

Virtual Symposium by Maryanne Mills  
INFO 287 – The Hyperlinked Library

Sound of an acoustic coupler connecting to a network

In 1987 I was clipping newspaper articles as a corporate librarian. Ten years later I witnessed the dawn of the Internet.

Today, as I review all that I have learned in the Hyperlinked Library class, I'm grateful for the connections I've made and the insight I've gained through all the lectures, posts and comments shared.

I've got two take aways from this class:

The first is Don't be afraid to stick your neck out. This theme was revisited through out the class and I found my incorporating the lessons immediately.

In Brian Mathews article, Think Like a Startup, he states that instead of a strategic plan, libraries need a strategic culture and to embrace failure as an opportunity to pivot to success. When libraries go through major renovations or any substantial change, we may struggle to understand our colleagues who invoke the phrase, "It's always been done this way" and to try and change their mindset. This can be

difficult, I know. but if we can use examples of successful libraries who have made the transition, it's a step in the right direction.

Sticking your neck out includes embracing chaos and being comfortable with being in Beta mode.

In the 10 steps for Planning lecture Professor Stephens quotes Clay Shirkey and the best approach to change: Endure as much chaos as you can stand. He states when chaos happens, it can be messy and mistakes will happen, but in the end we will be learning, growing and adapting to change.

Well, I took his advice this semester and was awarded a small grant to start the first phase of a digital medial lab for our library. We will turn or old microfilm room on the left into a Technology Lending Lab. Maybe one day we will have the kind of facility North Carolina State has on the right. I've never done this before and we are embracing the chaos because we didn't do 6 months of research first. What we had to realize is that there is never a "better" time to do something. If we did wait six months to plan it, prices may have increased. Also, we will beta test it with our students – give them a chance to test out the process of boring and let them help make it a better

service. This is a good segue into my second takeaway from the class.

Creating a community is more than a Facebook Page.

Hyperlinking with people – reaching out not just through social media but building connections face-to-face and through the participatory web.

In the book I reviewed for the context book report, *Consent of the Networked* by Rebecca McKinnon, I learned of web-based communities, people contributing to the digital commons and engaging in a form of citizenship on the Internet, otherwise known as Netizens. I realized I could bring that global project down to the local level to my college library as we embark on building a more transparent and participatory culture. Like the examples from Module 3, we want to users to help plan our future services, enhance what already works and maybe even inform us of what services are no longer needed.

I've come up with 3 projects that can help the library become more participatory  
Project 1: Short term: create participatory online space, global in nature and humanist in keeping with the teachings embodied in this class. It will be user-driven with the

ability to offer anonymous feedback. The model takes after two examples that were discussed in class: The 14 Days to Have Your Say blog from the University of Washington and the Anythink online magazine.

Thomas and Brown called it a “Collective Environment” in their book A New Culture of Learning. In an online platform, students will be learning in the collective from their peers and others including librarians, tutors, and instructors

Project 2: Investigate “infinite learning” activities that can make the library space a hub of exploration and creativity. The Library as Incubator Project gave me the idea for an Artist In Residence partnership with our art department at the college and the Montalvo Arts Center. In this way the library becomes the centralized space where these two groups can merge and students are the beneficiaries

Project 3: Build a digital Media Lab so that students can build 21st century skill sets. The Library has just embarked on a technology lending program, so our next step will be to create a space where students can create magic. A Lab with student interns assisting their peers would also create a lively art community as well.

This virtual symposium touched on just some of the valuable insights I have gained in this class and how I can apply them in my current position. Most of all, I think I've gained a new appreciation of our profession through the concept of the "Hyperlinked Library" In paraphrasing Professor Stephens, Hyperlinking is about people. Connecting with purpose, generosity, an open mind and a creative spirit.

Thank you!

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Acoustic coupler

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