EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION
LIBRARIES IN CRISIS

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Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 2,509 libraries between 1883 and 1929 (Bobinski 1968). These buildings occupy a special place in our shared imagination as bastions of stability, with thick stone walls that weather storms and protect the ideas of humanity. The buildings still stand, but many have been repurposed, as they have proven to be inefficient and too expensive to retrofit for modern communication technologies. The public, too, demands more out of the spaces of the library; in new libraries, rigid walls have been replaced with flexible shelving and open spaces for social interactions (Shoham and Yablonka 2009). Library buildings, as houses for knowledge, thus provide a metaphor for changes in the purpose of the institution as well as for how people know.

Until the 1960s, librarians focused their attention on building book collections, though other material artifacts, such as film, LP, and microform were also collected. Physical objects, such as print materials, are relatively easy to gather and catalogue compared to the digital documents that librarians now curate. The former are stable and owned; the latter are not—or are less so, despite librarians’ efforts to standardize formats and negotiate amenable terms with publishers, copyright holders, etc. Making digital documents accessible also poses a challenge. The devices and platforms that patrons use vary widely. Even upgrades of operating systems can disrupt access. Adapting to innovative communication tools and techniques is a systemic stress on the library as a whole—budgets, interdependent technologies, software and collection vendors, patrons and librarians alike. And it contributes to a perceived crisis, a fear, that librarians will be displaced by technology. Linked to this are periodic but very real crises in funding: technology is expensive, it drives change in the institution, and yet it is necessary.

One way to conceptualize crisis is visually, as an apex or an arc in a timeline of events. The crisis is a point at which a life, a system, an institution, etc., either falls apart or changes in order to survive; it is the juncture at which the system must adapt or die. A crisis might also be represented as a three-act
play or in simple narrative structure: the plot is set, a conflict ensues, after which the conflict is resolved—the denouement. But this analogy is an oversimplification. Any complex system has many actors with competing and sometimes incompatible motives. Locating the beginning of the crisis or the setting of the plot is difficult, sometimes even in retrospect. Likewise, the apex is unlikely to be an objectively observable point. When charted on a graph, the events of a crisis might look more like a mountain range than a single decisive spike. Resolution, likewise, is unlikely to be simple (or, returning to the metaphor above, may not necessarily appear as a visible decline). Nor is resolution equally distributed; inevitably, there is some collateral damage. Still, the image of the arc is helpful for conceiving a confluence of actions and events that force change—in this case, in the institution of the library and in the library and information professions.

This special journal issue presents a number of different views on crises involving libraries and other institutions of cultural record. The essays variously focus on challenges that result from changes in the greater environment (such as politics, technology, and publishing) as well as those that stem from change or stress within the profession. Some of the essays gathered here take an historical approach to crisis, and as such consider the aftermath or resolution in retrospect. Others discuss ongoing issues that remain unresolved. Does the closure of libraries constitute a crisis? Do we lament the loss of physical library locations because children will no longer be able to get lost in the stacks, or is it because we fear that knowledge itself is at stake? Are we afraid that research will come to a halt? Taken as a whole, the essays in this issue highlight why the mere act of naming a crisis calls for reflection, if for no other reason than to find a “new normal” or equilibrium.

In the first essay of this issue, John Buschman capsulizes two decades of his work concerning the fundamental role of libraries in the democratic public sphere. Buschman’s studies have centred on examinations of the neoliberal policies that drive public spending, on how those policies undermine the fundamental purposes of our public institutions, and on the centrality of libraries in the public sphere. According to Buschman, the crisis is a consequence of reduced public spending on libraries and there is no resolution in sight. Libraries must obtain their funding from somewhere, and that somewhere has increasingly been from private sources and corporations. The problem with private or corporate funding is that it potentially intrudes on the purpose of the library. While Buschman has written primarily from the standpoint of the United States, his concerns pertain to Canada as well, as attested by the commentaries in the Dossier on Canada at the end of this issue.
John Burgess reflects on events of the twentieth century that culminated in the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association (ALA). Professional codes of ethics are often produced to bring a sense of purpose or identity to a profession. The ALA’s Code of Ethics was written in the aftermath of the two World Wars. Burgess concentrates on the Library War Service of World War I, when librarians eliminated entire foreign (especially German) book and newspaper collections in support of the war effort. He calls this form of wartime participation a “moral crisis,” which he defines as an “event in the history of a person or an organization brought on by the realization that actions and self-identity no longer coincide, revealing something significant about the character of that person or organization.” The events of the Library War Service during World War I represent a crisis wherein the acts of censorship and surveillance perpetrated by librarians stood in sharp contrast to the ethics and values that have come to form the core identity of the profession. Burgess presents evidence that shows how librarians who participated in the War Service were moved by professional insecurity; the war presented an opportunity to raise the status of librarianship through mobilization. The resolution of the crisis, or the “new normal,” following World War I, included an espousal of neutrality in the library collection, which was later embodied in a new Code of Ethics. This resolution brought about profound and lasting positive change in the ethics of both the library and the profession.

The essay I co-authored with Michael Sweeney discusses libraries and democracy, much like Buschman’s, but through a focus on publishing. It concentrates on how pre-Internet publication models and the publish-or-perish system for tenuring university professors have contributed to the “Serials Crisis”—the name for the uncontrolled rising cost of many serial publications. The essay draws on Deweyan conceptions of democracy and Habermas’s theory of the public sphere to discuss open access scholarship and the role of research libraries in developing institutional repositories. The study concludes that librarians’ extensive work with institutional repositories, data management, and greater involvement in serious research consultation and collaboration together offer a way out of the crisis.

Beth Patin describes a different type of crisis. Her essay offers recollections of and reflections on her experience as a school librarian in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Patin worked at a private boys’ school in the Lower Ninth Ward that was completely destroyed by the hurricane. An analysis of the destruction reveals the strengths and limitations of the systems of support within the city and community. Warnings about the city’s weak protective levees had been largely ignored, resulting in massive devastation. The political system broke down under the stress of the natural
disaster. However, as Patin explains, the rich social fabric that supported the community provided the strength needed by the city—and the library as one of its vital institutions—to rise again. Today, one decade after Katrina, New Orleans is thriving, though in a new state of “normal.” Patin’s essay rounds out the issue and ends on a hopeful note. She emphasizes that the communities within which—and for whom—libraries work ultimately hold the power for positive evolution, even in the face of potent destructive forces.

Finally, four commentaries are gathered in a special Dossier on Canada. Jody Berland; Brian Greenspan; Vincent Larivière, Stefanie Houstein, and Philippe Mongeon; and Wayne Jones variously address the crisis in research and in the preservation of collections in the Canadian context. Berland’s and Greenspan’s commentaries critically examine the attack on Library and Archives Canada under the administration of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who held that office from February 2006 through November 2015. Many scientific libraries, among others, were shuttered in what was widely acknowledged to be an ideological effort not simply to cut costs but to silence communication about scientific research that was not aligned with government policy. The authors point out that gag orders and the dismantling of archives was part of a systematic effort to control information and knowledge. The commentaries by Jones and Larivière et al., much like the essay by Bossaller and Sweeney, focus on change in academic libraries: funding, the serials crisis, and Google. Do such changes constitute a crisis? Together, these four commentaries make it clear why funding—for physical libraries and for librarians to preserve and make available the contents of the production of human knowledge—are crucial for the free exchange of information, and for democratic citizenship.

Libraries must respond to pressures from their environments and constituents. Some crises are tangible, if not visceral, such as hurricanes and tornadoes that cause mass destruction. Others appear in retrospect to have been symbolic, though not without tangible effects. The shuttering of libraries and archives is arguably both tangible and symbolic, if not ideological: closing facilities to prevent access to knowledge is indeed a crisis.

As described above, crises arise from an imperative to change or evolve. Advances in technology have opened vast possibilities for advancing scholarly communication and have transformed how the general public accesses information. A fundamental tenet of librarianship is that libraries are growing organisms (Ranganathan 1931). Rigidity results in obsolescence. Sometimes a retrospective view might be needed in order to determine whether change constitutes a crisis, or whether it is merely confusing or inconvenient. Libraries
are, without a doubt, in a state of flux. However, the unimpeded exploration of ideas that libraries offer is a fundamental premise that must never be discarded as collateral damage.
References


LIBRARIANSHIP AND THE ARC OF CRISIS:
THE ROAD TO INSTITUTIONALIZED CULTURAL NEOLIBERALISM

JOHN BUSCHMAN

Introduction
The editor of this special issue of MediaTropes has noted that the word “crisis” has both an internal and an external dimension within the context of print culture and librarianship. This paper will frame those dimensions at a relatively high level and explore how they form an arc of development currently characterized by the growing hegemony of neoliberalism in institutions (like libraries) well outside of areas central to economic functions, but core to their social and cultural sway—and therefore of importance to print culture. That arc of development is best traced first in its external dimension: despite the ubiquity of the institution, the field is after all, generally a subset of municipal or county government, of schools, and of colleges and universities. In other words, the field is embedded in institutions that are themselves strongly subject to the sway of larger social and economic forces—a fact that has made the well-intended leveraging of education to make substantial social change so ineffective for so long over the course of American educational history (Perkinson 1995). Five important articles will be reviewed very briefly as the method to quickly trace and frame librarianship’s arc-of-crisis and its response and consequent changed relationship to print culture. These articles form a shorthand set of benchmarks by notable scholars. The fallout—or the internal dimension that I have called a crisis culture in librarianship in my own Dismantling the Public Sphere—will then be traced in parallel, feeding back into the broader social and cultural arc that spawned it in the first place. The paper will end with a further explication (beyond that clearly already embedded in the field’s crisis culture) of the meaning of these developments for print culture in the field and a brief conclusion.
The Broader Frame of Crisis: The External Dimension

The political theorist Sheldon Wolin (1981) wrote a piece titled simply, “The New Public Philosophy.” In it, he articulated three essential observations: with the recent election of Reagan, the radical changes that had been underway in our political culture and language were cemented and accelerated. Under Reagan “‘the economy’ has emerged in the public consciousness as [an] autonomous entity, the theater in which the destiny and meaning of the society will be worked out” (27); consequently, “the things the old language was suited to express and emphasized are being lost or downgraded” (27) and words like “citizen and community become subversive words in the vocabulary of the new political philosophy” (36). Wolin then interestingly inverts the crucial concept of political power: “Instead of power corrupting, politics manages to corrupt power by divorcing it from its grounding in political community. [P]ower becomes political when it is … shared and common concerns are discovered through a process of deliberation among civic equals and effected through cooperative action” (36). At a stroke Wolin synthesized some of the core ideas of contemporary political philosophy, and more importantly, he signalled that a fundamental shift was well underway that went well beyond simple social and economic policy into the workings of democratic culture.

An article by Henry Giroux titled, “Public Philosophy and the Crisis in Education” (1984) picked up Wolin’s theme and crystallized three overarching points about the early stages of neoliberalism inside schools: the strong ties being forged between the lagging performance of the U.S. economy and the schools; that this was being driven politically by a new language—the “new public philosophy” of Wolin’s title that constituted a new form of discourse that “defines economic rationality as the model of public reason” (187); and that this new public reasoning contained an “inadequate rationale for defending schools, or any other public sphere committed to performing a democratic public service” (191, emphasis added). Giroux took Wolin’s thesis and concretized it as it was being enacted in schools.

Michael Apple (1987) produced an analysis of the variety of Reagan-era blue ribbon educational panels that issued reports in the early 1980s. While A Nation At Risk (1983) remains the most notorious (Bracey 2003), there were about twelve such reports from 1983 onward and Apple concludes that they “are as much political as they are educational documents [and] the specific content of each of these proposals is less consequential than the overall tendencies they represent. [They] are calls for action, calls to use scarce resources and political power for specific ends” (201–202). The nature of those ends is decidedly economic, and within the logic of the reports inequalities
would go unaddressed or even exacerbated (203–212). At base, the reports represented a reassertion of authority for Apple: “the vision of the economy ... may be unequal and wrong, but there is little doubt that they have had considerable success in moving the debate onto capital’s terrain” and in “disarticulating the ... themes of social democratic accord” (216–217). Apple firmly established the conservative economic agenda and its framing of educational issues under such rubrics as “at risk” and “excellence” within the blue ribbon panel reports—the point at which Wolin’s new public philosophy was installed at the center of educational policy, but with broader cultural and social implications.

Giroux made a shorthand reference to a powerful idea articulated by Jürgen Habermas—the public sphere. Habermas wrote an early précis of his thesis (1974) that had to suffice for the English-speaking audience for many years. In it he locates the genesis of modern democracy in the changed commercial and political conversations of the 18th century in new urban public spaces such as coffee houses and the intellectual press of the day. The nature of this type of communication was new, and two crucial things happened as a result. First, opinion became something that was recorded and communicated beyond home and acquaintances and, via its distribution in the press, essentially created a public whose opinions critically reflected on government policy. Second, the act of public critique, discussion, and airing of the state's actions in print and in the arena of the market created what Habermas calls the principle of supervision: the principle that for power to be legitimate, its proceedings must be made public. This transformed the nature of power and its legitimation—and the printed word was at its core. It was also a process that carried with it the seeds of its own extension: power and its legitimate use was thereafter able to be subjected to the rational bases of critique and debate, explaining how the excluded (women, African Americans, immigrants, gay people)—however slowly—fought their way into the political process and toward equal legal standing in the democratic public sphere.

Habermas notes two crucial problems of relevance to our concerns. First, the public sphere so constituted relies on a highly educated, cohesive class of people. Once that breaks down and democracy becomes more of a mass, society wide affair in the 19th century, the rational communicative process of public and opinion formation begins to break down. It devolves back to what he calls “publicity.” Second, the economic half of the development of the public sphere has come to dominate. With formal rights established, the press was “relieved of the pressure of its convictions” in his words, and free to “take advantage of the earnings possibilities of a commercial undertaking” (53). Manipulation of public opinion (publicity) through the press becomes a means.
to administer the public sphere, to smooth out and justify an unequal economy in a putatively equal democracy. Habermas called this the “refeudalization” of the public sphere, referring to the political effects of kingly splendour and spectacle that were a hallmark of governmental authority under such systems. If subjects formerly were meant to be awed and obey the political authority of kings communicated through the splendour of power, citizens are now meant to be confused and diverted by media spectacle from questioning the workings of authority and its separation from democratic discussion.

In a wide-ranging and important article, Michael Harris (1986) surveyed most of these authors and ideas to think through their implications for librarianship. Harris’s conclusions concerning literacy and print culture were very much a part of the process of postmodern canon-breaking and high culture debunking well underway, but his working through of the implications of these ideas yielded two permanently fruitful applications of broader critical scholarship. First, this type of critical research can “demonstrat[e] the existence and character of … ideology, [or] the ways in which ideology (or culture) is produced and reproduced” in libraries (237). That is to say, Harris’s piece was the most definitive and thorough early scholarly statement welding what goes on in librarianship to larger social, economic, and cultural trends. Second, what emerges from this type of inquiry “is a sense of the library … embedded in a stratified ensemble of institutions … dedicated to the creation, transmission, and reproduction of the hegemonic ideology. Such an interpretation challenges the ‘apolitical’ conception … and strips the library of [an] ethical and political innocence [often] attributed to it” (241). In other words, the broader political, policy, and practice implications identified by Wolin, Giroux, Apple, and Habermas would logically show up in library budgets, policies, and initiatives—likely as part of librarianship’s being embedded in the broader context of educational institutions. These were important insights that could (and did) lead to different analyses and conclusions, but he established them firmly as having purchase within librarianship.

It is important to note here that this tracing is not conducted in the spirit of a genealogy or archaeology of these ideas—these authors did not “author” the context and framework decades ago that became contemporary neoliberalism. That process was undertaken consciously, in the political, policy, social, and cultural realms for a definite set of purposes (George 1999; Shor 1986). If the term does not trip off your tongue, its broad outlines should probably be familiar by now. What makes it neoliberalism is the infusion of economic and market principles into corresponding social arrangements and their extension into areas of society where we haven’t normally see them (Brown 2006, 694) —such as schools and libraries. Neoliberalism posits a series of assertions
about human nature and the best social, political, and economic arrangements that hold together as a “family,” the bedrock that it rests on and returns to over and over:

- people are rationally motivated by self-interest;
- the market is the best mechanism to harness those pursuits for social good;
- the state, with its hierarchical and bureaucratic restraints, thwarts the market and/or privileges certain groups or activities;
- state action in the name of the public good thereby often is ineffective or does harm;
- the state should therefore be weak in the name of market freedom and choice, and ideally itself be subject to market competition and discipline —specifically where it counts in budgets;
- at the same time, the state must exercise its power to enforce these policies both economically and socially. (Dunleavy 1992, 3–4; Apple 2005; Halsey, et. al. 1997, 254–262, 356–362; Clarke, et. al. 2007)

Beginning in the 1970s, new policies were crafted around the principle that “open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from state intervention and the actions of social collectivities, represent the optimal mechanism to socioeconomic development”—all promoted by global entities acting on neoliberal policy ideas (Sniegocki 2008, emphasis added). The most visible manifestation of neoliberal globalization was the “massive productive and financial corporate infrastructure across the world” that promotes quicksilver financial flows and the dominance of globalized consumption and fashion promoted “through an equally massive process of marketing and advertising” (Hall 2011, 722).

Socially, this implies the strong assumption that state commitments to egalitarianism and interventions in the economy (income redistributions, social inclusion and justice) are mere “sentimentality [which] enervated [people’s] moral fibre, eroded personal responsibility and undermined the … duty … to work” (Hall 2011, 707). Politically, neoliberalism “defines the exercise of unwarranted power in terms of insulation from the market-place” (Halsey, et al. 1997b, 256–257); in other words, democratic control of institutions such as schools, universities, and libraries is defined as problematic: it gets in the way of efficiently replicating market conditions within them, their ultimate good in neoliberal terms. While the perspective here is critical, neoliberalism has captured (or perhaps defined) some common sense ideas: given the real differences among people, the best arrangements “aggregate diverse individual
preferences into social choices” (Moe 2000, 129); “it is better to let people have what they want, or to respect their freedom to choose” (Taylor 2002, 189); and the persistent and basic threat to freedom is the “power to coerce [and] by removing the organization of economic activity from the control of political authority, the market eliminates this source of coercive power” (Friedman in Couldry 2010, 53).

The Crisis Culture of Librarianship: The Internal Dimension

Within librarianship there has been an almost continual declaring and naming of a crisis of one sort or another for about fifty years. Harris (1986, 211) notes a “lament” from the 1960s about thoughtless, fragmented research “oriented to immediate practice.” The “paperless society” and library famously predicted in the 1970s provoked a series of crisis-in-the-making announcements that dominated thinking and practice in the field for decades (Harris, Hannah and Harris 1998). As my Dismantling the Public Sphere documented, this became a tradition of reactive, careening, and overwrought form of management over the years—usually conducted to overcome traditionalism and resistance rather than engage it thoughtfully—and itself represents the crisis. Examples were not difficult to find.

- From 1973: “It is no longer controversial to affirm that ... there exists a library crisis and that some changes are in order”; there is a “breakdown of the established operations, an intellectual crisis among ... library management, and a deepening space and budget problem” (3).
- From 1984: “The Information Age has swept around the world like a poorly forecast winter storm [and] has been as bewildering as it has been challenging. This is the nature of the Information Age, but unlike the snows of February, it is here to stay. The necessity is for all of us to become acclimatized to it” (4).
- From 1993: “Are we the last generation of a profession being swept away by the rising tide of technology [and] will we be relegated to dealing with the great mass of print-on-paper [in] a gigantic mausoleum of old information? Or do we have the courage to enter into a deliberate metamorphosis and forever transform ourselves and librarianship?” (4).
- From 2002: “The public library, that used to be a major purveyor and ‘keeper’ of information, is now just one of the crowd [and is] barely considered as part of the information revolution” (5).
The critiques I made of this tradition of crisis largely paralleled critical educational scholarship: the environment of schools and universities—the home of so many libraries—was becoming more centralized, less autonomous; the market economy was invading libraries in unprecedented ways—particularly the driver of technology; technology was the stalking horse of the market as both the symbol of the new economy agenda in libraries and a driver of management discourse urging fundamental changes; those changes—to institutional purpose, in institutional practices—were deeply unreflective about the history and purposes of schools, universities, and libraries, and essentially a form of market discipline unsubtly applied directly from the business world; the changes engendered were essentially consumerist in nature with a synergy between the market as model for education and libraries and this consumerist approach. Institutions such as universities and libraries were both behaving consumeristically and framing their publics in consumeristic terms. These patterns do not serve democratic societies well, and in fact chip away at and dismantle the few remaining zones of economy and culture supportive of reason, debate, and investigation, in short, the public sphere and our professional roles in its continuing dismantling. In sum, this broad arc positioned libraries both within and as an agent of neoliberalism.

**Neoliberalism and the Arc of Crisis: The External and the Internal Meet**

The essential threat to democracy is the thesis of my later work, *Libraries, Classrooms, and the Interests of Democracy*. Neoliberalism as described here is a global economic agenda, but its characteristic social face is a fundamental hostility to collectivities (Bourdieu 1998). Neoliberalism engenders a fundamental problem: an inherent challenge to public goods, the undermining of community, and the developmental issues of the young (autonomy, learning, fairness, cooperation, self-actualization) are left behind in such an ethos. It does not fundamentally address these issues, but rather merely wishes to remove barriers that lie in the way of the progress of the market and the march of consumerism as a model for the operation of libraries and other educational institutions. The evidence again is not difficult to find: in an era of uncertainty and economic hardship, “even [when] it may seem to be going well within the library’s four walls … there is a risk that [it] will be overtaken by the many new virtual … cultural offerings” (Kajberg 2013, 295). We must quantify our value in economic terms—a difficult task which implicitly imposes a market structure on public and communal goods and services—with predictable outcomes:
• the commodification of librarianship in the adoption of marketing techniques and principles to the field—the bookstore and coffee shop model;  
• libraries-as-markets and libraries helping to create/stabilize/shore up markets, e.g., social capital and area real estate;  
• entrepreneurial management culture;  
• public choice ideology and the consumption model of citizenship in delivering and receiving services and service coproduction;  
• an entrepreneurial grant and/or fundraising culture and internal competition for funds (“intrapreneuralism”) in libraries and LIS departments;  
• a competitive ranking culture—for example the Association of Research Libraries ranking lists. (Greene and McMenemy 2012; McMenemy 2009; Buschman 2012; 2003; Clarke, et. al. 2007)

It is correspondingly not difficult to identify the current variation of the leadership crisis culture. The Director of Web & New Media Strategies at the Smithsonian Institutions recently gave the keynote at a yearly LIS symposium in Washington, D.C. (Edson 2014). He is very charismatic, well-spoken and transparently sincere in wishing to extend the reach of GLAMS (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums), but he does so by speaking in strikingly neoliberal terms, with the emphasis on scale: the “world has changed in scope scale and speed,” but libraries haven’t; we don’t dream big enough like astrophysicists, computer scientists (e.g., the algorithmic growth of Moore’s Law), or the audience reach of Wikipedia or Gangnam Style videos. The results were much like a slickly-produced TED Talk, with little “room for debate or questions…. ‘[I]deas’ [are] modular, fungible and easily transmitted in convenient formats … commodify[ing] thought, making ideas interchangeable, and adapted for consumption … [without] the critical delineation of problems, or the formulation of better questions” (Wilson 2014). As always, library leaders provided examples too. In an infamous presentation proposing to hire no more librarians by the head of a Canadian university library, the TED Talk ethos was further delineated: “We just want to get it done. We didn’t want to over-analyze it. We want to just pick a direction and go for it. We felt that the survival of the academic library was dependent upon our ability to start acting upon something…. We spend a lot of our time and effort in integrating technologies throughout the library, whatever that might be” (Trzeciak 2011). Still another library director takes the basic idea further:
I believe that libraries benefit from the same kind of leadership styles found in corporations. Furthermore, libraries, like corporations, have to adapt their leadership styles to match changes in the environment…. Since our environment is no longer stable, we need to evolve, fine-tuning our approaches and learning from corporations that have been successful in times of change. (Maloney in Jackson 2010)

In other words, librarianship’s rhetorical crisis culture continues up to and into the era of neoliberalism. Crises are continually declared or broadly hinted at, new entrepreneurial-business—“just get it done” paradigms are routinely declared, but the actual *purposes* and *ends* of the institutions are lost in the crisis fog-of-war.

**The Arc of Crisis and Print Culture**

The claim was made early on that the external dimension (the broad framework of the development of neoliberalism in economy, society, culture, and education) and the internal dimension (librarianship’s crisis culture) formed a feedback loop. Some of this is, of course, already implicit: the ethos of neoliberalism declares public, cultural institutions like schools, universities, and libraries to be non-competitive, inefficient (by definition), and unresponsive to the needs of the economy. These same institutions in turn respond by aping broader business, management, entrepreneurial, and neoliberal trends, turning a portion of the culture away from the goals of citizenship, development, and equality toward neoliberal ends, deepening and reinforcing its culture. For example, a student wrote frankly about the instrumentalist approach to her own education that captures the contemporary neoliberal social ethos among the young: “Time not spent investing in yourself carries an opportunity cost, rendering you at a competitive disadvantage as compared to others who maintained the priority of self” (Buhler in Brooks 2013). For another, Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society (in Peterson 2014) made the unsurprising finding that young students are growing increasingly frustrated by institutional restrictions on their use of smartphones in educational settings, and find restrictions and guidelines for them in classrooms a distinct signal of mistrust. Thus these consumer goods simultaneously invade learning spaces and obviate the basic trust within educational communities. Lastly as I have argued in a recent piece, the way LIS is researching, structuring, and marketing patron driven e-book acquisitions mimics shopping and thus consumerist orientations. A perfect market (which is what PDA aspires to be) responds only to “market-expressed preferences,” but people in fact formulate and
communicate preferences and needs in multiple and complex ways and contexts that themselves differ over time. “Why should the … expression that tends to be the most impulsive or the most self-centered be privileged over … other” kinds of expressions in our libraries? (Baker in Buschman 2014). As Fister (in Buschman 2014) put it, “Supplying [what] ‘customers’ … order from a catalog of possibilities alters the fundamental nature of libraries. … Sharing among libraries is something that most ebooks don’t allow. And building a collection for the future seems to be a thing of the past.”

While these have implicit effects on print culture and preservation in libraries, we are not short of explicit effects over the years. Though a surfeit of information had been complained about since early 17th century, the number of publications, the number of copies printed and distributed, and the sheer stability of this mass posed a challenge to libraries and their practices by the 1960s (Gleick 2011, 399–402). Gates (1990, 192–193) summarized the resulting challenges generated by the success of support from federal programs: bibliographic access on this scale (card catalogues became unwieldy), the time lag in libraries in moving from publication to acquisition to cataloguing to the hands of the reader, the sheer scope of the storage and preservation issues, sharing of materials—and the funding to accomplish all this. It was into this environment that F.W. Lancaster stepped with his hugely influential Daniel Bell-derived thesis of the “paperless” society and library—essentially declaring the very success of building a robust library system on a national scale in America a crisis; the result was a “form of economic determinism … rul[ing] the production and distribution of knowledge and information in society” with a strong deterministic bias toward electronic distribution (Harris, Hannah, and Harris 1998, 32).

A number of consequences for print culture have historically flowed from this over the last forty years:

- Ownership of journals were consolidated, prices rose to fund the conversion to electronic formats and distribution, and library budgets were squeezed.
- Investments in technology rose, further squeezing library budgets—and obviating any substantive national efforts to coordinate preservation while cutting book acquisitions.
- As a result of the budget squeeze, entrepreneurial management techniques strongly linked to business culture methods and ethos sought to leverage technology, buildings, and services to justify, produce, or otherwise increase revenue streams—and federal monies for
scholarship, publishing, and buildings has been diverted almost exclusively to technology.

- Meanwhile, stabilization and preservation of digital materials remains a chimera, and the further erosion of research and reading skills by the tools designed to make learning easy continues apace. (Buschman 2003; 2012; Warner 2002; Harris, Hannah and Harris 1998; Rosenwald in Pattillo 2014; Fister in Buschman 2014)

Rosen summed up the situation succinctly: “It is not that print is dying, and with it abstract sequential thought…. These statements are true, but they fail to account for what else is happening: … the search for the ‘responsive chord’ is crowding out all other impulses” (1992, 23). In fiscal, professional, and cultural terms, this defines institutionalized cultural neoliberalism in libraries and its effects on print culture.

**Toward a Conclusion: Got Hope?**

The short answer is yes. Clarke (2004, 29) argues against “overstating the coherence, power, and achievements” of neoliberalism, and in turn political theory uncovers a paradox: the social model of market choice is characterized by radical alienation; once the transfer of goods or services is made the relationship is over, obviating any coherent basis for the kinds of solidarity and social cooperation that neoliberal society actually relies upon to function (Slater 2002, 237). Yet neoliberalism, despite itself, “is highly dependent on state action—not only to prevent theft and enforce contracts but also to regulate the economy…. [People paradoxically] need the state but have no moral relation to it” under neoliberal social and economic conditions (Walzer 1991, 296–297). In the end “free exchange won’t maintain itself; it needs to be maintained by institutions” (Walzer 1984, 322) such as “museums, symphony orchestras, universities, … law courts, representative assemblies, newspapers, publishing houses” and libraries as well (Taylor 1992, 45). These institutions provide democratic society with practical settings to enact democratic practices and realize social solidarity beyond the classic sources of democratic community (churches, families or volunteer organizations) as I argued in *Libraries, Classrooms, and the Interests of Democracy*. Gerald Mara (2008, 132) describes the three types of institutions that democracies rely upon and utilize: 1) educative (schools, universities, libraries); 2) enabling (voting, political participation); and 3) elicitive (juries, school boards, etc.). Libraries are public educative institutions in a democratic society and they “contribute to the shaping of an intelligence capable of reflecting upon private and public
priorities and of a character able to meet … challenges” (Mara 2008, 132). In other words, democracies rely upon “autonomy and responsibility in the evaluation of individual and social choices” in its citizens, and educative institutions have a substantive role in fostering these capacities (Mara 1985, 1038). Conversely, it is why “the spectacle of a stupefied [public] worries us because it seems a travesty” of democratic citizenship, and it is why discussions of it “have such sharp political inflections[:] we are debating democracy by other means” (Peters 1993, 559).

The institutional location of libraries is a productive and important place to examine and counter the effects of neoliberalism because their practices, spaces, research foci, and internal bureaucratic habits and rituals are not inconsequential. In the end, the interesting question is not “what is neoliberalism in LIS?” but rather, what is the nature of the damage done by neoliberal practices that are already well known. What is their effect inside our institutions on the capacities for democratic citizenship? We can see neoliberal phenomena at work most commonly in library marketing to customers and return on investment strategies. Budd is very clear on this: “the importance of marketing initiatives in libraries as a mechanism to help customers choose from among the services offered by the library … [e]ither implicitly or explicitly … emphasize[s] the relationship between choice and potential benefit” (1997, 314). These practices tend to “convert all forms of public choice into market behavior” and we consequently “set limits on the range of available strategies [and] take a substantive … stand on [the] character [of our institutional] ends” and those of the people we serve (Mara 2008, 89, 35–36). At base, the core methods of neoliberalism undercut the cultural and social resources of democratic community itself (Bellah 1992, 21).

In simplest terms, “the everyday appeal to validity-claims [is] implicitly” instantiated in communicative processes and produces the ground of social cooperation and rational understandings in which democracy thrives for Habermas (1982, 234–235; Brookfield 2005, 1151). Postman (1985) is blunter; he simply contends that print culture and democracy thrived together. The point is that these processes take place in the lifeworld—a Habermasian concept that describes the “reservoir” of societal meanings that surround [us]…. It is the site at which systemic problems first become tangibly present for citizens…. [When] democratic political culture … play[s] a constitutive role … the lifeworld [is] the surrounding condition for political practice, the source of its coherence and the grounding of its norms … enabl[ing] both the explanation of
political forms and the evaluation of political alternatives. (Mara 2008, 143)

If the lifeworld is the surrounding condition for political practice, the public sphere is the space for politics we make through dialogue and debate, and it is extended to libraries and classrooms as places of learning and inquiry “where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all” (Giroux 2010, 190). It follows that the development of public and communicative autonomy can be severely limited when public spaces such as libraries and classrooms are organized around neoliberal principles. Such matters of institutional “policy can be understood as … the colonization of the lifeworld” (Habermas 1987, 371). The practical problem for Habermas rests in areas of culture like libraries where the stakes for money and power are not high, but where the “grammar of … forms of life” and democratic concepts are worked out in the lifeworld (1989, 297). What is at stake is a “grammar of systematically distorted communication … of dissociated symbols and suppressed motives”—like marketing and advertising—that becomes embedded within our institutions (Habermas 1970, 96). In other words, these have effects on print culture and a focus on libraries is not unimportant. Finally, Habermas retains a consistent focus on emancipatory potential and interest in a fully rounded concept of autonomy that deepens our understanding of the role of educative institutions:

only in an emancipated society, which had realized the autonomy of its members, would communication have developed into that free dialogue of all with all which we always hold up as the very paradigm of a mutually formed self-identity, as well as the ideal of true consensus. (Habermas 1966, 297)

What we research and think is shaped by the context in which a library situates the resources we discover, and it is as important what we decide not to include as what we do. Deciding to include something (or not) means that we must acknowledge the importance of what is there in the first place. The purpose of my scholarship is to uncover neoliberalism’s workings inside a commonly taken-for-granted institution so that we not distort libraries as one of the bases of a democratic culture beyond recognition.
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MORAL CRISIS, PRAGMATISM, AND THE LESSONS OF THE LIBRARY WAR EFFORT

JOHN T.F. BURGESS

Introduction

Between 1917 and 1920, the American Library Association operated the Library War Service. This was a program designed to serve the reading and information needs of soldiers in training camps or deployed overseas. It also provided an opportunity for librarians to improve the perception of their profession and to develop a broader demographic of library users, particularly adult men. In the process of accomplishing these goals, rank and file librarians across the nation engaged in acts of censorship against German cultural material, denied library access to pacifist organizations, and distributed pro-government propaganda. Arriving at the end of the progressive era of librarianship, World War I gave American librarians a new sense of purpose. The war was a call to action and a chance to prove once and for all how valuable librarians and library collections were to the American people. The nature of librarians’ response to that call was logistically impressive, unethical by current standards, organizationally transformative, and it revealed a deep chauvinism against feminized professions held both within and outside of librarianship. The actions undertaken by librarians as part of the Library War Service represent one of the greatest moral crises in the history of American librarianship. Understanding why this crisis occurred is essential for preventing a repeat occurrence in the future.

What constitutes a moral crisis? How does a moral crisis differ from other kinds of crisis and from normal change? A crisis may be considered as a span of time when events drive the pace of choices but do not dictate the choices that are made. As a result, crises act as stress tests, wherein the strengths and weaknesses of a system are demonstrated in greater contrast than would be seen in times of normal change. This is true for moral crises as well as for broader structural crises. For the purposes of this paper, a moral crisis is an event in the history of a person or an organization that is brought on by the realization that actions and self-identity no longer coincide, revealing
Resolving a moral crisis requires meaningful individual introspection or collective discourse and either a revision of identity or behaviour. This kind of crisis differs from broader social, political, or economic crises, where institutional power structures are pressured by internal or external events to either adapt or be replaced with a more responsive structure. These kinds of crises may act as the trigger for a moral crisis, in the way that World War I created the justification for the establishment of the Library War Service. However, whereas a standard crisis is resolved when either pressure to reform is removed or when structural changes are implemented, a moral crisis may not be resolved until years after the end of the events of the crisis. What matters in a moral crisis is the ability to honestly appraise individual or professional character as being morally good. Such appraisal can only occur after the kind of introspection or discourse mentioned above. Both kinds of crisis differ from normal change. Normal change occurs gradually and as a result of decisions that are made using existing, relatively unchallenged organizational paradigms. Risks incurred during normal change may be considered operational rather than existential in nature; operational risks are a matter of increased or decreased efficiency. In contrast, an existential risk is an event that is capable of radically and permanently altering an individual or organization, potentially leading to the demise of the institution in question.

The events of the Library War Service qualify as a moral crisis in that the increasingly progressive identity of the library profession was at odds with actions being taken at every level of practice. During the brief years of American involvement in World War I, librarians collectively chose to transform themselves into a profession that took loyalty oaths, censored German culture, gathered intelligence for the army, spread propaganda, and harassed individuals and organizations involved in anti-war efforts. Each of these choices was an effort to improve the perceived status of librarians, revealing a deep insecurity among practitioners regarding the worth of the profession, as well as a willingness to compromise certain emerging values in the hopes of increasing that worth. The primary contribution made by this paper is to establish that the events surrounding the Library War Service constituted a moral crisis, the resolution of which significantly influenced the identity of professional librarianship in the United States. That these events involved a moral crisis reveals why it is important for the profession to resolve any ongoing insecurity about professional worth that could lead to future moral
To make sense of the insecurity that moved leaders of the library profession to seek new purpose through wartime mobilization, it is useful to understand how radically the identity of librarianship had changed in the quarter century preceding the war.

The Progressive Era in Librarianship

The progressive era in the history of librarianship spanned the latter two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. It marked a generational transition in national leadership and corresponded with a change in the stated values of the library profession. This era also marked the beginnings of some of the library profession’s lasting paradoxes. A key example of this period’s value shifts was a reversal of the “moral uplift” policy. According to the uplift policy, one of a librarian’s signature duties was to engage in efforts to raise the moral standards of the users of his or her library. Dee Garrison (2003, 68–69), notes that under the “uplift doctrine,” the purpose of bringing reading to the masses was an attempt to elevate the general culture of the nation and to make citizens fit to engage in participatory democracy. By the end of the progressive era, there was a gradual shift towards one of librarianship’s contemporary values: that users should have the freedom to read autonomously and without being judged by library employees. This shift in values represents a significant swing in identity from the librarian as authority figure to the librarian as a member of a service profession. In fact, this shift to user choice and autonomy extended even to the circulation of so-called “pernicious readings.” As Garrison points out (1976, 84), these stories often featured women as protagonists in stories of adventure or intrigue, and were widely circulated among unmarried women in the late nineteenth century. This newly accommodating policy conflicted with the aims of cultural authorities, mostly from the middle class, who still considered unmarried women to be a protected class of person in whose “virtue” and domesticity much was invested. As this generation of late nineteenth-century “new women” readers matured, many found employment in libraries, contributing to the feminization of the library profession (Eddy 2001, 157). As Wiegand points out (1989, 103), economics was behind the feminization of the library profession; qualified women could be paid significantly less than their male counterparts and were

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1 The historical context of this paper is that of a moral crisis in American librarianship, and the lessons that may be learned from that crisis can only be directly applied to libraries in the United States. However, the emphasis on trusting the unity of action and identity that results from the successful resolution of moral crises is generalizable to the professional organizations and traditions of librarians from other nations.
seldom promoted to director positions. Being a feminized profession in a society that devalued both the contributions and the capabilities of women made the direct control over social reform impractical. Policies of direct control such as the “uplift doctrine” had encouraged librarians to make use of their authority as experts to elicit change in their communities. After the circulation reforms, librarians relied on their skill in developing the kinds of collections users actually wanted in order to encourage library use. According to Buschman (2007, 1,484), neither the authority nor servant groups went on to develop a full theory of the role of librarians in promoting democracy during the progressive era.

This period also saw significant changes in architectural and circulation policies. Architecturally, the progressive age marked the introduction of Carnegie libraries. Bobinski (1968, 1,361) notes that philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and his foundation were responsible for the creation of 1,679 community public libraries. Many of these community libraries went from sharing space in dual-use facilities to being housed in large, beautifully designed structures. Beyond using grand architecture to make the public library a focal point in communities, all but the earliest Carnegie libraries were designed to have open user access to library stacks. Open access to stacks facilitated browsing for material rather than relying on librarian mediation and made for greater privacy when reading on-site. While opening stacks might seem like an intuitive idea today, giving users direct access to expensive collections was a gesture of trust in the integrity of users. While trusting users was a forward-thinking policy, it was also a pragmatic labour-saving alternative to mediation by librarians. Carl A. Hanson (1994, 159) provides an account of how library reform pioneer John Cotton Dana pushed to make open stacks the standard beyond the Carnegie libraries, changing the way people used library collections for much of the twentieth century. The movement to open the stacks also coincided with other efforts to promote library use for pleasure among urban labourers, immigrants, women, and children. For example, collection policies that had privileged high-culture reading materials changed in the progressive era to include mass-market fiction and periodicals that were in far more demand. On initial examination, these reversals might appear to be motivated by changes in values, but they were also exercises in the pragmatic need to justify public investment in community libraries. To point out the pragmatism behind these policy changes is not a judgment against the library profession. Instead, it is a recognition that a strain of pragmatism runs through a series of policy reversals that are often characterized as progressive in spirit.

These shifts in policy and the process of feminizing the profession transformed the public’s image of librarians as being “apostles of culture” to
being “tender technicians” in the words of Dee Garrison, or “handmaidens of the learned world,” as Jesse Shera notes (1931, 21). Over the span of a single generation, the perception of public libraries and librarians was radically altered. One of the enduring paradoxes of these reforms is that they upheld the status quo even as they appeared to represent progressive political, social, and cultural ideas. Some historians of the profession argue that reforms were motivated by a desire to maintain the stability of society and the hegemonic influence of elites, rather than liberate access to literature and information. Advocates for this “critical revisionist” position include Michael Harris (1973, 2,509), whose essay, “The Purpose of the American Public Library: A Revisionist Interpretation of History,” started a heated debate among library practitioners and educators about the nature and motivations of library reform. Christine Pawley’s article (1998, 123), “Hegemony’s Handmaid?” criticized what she identified as an ongoing tendency of library and information science graduate school programs to disproportionately teach students to support the interests of the dominant culture in contrast with the progressive language used to convey the profession’s mission. What makes this a paradox is that elements of both positions—library as tool for hegemony and library as instrument of liberation—are both plausible and should be considered ongoing issues that have yet to be explicitly reconciled in regards to how libraries function in culture and society.

Understanding how these two guiding impulses, to liberate and to control, are reconciled reveals something important about the function and identity of American librarianship and explains why the call to arms in World War I was so well received. Garrison (2003, 219) captures the enthusiasm of the American Library Association’s engagement in the war effort in a quote by librarian, Burton E. Stevenson. Stevenson declared that before World War I, the ALA was “merely a humdrum professional organization, wrapped round with tradition, settled in its habits of thought…. Its members were quiet, inoffensive, well-behaved people, cherishing the same hobby.” This dismissive characterization paints an image of the profession as meek, domesticated, and irrelevant. It is impossible to know if this characterization was widely accepted, but in October 1917, librarians made the most of their opportunity to craft a new image for themselves when Librarian of Congress, Herbert Putnam, assumed responsibility for the program known as the Library War Service.

The Library War Service

The Library War Service was both a fundraising campaign and a distribution network designed to bring reading materials to American soldiers participating...
in World War I. Garrison argues that one of the reasons why library leaders were so keen on participating in the Library War Service was that it gave the leaders, who were predominately male, a chance to serve a male readership instead of serving the primarily female readership of the public library. Garrison further argues that the campaign was not just about working for men, but rather, about increasing the standing of the profession; serving the needs of men, especially men conducting a war, was deemed more important than serving the needs of women (219). This is clearly problematic, and yet it reveals something about how at least the library leadership viewed the effect of having a feminized professional work force. If the work of men was more important that the work of women, then librarianship must be less important than other, traditionally masculine-gendered work. When leaders had a chance to “re-masculinize” the profession, even by association, it was too opportune for them to ignore. Beyond providing a chance to increase prestige by being associated with the supposed work of men, serving the fighting force also meant that librarians were being patriotic, serving the most crucial interests of their nation. The results of the Library War Effort were two-fold. First, the campaign cemented the impression that librarians were part of a nationwide profession and therefore capable of significant coordinated action. Second, it demonstrated that librarianship could collectively respond to interests, national or otherwise. What librarianship collectively chose to do, in order to support the interests of the United States, was to once again assume the duty of institutional censor. This time, instead of engaging in uplift, librarians engaged in practices that restricted access to any materials that might support the nation’s enemy or the enemy’s culture.

An Active Instrument for Propaganda

The key study of American librarians’ efforts to support World War I is Wayne Wiegand’s 1989 monograph, *An Active Instrument for Propaganda: The American Public Library During World War I*. Wiegand describes the war as a watershed event in the history of American librarianship. He shows that prior to World War I, librarianship was a profession that presided over an unsettled domain. Librarians could neither dictate what people read, nor could they rely on traditional nineteenth-century sources of intellectual authority to justify the worth of their collections (1989, 3). Wiegand gives an account of a small, widely distributed profession eager to be relevant but anxious that an established canon no longer existed to ensure that the best books would be selected. When the Library War Service emerged as something that seemed so clearly worthwhile, librarians seized the opportunity to transcend their uncertain condition (4–5). The problem with transcending uncertainty is that doing so often requires accepting a worldview of reduced complexity. Once the
United States entered the war, librarians began to reflect upon their collections with the national spirit of intolerance, not just for pro-German material, but also for any reading material that was not in absolute conformity with the war effort (6).

Extremism propagated easily amid fears of German spies. Extremism also made it easier to commit injustices against German Americans and to suppress their civic groups and periodicals (88–89). Freedom of the press was abridged for German language newspapers and a Committee for Public Information (CPI) was placed in charge of getting out a positive message about the value of participating in the war effort. Public libraries were an important tool for the CPI in the distribution of pro-war propaganda (89). A specific example of this active participation in propaganda can be found in an account of the Cleveland Public Library’s participation in the war effort. Daniel F. Ring (1983, 10), notes the following loyalty oath that staff members were required to take:

I pledge my absolute loyalty, in thought, word and deed, to the United States of America. I pledge myself, personally and as a member of the staff of the Cleveland Public Library, to do all in my power to make the Library an instrument to help the Government in carrying on the war to defeat our enemies, Germany and Austria.

It is impossible to imagine librarians having to take this kind of oath today, which is a sign of just how much values have changed in the intervening decades. According to Ring, in addition to displaying posters and broadsides for war effort programs, librarians were asked to examine German language newspapers and notice anything that could be of strategic value in terms of targets, such as bridges or buildings, and send these to the authorities. They also participated in censorship by removing reading material perceived as being sympathetic to the German cause and by acquiring both pro-soldier reading material and interestingly, the anti-socialist political cartoon, Red Peril (Ring 1983). Everything Ring reports—from the amount of money raised to the dedication of the book drive and the participation in food saving programs—echoes the overviews found in the work of Garrison and Wiegand. Another perspective on participation in the war effort was that of the “women librarians” who staffed the library at Camp Zachary Taylor in Lexington, Kentucky (Daniels 2008, 286). Having women directly serving the reading needs of soldiers as they trained had a significant social impact for women. Not only those particular women, but all female librarians, perceived a boost in their
status, even though their participation was not officially acknowledged in written materials about the camp.

Resisting the Pressure to Censor

Thus far, this account of the emergence of librarian nationalism suggests that librarians might have found it impossible to resist the pressure to censor. However, that proved not to be true in at least one case. Wiegand gives an account of how, in the first year of American involvement in World War I, John Cotton Dana, the noted public library advocate and director of the Newark, New Jersey public library (who was mentioned above for his work on normalizing open stacks), opposed an attempt to have materials removed from his collection by a representative of the anti-pacifist writers’ group known as the “Vigilantes.” The representative had found success in having titles that contained what the group claimed was seditious content removed from other public libraries. But Dana refused to give his consent. Dana’s objection was that “liberty of thought is a very desirable thing for the world and that liberty of thought can only be maintained by those who have free access to opinion” (Wiegand 1989b, 96). This view on the freedom to read is entirely consistent with that of librarians working almost a century later. Unfortunately, Dana’s objection was one of the very few that rose to national attention among librarians. Wiegand concludes that the majority of librarians seemed not only to go along with being agents of censorship and propaganda, but also to delight in it for the sense of purpose and status it brought. He asks his readers to refrain from judging librarians of that era too harshly as war hysteria was pervasive.

Results of Librarian War Efforts

What became of the Library War Service? Writing in 1919, librarian Chalmers Hadley (1919, 110–111) made clear that it was widely recognized how participating in the war effort fundamentally changed librarianship:

It seems unnecessary to speak at greater length of the library war service and what it has done. How it has given the American Library Association a new and enlarged vision of usefulness and service such as it never had before, need not be dwelt on, since all of us realize this. The A.L.A. has put its hand to the plow and cannot look back.

Beyond this enlarged vision of usefulness, Garrison claims, the war effort changed the way women sought active participation in library leadership. She
gives particular credit to Beatrice Winser (a colleague of Dana’s at the Newark Public Library). In 1918, Winser pressed Librarian of Congress Putnam for more representation from women in camp libraries and at the Library War Service headquarters (Garrison 2003, 221). After the war ended, the momentum librarianship experienced failed to continue into the so-called “Enlarged Program.” That program was intended to centralize librarianship around the ALA, to establish new standards for adult services, and to standardize education for librarianship with a certificate program (Young 1980, 196–197). The process collapsed due to differing visions of the program, resistance from the Special Library Association, and a lack of ready funds for the effort (202). According to Garrison (2003, 224), after 1920, librarianship returned to its traditional role, providing a “generalist collection of books, chiefly fiction, read by middle class patrons, chiefly women.”

What ultimately changed was not the power, status, or mission of librarians, but rather, their awareness of the ethical significance of censorship and the value of intellectual freedom as a result of years of introspection and discourse about how to resolve the moral crisis brought on by participation in the Library War Service. In the ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Manual, Judith F. Krug stresses that freedom to read and intellectual freedom have not always been core values for the library profession (Krug 2006, 14). The significance of the two values to the profession had to be learned, and experience is often the most influential teacher. Only the almost universal failure of librarians during World War I to defend the freedom of individuals to read the material of their choosing provided the experience by which to judge the censoring materials for service to state. That moral awareness began to emerge in the late 1930s. The “Library’s Bill of Rights,” a document that preceded the current “Library Bill of Rights,” was adopted in 1939. These and subsequent statements of ethics and values were an effort to guide behaviour toward better compliance with the new professional identity.

Conclusions
What lessons can librarians and their supporters learn from the war service crisis? Seventy-five years later, in the early twenty-first century, librarians are at the forefront of collective efforts to protect intellectual freedom, the freedom to read, and the right to privacy. Indeed, dedication to these personal freedoms is often held up as being amongst the most significant parts of librarianship’s ethical identity. This seems like an unexpected trajectory—from the librarian as active censor and instrument of propaganda to the librarian as leading advocate.
of autonomy and tolerance. If read directly, the trajectory suggests that following the mistakes made during the war effort, librarianship made a simple commitment to the progressive ideals of the late nineteenth century. This account of continuous moral progress is a compelling narrative of the “goodness” of the profession. However, resolutions of moral crises are rarely so simple. An alternate account of the transition from active censors to defenders of intellectual freedom begins with the premise that the existence of libraries in society, particularly public libraries, is not guaranteed and must instead be justified. If that premise is true, then each generation of librarians must find the best social, political, and economic argument for ensuring the continued existence of libraries in light of their circumstances.

From this pragmatic perspective, the lesson learned from the war effort crisis is this: while direct power rests in the hands of the people with their ability to use the library or not, and it rests in the hands of cultural and economic elites with their ability to fund the library or not, it does not rest in the hands of library professionals. This is the same realization that began the progressive movement in librarianship. Uplift does not work because uplift cannot be mandated.

Moral censorship cannot be enforced because there are other sources for entertainment and education. Censorship of art and culture for the sake of national defence cannot be mandated because the fear necessary to justify it does not exist outside of a situation wherein a nation is engaged in total war. Contemporary circumstances have dictated that the progressive approach is one that is most likely to maintain the status and presence of public libraries in American society, and American librarians have become very good at employing that approach. This method involves giving the public close to unfettered access to the information it wants, in the format it wants, when it wants it, while protecting people from any institution that would attempt to exercise undue power over their access to information. That dedication to access is coupled with the belief that greater access to information and broader choice in media consumption is a benefit to society.

This view from the perspective of pragmatism in no way disputes the validity of the ethical codes that American library professionals struggled to craft. They are strong codes, negotiated and adopted in good faith. They protect both essential eighteenth-century liberal values and hard won nineteenth-century progressive advances. Instead, this view simply acknowledges that alongside the vein of professional idealism that runs through librarianship there is another vein of pragmatism that runs just as deeply. The primary lesson to be learned from reviewing the Library War Effort crisis is that the current
generation of librarians is not inherently morally superior to the librarians who took those loyalty oaths, put out pamphlets, or even those who took Goethe off the shelves. Subsequent generations have benefitted from the introspection and discourse surrounding this crisis and many other subsequent ones. Resolving moral crises such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s information gathering campaign at the height of the Cold War and the lack of clear leadership in response to racial segregation in libraries in the American South and elsewhere further shaped the identity and behaviour of the profession. This reshaping is the effect that moral crises ultimately have on institutions; the risk to the continued existence of the institution accelerates the pace of decisions and compels librarians to take action. As long as the institution persists, regardless of whether the results of the decision are helpful or harmful for society, lessons are learned. However, if a moral agent may be described as one that seeks to minimize bad decisions as a means of promoting the good, then librarians have a duty to try to make decisions that will not only ensure the persistence of the profession, but that do the most good for society.

A significant factor that can contribute to making the kinds of harmful decisions seen during the Library War Service is the lack of respect for the worth of the profession. Seeking to radically reframe the purpose, uses, and intellectual domain of the library profession in an attempt to acquire more status, particularly by embracing the values and approaches of more traditionally “masculinized” domains, runs the risk of minimizing the profession’s ability to justify its existence as being distinct from those other disciplines. This is the case, particularly if librarianship is unable consistently to bring in grant money or patents in numbers that are comparable to Computer Science or Engineering. The risk is that public libraries could become a specific not-for-profit use case for software solutions, instead of the product of an adaptable profession that is driven to act in accord with the hard-won lessons learned through moral crises. As contemporary librarians make decisions about the path that will best ensure the long-term continuation of libraries and all the good for which they have come to stand, it is important to remember the Library War Service, and to be aware of the tendency to seek legitimacy outside of the identity and character of the profession, and to resist the urge to submit to it.
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DEMOCRATIC POTENTIAL OF NEW MODELS OF SCHOLARSHIP AND THE CRISIS OF CONTROL

JENNY BOSSALLER AND MICHAEL SWEENEY

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to establish a position in favour of open scholarship in the debate surrounding scholarly journal publishing and commercial presses. It examines the serials crisis as a bounded entity within scholarly life to examine the relationship amongst scholars, libraries, publishers, and university administration.

One of the most problematic changes that libraries, and especially academic libraries, have dealt with is the rising cost of serials subscriptions. The serials crisis is economic, pitting scholars and libraries against commercial publishers. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) found that member libraries spent 402% more on serials in 2011 than they did in 1986 (Kyrillidou, Shaneka, and Roebuck 2012), forcing librarians to juggle monograph and serials budgets. Judith Panitch and Sarah Michalek (2005) summarize the price increases:

The term “serials crisis” has become common shorthand for the runaway cost increases of many scholarly journals. The serials crisis has also come to be closely associated with the pricing practices of certain commercial publishers, particularly in the areas of science, technology, and medicine (STM)…. But “serials crisis” is perhaps a bit misleading, implying that if we just got the fever to break—convinced publishers to be more reasonable—we could return to business as usual. That will not happen, and probably cannot, since the serials crisis is, more accurately, only the symptom of a larger crisis in the system of scholarly communications.

The shift to electronic publishing has caused a shift from the ownership of journals to the right to access journals electronically, wherein the library does not actually own a physical copy of the journal. The result has been dubbed the
“serials crisis.” Librarians explain that the serials budget is cutting into the monograph budget (Okerson 1996), and as such, it is contributing to the demise of university presses (Whisler and Rosenblatt 1997). The sheer bounty of published articles and new journals, the result of “publish or perish” and the reward system in academia, adds weight to the problem. Some elements of the serials crisis might be framed in terms of supply and demand and exploitation, fundamental ideas in Marxian economic theory. Marxian economics, however, are not entirely adequate to explain what is going on. Later critical theorists (e.g., Habermas 1975) provide another theoretical lens for consideration. Below, we first define the nature of the crisis, then look to various theories in order to propose a different model, framed in terms of Dewey’s conception of participatory democracy.

Defining “crisis”

Crisis is related to change, which is unavoidable and constant, but why do some changes result in a state of crisis? Crisis might involve a widespread catastrophe, such as a change in living conditions as a result of economic shifts (such as the 2008 U.S. housing crisis), or a hurricane—something that is universally recognized as a crisis. Alternatively, though, crisis can be a matter of perception involving a more personal (or localized) sense of loss, such as what might occur when forces that define or control social relations are upended. In other words, one party might benefit while another one loses in a drawn-out struggle for power. Such a crisis could be triggered by a combination of internal or external forces, such as conflicts in motivation and meaning or value and purpose.

Peter Knapp and Alan Spector (2011) explain that crisis, in Marxian terms, is defined by the process of growth to capacity followed by decline. Change is inevitable—it occurs in any kind of organism or system. Systems rise and peak, and then fall. Crisis occurs if a system fails to achieve a new equilibrium within its new environment. A fall might be triggered by a catastrophic event, in which case the change occurs quickly (as in the recent case of the collapse of the housing market, which triggered the financial crisis), or it might be slow, drawn out, and less dramatic or public (as is the case with the serials crisis). Marxism originally defined crisis in economic terms and class exploitation, with crisis culminating when the working class overthrows the ruling class (or when the exploited overthrow the exploiters). Marxist principles, though, are applicable across other social situations as a means of explaining power. While power often involves monetary exploitation, it is not a prerequisite—it is often the effect, rather than the cause. One suggestion might
be that crises occur when friction, driven by competing ideologies, causes the relationship to falter. Both the strict Marxian interpretation and a derived definition of crisis are applicable when examining the serials crisis, with identifiable actors exemplifying problems of power and economics, with periodic small crises punctuating an underlying, slow-burning and widespread instability.

Marxian economics are based on value, but who or what exactly defines the value of scholarly work, and who profits from it? When commercial publishers turn a profit, they are profiting on the model of supply and demand: here, scholars make the product (they are the labourers) and the publisher is the capitalist. Looking at the wide range of actors involved in serials production, we might address scholars and librarians together as the labourers or proletariat, and university administrations and publishers as the capitalist bourgeoisie, because the latter profit in many ways from the work of the labourers. Furthermore, librarians must buy back scholarly work from the publishers, suggesting that publishers are the source of exploitation. Indeed, in 2012, many scholars boycotted Elsevier (one of the largest and most profitable publishers—with over $1 billion in revenues in 2010) because of the exorbitant profits that publishers were making from their work (Whitfield 2012). An article in The Economist (2012) explained that the conflict was not only over profit, though; it resulted from a conflict of values or ideologies:

[The boycott] is symptomatic of a wider conflict between academics and their publishers—a conflict that is being thrown into sharp relief by the rise of online publishing. Academics, who live in a culture which values the free and easy movement of information (and who edit and referee papers for nothing) have long been uncomfortable bedfellows with commercial publishing companies, which want to maximise profits by charging for access to that information, and who control many (although not all) of the most prestigious scientific journals.

While the Marxian interpretation is apt, it is incomplete. Publishers have, traditionally, added required value to the work of scholars (we return to this below). They do things that scholars have neither the time nor expertise to do, such as printing, mailing, advertising, and optimizing search engines. And because most scholars do not define their happiness in economic terms, if they had to do the work of publishers they might find work less rewarding. Nevertheless, the crisis seems to have worsened in recent years as publishers’ profits have grown and as state support for universities (and thus administrative economic support for scholarship) has diminished. This is admittedly a
complicated situation. And while Marxism is ultimately hopeful, founded in a belief that a better system will rise from the ashes of capitalist exploitation, this article proposes another, democratic model of scholarly communication, one which remains hopeful and yet is based on practicable ideals.

A Professional Crisis

Habermas’s (1975) explanation of legitimate authority provides another way to think about the serials crises. In this case, we need to consider the legitimacy of professions, meaning the authority that professionals wield in the realms in which they work. A crisis in a profession might occur due to a structural change in the environment that causes a loss of control in a particular area of professional expertise (for instance, teachers required to adopt curricula in order to meet new reporting measures, or doctors refusing patients because of insurance caps; both are ceding what they know to be right due to imposed restrictions). Consider the crisis in funding for higher education. Public universities in the United States frequently say that they are in crisis because their funding structure has changed dramatically in recent years. Between 2007 and 2013, there was a 17.5% reduction in state funding for higher education, and a 23.1% reduction in state funding per full-time enrolled student (the difference has partly been alleviated through a 7.4% increase in the number full-time enrolled students) (Mitchell, Palacios, and Leachman 2014). The result is rising tuition and increased student debt load (Haughwout et al. 2015). Professors’ authority and legitimacy are based on their credentials as scholars and educators; however, the neoliberal university environment requires that they demonstrate their worth in dollars and cents. The ivory tower is crumbling, and is hardly immune from the scathing criticism of the public and politicians alike, and even less from stock market swings and decreases in state funding.

The crisis in higher education is linked to the serials crisis because both have resulted from decreased public funding. The rising cost of higher education cannot be attributed to one particular factor, but to several, including reduced funding and increased financial aid being offered, expensive new buildings, and increased enrolment (Henley 2014). It is likely that the rising cost of serials is attributable to a similarly complex set of causes. In the end, however, both can be analyzed through the lens of power: who holds the power, and who is profiting?

Perhaps these crises need to be tackled in tandem. One expansive qualitative study of faculty needs in scholarly communication (Harley et al. 2010) found that tenure and promotion of faculty, at least in Ivy League
universities, is granted on ground-breaking research that is published in monographs and books in the humanities, and in the highest-ranking journals in other fields. The authors found that scholars are able to use creative venues for publication but that “scholars across all fields are being told to play it safe, publish their work in the highest-ranking journals, and to avoid spending time on websites or other nontraditional media” (Harley et al. 2010, 10). There are opportunities for alternative publication, but scholars are discouraged from taking advantage of them.

A Marxian analysis of the problem would suggest a revolution at this point, which is not without its merits, and which is also incrementally happening. In this case, the proletariat or working class (librarians and scholars) would overthrow the publishers and administrative bourgeoisie. However, as we detail below, librarians and scholars alike depend on publishers and university administrations to perform functions that we are not always able to do. John Dewey’s description of participatory democracy is one way to conceptualize a situation that is more equitable and ethical.

Deweyan Conceptions of Participatory Democracy

Progressive-era reformer John Dewey often stated that a participatory democracy is central to an ethical society. He also argued that educators should safeguard against the tendency towards exclusivity: education should be driven by ideals such as freedom, individuality, and “relaxation of the grip of authority” (1944, 305). A fundamental Deweyan proposition is that an ethical society puts equal education for everyone at its centre, rather than in the hands of a privileged few. Dewey offers a rationale for public access to scholarship, and his message is particularly relevant as we face significant barriers to open scholarship (Veletsianos and Kimmons 2012), imposed by both university systems and commercial publishers.

Academics produce scholarship, but they must comply with the accepted norms of dissemination. They might write in isolation, but they are part of a group; they work from a shared foundation of knowledge that defines their discipline. They are, therefore, potentially part of a deliberative, democratic community that is based on communicative action among participants with a shared interest. Dewey described democracy as a particular “mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.” As a social ideal, democracy contributes to both increased individuation and a “broader community of interest” sustained through “deliberate effort” (Dewey 1944, 87). Dewey made an important distinction, however, between association and
Human association is a “condition of the creation of community,” but association and community are not synonymous terms. While association is “physical and organic”—a matter of fact—“communal life is moral, that is emotionally, intellectually, and consciously sustained” (Dewey 1927, 330). Community comes into existence when members become aware of the “consequences of combined action,” and these consequences “become the object of desire and effort” (ibid.), meaning that these consequences are directed toward particular, shared ends.

For scholars, the “consequences of combined action,” i.e., the “object of desire and effort,” is the sharing and advancement of human knowledge. Traditional publication tools, the printed monograph or scholarly journal, historically have served as the medium that enables scholars to identify one another as part of a community of interest and as the carrier or expression of new knowledge and intellectual deliberation across time and space. Journals are the de facto channel for scholarly communication in scientific (including social scientific) fields, reinforced by the structure that has been built around promotion and tenure (though there are exceptions: monographs tend to be more important in the humanities).

The first journals were a product of the Enlightenment, created to replace letters that scientists used for one-to-one communication (Cronin 2001). The wide dissemination of scientific knowledge (and all texts) was made possible by the invention of the printing press. Consequently, librarians were tasked with organizing the large new influx of materials; the French National Bibliography, printed in 1584, was indicative of this task. Research libraries first appeared in the very early years of the Enlightenment. Large libraries were a force in freeing people from the dogma of church and state because of the free availability of scientific information (Bivens-Tatum 2012). Librarians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were already dealing with “information management and patron access within a context of a ‘multitude of books,’ of multiple texts, and of serial publications” (Valentine 2012, 84). The enormous research libraries in today’s universities, therefore, trace their lineage to the Enlightenment’s ideals of reason, knowledge, and freedom.

Libraries have traditionally played an intermediary role in scholarly communication, and in a very practical way, by providing access to the monographs and scholarly journals that are the bedrock of continued intellectual deliberation and knowledge production. The structure of scholarly communication was created to meet the needs of scholars and professions, providing an accepted and orderly path for advancing knowledge and to make information findable. Printed books and journals housed information for most
of the field’s history, but the vast amounts of material presented constant challenges for the curation of these texts and to make them widely accessible. Librarians have created many technological tools to solve problems of organization and access.

In a prescient article, Fred Kilgour (1984) described the advancement of library technologies, beginning with the card catalogue, developed in France in the 1830s, through the online catalogue revolution that was occurring in the 1980s. Subject headings were developed in the mid-1800s, microforms were developed in the 1930s, and in the 1970s computers came into libraries. Kilgour predicted that computers would be the force to bring libraries “to the brink of a precedent-shattering socio-technological change” (1984, 319) as library users find library materials and the information that they need on their personal computers. Kilgour was, in 1984, envisioning users accessing articles available through the online catalogue from anywhere, which he predicted would “profoundly change the way people go about the business of living” (320).

Technologies also changed what could be published in the manuscript to print eras, and again in the print to digital eras. While the traditional academic journal is still the dominant publication format, it is riddled with practical limitations, such as page- or word-count limits based on print traditions and expectations. In addition to illustrating concepts and data in novel and beautiful ways, digital communication (through hyperlinks, etc.) provides seamless interconnections among related scholarship. Kilgour’s assessment was forward-thinking but limited by the time; new library technologies (discovery layers) pull in materials from the catalogue, databases, and repositories. Google Scholar, likewise, pulls in many of those, but users face the problem of the paywall in accessing materials from commercial publishers. For many users, this is a serious hindrance.

**Shifts in Methods of Communication**

At the heart of this analysis are communication technologies. The tools that are used to disseminate scholarship have changed drastically, both inside and outside of libraries. Do communication technologies have the power to change social structures? Theories of the network society, specifically, inform our analysis in terms of communication flows and the cultural aspects of democracy.

Marshall McLuhan ([1964] 1994) described three basic revolutions in communication that happened because of a technological invention: 1) orality to writing; 2) manuscript to print; and 3) print to electronic media. Elizabeth
Eisenstein (1983) builds on McLuhan’s insights; taking her analysis further, she explains how the printing press changed politics, the economy, philosophy, and other sociocultural phenomena. For instance, with the rise of print media, new ideas could be widely disseminated, providing checks and balances to the power of the church and the state, leading to the birth of democracies. Eisenstein focused on changes that occurred because of the printing press, which today seems like ancient technology. Nevertheless, the shifts that she discusses also apply to new communication technologies, demonstrating that any time there is a shift in how communication happens, there are social, political, and economic repercussions.

The first printing presses (and later iterations) also offered a means of standardization, which was crucial for reproduction and the systematic dissemination of ideas. However, it was not until the Industrial Revolution that technology brought mass production, mechanization, and regulation on a large scale. Today’s postmodern world, conversely, is marked by increasing flexibility across both space and time, which has been described as both empowering and chaotic (Harvey 1989). Technologies enable different types of social interaction. For instance, letter writing is asynchronous, one-to-one communication, while broadcasting is synchronous, but not interactive. Digital communication, by contrast, because it is flexible across both space and time, can be synchronous, one-to-one, one-to-many, or interactive (Braman 2009). The scholarly publishing world in this environment is both empowering and chaotic: there is a world of possibilities for communicating ideas, including video and multimedia published online through nontraditional venues. If they wish, scientists can share their data so that others can replicate their findings, which, as Cronin (2001) observes, was the original purpose for scientific journals. Digital communication enables scholars to re-imagine the scholarly communication structure, but scholars are currently constrained by university protocol and print-media traditions (Harley et al. 2010).

Christine Borgman (2007) sums up many of the scholarly issues inherent in the change from print to digital media. Scholars have many choices about how they are going to communicate their work—through books, journals, and various forms of manuscripts, as well as via many types of personal communication and personal websites. They may also choose to store their work in their institutional repositories (IRs). Borgman notes that “the proliferation of digital content is part of the evolution, revolution, or crisis in scholarly communication … authors, libraries, universities, and publishers are wrestling with the trade-offs between traditional forms of publisher-controlled dissemination and author- or institution-controlled forms of open access.
publishing. At issue are the forms of peer review, the speed of dissemination, the ease of access, the cost, who pays the cost … and preservation” (9).

**Open Access Journals as Democracy or Revolution?**

One solution to the serials crisis is to publish in open access (OA) journals. Fundamentally, OA means that a journal is freely available online for anyone to read. However, there are different OA models: in a proprietary journal the journal article might be freely available one year after publication, or the journal might allow the author to self-archive the article, to upload it to his or her own website, to place it in an institutional repository, or in a commercial repository such as Academia.edu or Research Gate.

John Willinsky (2005) delineates what he calls “the Access Principle” as “a commitment to the value and quality of research carries with it a responsibility to extend the circulation of such work as far as possible and ideally to all who are interested in it and all who might profit by it” (5; emphasis in original). He provides a thorough review of the problem posed by the increasing costs of scholarly journals, along with solutions found in ten different OA models. Open access to scholarship has been a focus for many librarians in alleviating the serials crisis (e.g., see Bailey et al. 2006; Bruxvoort and Fruin 2014; Hood 2007; Radom, Feltner-Reichert, and Stringer-Stanback 2012). Online publishing could without doubt lower costs for libraries—not only in acquisition, but also in storage. And most scholars prefer electronic access (Liu 2006). Self-archiving and the use of institutional repositories (IRs) increase access; most IRs are created and maintained by university librarians out of a belief in and commitment to the access principle. The IR might house materials like data sets or preprints. IRs have been conceived of as one way to solve the serials crisis: if IRs were to meet their full realization, they would allow anyone to access articles deposited in them, bypassing expensive journals altogether. Google Scholar is not necessarily perfect, but through it anyone in the world can access articles uploaded to IRs, making scholarly knowledge truly democratic and eliminating at least one problem that developing nations have with costly access.

In their study at Cornell University, Philip Davis and Matthew Connolly (2007) found, however, that many faculty members do not use their university’s IR. Librarians want them to use it, but many do not because they are unsure why they should. Some find it burdensome and redundant, while many believe the IR does not serve their needs as much as other forms of dissemination (for instance, republishing their work on their own websites). The authors conclude:
“While some librarians perceive a crisis in scholarly communication as a crisis in access to the literature, Cornell faculty perceive this essentially as a non-issue” (2). Their study suggests that an IR must be very convenient to use and provide obvious benefits if it is to be widely adopted. Publishing one’s work in an IR or in OA scholarly journals are two models of open scholarship, but there are also many other ways of connecting to the public and with other scholars that bypass formal publication. However, these options are often perceived as risky for scholars seeking tenure and promotion. The “grip of authority” is held by administrative bodies in universities competing for federal research funding.

There are platforms that scholars can use that remove the middleman. The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, or SPARC (http://sparcopen.org/), for instance, lists campus-based publishing and publishing cooperatives and collaborations as viable alternatives to commercial publishers. They are certainly not free, as there is always a cost, in terms of storage and labour. Librarians’ work changes under such models; instead of being intermediaries between scholars and publishers, they might instead serve as production engineers or managers of institutional repositories. Much like the “maker movement” in public libraries (Kroski 2013), academic librarians are creating digital humanities centres and other digital production and storage centres (Allen 2008; Sula 2013). Putting librarians in charge of digital production units, of course, changes their roles quite a bit (though that has been going on for some time now; librarians answer far fewer reference questions and instead spend time helping scholars, giving classes, etc.). The library space, too, is changing: reducing the serials budget frees more money for books, training, etc.

Commercial publishers nevertheless provide an important service for scholars. Kent Anderson (2013) lists 73 things publishers do, from branding to detecting plagiarism to handling artwork, metadata, licencing, and archives. How would scholarship itself be affected if commercial publishers were unavailable? They offer convenience, but for tenure and promotion, in the current climate they might be required because of the metrics that they offer; there is safety in publishing in well-established journals. For example, if a university uses Web of Science (http://wokinfo.com) metrics to determine a scholar’s worth, only articles that are both published and cited within other Web of Science-indexed journals will count. Web of Science is, therefore, considered to be the ‘gold standard’ because it is the most exclusive. Many libraries have helped scholars determine their “worth” using altmetrics—or non-traditional metrics (such as Google Scholar), though the extent to which they are used for tenure and promotion is unknown. Do commercial publishers really guarantee quality? Are their journals more easily findable?
Beyond Google Scholar, indexing services do exist for OA journals. The Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org) provides indexing services to quality peer reviewed OA journals, for instance. Quality has proven to be problematic, however; the OA umbrella is wide. Some OA journals are published by commercial publishers, and many are as legitimate as the highest-standard traditional journals, with excellent peer-review processes in place. Nevertheless, some are deceptive and even predatory, or have no clear standards for publication. The variability ultimately complicates the efforts of people trying to legitimize OA journals.

John Bohannan (2013) demonstrates the problem of peer review in OA journals through a (admittedly ethically questionable) sting operation in which he submitted a fake research article to hundreds of open access journals—an article with “meaningless results” that “any reviewer with more than a high-school knowledge of chemistry and the ability to understand a basic data plot … should have spotted immediately” (60). He found a wide and surprising variability in the peer review process across the board. The article in question made it through the peer review process of some OA journals, and also in some published by the most respected companies, such as Elsevier, Wolters Kluwer, and Sage. Bohannon linked those inconsistencies with profit, explaining: “A striking picture emerges from the global distribution of open-access publishers, editors, and bank accounts. Most of the publishing operations cloak their true geographic location” (64). Bohannon claims to be a supporter of open access, and he believes that if he had submitted the article to traditional journals he would have found a similar acceptance rate. He focused on OA journals because of the explosion of an “underclass of journals, and the number of papers they publish” (65). Scientists (and the public) need assurance that there is some process that separates the wheat from the chaff, and Bohannon proved that the peer review process, even at commercial presses, is broken.

University presses offer one alternative to commercial presses. However, it is unlikely that they will fix the peer review problem, which will only happen through more radical means (possibly by universities requiring academics to submit fewer articles for peer review!). Some university presses publish journals, and fulfill most of the functions of commercial presses. Pricing models vary between the university presses, as do policies. Some allow self-archiving and provide open access.

Would scholars suffer without presses? Many research librarians already maintain an institutional repository (IR). As noted above, Google Scholar searches those repositories. Moreover, scholars participate in societies and professional associations, whose members already review papers and perform
some of the editorial tasks. Therefore, we contend that, ultimately, scholarly production would not cease or be negatively affected without publishers; however, librarians and scholarly associations would be required to pick up the slack, which could be quite challenging in the context of constrained budgets. Such a model would require a reinvestment in libraries, and possibly raising the fees for scholarly associations.

More about the Economics of Serials Publication

Does everything begin and end with money? Publication does indeed cost money—scholars typically do not earn money for the work they do reviewing and editing journals, but their time is worth money because it could be spent doing other things. The costs of storage, indexing, adding metadata, and ensuring quality of a publication add up. Faculty are paid to do their work and are rewarded by their institutions when they publish in the most prestigious journals in their fields (which, ironically, might equate to more expense for the library). These rules are based on a model that is entrenched within the tenure and promotion system.

Who owns scholarship? Restrictive licencing is profitable for publishers, because the publishers control who is able to access scholarship, and at what price. Christine Borgman (2007) explains how this is beginning to change: “Economic and regulatory frameworks for digital information have unbalanced traditional relationships among authors, readers, publishers, and librarians. Concerns about the notion of information as ‘property’ and the deterioration of the public domain are leading to alternative publishing methods” (4). The scholarly publication system is interdependent on several sub-systems, but much of the criticism of the system squarely targets the publishers themselves. It is additionally ironic that electronic communication technologies and the Internet have created alternatives to traditional publication methods while they have also created opportunities for further economic exploitation.

Publishing houses have a vested economic interest in maintaining control over access to scholarship. Journal vendors generally bundle journals together, much as cable companies bundle channels, including seldom used journals with widely read ones. They also have more recently begun to offer incentives to rely on online-only subscriptions. Libraries are of course interested in getting the best deal. They might use the purchasing power of consortia to put pressure on vendors. We might think of libraries’ e-only purchases as analogous to an individual’s choice to purchase iTunes or e-books rather than physical copies. Those purchases are easier, but this model makes
many librarians nervous. ARL libraries—those belonging to the Association of Research Libraries, which serves research intensive universities—have traditionally purchased books for perpetuity. E-only purchases have created an “access versus ownership” dilemma. Certainly, libraries have many reasons to rely on digital content—it is what the users want; moreover, for many libraries there is dwindling space to store physical copies of journals and books. There is, however, no guarantee of perpetual ownership of an item that is accessed digitally—though demands for permanent access have led to several different types of journal-archiving initiatives (Stemper and Barribeau 2006). Consider the changing nature of music purchases among the general public: most people no longer buy CDs but instead access their music through different digital platforms, such as iTunes, Pandora, and Spotify. Public libraries provide access to popular music, e-books, and magazines through various platforms that users can access via apps (utilizing their library card), similar to databases. While this makes sense for fleetingly popular content in public libraries, scholarly journals in academic libraries are a different story; scholars require permanent access.

Libraries generally work with publishers by way of large information service companies that provide databases, e-books, abstracting and indexing services, journals, etc. The companies create pricing schemes through contracts with libraries and library consortia. In 2001, Kenneth Frazier dubbed such contracts the “Big Deal.” He explains that there are many short-term benefits for users in ordering e-only access to journals, yet the relationship that is created through these deals puts power squarely in the hands of the publishers rather than with libraries and library patrons. Frazier argues:

In the longer run, these contracts will weaken the power of librarians and consumers to influence scholarly communication systems in the future. Librarians will lose the opportunity to shape the content or quality of journal literature through the selection process. Those who follow us will face the all-or-nothing choice of paying whatever publishers want or giving up an indispensable resource. The largest publishers will not only have greater market power to dictate prices. They will also have more control over contractual terms and conditions—including the ability to “disintermediate” other players in the economic chain. (Frazier 2001)

In a similar vein, Robert Darnton (2014) in The New York Review of Books explains why the serials crisis should matter to the public:

Consider the cost of scientific periodicals, most of which are published exclusively online. It has increased at four times the
rate of inflation since 1986…. Three giant publishers—Reed Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, and Springer—publish 42 percent of all academic articles, and they make giant profits from them. In 2013 Elsevier turned a 39 percent profit on an income of £2.1 billion from its science, technical, and medical journals.

All over the country research libraries are canceling subscriptions to academic journals, because they are caught between decreasing budgets and increasing costs. The logic of the bottom line is inescapable, but there is a higher logic that deserves consideration—namely, that the public should have access to knowledge produced with public funds.

This problem caught the attention of federal legislators, resulting in the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act, which was introduced in 2013. An editorial in Publishers Weekly explained its wide acceptance across a range of stakeholders:

perhaps the most notable aspect of the proposal is that the memo was praised by publishers, and open access advocates alike. And, also by members of Congress … while publishers have consistently opposed previous federal public access mandates, and supported legislation designed to bar them from implementation, including last year’s Research Works Act the 2009 Fair Copyright in Research Works Act, the Association of American Publishers (AAP) came out today in praise of the Obama administration’s initiative, calling it “a reasonable, balanced resolution of issues around public access to research funded by federal agencies.” (Publishers Weekly 2013)

One of the main points of this federal intervention is that the public has already paid for the research, and for this reason, it should be publicly available. But should this hold true for work produced by all professors at public universities? How much accountability to the public at large do professors have? How much access should the public have? More importantly, has the Internet changed anything? The three main parties with legitimate claims of control over the flow of scholarly communication are scholars, libraries, and publishers; but (as demonstrated by the FASTR Act) the public should be able to access it as well.

Yet another aspect of scientific (and social scientific) research is that many of today’s problems are global. Does that not mean that we should consider the rest of the world when we speak of public access to information? This brings up yet another problem with the “old model” of publication and
distribution: many have argued that it favours the Global North. Some claim that scholarship is not controlled by scholars but by “large multinational publishers are driven primarily by commercial motives and market shares” (Chan, Kirsop, and Arunachalam 2011), which was confirmed by Bohannon’s sting operation. Bundled packages of journals and services are “a legitimate commercial strategy, even rich institutions in the North can ill-afford the continuing rising cost” (ibid.). It is true that there have been efforts to extend journal services to countries in developing nations through such programs as Research4Life (http://www.research4life.org/) and INASP (http://www.inasp.info/en/), but the countries to which these programs extend often have unstable or unavailable Internet connections. Many libraries in Africa are unable get even print journals (Willinsky 2005), and the high cost of bandwidth in many developing nations presents further access issues (Cottrell 2013). In sum, the traditional scholarly publication model represents an entrenched power regime that favours certain kinds of research from certain countries (Gray 2007). The Internet has brought to the forefront many issues of power and control over the spread of human knowledge. It is worth asking whose interests are being served by the current accepted models of scholarly communication, and if there is a better means to support the advancement of knowledge.

Within librarianship, the serials crisis has been framed as a problem for the library. Librarians work primarily with tools that have been created by others—such as library catalogues, discovery layers that lay on top of the catalogue, and communication tools for working with distance patrons. Librarians sometimes create their own tools using open-source environments—for instance, many librarians are now using open-source Evergreen or Koha software systems, or others. However, the software and hardware that the technology relies on are always changing: they require upgrades and sometimes information becomes inaccessible. Furthermore, the tools all need to be compatible with each other and with the access tools that patrons already use. Keeping up with technology is expensive in terms of both time and money.

Libraries derive authority from users. They are embedded in the process of scholarship because they collect the materials that are needed to complete scholarship. We can say that the social “capital” that librarians deal with is knowledge, or cultural production, which is one reason to explore the idea of “crisis” relative to librarianship, particularly when changes in the nature of information production cause a crisis in librarianship. Librarianship’s legitimacy, its cause and reason for being, is based on the cycle of information production. When changes in production occur, it causes a crisis in the profession because professionals must be responsive to that change in order to
maintain control over the flow of information. Librarians understand the stakes and have devoted their professional lives to organizing information in order to make it accessible.

Is the word “crisis” a misnomer for the current state of affairs with serials? The serials crisis has been called a crisis because libraries cannot fulfill their mission due to the current state of scholarly communication; they are tasked to provide students and faculty with the scholarship that they need, scholarship that will produce future scholarship. Furthermore, if they are forced to cancel the most expensive journals the university itself loses credibility among its users, and it also might face problems with accrediting bodies. One way to conceive of the crisis is as a fight between the collective good and corporate interests. It is also a crisis because libraries have, for so long, relied on publishers, out of necessity. The Internet has made new forms of communication possible, but the systems that revolve around scholarly communication have not yet recognized the value of the public good in opening scholarship to the widest possible public. It is nearly impossible for librarians, alone, to build a more equitable, world-wide platform for the sharing of scholarly resources. Such a platform would need to be accepted and used by scholars, as well as by tenure committees and accreditation bodies. In other words, solving this crisis will require all players to negotiate new roles for themselves, and to adjust together, to make the process of scholarly communication work in the twenty-first century.

The Way Out → Moving Toward the Ideal

Is there a way out of the crisis in which we, as scholars and librarians, are entrenched? Are we forever bound to corporate interests? Manuel Castells (2009) has argued that democracy “resid[es] in the capacity to counter the power of heritage, wealth, and personal influence with the power of the multitude, the power of numbers” (366), and that the “practice of democracy … is called into question when there is a systemic disassociation between communication power and representative power” (298) or when there is a lack of “equal opportunity” to participate in the meaning-making process. If scholars begin to recognize their role in relation to librarians and libraries, they will understand that they have an ethical duty to create equal opportunities. By working with librarians, they can increase the democratic nature of scholarly communication.

The connective technologies of the twenty-first century hold tremendous potential for building democratic communities of interest. Unlike the
broadcasting media of the twentieth century, which were unidirectional communication vehicles, today’s social media facilitates dialogue. Clay Shirkey (2008) provides insight into the power that the Internet offers for simply connecting people to each other through social media: “the enormous visibility and search-ability of social life means that the ability for the like-minded to locate one another, and to assemble and cooperate with one another, now exists independently of social approval and disapproval” (207). Scholars are beginning to take advantage of these communication technologies to build and sustain communities of interest. The question raised by John Dewey (1927) was whether individuals would come to recognize themselves as a “public,” as a group with shared concerns and shared interests.

Social media have the power to link people together in user communities; ultimately, though, a model for scholarly communication would incorporate not only social media but also what Charlotte Hess (2008) has called a “new commons … inhabited by heterogeneous groups from divergent disciplines, political interests, and geographical regions … [who are using the commons to solve] social dilemmas, degradation, and sustainability of a wide variety of shared resources” (1). Hess is describing social activism, enabled by the Internet, which is ideally a democratic force against corporate greed (humbly granted: this is merely an ideal). Of course the Internet has been used for social activism around the world, but arguably it has been used with even greater power by governments as an anti-democratic forces (see, for example, Freedom House reports). Rebecca MacKinnon (2013) notes that activists (or “netizens”) can use the digital public commons to expose problems with government (such as Wikileaks has done), potentially reducing the abuses of power through the power of words and code. However, the Internet is a double-edged sword: “public debate and even some forms of activism are expanding on it, while at the same time, state controls and manipulation tactics have managed to prevent democracy movements from gaining meaningful traction” (42). This is not at all tangential to the discussion of scholarly communication, if one considers the exclusion of many voices in science (Harding 1991).

Developing countries, too, face roadblocks to participation in scholarship because they do not have even or stable access to the same journals as developed nations. OA journals and other projects such as Wikipedia hold great promise for democratic production and ownership. Publicly available scholarship is needed to level global inequities in access to research, and there are new tools that researchers can take advantage of that go beyond traditional scholarly production (Chan, Kirsop, and Arunachalam 2011). One new model with interesting possibilities is the crowdsourced journal article. The Chronicle of Higher Education has reported on a crowdsourced article in the Harvard
Business Review with over 200 authors, including “community thought leaders”:

the general approach was to put ideas “out in the open, so that, one, everyone can see them, and two, people can comment on them, elaborate on them further, and help to develop them, to take what might be a kernel of an idea into something that’s much more powerful…. And we really believe that, going forward, taking advantage of this capability is not only possible, it’s really revolutionary in terms of the speed with which we’re able to work.” (Biemiller 2014)

Democratic? In one sense, yes; however, contributors were limited to the Harvard Business School community. This offers another model for scholarly production, though one can see how it could become muddled and unwieldy. Perhaps it worked because the authors all came out of the same school.

Frazier (2001) has argued that librarians need to invest in “bold new experiments in scholarly communication [such as] The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) partners such as MIT CogNet, BioOne, Columbia Earthscape, New Journal of Physics, Project Euclid, and others” in order to counteract the power of commercial publishers. Frazier believes that those “initiatives are profoundly subversive to the commercial publishing system—and the commercial publishers know it” (para. 39). Fifteen years since the publication of this article, librarians continue to develop these and other models amongst themselves and in cooperative agreements, such as the Hathi Trust and Google Books (despite protests from publishers as well as some from the authors guild). Scholars are also creating their own bold new experiments, even as ensuring compliance to standards is crucial for findability. A central aggregator is needed—one that has both democracy and the public interest as its highest goals.

This article has focused on the serials crisis. As libraries move towards larger e-book purchases (recall “the Big Deal”), we are seeing the same financial problems arise with monographs. Publishers have bundled monographs for libraries for immediate access to pre-processed large collections of e-books. E-books, like e-journals, present the same conveniences to readers: immediate access from anywhere. Libraries, likewise, are not required to find space for the books on the shelves. They require no physical care. They require little processing. Meanwhile, The Chronicle of Higher Education has recently reported that the major monograph publishers have raised the cost of e-book bundles (Wolfman-Arent 2014). The publishers have replied that the pricing scheme that the libraries originally signed onto was
unsustainable: they were testing pricing models that would benefit libraries because libraries do not have to pay shipping costs for e-books, and if the books are not used much anyway, then it makes more sense for the libraries to simply purchase access. Librarians are certainly questioning these claims of benevolence, seeing the past repeat itself in a “historical tug-of war” (Wolfman-Arent 2014) between publishers and libraries. One librarian emphasized that libraries need to “set the agenda” (ibid.) this time around. It is unlikely to happen if they are relying on publishers for access through proprietary platforms.

We believe that the notion of a serials crisis is actually a misnomer, and is instead, as Castells (2009) has noted, a shift in power ushered in by electronic communication combined with decreases in public funding. The real crisis for librarians may be the library’s loss of centrality in the scholarly communication process. The centrality of the library, or at least the standards and tools that libraries have created and are developing, will make interdisciplinary work more effective; if there is no central platform, there is more opportunity for the balkanization of disciplinary knowledge. Knowledge production today benefits from cross-fertilization between the disciplines. Subject repositories and self-archiving are certainly not a problem, but there needs to be some method of centralizing those articles and data, which might simply mean ensuring standardized metadata and tagging. Thwarting corporate domination will ultimately require a concerted and unified effort.

Finally, this argument for the central role of the library is linked to democratic culture. Librarians have the tools to make scholars’ work findable. Presently, there are simply too many redundant forms for communicating knowledge: users do not necessarily want both journals and repositories, and they are confused about when they can put their work in a repository in a way that conforms with publishers’ contracts. Librarians’ professional values of intellectual freedom and increasing accessibility to information are aligned with scholars; right now, workflows and logistics need to be established to create democratic communication flows.

Conclusion
Do commercial publishers add value? Yes, they do. It would take a lot of effort for librarians across many universities to create a platform that would replace publishers. Scholars across the spectrum would need to decide that it is time for the system to change. Such a change would not be structured and orderly at first, but the end result would be a sort-of Marxist utopia—an unlikely scenario,
even though removing middlemen from scholarly publishing would create a more sustainable, democratic future for scholarly publishing.

Revisiting Anderson’s (2013) list of 73 things that publishers do, we might reconsider what would change if publishers (the middlemen) were cut from scholarly journals. There are a number of tasks that could be eliminated or that could be performed by scholarly associations—for instance, detecting the audience and cultivating readers, establishing a brand, making money, and maintaining a reputation. But a scholarly journal does not really need to make money; it needs to break even, and that could happen through membership fees or small subscription fees. Scholars, as peer reviewers, can handle accepting and rejecting submissions, manage the peer review process, and edit content. Librarians can manage statistics, register copyright and DOI, tag articles, gather analytics, track metrics, host/archive content, and protect the server. These new roles, though, might require some effort in shifting funding from purchasing access to electronic materials to storing materials; smaller schools (and even large universities) might need to form consortia or share repositories.

Do people still want physical copies of journals? Research says that electronic access is more important than physical copies (Liu 2006). However, if libraries were able to spend less on journals, they would have increased monograph budgets; this would help university presses, which in turn might take on smaller print runs of journals as well should print copies be desired. Libraries could always print a version of each item put in the repository to prevent problems associated with data-rot (though multimedia projects might prove more difficult to store physically).

Librarians have always worked with technologies that enable scholarship. Many librarians are already leading the way in the efforts described above. One section of the puzzle is still askew, though: the university administration, the requirements of tenure and promotion, and the competition among universities for higher positions in rankings. University administrators would need to reconsider what it means to be called a productive faculty member, and measurements would need to be adjusted. Some options might include requiring fewer (though better) publications, promoting more engagement with the public, and giving equal weight to different kinds of scholarship, such as monographs and digital projects. This would likely positively affect peer review, as well, as better articles would be submitted.

Castells (2009) discusses a common culture of the global network, one “not made of content but of process, as the constitutional democratic culture is based on procedure, not on substantive programs” (38). The power of the network made possible by new communication technologies lies in its potential
to expand global participation. The network is profoundly democratic on its own; it does not discriminate. The goal of scholars and librarians should be to foster its democratic nature, to fight the forces that try to stifle equal participation.

In the end, we—both librarians and the individuals within scholarly communities of interest—must decide whether the purpose of scholarly production is for sharing or for profit. If, indeed, the purpose is for sharing, scholars should be working with librarians in order to build viable systems that meet their needs and disseminate information as widely as possible.
References


THROUGH HELL AND HIGH WATER:  
A LIBRARIAN’S AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

BETH PATIN

Introduction

Ten years ago, my understanding of librarianship and information science was changed forever by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. On Friday, August 26, 2005, I walked out of my library without knowing that it would be more than two months before I would see it again. Critical reflection on the experiences occurring during that period played a pivotal role in shaping my views about libraries’ potential as a source of community resilience during and after periods of intense crisis. This autoethnography examines the role of a school library during the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita using the community resiliency model developed by Fran H. Norris et al. (2008) as a framework for reflection and analysis.

Holy Cross School for Boys

When the school year started in August 2005, I was the head librarian at the Catholic Holy Cross School for Boys (fifth through twelfth grade) located in the Lower Ninth Ward neighbourhood of New Orleans, Louisiana. The Holy Cross campus was a special place, nestled between the Mississippi River and the Intracoastal Canal and located under stately oak trees. The Lower Ninth Ward is now a lower-income, mostly African-American, neighbourhood—though this was not always the case. Juliette Landphair (2007) describes the demographic and socioeconomic shift that occurred in the community between 1940 and 1970: the “nonwhite population … rose from 31 percent to 73 percent, and by 1970, 28 percent of Lower Ninth Ward families lived below the poverty line. By 2000, approximately 90 percent of the Lower Ninth Ward was African American, and 33 percent lived in poverty” (842). Even though Holy Cross was located in a predominately African-American neighbourhood, its close proximity to St. Bernard Parish and the change in population that
occurred in the Lower Ninth Ward itself resulted in Holy Cross being one of the more racially diverse schools in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Holy Cross School, 2005

**History of the School**

After founding the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana in 1842, members of the Congregation of Holy Cross migrated to New Orleans. In 1849, by invitation of the Archbishop of New Orleans, five brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross were sent by Father Basil Moreau to assume responsibility for St. Mary’s Orphanage. In that same year, they founded the Holy Cross School for Boys (Holy Cross School n.d.). Reynes Farm (a former riverfront plantation) was purchased by the congregation. When the need for an orphanage waned, the congregation opened St. Isidore’s College as a boarding and day school. The Reynes Farm location served as the home of Holy Cross School for over 150 years. In 2007, the school was relocated to a site in Gentilly in response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and in order to continue its mission (Holy Cross School n.d.). The new campus opened in March 2010, less than five years after Hurricane Katrina.

The Holy Cross School community is unique in New Orleans. In addition to its location in the city, Holy Cross was the only middle and high school for boys, providing an education that the school refers to as “Boys to Men” with the motto, “Become the Man You Are.” Over half of the boys are legacy students, “having followed a great grandfather, grandfather, or father to Holy Cross” (Holy Cross School n.d.). Next year, Holy Cross plans on adding an elementary school, further distinguishing it from other local institutions. As

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1 Except where noted otherwise, photo credits by Beth Patin.
the school librarian, I was able to see how these familial and community networks were strengthened through intergenerational connections at the school and also because many of the boys attended Holy Cross throughout their middle and high school years, an experience few students in New Orleans have.

**Hurricane Katrina**

On the morning of August 23, 2005, Tropical Depression Twelve formed over the south-eastern Bahamas and on August 24, it was named Tropical Storm Katrina. Tropical Storm Katrina picked up strength and was upgraded to a “Category 1 Hurricane” just before it made landfall in Florida on August 25, 2005. As Hurricane Katrina moved into the Gulf of Mexico, the warm waters facilitated rapid growth in the size of the storm as well as a massive surge in its intensity. Hurricane Katrina moved to “Category 5” status on the Saffir-Simpson Wind Scale on the morning of August 28, and it reached its peak strength later that day, with maximum sustained winds of 175 mph. The pressure measurement made Katrina the fourth most intense Atlantic hurricane on record at the time, only to be surpassed by Hurricanes Rita and Wilma later in the season; it was also the strongest hurricane recorded in the Gulf of Mexico to that date (National Hurricane Center 2005). After weakening, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29 as a “Category 3 Hurricane,” with sustained winds of 125 mph (200 km/h) near Buras-Triumph, Louisiana. At landfall, hurricane-force winds extended outward 120 miles (190 km) and the storm’s central pressure was 920 mbar (27 inHg). Hurricane Katrina maintained strength well into the state of Mississippi, finally losing hurricane strength more than 150 miles (240 km) inland near Meridian, Mississippi.

Hurricane Katrina’s storm surge caused fifty-three different levee breaches in greater New Orleans, submerging eighty percent of the city and devastating the entire Gulf Coast. It has been measured as the most costly disaster in United States history. The Bush Administration sought $105 billion for repairs and reconstruction in the region, which did not take into account damage to the oil supply or highway infrastructure (St. Onge and Epstein 2006). Hurricane Katrina displaced over one million people from the central Gulf coast to elsewhere across the United States, which became the largest diaspora in the history of the nation (Ladd et al. 2007). By the end of January 2006, about 200,000 people were once again living in New Orleans, less than half the pre-storm population (Stone et al. 2006). The US Geological Survey estimated that 217 sq. mi. (560 km²) of land was transformed to water by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many people lost their lives as a result of Katrina as well. The confirmed death toll is 1,836, with one fatality in Kentucky, two
each in Alabama, Georgia, and Ohio, fourteen in Florida, 238 in Mississippi, and 1,577 in Louisiana (Beven et al. 2010).

Libraries and Crisis

Most literature about disasters in Library and Information Science (LIS) focuses on the preservation of materials and on events that affect the library itself, such as fire, water damage, and mould (Zach and McKnight 2010). However, a new focus is emerging: that of libraries’ roles during crises in the community, such as tornadoes and other storms (Jaeger et al. 2006; Stewart 2014; Veil and Bishop 2014). This marks a shift from a building-centric focus (or how to preserve library resources) to a community-centric focus (on how to provide services when communities need them most). However, much of the new research recognizing the roles libraries play in disaster situations has remained “siloed” in the LIS literature. As evidence, when Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) director David Paulson was asked about the role public libraries might play in disasters, he said, “I think you are really on to something there, I mean, where else are they going to go? Libraries have backup generators for power, they have the Internet, they have people who will help you. I guess we never really thought of the role libraries could play” (Veil and Bishop 2012). This is a concern, especially since FEMA’s 2010 revisions to the Stafford Act have designated public libraries as essential community organizations.

While FEMA might not be aware of it, research in LIS has shown that community members do seek out library services during disasters. Skinner (2008) reported that thirty-five percent of Louisiana public libraries were closed following Hurricane Katrina; however, there was a scant one percent reduction in visits, pointing to a reliance on this public infrastructure during the immediate rebuilding. After Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast, the Princeton Public Library in New Jersey had over 2,000 more patron visits than average (Bayliss 2012). The most extensive research pointing to libraries’ roles after disasters was conducted after the 2004–2005 hurricanes, which identified a variety of services that were provided by the libraries (Jaeger et al. 2006). The most commonly identified uses for libraries included using the Internet to talk to family and friends, researching the disaster, and filling out FEMA and insurance forms. However, a wide variety of other services were identified as well. These included responding to information inquiries, creating community contact centres, staffing shelters in the library buildings, housing city command centres, distributing food and supplies, providing power to recharge electronics, assisting with FEMA, insurance, and other paperwork, providing library
materials to evacuees in shelters, and offering meeting space for emergency responders.

The National Library of Medicine’s oral history project identified seven roles librarians already perform that could be adapted to support disaster management. These roles include institutional supporters, collection managers, information disseminators, internal planners, educators and trainers, and information community builders (Featherstone et al. 2008). Bishop and Veil (2013) suggest ways that librarians should prepare for or act during an emergency: 1. Develop a disaster plan to include ways the library can assist the community; 2. Regularly update emergency contact information; 3. Work with emergency response managers to integrate public libraries into the existing community disaster planning framework; and 4. Document the number of users assisted in disasters to provide clear evidence of libraries’ contributions. Building on this list of preparations for emergencies, after the tornadoes hit the South-eastern United States on April 27, 2011, Veil and Bishop (2014) conducted interviews with librarians and identified opportunities for libraries to enhance community resilience—for instance, by offering technology resources and assistance; providing office, meeting, and community living room space; serving as the last redundant communication channel and a repository for community information and disaster narratives; and adapting or expanding services already offered to meet the changing needs of the community. This growing body of empirical evidence corroborates the importance of libraries during disasters.

Community Resiliency

Resilience in disaster

The concept of resilience stems from mathematics and physics. Crawford Holling (1973) used mathematical models of natural systems to determine the characteristics that make them adaptive and resilient. This work was important for his field of ecology, but has grown to become the basis for our concept of resiliency in both natural and social science. A resilient system is “one that can withstand shocks and surprises, absorb extreme stresses, and maintain its core functions, though perhaps in an altered form” (Innes and Booher 2010, 205).

Some of the different theoretical discussions about resilience have focused on:

- whether resilience is an outcome (Tierney and Bruneau 2007) or a process (Norris et al. 2008) or both (Cutter et al. 2008);
• what type of resilience is being addressed: physical (Bodin and Wiman 2004; Gordon 1978) economic, infrastructure (Scholl and Patin 2013), ecological (Holling 1973; Klein, Nicholls, and Thomalla 2003; Longstaff et al. 2010), or psychological;

• communities; and,

• what policy realm should be the focus of study (Norris et al. 2008).

“Community resilience” has been defined as a community’s ability to strengthen its response to deal with crises or disruptions (Colten and Sumpter 2009). It is important to note the differences between resilience and mitigation. Mitigation strategies are based on reducing the impact of hazards, whereas resistance strategies aim to prevent the occurrence of hazards. By contrast, resilience assumes that hazards or disasters cannot be prevented, but that a community can be equipped with information in order to enhance the ability to anticipate threats, reduce vulnerability, and respond to and recover from hazard events when they occur. Ann Carpenter (2015) describes both physical and social elements in community resilience; physical resilience can be measured by the severity of the damage and the amount of time it takes to return to normal after the shock. Social resilience describes how quickly individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions respond to external or internal shocks. In sum, a resilient community is one that is able to bounce back from an event. It might not necessarily return to its previous state, but instead, establish a new, functional normal.

Community resilience

There are many factors that contribute to a community’s ability to become resilient. This research utilizes the factors of network adaptive capacities (Norris et al. 2008), including economic development, social capital, community competence, and information and communication capabilities. The theory of community resilience will be used as a framework for critical reflection contributing to the analysis of this work.

In their framework, Norris et al. (2008) define resilience as a measure of how well communities adapt, but that resilience requires a conscious effort and must be maintained over time. Robustness, redundancy, and rapidity are all seen as dynamic attributes of resilient communities. Robustness measures the strength of resources in the community and considers their probability of deterioration. Redundancy measures the extent to which elements are sustainable in the event of a disaster or crisis. Finally, rapidity refers to how
quickly the capacities in the community can be accessed and used or mobilized. This research identified four interconnecting capacities of a community that can affect its overall resiliency: 1. Economic Development; 2. Social Capital; 3. Community Competence; and 4. Information and Communication. Public libraries can enrich these interconnections by building a neighbourhood’s adaptive capabilities (Veil and Bishop 2012). Veil and Bishop (2014) qualitatively demonstrated that libraries have both opportunities and challenges when it comes to enhancing community resilience. However, they did not measure the effect of libraries on community resilience.

Economic Development involves the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific locality or neighbourhood and is a critical aspect of the community (Schumpeter and Backhaus 2003). One aspect of economic development concerns the fairness of risk and the vulnerability to hazards that a community assumes. This follows the “it costs more to be poor” model that argues that people in poorer communities assume more risk because there are fewer infrastructures, organizational networks, and social supports. Another important aspect of economic development has to do with the level and diversity of economic resources. Economic growth, stability of livelihoods, equitable distribution of incomes and assets, land and raw materials, physical capital, accessible housing, health services, schools, and employment opportunities are all significant economic resources for communities. Norris et al. (2008) explain the importance of equity of resource distribution as a component of economic development. Resource distribution studies look at the equity of income and other resources and how they are divided amongst members of the community. Often these divides are considered along racial or gender lines.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) brings another important consideration to the concept of resiliency: capital. He distinguishes three forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social. He defines “social capital” as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (198). In other words, social capital involves an individual’s ability to gain returns by investing, accessing, and using resources embedded in social networks. Received (enacted) and perceived (expected) social support are important aspects of social capital. This links to Norris et al. (2008), in that sources of assistance can determine if and how that help is available. For instance, it can determine from whom the help is coming (or from where it is expected to come) and what type of assistance comes from that source (e.g., emotional, informational, or tangible support). “Formal ties” to the community
include citizen participation and leadership as manifested through voter participation, membership in religious congregations, school and resident associations, neighbourhood watches, and self-help groups. In other words, formal community ties determine who is participating, why, and how. “Informal ties” to community include notions of social embeddedness that determine the strength of one’s social network. Another way of looking at community ties is through organizational linkages and cooperation, which determine which organizations work together and whether there are agreements in place to collaborate in the future. A “sense of community” is defined as an attitude of bonding, trust, and belonging associated with concern for community issues, respect for and service to others, and a sense of connection to others. “Attachment to place” refers to one’s connection to the neighbourhood or city apart from connections with other people.

“Community competence” was defined by L. S. Cottrell (1976) as a community that is “able to collaborate effectively in identifying the problems and needs of a community; can achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities; can agree on way and means to implement the agreed upon goals; and can collaborate effectively in the required actions” (197). Norris et al. (2008) consider community competence to be the networked equivalent of human agency marked by collective action and decision-making within the community. “Community action” is the community’s ability to act in a way that will help it recover from negative physical or social events, and includes coping strategies and shared plans for the future. Not only must a community be able to identify its problems, it must be able to work towards solving them. Critical problem-solving skills are vital in identifying problems and needs as well as in helping the community come to a consensus regarding goals and priorities. Flexibility and creativity determine a neighbourhood’s ability to adapt and change goals and objectives in light of new information and learning. Collective efficacy and empowerment determine trust and the shared willingness to work for the common good of a neighbourhood and one’s belief that one can and should participate. Finally, political partnerships are the type of political approach to civic involvement; they can be either proactive or reactive in nature.

Another determining capacity in community resilience described by Norris et al. (2008) is the “effective use of information and communication,” which they define as the creation of common meanings and understandings and the provision of opportunities to articulate needs, views, and attitudes. Defining characteristics of this capacity include responsible media, narratives, skills, infrastructure, and trusted sources of information. A responsible media outlet is one that portrays the disaster ethically and truthfully, including the types of
information they provide and how they provide it (this, in contrast to irresponsible media that focuses on exaggerated and extreme instances of looting and lawlessness with the hopes of gaining ratings). Community information and communication skills include educational levels of the citizens, their abilities to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) as well as the infrastructure of response systems, meaning the presence of computers, wires, Internet, power, Wi-Fi, etc. The narratives of this study demonstrate experiences of shared meaning and purpose and help members of the community create a collective understanding of reality. Trusted sources of information refers to whether the sender is trustworthy; often local sources are more trusted than major media outlets. Trusted information is critical during crises because there is often little time to confirm or validate information.

Narrative and Analysis

Qualitative methods began with ethnography as a way to study “the other” (Patton 2002). “Others” in the United States, according to Michael Patton, have been traditionally identified as “blacks, American Indians, recent immigrants, working-class families and the inner-city poor” (2002, 84). Critiques of classic ethnography “raise questions about imbalances of power, wealth, and privilege between ethnographers and those they would study” and “have raised fundamental questions about how the values and cultural background of the observer affect” observations (ibid.). Such critiques of this classic qualitative method have led to the development of autoethnography, or studying one’s own culture and oneself as part of that culture (Ellis and Bochner 2000). Laurel Richardson (2000) explains that autoethnographies should be evaluated according to five elements: 1. Substantive contribution; 2. Aesthetic Merit; 3. Reflexivity; 4. Impact; and 5. Expression of a Reality. The method of producing an autoethnography involves the researcher retroactively and selectively writing about past experiences and it may also use different texts, photographs, or other tools to help support the reflection.

For the remainder of this section, I will describe my experiences in the library at Holy Cross School leading up to and following Hurricane Katrina. I will also share narratives illustrating the adaptive capacities of community resiliency.

After teaching in the New Orleans Public School system for several years, I earned a Master of Library and Information Science from Louisiana State University and was subsequently hired as the head librarian at a 125 year-old boys’ school nestled on the banks of the Mississippi River. Life presented
amazing opportunities; what could possibly go wrong? I had no way of knowing, when I walked out of my library on Friday afternoon, that it would be more than two months before I would see it again. By the time I awakened on Saturday morning, a call to evacuate all of South Louisiana had been issued. I quickly tried to think about my most important possessions, grabbed my dog, packed up, and left. I headed to Baton Rouge thinking I would have to work on Monday morning and so I did not want to travel too far.

On Monday morning, New Orleans was hit by Hurricane Katrina and our levees failed. For the next couple of days, I watched the news in disbelief and saw pictures of my friends, co-workers, and neighbours fight to get out of New Orleans. I had always gone to school, worked, or both, so I never imagined I would be without a place to live or without a job. For the next two months I found myself homeless, jobless, and displaced; I did not know when the city would reopen. It is hard to imagine oneself standing in Red Cross lines for necessities or getting food from the Salvation Army, but that was my reality. During that time, even though I had gotten job offers from other library systems, I turned them down. I knew I would rather struggle at home than be anywhere else. For me, there was no doubt that when New Orleans reopened, I would be there. And the morning that residents were allowed to return, I was in that number.

![The Lower Ninth Ward, 2005](image.jpg)

Nothing could have prepared me for what remained of my city. There were boats on houses and houses on boats. Cars were in trees, trees were on cars, and debris was everywhere. No matter where you drove, you could see the dark, oily line demarcating the point where the water had risen. Oh, and there was a smell. The smell of death and decay permeated everywhere; it became such a part of my daily life that I do not even remember when it finally went
away. There were moments when I was not really sure if I would survive. Would it not be easier to just go somewhere else and start over? I doubted whether I had the strength to rebuild my home, my city, my life, piece by piece. But I resolved to do one thing: save something, anything.

When I headed to the Lower Ninth Ward, the first thing I saw was the breach in the Intracoastal Canal and a barge sitting in the middle of what had been a street of colourful houses. As I turned off the bridge, the National Guard stopped me. The Lower Ninth Ward was still closed to residents and was not safe; we were under “look and leave orders.” Look and leave orders allow residents in a specific area to look at their properties and assess damage but they were required to leave each day by 6:00 p.m. As I drove up to the campus, I could see the magnificent oak trees that have watched over Holy Cross for over a hundred years. The devastation took my breath away. The gym was completely demolished and there was a water line above the windows on the first floors of the buildings on campus. All of the cafeteria tables were covered with mud and sludge and were strewn in every direction. Offices and classrooms were filled with dirt, garbage, dead animals, and fish. Lockers were rusty and mouldy and the disgusting black line went half way up the second flight of stairs. When I saw the library, my heart skipped a beat. Broken windows, roof tiles, and debris were everywhere. I knew it was going to be a long time before the library would be ready for students again.

The Holy Cross Neighbourhood, 2005
Holy Cross first floor hallway, 2005

An office in Holy Cross, 2005
Only two weeks after Hurricane Katrina, Holy Cross opened a temporary school in Baton Rouge using a school building from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. after the regular students finished classes. More than eighty-five percent of our students and faculty lost everything. But we were determined to bring back Holy Cross. Our students (and some faculty) took an hour-and-a-half bus ride each way, just to be a part of our community. Unfortunately, since we had no library building, they could not hire me as the librarian. By January 2006, Holy Cross received trailers from FEMA and began operating out of its Lower Ninth Ward campus. I talked to my principal and pleaded for a job so I could still work at Holy Cross. Like everyone else, I knew I had to be part of the rebuilding. He finally hired me as his secretary, and I knew this was the first step in rebuilding the library.

As summer approached, business was coming back to the Big Easy. I am especially proud to say the American Library Association (ALA) was the first National convention to be held in New Orleans after the storm. I can never express how grateful I was to the ALA and its members for having faith that New Orleans would rebound. I asked for volunteers and they came and helped me clear out all of the mouldy and mildewed books and pack the ones I believed we could save. If you have never been to New Orleans in late June, let me tell you it is hot. Sweltering. So to ask people to work for hours on a second floor without power and air conditioning, in an environmentally unsafe building, is to ask a great deal. But no one complained. Even publishers who brought books to the convention donated the leftover volumes to libraries in our city. These books, combined with those I purchased myself, would be the first additions to our new library collection. At the end of summer, a position opened to teach ninth grade English and American College Testing (ACT) preparation. I was grateful to get this job, because I was a terrible secretary.

Our entire school was operating out of trailers in our old parking lot. The only trailer left for my class was being used as a combined IT site, admissions office, guidance department, and computer lab. Because there was no physical space for our school library, I created a “cybrary.” I contacted online book companies, begged for free subscriptions, and organized websites that would entertain the students and help teachers with the curriculum—without taking up any physical space. I began to go back into the buildings to look for supplies and books during my planning periods. Sometimes I was able to borrow a few students from physical education classes and have them carry whatever I could salvage back to my trailer. Eventually we had four bookcases, two spinning shelves, and almost 200 books—not nearly enough. With so many decisions weighing heavily on the adults of New Orleans, the children were often forgotten or considered last. Students no longer had toys, video games,
sports equipment, or games: they needed distractions and the few books we had were not “cutting it.”

Temporary Library trailer, 2006

During graduate school, I had written a successful grant to fund a library in a youth detention centre and I thought I should try grant writing again. So during the days, I taught English, pillaged books, and looked for funding sources online. At night I wrote grant proposals. The first grant I submitted was to the Laura Bush Foundation requesting almost $30,000 to purchase new books. In April 2007, I found out that I had made it to the final round and that I would be interviewed by Jose Aponte, the director of San Diego County Libraries. When Jose came to campus, I showed him my trailer and then took him to see our old library. Although I believed we had saved some books, Jose pointed out that the volumes were beginning to grow mould; the entire collection was a complete loss. A few days later, I found out that I had not only received the grant, but I was awarded $50,000 and Laura Bush was coming to meet me and see all six of my library shelves for herself. The next ten days were a whirlwind for me, filled with arrangements with the staff of the Office of the First Lady and the Secret Service, as well as televised interviews. It was a humbling moment when I learned that a motorcade with First Lady Laura Bush, Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, and then Lt. Governor and now Mayor of New Orleans, Mitch Landrieu, was touring the devastated Ninth Ward, and that this distinguished group was on their way to see me and what I managed to accomplish in my library.

Earlier that year during a meeting, I had struck a deal with my headmaster: if I raised $40,000 he would buy me my own trailer for a library. When I received the grant, he delivered. In August 2007, two years after the storm, I opened our first, true temporary library. I was fortunate to continue to
receive grants from the Louisiana Library Association, the First Book Organization, We the People Bookshelf, the Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and another from the Laura Bush Foundation. In all, I was able to raise nearly half a million dollars to pay for books, furniture, equipment, software, shelving and supplies. From 2007–2009, I opened three temporary libraries and designed a permanent 6,000 sq. ft. (557 m²) library, which opened in March 2010.

First Lady Laura Bush visits Holy Cross to announce grants for Gulf Coast school libraries (photo credit: Charles Illanne)

**Economic Development**

Communities assume different amounts of risk and can be more vulnerable depending on the quality of their infrastructure. Being situated in the Lower Ninth Ward, one of the most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods in
New Orleans, certainly played a factor in our ability to rebuild. In stark contrast to the neighbourhood where we were located, our school community and its infrastructure were very strong. Though our buildings were old (some of them warranting historical preservation status), they were well maintained. Our ability to secure funding from FEMA for temporary trailers in our parking lot allowed our school to get up and running before many other schools in the city.

My definition of community for this article is extremely narrow: the Holy Cross School community—so it is difficult to measure the level and diversity of existing economic resources. I believe the area where Holy Cross had the most impact was in the financial support of its faculty and staff after Hurricane Katrina, whether we were able to return to work or not. The New Orleans Public School Board fired all of its employees, who received their final paycheque on September 1, 2005. Holy Cross handled the situation much differently. They offered jobs to everyone they could at their temporary location in Baton Rouge two weeks after the storm and gave everyone else fifty percent of their salary until they found other employment. Stabilizing our livelihoods by providing a secure source of income for all Holy Cross employees was a decision that allowed me, and so many others in our community, to return to New Orleans and rebuild.

Social Capital
The social networks that emerged after Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the resiliency of communities and people like nothing I have ever experienced before. Much as Rebecca Solnit (2009) describes in *A Paradise Built in Hell*, people in our community found strength in each other as well as the social supports needed to face the challenges in front of us. Jay Walljasper (Dudley 2012) describes our experience well, leading me to believe that what we endured was not unique: “libraries stand as a prime example of social capital, which more and more observers see as the secret sauce that makes the difference between a community that thrives and one that struggles” (1). Holy Cross School was a well-recognized pillar of the New Orleans community. I believe our history in the city and our high number of legacy students created a network of associations that increased our school’s resiliency capabilities; it seemed that there was hardly a business or organization in New Orleans that did not include at least one Holy Cross alumnus. As a school, we relied heavily on our social network for support and whether we needed lawyers, engineers, architects, or chefs our alumni organization was there to help. This network, which was already in place before the hurricane, was key to our community resilience.
The sense of community at Holy Cross was unique. Our community was special and the attitude of our students frequently demonstrated this fact. Once, while working with Juniors on college test preparation, I asked the students to respond to a writing prompt about whether the school should require them to wear uniforms. I expected students to rant and rail about their uniforms, as I had done when I was young. Instead, I was completely overwhelmed by the almost unanimous response; students were proud to wear uniforms. They said they loved to be out in the city wearing their school uniforms so people knew that they were “Holy Cross men” just by seeing them.

It has been ten years since the hurricane. One thing that stands out in my mind is the sacrifices students made to attend or graduate from Holy Cross. During the time when we were in temporary quarters in Baton Rouge, our students travelled in the late afternoon to attend classes after working all day clearing their homes. They often would not return home until after midnight, only to do it all again the next day. I remember early in the morning, after we had returned to the trailers in the Lower Ninth, the football players would come in before school to practice. They had to pull all of the workout equipment out of a shed, set it up, work out, and then put it all back before class started. I remember being in awe of the dedication of those students. For me, the most remarkable were the pupils who chose to stay with friends or other family just so they could continue to go to our school. One student’s parents relocated to Texas after Hurricane Katrina. He stayed in a trailer with his aunt and took two buses every morning and afternoon to make sure that his diploma came from Holy Cross.

Though we were very attached to the Lower Ninth Ward campus, in the end we had to relocate to a new neighbourhood in New Orleans. We transported icons—statues, the gazebo, the bell—from our old campus to the new one, and saw our traditions flourish on our new campus. It helped me realize that while a sense of community is attached to place, the people are the glue that holds a community together, regardless of the infrastructure. As we watched our connections grow on our new campus in Gentilly, I realized how proud I was of the library’s role in building a community in our new space; it became “the place to be” on campus. While there was no faculty lounge and few places to hang out during lunch, our library became the space on campus for both students and faculty to come together as a community.
Community Competence

The Holy Cross community demonstrated a level of competence that I have rarely seen in an organization. Much of this competence, I believe, was founded in strong leadership and clear goals. Our community action priorities were clear from the beginning. Only for a moment was there a question about whether we would reopen; following that decision, every move was made to reestablish our school in the “new” New Orleans. Our ability to consider the problems that we were facing, find temporary locations to hold classes while we constructed new buildings, and come up with flexible and creative solutions was key. In addition to our own organizational efficiency, our Board of Directors worked diligently through political partnerships to ensure that our concerns were heard and understood.

Information and Communication

We know that libraries are more than the resources they hold. People who survive disasters often mention that they not only appreciated the information they received at the library, but also the space it provided to gather with other members of the community and commiserate, mourn, and gain a shared experience of the crisis (Celedón et al. 2012). Narratives are one way that communities come together to create shared experiences; they also help us avoid repeating past mistakes. “Failure to remember, collectively, triumphs and accomplishments diminishes us. But failure to remember, collectively, injustice and cruelty is an ethical breach. It implies no responsibility and no commitment to prevent inhumanity in the future” (Minow 2002, 28). Since we were operating out of trailers for several years, space was at a premium and the library served as a meeting space for our community. Our faculty meetings were held there. It also functioned as a faculty lounge, computer lab, and library for our entire community. This temporary facility provided the physical space that would allow citizens of our neighbourhood to be near one another and to share experiences.

The media’s responsibility to ethical journalism is critical during times of disaster. Often the media can perpetuate myths or rumours about unrest that can exacerbate the crisis, with media replaying frightening images simply for effect. Replaying the same images over and over and focusing disproportionately on communities of color or in poverty has been touted as “exploitive” and “voyeuristic” and some have even gone so far as to refer to it as “disaster porn” (Sirota 2010). One striking example of this was when CNN News anchor, Wolf Blitzer, commented, “you simply get chills every time you
see these poor individuals … so many of these people … so poor and are so
black” (Blitzer 2005). This focus on devastation, race, and socioeconomic
issues is very little help to those on the ground. To the contrary, those of us on
the ground observed people sharing information that helped others make
decisions. For example, though the offices and printing presses of the *Times
Picayune* were flooded, the local New Orleans newspaper was able to continue
to inform its community through its blog on [www.nola.com](http://www.nola.com).

What difference can a school library make? It might be reasonable to
imagine that we had little influence over the infrastructure in our
neighbourhood, but there were many instances where our presence had a
positive effect on our larger community. For example, we pressured the New
Orleans Sewerage and Water Board as well as Entergy to prioritize rebuilding
infrastructure in our community. Most of the telephone poles in our
neighbourhood were damaged, so there was no phone service. We were able to
use switchboards at Holy Cross as routers for new telephone lines and to bring
Internet service back to the area. As a school community, we embraced
technology and used this crisis as an opportunity to become a “1:1 laptop
school,” where every student received a school-issued portable computer.
Resiliency is the ability to establish a “new normal.” We created a new normal
by rebuilding infrastructure and incorporating new technologies, which moved
us ahead.

**Discussion**

The community resilience framework calls for governments to identify the
capacities they possess that will make it possible for them to bounce back after
a tragedy. Identifying and strengthening these capacities can help communities
recover more quickly. As a school librarian, this experience helped me to
consider the roles and services of libraries on a grander scale. Through this
process of reflection, a major theme emerged that serves as a lesson about how
librarians and information professionals can position themselves within
communities to help support their adaptive capacities.

It is critical that library and information professionals embed themselves
within their communities and build trust before events occur so they are already
seen as a resource when disaster strikes. This is true not only for school
libraries, but for all libraries. Libraries are physically and socially embedded in
neighbourhoods, and are therefore well positioned in terms of infrastructure and
expertise to fulfill the information and communication needs of the various
actors within those communities. I believe my position on the school leadership
team along with my appointment to the building committee allowed me to
advocate for the resources the library needed to serve the community. These
appointments also allowed me to remind the leaders of the school how the
library could support our community. Therefore, it is my firm conviction that
librarians must situate themselves in positions of power at their institutions so
they can make the case for library services in critical times. Again, this idea is
not only relevant at the school building level but at the public library level as
well. Public libraries, now considered essential community organizations by
FEMA, should work with their local governments to create standard operating
procedures that include plans to support their neighbourhoods during disasters.
Governments at all levels should include procedures for the design and delivery
of emergency planning and response efforts.

The Holy Cross Library

Conclusion
The Holy Cross School is not a large community, but the experience described
here demonstrates the pivotal role that a library can play during a time of
intense crisis. More research is needed to identify ways that libraries contribute
to the adaptive capacities of communities, and to discover how libraries can be
better positioned to meet the critical needs of their communities when they are
needed the most. In hindsight, it was important for me to lose so much, because
it helped me understand what is absolutely essential: my family, my friends, my
community. Being a part of the rebuilding process after Hurricane Katrina
taught me that my school was not just a building and that my city was not just
infrastructure. Both are made up of people dedicated to working towards similar goals. Our library was a cornerstone of community resiliency.

The new Holy Cross Library
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THE POLITICS OF EVIDENCE:
THE CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN CONTEXT

JODY BERLAND

While science is rarely at the forefront of political controversy, the previous Canadian government acted strategically to silence government scientists and to render their findings invisible. Led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the government cancelled the long-form census, eliminated the office of the National Science Advisor, closed libraries, testing labs, parliamentary offices, and research programs, and interfered with researchers’ communication with the public. When research is veiled or cherry-picked by government offices, its policy implications cannot be properly addressed. Further, some advocates of policy outcomes based on scientific research were targeted as hostile to the national interest. This practice was consistent with a notable and unprecedented centralization of power in the Prime Minister’s Office.

Scholars in Science and Technology Studies and in the history and anthropology of science and social science have shown that “science” and its evidentiary rules have evolved through complex social, political, economic, technological, and institutional contexts. Science has never been pure, or purely objective; it has always been closely intertwined with social and cultural practices and priorities. The Canadian government’s direct interference with scientific and social evidence has made explicit to wider publics that political power can shape what and how (and how much) we know, whether by governments seeking to secure a preferred policy or corporations seeking to secure profits. The Harper government’s unprecedented “silencing of the labs” (The fifth estate 2014) and its larger assault on public science and evidence-based policy brought increasing condemnation from scientists around the world.

Since 2006, according to many reports, the Harper government made concerted efforts to control or prevent the free flow of scientific information across Canada, particularly when that information highlighted the undesirable consequences of resource development. Carol Linnitt notes that, “The free flow of information is controlled in two ways: through the muzzling of scientists
who might communicate scientific information, and through the elimination of research programs that might participate in the creation of scientific information or evidence” (Linnitt 2013). In 2008, the position of National Science Advisor was eliminated. In 2010, the government cancelled the long-form census and began to close libraries, destroy archives, and shutter research facilities. The 2012 omnibus budget bill, Bill C-38, cut funding to or dismantled the following environmental bodies or pieces of legislation: the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Energy Board Act, the Species at Risk Act, the Parks Canada Agency Act, the Canadian Oil and Gas Operations Act, the Coasting Trade Act, the Nuclear Safety Control Act, and the Canada Seeds Act. The Prime Minister’s Office also prohibited government scientists from speaking to the media, shadowed and censored Environment Canada scientists in the course of their work, terminated environmental assessment stations in the North, purged scientific libraries, and closed hundreds of labs and water testing facilities across the country.

Records on socially controversial policies such as Aboriginal residential schools, gun ownership, and foreign workers either disappeared or failed to register in political solutions. When government acts to delink policy from evidence, it denies its citizens not only the right to know what scientists know but also the right to engage in informed public discussions about issues that affect us. Another result of this government’s hostility to evidence (when it did not support its policy goals) was the emergence of a counter-movement dedicated to bringing scientific controversies and their political implications into the public eye, spearheaded by organizations such as Evidence for Democracy and Scientists for the Right to Know.

Scientists and journalists opposing these trends accused Harper’s Conservative government of “libricide” for closing some of the world’s most important fishery, ocean, and environmental libraries (see TheStar.com 2014; Doctorow 2014; Climate Science Watch 2014; Linnitt 2013). When the National Science Advisor’s office was dissolved, its libraries were moved into Information Management and Technology Services (IMTS), and five out of seven of these important libraries were closed. In some cases, IMTS invited the public to enter and scavenge the shelves before shipping out what was left to remote sites. In other cases, witnesses saw collections being moved to dumpsters (Nikiforuk 2013b). Canada was a world leader in research on sustainable fisheries and oceans. We possessed world-class laboratories and libraries with some of the finest environmental science and freshwater book collections in the world (Nikiforuk 2013a). Many of these are now gone.
Scientists and advocacy groups described a growing incongruity between the government’s single-minded dedication to profitable and efficient natural resource extraction, and the known, scientifically proven risks of environmental degradation, such as polluted waters, climate change, and resource depletion arising from such extraction. This incongruity became increasingly evident with the unchecked growth of the oil sands, fracking, overfishing, factory farming, and the movement of bitumen by land and sea. The collection and public dissemination of research related to these issues gave way to the enactment of strategies dedicated to suppressing such knowledge. While cutting programs like water testing, wastewater surveys, and emissions monitoring programs (Linnitt 2013), ostensibly for budgetary reasons, the government dedicated targeted funds to the accumulation of punitive evidence, like investigating the public communication and charitable status of environmental non-profits. When government officials suggest that public scientists or environmental groups questioning pipelines or oil sands are hostile to the nation’s interests and even “terrorists” subject to potential counterinsurgency tactics, and when the Canada Revenue Agency threatens to audit bird watchers (and many other groups) in case public statements about the natural environment disqualify them from charitable status, we know the country is facing a serious problem that concerns not just science, but democracy itself.

These practices of closure and surveillance did not just affect policy discussions or outcomes. They also threatened future research and where it might point us. Whether documenting fish, drilling, water, oil leaks, or the treatment of Indigenous peoples, many of these materials are lost forever. Indeed, “evidence” is not confined to the world of natural resources, and “libricide” is not confined to the collections of the Departments of Science or Fisheries and Oceans. The long-gun registry was not just terminated; its records were destroyed. The long-form census gathered statistical evidence of changing family, economic, rural–urban, and social patterns that was essential to making social policy responsive to people’s actual needs. When it was cancelled, the director of Statistics Canada resigned from public service. We call this a “politics of evidence” in part because it harms some communities more than others. This government refused to order an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, formulate a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Report, address the rights of refugees, or tell the truth about the Temporary Foreign Workers Program and its impact on unemployment and workers’ rights, because, as the prime minister so cogently put it, “we don’t do sociology.” Notably, the United Nations Human Rights Committee released a
report highly critical of the Canadian government for its failure to address these urgent issues (CBC News 2015).

Under this regime, our ability to know what is happening in our country and to base reasonable policy on this knowledge was shattered. Scientists and researchers must be allowed to learn about the country and communicate their knowledge with the public. Where evidence is suppressed, public knowledge and awareness are also suppressed, curtailing the will for change. Missing evidence has significant implications for the safety and security of everyone, whether it involves social, scientific, medical, environmental, women’s, LGBT and Indigenous peoples’ problems and histories, or the future of the planet.

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A version of this article was written as an editorial introduction to an issue of Canada Watch, an annual publication of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University. We produced this issue in collaboration with the Politics of Evidence (POE) Working Group, an inter-university collaboration convened by Professor Natasha Myers. This group was formed as a response to the overt and unprecedented suppression of science by the Conservative government in Canada, led by Prime Minster Stephen Harper; the issue was published six weeks before the election in which Harper was defeated. It is posted at http://robarts.info.yorku.ca/files/2015/09/CW_Fall2015_FINAL.pdf. I have changed a few verb tenses because of the intervening election.

The POE Working Group brings together over forty faculty and graduate student members from York University, the University of Toronto, Ryerson University, and other universities across the country. It was formed to “raise public awareness and to challenge existing barriers to research and the dissemination of research findings, whether such barriers come from the public or private sectors. By interrogating the uses and abuses of evidence, we seek to highlight where science and technology in Canada intersect with issues of social and environmental justice.” You can read more about POE resources and activities at https://politicsofevidence.wordpress.com.
References


BURNING CANADA’S LIBRARIES AND OTHER MONUMENTAL ERRORS

BRIAN GREENSPAN

As a new Russian community is emerging, libraries are called upon to play a crucial role in the opening of citizens’ free and unlimited access to information and knowledge, the unification of Russia into one informational and cultural whole and its integration into the global community.

— Russian Ministry of Culture
Resolution no. 532 (1995)

Original materials will be preserved. Duplicate materials that nobody wants will be disposed of in the usual manner. Information that was available in the libraries continues to remain available in the digital world. Welcome to this century.


According to Plutarch, the first fire to consume the Library of Alexandria was started by Julius Caesar during his civil war with the Roman Senate in 48 BCE. Rather than allow his ships to be stolen as he pursued Pompey’s senators, Caesar set his own fleet on fire, which spread to the celebrated Alexandrine Library. At least 40,000 scrolls were burned, but Caesar escaped and, with his populares, went on to defeat the Senators and win the favour of the people. From the early days of Western civilization, then, the library on fire has symbolized an angry populist’s victory over elite intellectuals, the archons who embody sovereignty over the laws and edicts of the land. Burn the library, defeat the archivists and senators, and win over the people: it’s a formula that survives the test of time.
Accidental fires remain among the greatest threats to libraries and archives today. In January 2015, fire ripped through Moscow’s Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences (INION). Over a million documents were destroyed, some dating to the sixteenth century, in an incident the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences described as “reminiscent of Chernobyl” (AFP). While the comparison may be exaggerated, the fire was a blow to Russia’s social sciences and humanities research community. Yet, for many foreign correspondents, the greatest loss was not research data, but much older documents of global democracy, including:

the complete archive of the League of Nations, the United Nations, and UNESCO and documents from the US Congress since 1789, the British parliament from 1803 and the Italian parliament since 1879.

According to the latest indications, the Russian edition of all of the documents from the UN General Assembly, international handbooks and lexicons, documents from the International Court of Justice, and part of the library’s department for world literature in foreign languages, as well as the institute for research into Slavic language and culture were destroyed. In the latter case, the majority of these editions were only to be found at INION. (Weiss)

The presence of these documents, which would have been unknown to scholars for much of the twentieth century, are a vestigial feature of INION’s predecessor, the Library of the Communist Academy. Established in 1918, the Communist Academy boasted expansive collections organized by intellectuals with Marxist and often revolutionary-populist leanings, who were committed to the public library movement (Stuart 420). The Harvard-educated American Henrietta Derman, who directed the Library in the early 1920s, was essential in instituting Anglo-American procedures, including open shelves and Library of Congress classifications (Hamburger 261). As Irina Klim has shown, Derman and other librarians with exposure to American library science exerted a strong influence on early Soviet collections, initially with the support of Vladimir Lenin, who admired the New York Public Library and wrote articles about the importance of circulating library materials among the people (213).

However, Lenin also instituted a policy of Partijnost, the deliberate shaping of collections to reflect the ideology of the Communist Party, and relegating materials that did not do so to closed repositories, or spetskhran (Klim 213; Knutson 718). Stalin further increased controls on any intellectual activity that violated Party orthodoxy, purging books by his political enemies
along with their authors, and instituting censorship policies that shaped Soviet libraries for over half a century (Knuth 67). Describing his experiences as a young American scholar conducting research in Soviet libraries and archives in the early 1970s, Edward Kasinec recalls that the Lenin Library’s holdings excluded items that did not promote Soviet history or Russian secularism, that photocopying facilities were “strictly controlled,” and that scholarship undertaken there was closely monitored and “carefully proscribed” to reflect orthodox ideology (21). As late as 1987, “limitation on access to information, within a hierarchy of users” was at the time “a basic feature of Soviet research libraries,” stemming from “a policy of controlling the flow of information and channeling it into trusted hands” (Kimmage 571). Apparently, there are greater risks to libraries than accidental fires.

If any good can be salvaged from the repressive Soviet era of librarianship, it may be that those holdings that did survive the imposition of Stalinist epistemology were well-preserved:

Reference work under Soviet rule was oriented more toward promoting state security and political control than facilitating public research access, but, because of the tremendous importance of archives to the regime, considerable funds were devoted to reference systems and a significant quantity of reference publications. (Grimsted 719)

Ellen Knutson likewise notes that, “[u]nder the Soviets, the library was not free to collect and disseminate any information they wished…. Nonetheless, literacy was important to the Soviets, book publishing flourished, and it was an accepted ideal that no person should have to walk more than fifteen minutes to get to a library” (716). Ironically, Knutson continues, “[a]fter perestroika libraries were faced with drastic budget cuts and closures, but at the same time they had a new freedom to open access to information.”

After 1991, the long-standing emphasis on promoting mass literacy was combined with a new commitment to openness in Russia’s State Archival Service, with the introduction of new or newly declassified fond-level guides for federal and institutional archives, and newly opened sources on Stalin’s Politburo and the Communist Party of the 1930s (Grimsted 720–725). Knutson concludes from her analysis of the Bryansk Region public library system that the centralized and hierarchical structure of Soviet-era public libraries has, “in an ironic twist,” allowed the ready dissemination of “new information and methods among the libraries that are part of the … network,” which has emerged as a “conduit for innovation and change” (727). The state’s long-standing commitment to maintaining its holdings and infrastructure has allowed
Russia’s libraries and archives to transcend ideological entrenchments, positioning them for re-entry into global information networks, renewed intellectual debate, and popular discourse alike. Donald J. Raleigh describes the transformed spirit of open intellectual and historical inquiry that the newly declassified archives inspired in millions of Soviet citizens between 1987 and 1988:

Launched by writers, publicists, politicians, and maverick historians, the national dialogue on the past and future of Soviet society soon forced a reevaluation of the Revolution of 1917, the New Economic Policy (NEP), alternatives to Stalinism, the Soviet regime’s brutal collectivization policies, Stalin and his associates, the command-administrative system, the Great Patriotic War, and Lenin himself. (16)

The maintenance of the archive, in other words, made it possible for future generations to reevaluate the nation’s past and future from new ideological perspectives.

Although one might think that democratic institutions provide some guarantee of archival integrity, the reverse is in fact true. In a 1977 essay, “The Lives of Infamous Men,” Michel Foucault explores the traces left by ordinary individuals on the modern archive (in particular the prison archives of the Bastille and Paris’s Hôpital Général). By “infamous” Foucault means “unfamous” (Osborne 61), those who led utterly unremarkable lives but, due to an unlucky encounter with power, were punished for rather ordinary and monotonous crimes: “Neighborhood disputes, the quarrels of parents and children, misunderstandings between couples, the excesses of wine and sex, public altercations, and many secret passions” were the substance of petitions to bring the offenders before the King for judgment, and which accumulated as written traces in royal “dossiers and archives” (169, 166). In this way, the modern archives came to replace penitential confession as a disciplinary apparatus, “a recording mechanism instead of a pardoning mechanism” that functioned “to bring the quotidian into discourse.” For Foucault, the archive doesn’t merely record the everyday, but produces it in the form of “ongoing mundane facts,” as Thomas Osborne explains (60). Citing Vitaly Shentalinsky’s work on declassified Soviet archives, Osborne points to the
KGB case file of the writer Isaac Babel’s arrest, which records the author’s “‘toothpaste, shaving cream, a bath sponge and … the thong from an old pair of sandals.’” Osborne, like Knutson, sees the irony in archives that come to negate their initial purpose, noting that precisely because the KGB archive was “originally designed for a particular, secret purpose, it can thus be used all the better to provide something like objective evidence for those that follow” (56). Guided by “the principle of the explanatory relevance of the mundane,” the archive includes the most quotidian objects of history’s famous and infamous individuals alike, as though to demonstrate that “power is ordinary” and the heroic, commonplace (59). The modern archive is in principle a crowded site of everyday statements about ordinary lives, its mundanity the very source of its “archival credibility,” conferring the “expertise of providence, the right to make statements about the past, about history, about change, about fate and, by extension … about the future” (54).

Defined by their utter ordinariness, archives are of little use to Stephen Harper’s attempt to rewrite Canadian history as a myth of exceptionalism and military heroism (Frenette 55–57), which perhaps explains his antipathy toward them. In less time than it took Stalin to impose his restrictions on Soviet intellectuals and librarians, the Harper government has ravaged Canada’s libraries and archives through a series of destructive decisions that are every bit as ideologically motivated, but less likely to leave us any chance of fully recovering our national memory once the dust settles. The Harper government has willingly destroyed the contents of several important research libraries, ignoring the debt to future generations that constitutes archival credibility. Beginning in 2013, the government began the process of closing most of the regional libraries of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Claiming publicly to be consolidating and digitizing a century of data relating to marine life and the environment, a secret memo revealed that the DFO was in fact “‘culling’ material to make it fit into the two remaining libraries,” burning documents or sending them to landfill (Nikiforuk, “Scientists”). As a DFO Scientist told The Tyee,

The cuts were carried out in great haste apparently in order to meet some unknown agenda. No records have been provided with regard to what material has been dumped or the value of this public property. No formal attempt was made to transfer material to libraries of existing academic institutions…. The Department has claimed that all useful information from the closed libraries is available in digital form. This is simply not true. Much of the material is lost forever. (Nikiforuk, “What’s Driving”)
Nor has Fisheries been the only portfolio affected by Harper’s book burning. On its Canada’s Past Matters blog, the Canadian Association of University Teachers has documented numerous budget cuts since 2007 to Health Canada’s Library Services, as well as the closures of the Citizenship and Immigration Library, the National Capital Commission Library, and the Public Service Commission library, among many others. Library and Archives Canada (LAC) alone has suffered budgetary reductions in the tens of millions of dollars, cuts “so devastating that LAC has been nearly dismantled” under the Harper government, throttling its acquisitions and forcing LAC to fire staff, reduce opening hours, cancel their interlibrary loans service, and close online portals (Frenette 63; Groover).

This war on data and knowledge is being carried out not only through the closure of libraries and archives, but also through the enclosure of the remaining data commons by private interests. In 2013, Libraries and Archives Canada entered a secret deal allowing a private corporation to digitize its holdings in exchange for exclusive rights over them. This new agreement would further restrict access to LAC’s holdings by granting Canadiana.org the right to sell back to Canadians digitized versions of heritage documents collected at taxpayers’ expense, and which were previously freely available (Geist). Interestingly, Soviet librarians were forced to make similar private sector deals when state funding dried up after perestroika (Knutson 720–721; Raleigh 17), during an era of national financial crisis far worse than any faced by Canada since 2008. Sam Trosow faults the management of LAC for its willingness to adopt the government’s model of privatization, noting “the wall of institutional conservatism and risk-aversion” within the library community that hides beneath the posture of “neutrality”: “It is no surprise when commercial interests external to the library community take strong positions to protect their business models and extend them through new markets. What is more perplexing though is when these positions arise internal to the library community” (n.p.). For Trosow, “it is not enough to try to hold back the process of enclosure and commodification. We have to be thinking of ways to reverse the process once it has begun” (n.p.).

According to the government’s official line, its repeated assault on physical research holdings—especially those that potentially point to the negative long-term environmental costs of the fossil fuel industry—is inconsequential, since it is also transcoding these materials into digital form. Burning a library to disk, in other words, somehow justifies burning its physical volumes. Yet, as Yves Frenette observed in 2014, the “archival digitization program that had been presented as a universal panacea … has yet to yield results” (63), and there is little evidence that the situation has since changed.
Even were the government to carry out its digitization plans, not everyone looks optimistically at the prospect of replacing printed libraries and archives with centralized digital collections. Some humanities scholars even celebrate the benefits that partial and incomplete printed holdings allegedly bestow on the elite operations of hermeneutics. In an article for the Los Angeles Review of Books, Stephen Marche warns that the very attempt to digitize and analyze literary texts in large numbers strips literature and its interpretation of its “brokenness,” along with all its “distinction,” “taste,” “refinement,” “history,” and above all, its “humaness.” In opposition to large, open-access digital corpuses and distant reading—the stuff of digital humanities—Marche celebrates a literary scholarship that is partial, fragmented, and incomplete. If literature is a worthwhile object of study, he claims, that is because it is “haunted by … oblivion, by incipient decay” (¶ 20). According to Marche’s logic, digital archives are simply too large and totalizing to be trusted.

Marche is right about one thing: people seem to prefer the melancholy of ruins to large and perfectly harmonious wholes. Next to artfully arranged fragments, the massive open-access collections of recovered works painstakingly assembled by digital humanists seem obvious and unromantic. Marche echoes those liberal and conservative thinkers since the 1940s for whom any project that presents a glimmer of totality—even in the form of a large archive or database—appears dangerously totalitarian (Jacoby 42–45). Such an anti-utopian fear of the totality might explain the Harper government’s penchant for obliterating the printed record of our science, culture, and way of life, and replacing it with the “incipient decay” of digital records that are piecemeal, fragmentary, and inaccessible to most Canadians. On the other hand, for a government seemingly intent on rewriting Canadian history, digital files are more plastic and mutable than the stubborn and resilient matter of printed records. In a recent exposé of the government’s “war on data” for Maclean’s magazine, Anne Kingston (2015) writes that, “where digitization has helped other governments and companies make more information available, it is having the opposite effect here.” Noting the deletion of certain government databases and websites, Kingston observes that LAC lacks sufficient budgets or oversight for the digitization of its holdings, and warns that “claims of ‘digitization’ can be a precursor to brick-and-mortar closures.”

In a famous passage from Victor Hugo’s Les Miserables, the archdeacon Frollo looks up from a printed book to a stone cathedral and utters, “Ceci tuera cela.” The arrival of the printed book, Frollo feared, would soon come to replace architectural monuments as sites of memory, culture, and community. Hugo implied that the space-biased medium of stone could not coexist alongside time-biased media like print, to use Harold Innis’s distinction (33). Of
course, paper books did not halt the construction of cathedrals; but the fact that older media and newer media regularly coexist in complex ecologies hasn’t stopped critics from repeatedly evoking Hugo’s vignette to describe the fears that attend contemporary digitization practices (Gunkel 279), which some interpret as a threat to the stability and permanence of our libraries and the printed record as a whole.

Frollo might approve of the Harper government, which, in a reversal of the precession of media empires, has been systematically destroying libraries and archives even as it builds new sacred sites from stone and concrete. From Triumph Through Diversity, the bronze and granite monument erected on Parliament Hill as part of the bicentenary celebrations of the War of 1812, to the colossal and controversial “Mother Canada” war memorial proposed for a protected area of Cape Breton, Stephen Harper has a mania for stone monuments. This investment in colossal memorials complements the Harper government’s general turn away from progressive Canadian history in favour of retrograde modes of historiography that foreground the nation’s military and colonial entanglements and connections to the British monarchy, in what Frenette calls an “effort to reconstruct collective memory” in Canada (53–57).

One of the Harper government’s most blatantly ideological retrogressions involves its proposed National Memorial to Victims of Communism. Designed with the blatant aim of courting of votes of Canadians from formerly communist Eastern European nations, the memorial has been allocated a plot of National Capital Commission land in Ottawa’s Judicial Precinct long designated for a new Federal Court building. The monument will be erected literally in place of justice, a physical reminder of the Prime Minister’s vendetta against the judiciary and the Supreme Court in particular. The proposed site also rests beside Library and Archives Canada, the stone cold memorial marking the place of our once living archival memory, now fired off from Canadian citizens. According to Ludwik Klimkowski, chair of the Tribute to Liberty foundation dedicated to raising funds for the National Memorial to Victims of Communism, “True inspiration [for the memorial] comes directly from the PM” (Peesker). In other words, the proposed memorial edifies the structure of memory of a “heroic” leader, which must stand in for our collective, negotiated memory.

Many have publicly questioned the wisdom of such a memorial, arguing that it revives Cold War caricatures and ideologies, while effacing the responsibility of Western nations for contributing to the deaths of citizens from communist countries in the name of capitalism. In a recent opinion piece, Scott Taylor delineates the millions of victims of capitalism’s military interventions
against communist states, asking, “Where is the monument to their suffering?” (Taylor). To the extent that the proposed memorial would efface the memory of other victims while stealing federal funding from research libraries, it contributes directly to the government’s “war against data.” Numerous commentators have connected this “national amnesia” (Samek qtd. in Kingston) to the government’s desire to protect oil companies from inconvenient environmental data, and its need to protect itself from statistics indicating poor employment rates and the lacklustre performance of the economy. In short, our national amnesia is the direct result of the Harper government’s commitment to a certain version of capitalism, one that wraps the destructive tendencies of twenty-first century neoliberalism in a timeless stone façade. The Marxist scholar Marshall Berman once decried capitalism’s “innovative self-destruction,” its need to constantly revolutionize production by destroying old zones of development in order to create new sites for the absorption of capital. Citing The Communist Manifesto, Berman lamented the “pathos of all bourgeois monuments,” stating that, “[e]ven the most beautiful and impressive bourgeois buildings and public works are disposable, capitalized for fast depreciation and planned to be obsolete, closer in their social functions to tents and encampments than to Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, Gothic cathedrals’” (99). Canada seems to have returned to an earlier phase of state capitalism in which finances are sunk into massive stone works, mute monuments to a perpetual forgetting, even as our libraries melt into air along with our history and heritage.

Of course, no monument is really permanent, no more than any government, corporation, ideology, or economic system. Tzvetan Todorov observed that the opening of the Moscow Archives in 1991 altered our understanding of the history of communism, producing conflicting understandings of the Communist International and its leaders:

A nation’s past can be the object of two apparently similar but in fact opposite processes, remembrance and commemoration. The goal of the former is to apprehend the past in its truth; that of the latter is to produce images that are deemed useful for the present. The first complicates our knowledge of the past; the second simplifies it, since its most frequent objective is to provide us with idols to venerate and enemies to abhor…. Commemoration is always the adaptation of memory to the needs of today. (10–11)

Pragmatists may challenge this stark opposition between the useful and the true. But it’s at least useful to understand the Harper government’s shift in priority from archiving the past to memorializing it as the repression of complicating
remembrances in favour of simplifying commemorations. It could even be said that Canadians are today confronted with another kind of memory, one that occurs in the wake of digital media, almost as a parody of its processes. Cast in the oldest media, this new form of destructive memory commemorates even as it obliterates the foundations of remembrance, threatening the possibility of any future dialogue.
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BIG PUBLISHERS, BIGGER PROFITS:
HOW THE SCHOLARLY COMMUNITY LOST THE
CONTROL OF ITS JOURNALS

VINCENT LARIVIÈRE, STEFANIE HAUSTEIN, AND PHILIPPE MONGEON

How should research be disseminated? This question is central to the research community. Before the creation of the scientific journal 350 years ago, knowledge was usually shared directly with those who could experience it firsthand. For example, The Royal Society of London, founded in 1660, held public demonstrations of experiments in which Robert Hooke and other curators of experiments would provide visual evidence of a new phenomenon or offer a new description of reality. Written accounts of new knowledge were also transmitted, in the Republic of Letters, through the important correspondence exchanged amongst scientists, as well as through the pre-journal “editorial” role that was played by passeurs of letters, such as Father Marin Mersenne and Henry Oldenburg (Gingras 2010). With the rise of the printing press, the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge became faster, and journals, with their exponential increase (de Solla Price 1963), gradually replaced letters and monographs as the primary means for transmitting research results (Harmon and Gross 2007), especially in the natural and medical sciences (Larivière et al. 2006).

While the Philosophical Transactions and many of The Royal Society’s other journals have been a financial burden for most of their existence (Garner 2015), today a large and profitable market exists around scientific journals. Commercial academic publishers are not a new phenomenon, however. By the Victorian era, a large number of journals were being published by commercial companies, whose distribution channels were considered to be more efficient than those of scientific societies (Brock 1980). While scientific societies and commercial publishers have co-existed for a long time, few studies have looked at their relative importance in scholarly publishing as a whole and, particularly, at the impact of the digital era on the scholarly publishing landscape. The
digital age may have further democratized the dissemination of scholarly work by making open access possible, but also provides profitable opportunities for powerful corporations.

At the end of the 1990s, some authors were of the optimistic (and perhaps slightly naïve) opinion that the digitalization of academic publishing would provide a solution to the ongoing budgetary problems faced by libraries (Abramson 2008; McGuigan and Russell 2008). Indeed, as digital technologies make it easier to update, reuse, access, and transmit scientific documents, researchers would no longer need publishers and journals to disseminate knowledge. *The Financial Times* even predicted in 1995 that the publisher Elsevier would be “the internet’s first victim” (Cookson 2015). Created by a group of researchers at CERN in Switzerland, the Web was now offering them “a way of sharing their research online for free. What need would anyone have for fusty, expensive journals?” (Cookson 2015). Indeed, many people saw digital publishing as a way of disseminating knowledge at a much lower cost, an exciting prospect for institutions facing cyclical budget cuts, many of which continue today.1 Other authors more pessimistically speculated that digital distribution would in fact only exacerbate the problem, or at the very least, provide no solutions (Solomon 2002; Halliday and Oppenheim 2001). Based on a paper recently published in *PLOS ONE* (Larivière, Haustein, and Mongeon 2015), this short paper describes the growth and importance of major academic publishers by looking at nearly 45 million articles indexed in the *Web of Science* from 1973–2013.

*Figure 1* presents the extent of the consolidation of the publishing industry. More specifically, it shows the proportion of papers published by the top five publishers that account for the largest number of papers published in 2013 in the natural and medical sciences (NMS) and social sciences and humanities (SSH), along with the proportion of papers published by other publishers. In both NMS and SSH, Reed Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer, and Taylor & Francis are included in the top five publishers list. For NMS, the fifth publisher in the top five is the American Chemical Society, a scientific society, and in SSH the top five includes Sage Publications.

For both NMS and SSH there is a significant decrease in the percentage of articles published by other smaller publishers, especially since the advent of

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1 For example, because of such budget cuts and above-inflation increases in subscription prices, the Université de Montréal has recently stopped subscribing to the Wiley *big deal*, only keeping the subset of journals from publishers that were accessed above a certain threshold. More details can be found at [http://www.bib.umontreal.ca/communiques/20131104-DB-nouvelle-ere-collections.htm](http://www.bib.umontreal.ca/communiques/20131104-DB-nouvelle-ere-collections.htm).
the digital era in the mid-1990s. In NMS the top five publishers were responsible for 20% of articles in 1973; that percentage grew to 30% in 1996, 50% in 2006, and then 53% by 2013. Three of the five publishers alone accounted for over 47% of all publications in 2013: Reed Elsevier (24.0%), Springer (11.9%), and Wiley-Blackwell (11.3%). A similar pattern can be observed in SSH. During the period from 1973 to 1990, the five major publishers represented less than 10% of publications. This percentage began to increase in the mid-1990s and has continued to do so since, reaching more than 51% of all publications in 2013. Thus, in both major scientific domains, five publishers control more than half of all scholarly articles.

![Figure 1](image.png)

**Figure 1.** Percentage of natural and medical sciences (left panel) and social sciences and humanities (right panel) papers published by the top 5 publishers, 1973–2013.

The proportion of articles controlled by five major publishing houses varies among fields (see **Figure 2**). For example, the vast majority of articles in the arts and humanities are published in journals not belonging to the five major publishers. The relatively low subscription prices, the low number of journal articles published, and the continued importance of monographs have all factored in to make the arts and humanities a much less appealing domain for large publishers to invest in.² On the other side of the spectrum, in recent years the major publishers have heavily invested in the social sciences, which include disciplines such as sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, and urban studies. While the top five publishers accounted for 15% of social

² Big publishers have, however, been traditionally been quite active in publishing monographs, which can also be quite lucrative. See: [http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/sep/04.academics-are-being.hoodwinked.into-writing-books.nobody-can.buy](http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/sep/04.academics-are-being.hoodwinked.into-writing-books.nobody-can.buy)
sciences articles published in 1995, this percentage leapt to 66% in 2013. Worse still, the three largest publishers—Reed-Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley-Blackwell—account for nearly 50% of all published documents in 2013. Psychology follows a similar trend, with the top five publishers responsible for 71% of publications in 2013, while this percentage was only 17% in 1995.

In NMS, chemistry is the most concentrated field (71%), which is not surprising given the presence of the American Chemical Society (ACS) among the top five publishers. Physics, on the other hand, follows a different model: after increasing from 20% in 1973 to 35% in 2000, the trend has stabilized. Today, physics is the field where the top five publishers account for the lowest proportion of articles published. The importance of scientific societies in physics, such as the American Physical Society (APS), the American Institute of Physics (AIP), and the Institute of Physics (IOP), the arXiv preprint server, and free-access agreements like SCOAP3 have made this field less profitable and therefore less attractive to commercial publishers.

![Figure 2. Percentage of papers published by the five major publishers, by discipline, 2013.](image)

While scholarly literature in both SSH and NMS has undergone a clear increase in the concentration of papers in the hands of a few publishers

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3 With a 158,000 members and assets of about $1.3 billion, the American Chemical Society (ACS) is considered as the world’s largest and richest scientific society ([http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/about.html](http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/about.html) and [http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/about/aboutacs/financial/overview.html](http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/about/aboutacs/financial/overview.html)). Despite being a scientific society, the ACS is known to have a strong stance against open access (Giles 2007).

4 SCOAP3 is an agreement between libraries, journals, and research funders to convert journals into full open access, at no charge for authors. More details can be found at [http://scoap3.org/](http://scoap3.org/).
(reaching 50% in recent years), a clear distinction was observed between NMS and SSH. In the former group of disciplines, the size of scientific societies— which is a consequence of the size of disciplines in general—managed to keep the literature less dependant on commercial publishers. For example, scientific societies such as the ACS or the APS publish many journals in the specialties of chemistry and physics, respectively, and they have successfully managed the shift from print to electronic dissemination. On the other hand, the social sciences are much more fragmented: anthropology, communication, criminology, demography, economics, and sociology can all be considered social sciences. Yet, there is no large scientific society that regroups researchers from these disciplines and that also publishes the various journals covering these different disciplines. There are, rather, many different associations for each discipline, which are often divided into specialities. Therefore, topics in SSH are more often local in scope, and thus less international, leading to decentralized (and smaller) scientific societies. As a consequence, these scientific societies did not have the means to adapt to the digital era and therefore were more likely to be acquired or have agreements with big commercial publishers for the publication of their journals.

Hence, since the arrival of the digital era, large commercial publishers have increased their control over scholarly communication, which increased their sales volume and, consequently, their profits. For example, Reed-Elsevier’s profit reached more than US $2 billion in 2012 and 2013, thanks to a profit margin of nearly 40% for its Scientific, Technical & Medical Division. Similar profit margins were obtained by Springer Science+Business Media in 2012 (35.0%), in 2013 by the Scientific, Technical, Medical and Scholarly of John Wiley & Sons (28.3%), and Taylor & Francis (35.7%). These very high profit margins are due to the peculiar economics of scholarly publishing, in which authors provide their goods without financial compensation, while consumers (readers) are isolated from the purchase. Along these lines, there is no substitution of goods for the knowledge contained in a given paper, as each journal has control over the papers it publishes. In other words, a paper published in the journal Science cannot be considered an alternative to a paper published in Nature; the papers, rather, complement each other, which obliges libraries to subscribe to a larger number of journal titles.

5 Compiled by the authors from annual reports: http://www.reedelsevier.com/investorcentre/pages/home.aspx.
7 http://www.wiley.com/legacy/about/corpnews/fy13_10kFINAL.pdf.
One might argue as well that, despite their profits, the value added by publishers has decreased in the digital era. In the print world, the publisher’s role of formatting, printing, and distribution was essential, but in the digital world, the ease with which these functions can be performed—even rendered obsolete—begs the questions: What services do the big publishers provide? What role do the big publishers play in the scientific community? And what justifies their ever-increasing share of university budgets? Although it could be argued that publishers coordinate the evaluation of manuscripts, we must not forget that it is the researchers themselves who perform the evaluation, and that they do so for free as a service to the scholarly community. Therefore, the essential quality control of published work is not value added by publishers but by the scientific community itself.

The scientific community is becoming more sensitive to the abusive behaviour of some for-profit publishers. In 2012, The Cost of Knowledge\(^8\) campaign, initiated by the mathematician Timothy Gowers, protested against the business model of Elsevier and asked researchers to boycott its journals by ceasing to submit to and evaluate for them. Analogously, several university libraries, including the University of California (Howard 2010) and Harvard University (Sample 2012) have threatened to boycott the big for-profit publishers. Others, such as the University of Konstanz in Germany, have simply cancelled all subscriptions to Elsevier, reporting that they were not able to follow the company’s aggressive pricing policy, including a price increase of 30% over five years (University of Konstanz 2014; Vogel 2014). Recently, the editorial board of the journal Lingua stepped down to boycott Elsevier’s open access author publishing charges (Jaschik 2015). But these pushbacks remain the exceptions. Unfortunately, researchers are still quite dependent on publishers, essentially for a symbolic reason: the award of “academic capital” and prestige. Young researchers must publish in prestigious journals, often associated with major publishers, in order to cement their academic status, while established researchers do the same to keep their research funding. In this context, publishing in an internationally renowned journal from Elsevier or Springer “counts” much more than publishing in a local or national independent journal, though the latter is much less expensive and as easily disseminated. In this context, the role of universities and research councils cannot be over-emphasized, as they are at the heart of the research evaluation system and decide what has value. Should they create incentives for scholars to publish in open access, not-for-profit journals—rather than focusing on Impact Factors or

\(^8\) [http://thecostofknowledge.com/](http://thecostofknowledge.com/).
university rankings, which clearly favour big publishers—the research community could regain control of the scholarly communication system.
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DECIDING CRISES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

WAYNE JONES

The history of library and information science is strewn with events and changes that at the time and/or later are referred to as crises. These crises in the profession may have seemed or been characterized as crises at the time, but looking back we might be a bit bemused. What’s the difference between what we called a crisis then and a similar event that happens 20 or 30 years later? The opposite is also true. Sometimes serious things happen that either we handle adeptly or that we underestimate, and thus do not consider or name them crises at all, even though, all things considered, they may represent one. The etymology of the word crisis itself appropriately provides a key to what a crisis is and the action that is required. The word is derived from the Greek word krinein, meaning “to decide,” and is used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with very specific meanings in the fields of medicine and astrology. But the first known recorded use with a more general meaning is in 1659: “This is the Crisis of Parliaments; we shall know by this if Parliaments live or die” (referring to the third, and final, of England’s Cromwellian Protectorate Parliaments).¹ A crisis is a change that is occurring, or a circumstance that drives change, and makes a decision necessary.

Academic libraries are vulnerable to crises not only because of their own management or action, but also due to the multilayered environment in which they operate. The simplest and most obvious of these connections is that academic libraries are part of a university—a university that is, in the Canadian context, funded mostly by the host province. Note the word funded: as in most other human endeavours, money is a significant factor, and many of the crises to which academic libraries have been subjected are related to money in one way or another.

What is now called the “serials crisis” was one of those. The rising cost of journals, starting in the 1980s, had an impact on libraries’ budgets, given that a large portion of most libraries’ acquisition funds were dedicated to journals.

This is an example of a crisis in response to which libraries proactively tried to solve the problem. Many journal subscriptions were outright cancelled, with libraries acting just as a responsible individual might when confronted with a budget crunch: have a hard look at what you are purchasing, decide what you really need, and consider cutting the rest. Libraries also responded to a major change in publishing in order to help alleviate the effects of the crisis. With the advent of electronic journals starting about the mid-1990s, the concept of the ‘big deal’ was introduced: publishers began to offer subscriptions to their entire catalogue of journals, or to designated swaths of it, at a price that was often significantly lower than selective, title-by-title subscription.

The serials crisis of the 1980s spurred academic librarians to encourage a whole new movement and model in academic publishing by the end of the decade. With the simple and logical premise that since faculty members do the research and writing, and now have the online means to post or publish their results directly to the web, why not bypass commercial publishers altogether? Open access was born, and academic libraries have played a key role in promoting the concept on their campuses. There are compelling arguments not only for faculty members but also for those who oversee budgets: “University administrators often complain that they are paying twice to acquire publications: once for the salary of their faculty members who did the research, and a second time to buy their scholarly products back from the publishers.”

Some open access journals charge no publishing fees to authors and/or subscription fees to readers, and so they save money overall in the system. For those that do charge fees, it is arguable that the cost is simply being transferred from library acquisition funds to university research funds. Open access continues as a strong movement, although for many reasons it has by no means supplanted commercial academic journal publishing and most academic libraries still spend enormous sums of money, year after year, on e-journals.

Libraries have also been proactive during the more recent financial crisis. In addition, the decline in the value of the Canadian dollar against the American dollar over the past couple of years especially has come at a time when there are many other pressures on the buying power that academic libraries have in acquiring collections for their universities—for example, inflationary increases from the vendors and cuts by universities to collections budgets. It is interesting to see that this time the ‘big deals’ are again a factor in the reaction by academic libraries, but now the other way around: some

libraries are cancelling publishers’ bundled subscriptions in favour of title-by-title selections. Brock University’s library caused quite a stir on its campus when it cancelled the entire package of Wiley-Blackwell journals, just as the Université de Montréal had done the previous year. The big deal, as has been predicted for about the past ten years, may be dying.

There have been other crises that academic libraries have not handled so directly, with the result being that they have had to adapt to a changed environment that their inaction has helped to create. I am thinking here of the issues around searching for and finding information not only in libraries but also beyond, as Google and the Internet came to prominence in the early twenty-first century. Here there were two primary aspects of libraries’ concern. One was that the online catalogue was being supplanted as the chief search tool for finding information, and the other was the broader and more threatening extrapolation of this: that libraries themselves would be relegated to secondary status at best—and irrelevant at worst—as Google and other search engines provided better interfaces and better results. A famous observation from the era was that “isn’t it true that only librarians like to search? Everyone else likes to find.”

To be fair, there likely was little that academic libraries could (or should) have done to stop or slow down what was happening, and in the end they did what the best of evolutionary survivors do: adapt. In the early 1990s the way to find information was in the library’s catalogue, but the modern academic library offers that as just one search tool among many. Carleton University Library’s website is typical. The main tool, called Summon, searches everything in the library catalogue plus almost every other database to which the library provides access, all via a single search box. But there is also a direct link to the traditional catalogue, as well as individual links to all those other databases (including Google Scholar and Google Books) to which the library facilitates access.

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Academic libraries, and libraries generally, are amongst the most respected cultural institutions in the world, and they have demonstrated an extraordinary ability to adapt—not just over the past three decades, but over centuries. Nevertheless, an academic library cannot sit back comfortably and assume that society (or its university administration) will support it no matter what. Vigilance is essential: sometimes we must act boldly, and sometimes we must adapt smartly to whatever crisis happens. A cultural institution such as an academic library needs to call on its basic values as it makes changes, with the goal always of preserving those values at the same time that practices and policies may be subtly or radically modified. Change does not have to be a betrayal of fundamental values, but those who want to resist change for various reasons tend to couch their inaction or resistance in those terms, conflating (sometimes intentionally) progress toward a better future with rejection of the past. Change can be a part of an ongoing process of improvement, and is, yes, often instigated by crisis.