead of the changing information landscape. 🐼

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## Booklover — Canetti Crowds and Power

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“*Crowds and Power*.” This intriguing title by **Elias Canetti**, the Bulgarian author who won the **1981 Nobel Prize for Literature**, caught my attention while perusing the library for the next reading selection toward my goal of reading one piece of work by every author who has every won the **Nobel Prize**. (Update — 51 laureates’ literature read — not quite halfway to the goal.) “*Crowds and Power*” presents itself like a case study of humanity, possibly even a textbook for a sociology course. In 50 short somewhat staccato chapters he guides the reader through an understanding of crowds. He begins with the interesting premise in the first chapter entitled, “The Fear of Being Touched.” “There is nothing that man fears more than the touch of the unknown. He wants to see what is reaching towards him, and to be able to recognize or at least classify it. Man always tends to avoid physical contact with anything strange.” A couple of paragraphs describing this fear and then: “It is only in a crowd that

man can become free of this fear of being touched. ... This reversal of the fear of being touched belongs to the nature of the crowds.” **Canetti** then spends several chapters describing the open crowd, closed crowd, rhythmic crowd, stagnating crowd, flight crowds, ethnic crowds, reversal crowds, the pack, religious crowds, and finally the crowds in history.

Then the dynamic shifts to power. 55 chapters are given to navigate power. He begins again with an intriguing title: “The Entrails of Power” and an investigation into the use of the hand. Power is shown with force, speed, survival, secrecy, mercy, command, transformation, fame, and is illustrated with descriptions of African kings, slavery, rulers and paranoiacs.

But the most thought provoking illustration of power for me is in the chapter entitled “The Orchestral Conductor.” “There is NO more obvious expression of power than the performance of a conductor. Every detail of his public behavior throws light on the nature of

power. Someone who knew nothing about power could discover all of its attributes, one after another, by careful observation of a conductor.” **Canetti** begins with the single aspect of standing — a power stance. The conductor is the only one standing. The orchestra sits in front. The audience sits in back. “Quite small movements are all he needs to wake this or that instrument to life or to silence at will. He has the power of life and death over the voices of the instruments; one long silent will speak again at his command.” This same power is also over the audience who is usually abuzz until the conductor appears on the dais. They become silent and still in their seats and remain that way until the conductor makes the final baton movement.

I love live music, be it classical, jazz, blues, rock-n-roll, indie, or up and coming, and enjoy

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