

# EMPOWERMENT & EVOLUTION



The Keys to Success in the Future  
of Libraries

By: Frenchie

# DO LIBRARIES HAVE A FUTURE AS THE WORLD DIGITIZES AROUND US?

“To answer that question, we need to recognize that the computer age is not fundamentally about computerization. The computer age is about the change in management mindset enabled by computerization.” (Denning, 2015)

Libraries must adapt to emerging technologies and trends. In the last few decades we've seen libraries evolve from spaces that offer physical information resources to the digitization of these files, spaces to provide resources on digital literacy, and more, all while maintaining their senses of community and humanity that make them significant and stand out nationally, state, and locally necessities.

Ever-evolving libraries must keep ideals of social support and empowerment at the heart of implementation of new technologies, programming, and development. Luckily, this is happening everywhere and on all levels. The change in management mindset is evolving in a way that is top down necessarily, but coming forth in a way that is patron and people inspired.

## HOW SHOULD WE SHIFT HOW WE TRAIN LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS?



-Saunders (2015)

# EMPOWERMENT AS OBLIGATION

“What relationship do we want learners to have with their library? One that is grounded in **dynamic, interdependent partnerships.**”

(Matthews, et. al., 2015)



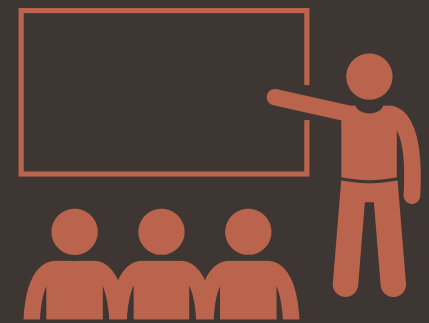
Libraries facilitate the connection between people and information resources, which is arguably their highest priority. Adaptability to emerging technologies and the mass movement of digitization of information works in tandem with these values, It’s proven “psychological empowerment has a larger positive effect on extended information seeking” (Zha, et. al., 2020), and library professionals play a major role in advocating for the need for the human connection that is vital to this connection. There doesn’t seem to be a future for libraries that don’t include human librarians. The world of library science already knows this, and is adapting to the ever-changing world, committed first and foremost to the needs of their patrons.

# REFLECTION & REFERENCES



As a high school librarian, I see first hand each day the extreme use of technology by students. This ranges from consistent use of cell phones, the implementation of laptops/tablets as necessary ways of managing and navigating coursework, and the required tech competencies in curriculum. Our library department works closely with our technology

department to seek support in creating digital research presentations that introduce or refresh the way in which they research sources for their classes. I approach these presentations in a manner that is lively and personable, reminded that navigating databases and the internet is so vast it can be intimidating. As teachers require more internet research for classwork, I see myself as a resource for them to utilize when evaluating and conducting research, but one that can be as motivational and empowering as it is helpful. I am hoping to continue to advocate to my administration that digital literacy and citizenship should be prioritized on an institutional level, and that the library team can serve as a key part of that.



## REFERENCES

Denning, S. (28 August 2015). *Do We Need Libraries?* Forbes. [https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/04/28/do-we-need-libraries/?utm\\_campaign=ForbesTech&utm\\_source=TWITTER&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_channel=Technology&linkId=13831539](https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2015/04/28/do-we-need-libraries/?utm_campaign=ForbesTech&utm_source=TWITTER&utm_medium=social&utm_channel=Technology&linkId=13831539).

Matthews, B., Metko, S., & Tomlin, P. (7 May 2015). *Empowerment, Experimentation, Engagement: Embracing Partnership Models in Libraries*. EDUCAUSE Review. <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2018/5/empowerment-experimentation-engagement-embracing-partnership-models-in-libraries>.

North, P. (18 January 2018). Screen time. [Cartoon]. The New Yorker.

Saunders, L. (2015). Professional Perspectives on Library and Information Science Education. *The Library Quarterly (Chicago)*, 85(4), 427-453. <https://doi.org/10.1086/682735>.

Zha, X., Huang, C., Yan, Y., Yan, G., Wang, X., & Zhang, K. (2020). Understanding extended information seeking: The perspectives of psychological empowerment and digital libraries attachment. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 72(5), 705-724. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-08-2019-0213>.