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LECTURE



C. WALTER
& GERDA B.
MORTENSON
CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL
LIBRARY
PROGRAMS

THE HEART OF
THE UNIVERSITY:
THE MAKING OF THE
GLOBAL LIBRARY

ROBERT
WEDGEWORTH

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UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-
CHAMPAIGN

INTRODUCTION



I am delighted to present to you the fourth annual C. Walter and Gerda B. Mortenson Distinguished Lecture, delivered on September 30, 1993, by Robert Wedgeworth, Interim University Librarian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Mr. Wedgeworth's long and distinguished career began in the 1960s as a pioneer in the then-new field of library automation and quickly progressed to expertise in the area of the international book trade. In 1972, he was appointed executive director of the American Library Association, a post he held for thirteen years. From 1985 to 1992, he was dean of the School of Library Service at Columbia University, and in 1992 was appointed Interim University Librarian at the University of Illinois. He is also president of the International Federation of Library Associations, which represents over 1,300 library associations and institutions in more than 135 countries.

Mr. Wedgeworth's many honors and awards include five honorary doctorates, the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the prestigious Joseph Lippincott Award from the American Library Association. In 1993, he was appointed to the Library of Congress's Copyright Advisory Group.

In "At the Heart of the University: The Making of a Global Library," Mr. Wedgeworth discusses the evolution of our own great library and considers its future in an environment in which computer and telecommunication links to information technologies play nearly as important a role as a library's on-site collections.

Marianna Tax Choldin
Director, Mortenson Center for
International Library Programs and
Mortenson Distinguished Professor



The goal of the C. Walter and Gerda B. Mortenson Center for International Library Programs is to foster international tolerance and peace by strengthening ties among the world's research libraries and librarians in an effort to ensure access to knowledge throughout the world.



The concept of the research university library is a modern one and predominantly North American in origin. In the world of universities where relatively small, ill-supported, ill-staffed faculty libraries are the norm, centrally funded, centrally administered university libraries are only slowly beginning to appear outside of North America, most often in newly established institutions.

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century even university libraries in the United States and Canada were small, poorly organized and weakly supported. The evolution of modern research university libraries in North America with their millions of volumes, monumental buildings and impressive technologies has yet to be told in full. Our purpose here will be to address two fundamental questions. What accounts for the development at the University of Illinois of one of the most distinguished university libraries in the country? And what will be the nature of this library if it is to operate in an academic environment whose outlook is global? Although the University of Illinois has a second research library on its Chicago campus, the focal point of this lecture will be on the University Library at Urbana-Champaign, hereafter referred to frequently just as Illinois.

At Illinois there is a strong tradition of placing the library at the heart of the institution. But that was not true in its earliest days. It was not until 1897 that the university had its first library building. According to Professor Winton Solberg, when the University first sought to persuade the Illinois State Legislature in 1893 that such a facility was needed, Michigan's library was four times as large as that of Illinois. At the time, Illinois also trailed Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa in the size of its library. The first fifty years of this century was an extraordinary period of growth for the U. of I. Library. It took until 1929 to amass the first million volumes. The second million came seventeen years later. By the time the Library attained its three millionth volume it was, and still is, the largest library at a public university in the



country and the third largest among all university libraries after Harvard and Yale.

In his later years, Phineas L. Windsor, Director of the Library, whose tenure from 1909 to 1940 marked the first major period of growth, was quick to point out that there was never a conscious effort to build a great research library. Rather, President James, Dean Kinley, Windsor and several prominent professors who had arrived about the same time were consciously building a great university. Windsor supported this ambition by concentrating on collection development both in building the Library's general collection and in his work with scholars to obtain specialized research materials.

Perhaps nowhere is the rationale for building a great university library at the University of Illinois more clearly stated than in President James' statement to the Trustees on September 7, 1912.



Speaking in support of increased investment in the library collection and for adequate facilities to house the collection, he first emphasized how fundamental a library was to the work of the faculty.

“Among all the institutes or departments of a university, none is of more fundamental necessity than the university library. No scientific work can be done nowadays of any real value, aside from those extraordinary cases of genius which occur now and then in human history and which seem to be independent of all conditions and exceptions to all rules, without the aid of an adequate library.”

Next, he noted that by establishing the University “in a village one hundred and twenty five miles from any important collection of books,” the State had created an even greater need for a library than was true for similar universities located in urban centers

“We need, therefore, a much larger collection of books, other things being equal, than does the University of

Chicago, or Harvard, or Yale, or Columbia, or Pennsylvania, all of which institutions are located within easy reach of collections which in the aggregate are two or three or four times their own collections."

He went on to cite how the library at Illinois was inferior, not only to those at the institutions noted above, but also to libraries at Cornell, Wisconsin, Princeton, Michigan, California and Brown. He concluded:

"It is plain that the University of Illinois cannot hope to take its place among the great institutions of the world as a real center of learning and investigation until it has much larger library facilities."

James proposed that the University set a goal of accumulating "a collection of at least a million of books as rapidly as possible," and that,

"it will take about a million dollars to house a million books; and, either in the form of a new library building, which might be put up in four two hundred fifty thousand dollar sections, or in the form of an addition to and enlargement of the present library building, at a somewhat similar expense, we must make provision for such a collection."

Windsor and his faculty colleagues accepted the challenge of James' ambition and over the next two decades brought it to realization. In addition to books to support undergraduate studies and faculty research, the university acquired scholarly journals, learned society publications and books fundamental to research in all of the fields represented at the university. Many were purchased based on recommendations by the faculty, others came with the purchase of whole libraries of scholars and booksellers.

This momentum carried through even during the Great Depression. During the decade of the 1930s Illinois managed to acquire almost 368,000 volumes. Michigan was not far behind (344,000), while Pennsylvania (221,792) and Wisconsin (113,124) faltered in their efforts. For the next decade and during the Second World War, Illinois, under the direction of a new Dean of Library Administration, R.B. Downs, doubled its

rate of acquisition. Michigan (approximately 340,000) maintained its rate, Penn (183,873) continued to lag and Wisconsin (201,976) recovered some ground from the previous period. By the 1950s Illinois was adding to its collections at an average rate of almost 100,000 volumes each year. Michigan reached that level by the end of the decade, while Penn and Wisconsin were at less than half that rate.

These growth rates for Illinois only hint at the growth and development of the several colleges of the University. They also only suggest the development of collection strength across the range of disciplines from the humanities to the sciences. More importantly, they mask the development of truly distinguished collections compiled at the direction of specific scholars on the faculty, like Professor Harris Fletcher, who was responsible for the truly outstanding collection of works by and about the seventeenth century English poet, John Milton.

True to the charge by President James the University erected a main library building to house the collection in 1926 and has since added six additions to the bookstacks. It reaches out to the faculty and students in specialized areas of study through its 42 departmental libraries, including the Mathematics Library which is located in the original library building at Altgeld Hall. Early in 1994 Illinois will unveil a splendid new Grainger Engineering Library Information Center. A new library for the College of Agriculture is in the planning stages.

Together with the proposed seventh stack addition, these library facilities erected during the twentieth century will greatly exceed any possible interpretation of President James' ambitious goal. But books and buildings are only two of the fundamental features of a great research library. Tools for gaining access to the contents of a great collection and a staff of experts to assist users are additional requirements.

From its very early days Illinois has placed a high value on professional education for librarians. This probably stems from the influence of Katherine L. Sharp who came to Illinois in 1897 as professor, director of the University Library and head of the Illinois State Library School. Sharp was a graduate of Northwestern who also was a member of the second class of Melvil Dewey's New York State Library School in Albany. When the President of

the Armour Institute in Chicago asked Dewey's advice about the best man in America to set up a library and organize a library training program at his institution, Dewey is reported to have given his now famous reply, "the best man in America is a woman and she is in the next room". Sharp started the library school at Armour Institute, but wanted her school affiliated with a university. This led to her successful efforts to transfer the program to Illinois.

The original program which subsequently became the Graduate School of Library and Information Science celebrated its centennial in 1993, proud of its reputation as one of the leading programs in its field in the world. Its graduates and others who are invited to join the faculty of the University Library are given the opportunity to attain all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of faculty of the University, uncommon among university libraries, but yet another indication of the Illinois tradition that binds libraries to teaching and scholarship.



In 1978 under the leadership of Hugh Atkinson, University Librarian, Illinois closed its card catalog and introduced a new computer-based online catalog of its collections called Illinois Online (IO). Abstracts and indexes to journal literature were added later as the Illinois Bibliographic Information Service (IBIS). During a typical day of the academic year, around 150,000 users log in to the online system to search the catalog or the journal indexes. At the peak of our academic year, more than 200,000 users log onto the system. Many of these users are located at other institutions in North America, and some are from other countries. They are able to reach us via the Internet, a telecommunications network that connects several million institutions around the world.

Initially, applications of computers and telecommunications networks in libraries provided the means to search library catalogs for descriptions of items in the respective collections that could be shared with libraries needing to add these descriptions of newly acquired items to their catalogs. It eliminated the need to duplicate work already performed. Later, these same catalogs connected via telecommunications became the basis for

lending and borrowing materials among libraries. Indeed, some of the largest computer installations outside of the Pentagon do nothing more than communicate bibliographic information among libraries twenty-four hours a day. In the 1970s this telecommunications capability began to stimulate the development of online data bases of specialized information in addition to references to bibliographic works. Accounting, law, medicine, engineering and many government sources like the United States Census are among the several thousand online databases currently available.

During the tenure of Phineas Windsor as Director, Illinois and other libraries acquired materials in just three basic ways: by purchase, by gift or by exchange with other institutions. The majority of the existing research library collections were developed in this manner. Today, not only have the formats of information resources multiplied well beyond books and journals to include audio, video and computer readable materials, but the terms and conditions of access now include licenses that specify terms and conditions of use for limited periods of time. Therefore, the concentration throughout most of this century to build large on-site collections housed in attractive, functional settings to serve the needs of scholars and students has begun to give way to the idea of a university library as a gateway to knowledge and information which is accessible from any computer work station with an Internet connection. What appears to be emerging is the concept of the global library connecting users to sources of information well beyond that which has resulted from traditional scholarly enterprises.

The winds of democracy that have swept across the world have left in their wake societies that are more than ever dependent upon access to information that shapes our understanding of history, that helps form our beliefs and that prepares us to apply information to our daily lives. The weather, interest rates, cultural discoveries, scientific discoveries and artistic impressions or expressions can be transmitted almost instantaneously around the world, informing and guiding world opinion and local policies. Yet, as libraries begin to operate in a more global environment, they are increasingly aware that costs, availability and proprietary rights are major barriers to acquiring the kinds of information that users want and need.

Perhaps the most obvious barrier is cost. Libraries anticipated the increased operating costs associated with the use of new information

technologies that brought about new operating capabilities. What came as a surprise, however, was the rapid, and in some cases, unjustified increases in the cost of scholarly journals.



For the decade of the 1980s, well over half of the increases in research library budgets went into increased serial costs. At the same time, research libraries in the United States, in aggregate, were subscribing to fewer and fewer serials. At Illinois, for example, since 1988 almost 7,000 serial subscriptions have been canceled, saving more than a million dollars. Although the number of subscriptions canceled is not impressive from a base of more than 90,000 subscriptions, what cannot be assessed is the impact of having to cancel journals that are at the core of the literature of certain scientific and scholarly fields. The rate of inflation of serials subscription prices has moderated recently from double digits annually to a projected 5-7% for 1993-94. However, the long-term trend remains and the relative lack of funds to buy monographs and other types of library materials causes some concern for the quality of current and future collection development in those fields that are less dependent on serials.

What has been a slowdown for libraries in North America and Western Europe has brought collection development to a virtual halt in libraries in the developing world. Operating in the worldwide recession of the 1980s and without access to the major currencies in which most library materials are sold, these libraries are almost entirely dependent on gifts and exchanges for additions to their collections. Several years ago the Director of a national library told me that when there was funding to buy materials for the library there was still the problem of getting foreign exchange to purchase materials from Europe or North America. Since foreign exchange in his country is allocated on a priority basis first to defense spending, then to vital industries, by the time there was foreign exchange available for the national library many of the items desired were no longer available.

Large student populations typify universities in developing countries where photocopies of textbooks as well as supplementary library materials are commonly relied upon due to the high cost of books. In a 1987 study of

the prospects for book and library development in Central and South America, we found that local publishing of original scholarly works or imported texts in translation had a limited market because the initial copies were photocopied immediately and sold at a much lower price. It is common for student industries serving large part-time student populations to control access to photocopying machines at these universities.

Resource sharing which is common among North American university libraries rarely occurs in developing countries. What few library materials they have are in such constant demand by local users that most interlibrary lending comes from major national libraries in Europe and North America. But recent budgets at the Library of Congress forcing reductions in services outside of the United States reveal how fragile that reliance may be.



The cost of library materials regardless of the format will remain a significant barrier to serving users for the foreseeable future. For those libraries with some resources, it will accelerate the growing shift away from ownership of certain kinds of library materials to buying individual journal articles on demand or subscribing to online full text databases and paying only for what is needed. For those libraries in developing countries it will mean continuing to rely upon gifts, exchanges and loans of materials from Western Europe and North America.

The new information technologies have greatly expanded the range and types of bibliographic tools and information sources available. As with preceding information technologies they have not replaced current sources but added to them. Just as radio has become a large consumer of recorded music and television has become a large consumer of motion pictures, online databases will become a large consumer of printed journals and other information sources. Yet, the volume of new printed information continues to grow. Although more material appears each year in machine readable formats, the number of printed documents produced worldwide continues to grow. More than 65% of the world's published output originated in North America and Europe in 1989. The total number of titles published worldwide exceeded 840,000 according to UNESCO

reports. Even in the United States, where the number of new books published each year leveled off in 1989, there are still more than 46,000 new books published annually. These figures represent reported titles only. Actual publications greatly exceed these numbers. In the United States alone it is estimated that about twice as many new publications appear as are reported to trade sources.

Interestingly, in October of each year at the Frankfurt Book Fair, along with the hundreds of thousands of books on display, there are increasing numbers of audio, video and computer software materials marketed by publishers and other information providers. But each of these machine-readable products seem to be accompanied by as many or more printed manuals, guides, interpretations and companion books!

The globalization of libraries on one level means simply that there will be more to acquire with the same or less funding. On another level, however, access to the world's intellectual output on a timely basis will require gaining rapid access to proprietary rights for translation and for conversion to other formats that will allow information to be transferred easily and cheaply around the world. Current legal restrictions on the uses of intellectual properties without permission of the owners inhibits the use of available technologies to make information available at reasonable costs. The new CD-ROM technology, for example, which replaces the printed version of some massive scholarly and reference works requires the signing of a copyright license before the item can be purchased. The license specifies the terms and conditions of use. For use on a single work station there is one price. For use on multiple work stations there is another higher price. Frequently the licenses are more restrictive than the copyright law and thus the copyright owner is able to prohibit uses of published materials that are permissible by law under fair use.

Thus far, the technology has promised more than can be delivered legally. All too often college and university officials talk of converting libraries into machine readable formats without any awareness of the legal implications of such actions even if the conversion costs were affordable.

Copyright laws and the reluctance of publishers to make available their intellectual products for fear of losing control are probably the most signi-

ficant barriers to achieving global access to published information. In the music business there are mechanisms that make possible the commercial distribution of new music to a worldwide audience within days of its initial introduction. Similar mechanisms simply do not exist to facilitate access to scholarly information sources. Often it is difficult to discover who the copyright owner is in order to gain permission to use a given information source.

It has been said that piracy has always been the twin of publishing. Without legal, cost-effective means to gain access to published information, the enormous technological capability already developed may be increasingly devoted to the transmittal of unauthorized documents. Therefore, a collective mechanism similar to those in the music industry needs to become a priority in discussions that occur within the international publishing and educational communities.

There is yet another major inhibiting factor to the global distribution of intellectual material, although it is not frequently discussed—government censorship. As interactive telecommunications breaks down the geographical and political barriers, instant access to educational and cultural information is perceived by some as a threat to cultural and national sovereignty. Somewhere in the world each week a publication is suppressed, a journalist is attacked or arrested or access to a play, film or musical creation is denied. Governments as well as organizations use censorship as an instrument of power. When the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions met in Barcelona in August of 1993, displays of textbooks and newspapers in Catalan, prohibited during the Franco regime, reminded us of the tragic repression of the Catalan language and culture after World War II. Censorship extends government influence and can usually be rationalized as a means to maintain or restore order to society. Its effects can be multiplied by individuals or organizations engaging in self-censorship in order to avoid difficulties with government officials or influential organizations. While instances of censorship occur most frequently with materials in the popular culture, the focus on religion, race, sex, violence and politics almost certainly will involve materials of scholarly or educational interest.

Global access to information via the new information technologies makes government censorship more difficult. However, the new information technologies can sometimes be an ally to the censors as it can allow content to be altered almost without detection. The power to expand access can also be the power to deny access. Fortunately, our experience has been predominantly with the use of technology to expand access through broadcast technologies and underground publications. But the warning of Ray Bradbury's book *Fahrenheit 451*, where firemen in the new society burn books considered offensive, is a very real one that we ignore at our peril.



The proposed National Information Infrastructure (NII) in the United States offers great promise for the positive uses of telecommunications to improve the conditions of life not just in the United States, but all over the world. In this context the basic idea of a global library as a communications hub expanding what may be available in any home or office, or on any campus becomes a realistic prospect. While the individual home or office may be capable of receiving a wide range of materials, limitations on discretionary income and the lack of access to librarians and information specialists for assistance will bolster prospects for the global library.

Under the NII proposal, communications that now travel over leased telephone lines or networks of inadequate quality and capacity will travel over an electronic "superhighway" similar conceptually to the network of federal interstate highways.

Although sources of funding have been a major question, experience would indicate that the commitment of federal dollars to initiate the NII will liberate many more private and public dollars at the local, state and regional level thus assuring nation-wide interconnectivity, local content and local employment opportunities.

The content of communications traveling over the network will be as widely varied as human ingenuity allows. It will range from messages among friends and families to instructional and entertainment materials as well as research data and scholarly communications. The formats will

include text and voice, full-motion video, coded and clear communications. The entire world of information can be brought to Champaign-Urbana for a variety of purposes. What then are the real implications for a research library like Illinois?

Fundamental to the mission of the university is the responsibility to assure the transmission of our culture to each generation. The advent of the new information technologies have vastly expanded the range and scope of what can be known by each successive generation. What will be significant about the global library will be its ability to make accessible the archive of human knowledge while making connections to information, data and other forms of human expression, including individual experts, vital to the creation of new knowledge. It will be a role for which there will be some competition. However, the experience of generations of libraries give a special approach. The concept of the teaching library is a natural outgrowth of the complexity and comprehensiveness of the scholarly information world.

It has been somewhat traditional at commencements and similar occasions to speak of the Library as "the heart of the university". The concept probably evolved from comments made by an early president of Harvard who spoke of the "centrality" of the library and of it being at the "core" of the institution. It has been used to refer to the placement of the library building geographically and it has been used to symbolize the interconnection of all disciplines comprising a liberal education. Although the concept has been more of a tradition in practice at Illinois than at many other campuses, not infrequently the facts speak differently than the rhetoric of college and university officials. In his 1987 study of the American undergraduate experience, Ernest Boyer discovered that for undergraduates, who tended to use the library less than one hour each week, the academic library was not the heart of the campus, but more like the spleen. It served a useful purpose but most would not miss it if it were not there.

A part of this problem is that there is a tendency to assume that students, even graduate students, arrive at the university with all of the requisite knowledge and skills to utilize its most basic facilities. However, a survey of university faculty in 1990 found that faculty overwhelmingly

agreed that they were teaching too many things that they should not have to teach and that too many students arrived at the university unprepared to do the work required of them.

The globalization of the library at Illinois will require the development of a much stronger teaching function than is currently true for most university libraries. Work stations with access to interactive instructional programs for upgrading skills, expanding knowledge or sheer entertainment should become commonplace for the library. Although some of the more popular or widely needed programs might be available on the campus network or even distributed through the National Information Infrastructure, many more such programs will need to be available locally to meet occasional needs.



Beyond the instructional programs on software applications offered by computer centers there will be a need for instructional programs to teach students how to think about their information problems. They need to learn how to identify, search for, evaluate, and analyze information. Beyond the generic approaches of the library, some of these short courses may be designed by other departments of the university for delivery by the library thus assuring the departmental faculty of some commonality of knowledge and skills among their students.

What we have known throughout the history of libraries is that next to the richness of a given collection for a user's purposes, the need for assistance in its use is a close second in value. It is precisely for this reason that Illinois' Graduate School of Library and Information Science and similar programs at other universities are not peripheral to our interests, but central. The analogy we have used to express what this relationship should be has been that of the teaching hospital to the medical school. We must support graduate programs for librarians and information specialists in their efforts to attract the best faculty and students of outstanding potential. The Library provides a base for research and improvement of practice that is vital for the retention of its role. The trauma caused by the closing of a number of major programs in this field



is real. On closer analysis it is but an expression of the failure of higher education to come to grips with its real problems of cost and structure. The casualties of this period have been the small departments and professional programs that have been sacrificed to give the appearance of effective action. Therefore, libraries, who have the most at stake in future of professional schools educating librarians need to offer more support. Calling attention to the accomplishments of the past can be helpful.

Most of the accomplishments of the North American research library are not unique. What is impressive is the size and scale of the replication of these accomplishments on this one continent. This cannot be explained simply in terms of the wealth and generosity of the governments and individual donors to libraries. Nor can it be explained by the absence of major wars which have destroyed so many libraries and cultural institutions in Europe, Asia and Africa. What perhaps may be unique about the library community of North America is the existence of a large cadre of professionally educated librarians who have a similar understanding of the mission and purpose of their respective institutions, and who have been the most constant force in shaping and molding libraries as we know them. Since we export the graduates of this university all over the world, we assume a special responsibility.

The C. Walter and Gerda B. Mortenson Center for International Library Programs is a special expression of the global outlook of the library at Illinois. Devoted exclusively to the advancement of international librarianship, its program has in its first two years of existence already begun to make its mark on the world. Under the leadership of Marianna Tax Choldin, its Director and the Mortenson Distinguished Professor, librarians showing outstanding potential for leadership have been brought to the Urbana-Champaign campus for additional study, research or orientation to the operations and technologies employed by Illinois and other libraries in the United States. Other foundation and government programs for foreign librarians are now beginning to use the capabilities of the Mortenson Center by sending their participants to Illinois for similar purposes.

From modest beginning of one or two visitors, librarians are now coming to us in a steady stream from all over the world. The needs are

great and our resources are modest, but perhaps this model will stimulate the establishment of similar programs here in the United States and in other countries.

Since in the next century we cannot expect to have an exceptional future without a new generation of exceptional librarians, it is an investment opportunity the research library community cannot afford to miss. A university library with a global outlook matching the needs and interests of the university community, with state of the art technologies accessible on campus and off, with a library faculty of information specialists fully participating in the teaching and research functions of the university is what we should naturally expect at the University of Illinois given what has already occurred in our past.

Our vision of the future is firmly based on the ambitions of our past. First, we must continue to manage one of the world's largest collections of information resources in support of the teaching and research mission of the university. Second, we must provide access to to an increasing range of information resources that support research and decision-making. Third, we must develop a better understanding of the needs and interests of our user population in order fulfill an expanded teaching role. Fourth, we must provide a base for research and training that will assure the quality of service that has been the hallmark of North American librarianship from its inception. Continuing to operate within a great research university will require no less.



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