Radical Collaboration: Designing Libraries to Advance Open Scholarship

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Radical Collaboration: Designing Libraries to Advance Open Scholarship

Presenter 1 Title
Associate Director for Collections

Session Type
45-minute concurrent session

Abstract
In 2016, after a year-long effort involving over two dozen faculty from multiple disciplines, MIT released the MIT Future of Libraries Report, which articulates a vision for libraries that advances “the promise of a truly open and interactive digital library of knowledge.” Implementing this vision requires a reevaluation of nearly all aspects of library work, from organizational design, systems, and even a new articulation of core professional values and identities. This talk will focus on the concept of radical collaboration, in the context of remaking libraries to advance an open knowledge future.

Greg Eow is the Associate Director for Collections at the MIT Libraries, where he provides leadership for an administrative portfolio that includes scholarly communications and collections strategy, digital preservation, acquisitions and metadata creation, and the Institute Archives and Special Collections. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the MIT Press, and a member of the Collections Committee of the MIT Museum.

Before joining the MIT Libraries, Eow previously held appointments at the Harvard Library, Yale University Library, and Fondren Library, Rice University. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Rice University, an M.L.I.S. from the University of Pittsburgh, and a B.A. from Hendrix College. Eow is a member of the American Historical Association, the Grolier Club, and the Society of American Archivists.

Location
KIPJ Theatre
Radical Collaboration: Designing Libraries to Advance Open Scholarship

Digital Initiatives Symposium
University of San Diego
April 30, 2019

Greg Eow
Associate Director for Collections
Structure for today

1. Big Picture and Historical Context
A fundamental challenge

“Two digital revolutions do in fact coexist, one enabling the technical locking down of access to and distribution of content, the other allowing the breakdown of these barriers. This double digital revolution can be seen in the recent history of libraries, as well as the wider domain of online information selling and sharing.”

– Matthew David, Sharing: Crime Against Capitalism (Polity, 2017)
We have been here before

“As **an agent of change**, printing altered methods of data collection, storage and retrieval systems and communications networks.”

“[The research university] organized what had been experienced as a ‘flood’ of print into coherent, culturally complex intellectual identities. It was a source of authority amid moments of technological change and epistemic anxiety.”

- Chad Wellmon, Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University (Johns Hopkins, 2015)
Structure for today

1. Big Picture and Historical Context
2. Strategic Shifts at MIT
The MIT Future of Libraries report

What is the future of the research library in a fast-changing, digital world?

• Taskforce convened October 2015
• Multi-disciplinary group of 30 faculty and students
• Gathered feedback from MIT community and domain experts
The “Not Enough” Problem

Not enough content is available online/digitally

Not enough people have access to what is available; too much of the scholarly record is locked behind for-profit publisher paywalls

Not enough ways to use content (e.g., machine learning, text mining)
Redefining the library

MIT Future of Libraries Report

“The MIT Libraries must operate as an open, trusted, durable, interdisciplinary, interoperable content platform that provides a foundation for the entire life cycle of information for collaborative global research and education.”

1. Redefine community
2. Redefine service
3. Redefine collections
Redefining Community

Recommendation 1: The Task Force asserts that the MIT Libraries must be a global library serving a global university and its audiences. The MIT Libraries should conceive of the communities they serve as concentric circles, from the closely affiliated circle of current students, faculty, and staff to increasingly larger circles of cooperating scholars, MIT alumni, participants in MITx classes, the local Cambridge and Boston community, and the broader global community of scholars.
Redefining Community

- Libraries and University Presses
- Libraries and Museums
- Librarians and Archivists
Recommendation 3: In supporting the research and teaching mission of MIT, the Libraries will provide educational opportunities to equip MIT community members with essential skills and habits for critically and effectively using information. It also will teach them the skills required to responsibly generate new knowledge and to create the platforms, systems, and networks to disseminate it, guided by the values held dear by MIT and by the library profession.
Redefining Service

“I think it will be crucial that we avoid the temptation to continue to serve primarily individual human readers and let the computer scientists worry about how to apply machine learning and AI to vast libraries of resources. I think we would be wise to start thinking now about machines and algorithms as a new kind of patron.”

– Chris Bourg, “What Happens to Libraries and Librarians When Machines Can Read all the Books?” (March 2017)
Redefining Collections

Recommendation 4: In support of the MIT mission and values of openness and service, the MIT Libraries should be a trusted vehicle for disseminating MIT research to the world.
Redefining Collections

**Outside in** Bought, licensed
Increased consolidation
Move from print to licensed
Manage down print – shared print
Move to user-driven models

Aim: to discover

**Inside out**
Institutional assets: special collections, research and learning materials, institutional records, ...
Reputation management
Increasingly important?

Aim: to *have* discovered ... to disclose

- Lorcan Dempsey (2010)
Redefining Community
Redefining Service
Redefining Collections
Structure for today

1. Big Picture and Historical Context
2. Strategic Shifts at MIT
3. Organizational Design & Operations
Scholarly Communications and Collections Strategy Department

We take the values of open access, diversity, and social justice as a lens for framing collections decisions, and as important guideposts for navigating and favorably shaping the scholarly communications landscape.
Scholarly Communications & Collections Strategy

- Managing collections budget
- Implementing faculty OA Policy and other OA supports
- Providing copyright and author rights support and outreach
- Developing and applying collections strategy
- Licensing and negotiation
Activities & Directions

Formed negotiations team and established new principles-based model for negotiations

View expenditures on OA initiatives as investments in scholarly communications models (arXiv, Reveal Digital)

Open Access partnerships with the MIT Press

Incorporate scholarly communications issues into library instruction program
Acquisitions and Appraisal Department

“...a department committed to innovation and experimentation in the field of library and archives acquisitions and appraisal. Together we will advance a broad approach to this work, as we redefine acquisitions work in academic libraries and help shape the future of scholarly communications.

Over time, we will actively augment core acquisitions support services by expanding our work in line with the wider library strategic pivot toward ‘inside-out collections,’ such as Open Access collections, data acquisitions, digital scholarship and born-digital archives.”

-Acquisitions and Appraisal Librarian job posting
Structure for today

1. Big Picture and Historical Context
2. Strategic Shifts at MIT
3. Organizational Design & Operations
Thank you