



3-2-1

VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

By Louis Waters
INFO-287 Hyperlinked Libraries



AHA! MOMENT ONE

“Library as Infrastructure” by Shannon Mattern

Mattern’s article was my first major aha! moment. It articulated my feelings about libraries’ roles in society, as a necessity, as important as the roads and power grid. Her description of the library as “mediators, at the hub of all the hubbub” really resonated with me. The hyperlinked library, as I conceive it, is a vital gear in the complex social, political, and cultural systems that make society function. A basic, fundamental component in a healthy civilization. I go into this in a bit more detail in my Assignment X.

AHA! MOMENT TWO

Dokk1's partnership with Værestedet

This I learned about from Millicent's Reflection Blogging #2: A Safe and Comfortable Space for All. Due to a collapsing social safety net, libraries have, in many communities, become de facto resource centers for homeless or precariously housed community members. I believe partnering directly with local shelters, safe injection sites, LGBTQ+ resource centers, and other organizations that offer assistance to marginalized or at-risk communities to create collaborative off-site library spaces is a great way to not only better serve these communities but strengthen very necessary bonds in the ongoing battle for better social services.

AHA! MOMENT THREE



“Chaos and Caring” in Wholehearted Librarianship by Michael Stephens

Time feels at stand still. Written in the aftermath of 2016, this could have easily been written today. I covered some of this in my one of reflection posts, [Goodbye Neutrality: A Reflection on New Horizons](#), but I think what this recent presidential election really cemented for me is library’s need to commit to being activists for our ideals. Being for “everyone” does not mean we have to adhere to, what really is an unachievable pure neutrality. Our values do have a political dimension, so we cannot shy away from taking a political stance when necessary. As public institutions that rely on public funding, public libraries’ futures rely on us to actually fight for and defend what we believe in, on our own terms.



NEED TO KNOW MORE - ONE

Artificial Intelligence

My interest in digging deeper into the issue of Artificial Intelligence has less to do with opening myself up to its possibilities than learning how to combat the current messaging around it. I think, from a technical standpoint, there are some practical and truly innovative uses for it in library science, mainly to do with cataloguing, data retrieval and processing. But the privacy concerns, discussed in module 9's AI and Machine Learning, are very real. As are the concerns about the proprietary nature of AI services and the threats they pose to employment, as discussed in ChatGPT is reshaping information infrastructures. AI represents an end stage in the general turn away from humanities and towards STEM, where streamlining and optimization is threatening to dehumanize the arts. And I believe libraries will play an important role in promoting the value of messy learning. Learning for learning's sake.



NEED TO KNOW MORE - TWO

Storytelling

Storytelling has been something of a buzz word for a while now. I think it's great, and I wholeheartedly agree that giving marginalized and stigmatized community members an opportunity and an avenue to describe their experiences and personal histories is a good thing, but I worry we've hit an oversaturation point. These programs and services should remain, and be given the proper level of material support, but I'd also like to explore ways to push it to the next level. And learn about the various things being done to move past personal storytelling, into more conscious efforts to not just learn about the lives of those around us but to connect the aspects of these lives that mark them as stigmatized or marginalized to larger structural issues. In other words, to move from inspiring empathy to inspiring concrete political, social change.

WHAT'S CHANGED

Hyperlinked Mindset

This class has helped me articulate many of the inchoate ideas I'd had rattling around in my head. It's helped me recognize not only the importance of remaining flexible and open to new ideas but has also pushed me to turn skepticism and doubt into a productive force. If you're going to challenge something, you need to back it up with proposed alternatives. I've already started, in my professional life, pushing myself to follow an idea as far as it will go. To think around doubts and to turn my endless internal critic into a productive voice. Something I can use to tease apart an idea's various threads, to see what else is possible.