

我的

圖書館

My Library

香港 Hong Kong

高中組 Senior Secondary
中四 (S4) ▶ 中六 (S6)

▶ KO Tsun Kai Cheung Sha Wan Catholic Secondary School

Topic Be Mobile, Be Virtual And Be Green - Future Libraries In A Nutshell

Libraries have been an important part of human civilization. It is the vault of wisdom and knowledge, the home for scholars and the comfort zone for the public. However, they seem worthless in the current generation where information is so easily accessible. How can libraries evolve so as to serve its function perpetually?

Be mobile

Library is a place to acquire knowledge and an open space for the public. Who says it has to be a stationary building? Currently, there are mobile libraries all around the world, serving people in remote villages where library services are not easily accessible. Limited as the collection or books may seem, these library trucks can serve several communities simultaneously, which can never be achieved by conventional libraries. What if we expand the project, like creating a library train? A library ship? What if they can move between nations and continents, collecting knowledge across the world? Given the knowledge from the whole human civilization, these libraries can attract people wherever they go. This initiative can foster cultural exchange, uniting cultures together to form a "human culture". As a result, making libraries mobile can create a united, if not borderless world.

Be virtual

As of today, countless aspects of our life have gone online: shopping, calling taxis, even worshipping. If so, why can't libraries go online too? We used to think books are stacks of paper filled with little packed words, but e-books completely redefined the meaning of 'books'. They can be accessed 24/7, anywhere with a digital device, which breaks the limitations of traditional libraries. The ability for e-books to be copied, downloaded and printed make itself an invaluable tool for researchers and students. Given these advantages, many university libraries have established e-book databases to assist students in their research and most of them have received positive feedback. If public libraries can have their own e-book database, people can enjoy a wide array of books just by using their computers, which is favoured by 'digital natives' - the generation who have grown up surrounded by technologies. Moreover, e-books cannot be stolen, damaged or destroyed, significantly reducing librarian's workload in repairing books. E-books are also more interactive, which enhances people's interest in reading books. Not only can libraries go virtual to attract young users, it also revolutionizes the services provided by libraries.

Be green

Green living and sustainability are some of the core values of the current society, and libraries can also contribute to it. If we want our grand-grand children to enjoy libraries as we do, we have to act now to safeguard the future. With the advancement in technology, there are countless methods which libraries can use to make their libraries greener. To reduce the use of energy, the design of buildings should allow natural light instead of artificial light to illuminate the building. Solar panels and wind turbines can be installed to minimize the use of fossil fuels in generating electricity. Installing low-flow toilets and water taps, harvesting rainwater for flowering plants are ways to reduce water usage. Having green plant on the roof can absorb heat from solar radiation, reducing the temperature at the top floor, in turn reducing the need of air-conditioning. These can all enhance the experience of library users. Green libraries can also act as an educational facility, raising public awareness of the importance of environmental protection. As a result, our society can be more sustainable and our offspring can enjoy a more prosperous life.

It is believed that only by completely redefining and changing 'libraries' can we create an ideal library of the future.

Comments

- Well-structured and informative.
- Good ideas and clear presentation.

▶ KONG Siu Chun The ELCHK Yuen Long Lutheran Secondary School

Topic Technology Is The Way To Go For Libraries!

If you have the power to design an ideal library, what will you feature? A magic carpet? Flying books? Floating chairs? For me, 'technology' will be what my ideal library features.

Let us face it; in our world nowadays, technology is advancing swiftly. In recent years, we have seen various technological trends booming up and making contributions to our world, such as robots with AIs, intelligent apps, virtual and augmented reality platforms ... Technology changes our lifestyle consistently, and libraries with updated technological equipment are an inevitable trend to happen in the future.

In my eyes, modern libraries nowadays should not only serve the purpose of borrowing books; but most importantly, to serve as a creative space and a learning hub for individuals to incubate knowledge and ideas. As the society progressing, more and more of the world's knowledge is being digitalized saved in the Internet world, and no longer be only stored in our books. Therefore, libraries in the new century have to also serve as a role to provide entry points for users to engage into the digital world. To serve the above purpose, an ideal library in my mind has to be equipped with relevant high-tech equipment, so as to improve the technological literacy of local communities and allow easier access for readers to gain knowledge. The following are a few instances I have brainstormed that might help illustrate the ideal library in my mind.

First of all, my ideal library in the future would equip with technological equipment that helps enhance user's reading experience. Nowadays, modern paper-back books that are inches thick can be dull and boring, especially for amateur readers. A Harry Potter book with 2.7 inches thick and 700+ pages can surely drive some readers crazy and make them lose concentration. The dull and tedious thick paper-back books can be a turndown point for patrons to have access to knowledge. This is where technology comes in handy. In the future, libraries could put little bookmark-like devices into every paper-back books. Those devices would be stuck to the book's cover. The device would be a companion for readers and would make use of 3-D projection technology, so as to provide functions like guided-reading, animations, defining and translating words. The idea might sound crazy, but it is not impossible at all. In fact, a Chinese design company "TOOUT" has designed similar prototype devices that also serve as a companion for readers to navigate through printed materials. Hopefully, equipment like the book companion devices could be possible in the future and could improve the user-experience of reading paper-back books, thus make their journey on searching knowledge much more compelling.

Apart from user-experience enhancing accessories, my ideal library would also implement full automation systems. In nowadays, some aspects of libraries have already implemented automation systems. For instance, self-service check-out/in counters have helped relieve the hassle of librarians having to consistently check in and out books for patrons manually. This has greatly improved the efficiency of libraries. However, the efficiency of some aspects of

libraries is still being impeded with slow and sluggish routines. For instance, most libraries still have librarians manually shelving and categorizing books every day. The shelving and categorizing of books can be slow and sloppy, especially on a busy day with a lot of returned materials. The ineffectual routine of manually shelving and categorizing books can impede with user's experience of the library, especially when there is a high demand. Therefore, my ideal library will be fully automated and run by algorithms - there will be book shelving robots that run non-stop 24/7 up and down the library; there will be no library cards, where they are replaced by facial recognition instead; patrons can reserve books through voice command without walking into the counter; readers can navigate through the library and locate books with the help of augmented reality technology; libraries will be open 24 hours a day ... In the Macquarie University's Library in Australia, they already have similar automation systems that can automatically store and retrieve books upon reader's request. We can foresee that there is a possibility that automated libraries can come in the future. At the end, automated libraries not only allow readers use library services much easier but also help library operators employ fewer librarians, such as to cut down operational costs. This surely is beneficial to readers and library operators.

Last but not least, my ideal library in the future will fully make use of online services to provide an immersive out-of-the-library experience for readers. Nowadays, most libraries have already provided various online services, such as allowing patrons to search through the library catalogue, perform online reservations, and have access to e-Book materials. These online features have since enhanced patron's experience of discovering knowledge, as it's much easier now for readers to have access to certain library materials, where they can read e-Books at home in just a click; the online features have also since made it easier for readers to engage in library, as they can have access to features like library catalogues. In the future, my ideal library would continue to manipulate its online services, where readers in the future could further captivate with library services. For instance, readers in the future could take a virtual tour and even locate books in the library at home by using software similar to "Google Street View" and virtual reality technology; patrons could participate in online discussions and post book reviews through the library online services; library catalogues could provide specific book suggestions by analyzing user's search records and website histories ... Hopefully, the extensive improvements of library online services could help patrons to have access to knowledge much easier and also turn up their passion for reading.

There's an endless possibility of how my ideal library will turn into, but the similarities of those possibilities are all related to 'technology'. In the future, our ways of acquiring knowledge will be digitalized gradually - students will ditch paper-back textbooks and make use of learning tablets; print materials will no longer be on store shelves as e-books will overhaul the reading market; the online database of knowledge will grow bigger in the future ... There's a significant importance for libraries to follow the tech trend, as the habits of readers will transform greatly in the future. The library has to adapt to the new habits of readers in order to be successful. And therefore, my ideas for an ideal library mostly technological oriented.

Comments

- Good illustration that captures the audience.
- Good ideas and structure. Clear presentation.

作品排名不分先後，以獲獎者姓名排序。
Works arranged in the order of the winner's names.

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LIN Bernice Wen Heep Yunn School

Topic Reading Into The Library

With the rapid advancement of technology in recent years, with former impossibilities becoming reality and with the swift evolution of society, there have been concerns raised about the library. What does the future hold in store for this venerable staple of civilization? In examining my views of what an ideal future library ought to look like, it is perhaps necessary to elucidate the role and transformations of such institutions throughout the course of human history.

To begin with, what is a library? The most important function and, arguably, the only single requirement that a library must fulfill in order to be seen as such, is to contain knowledge. The amount to be held varies; a library may be anything from the famous Library of Alexandria, one of the grandest in the ancient world, to some small nameless space. If we were to define the word 'library' as merely meaning a repository of records, then our perspectives may as well be expanded to include language. From Homer's epics to the transmissions of religious followers in India, oral tradition has been a tool well-used to pass down art, ideas and culture from generation to generation.

The true form of a library is thus an abstract one; a concept as opposed to a building with bookshelves. Real libraries are flexible and changeable, and future libraries will most probably continue to adapt to suit the needs of people in a new era, as they already have before.

Fears for the library are far from new. Paper books are still oftentimes the first and foremost association that occurs when the subject of libraries comes up; the two are closely linked in collective consciousness, to such an extent that some may believe that the decline of the printed word will bring about the library's extinction. Even if we constricted libraries to being only physical places, however, we would realize that the earliest libraries, born in Mesopotamian Sumer, had not books on their shelves but inscribed clay tablets, as mentioned in "The Future of the Library". Bound books are simply one of the later additions in a series of manuscripts that have resided in libraries. Their loss, in my opinion, although unfortunate, would not present a killing blow.

Who is to say that books are certain to disappear, though? Reading through "The Future of the Library" has opened my eyes as to the fact that people have been predicting the obsolescence of books for literal decades. Since the advent of new-fangled electronic media such as the television, there have been worries over whether more traditional mediums would be crowded out, and yet it seems that the prominence of new media has not eliminated books from the running at all. The threat to them is almost certainly overblown.

In my vision of an ideal future library, books are definitely still existent. I think that there is a degree of charm and comfort in settling down to read whilst running your hands over physical pages, which is something I feel would be difficult to replace using the technologies we have so far or those which are projected to be achieved soon. However, despite the many merits of the book, I also believe that they should be used in tandem with other sorts of media, instead of being the sole items that can be found in a library.

As "The Future of the Library" says, "The medium is the message". Different forms of media send different types of signals to oneself. Hearing a podcast feels dissimilar to watching a video, which in turn is unlike reading the written word, and this all contributes to the ways we learn and absorb the information we come into contact with. For example, it would likely be much easier for me to visualize certain cellular processes if I were given a 3D video presentation on such a topic, rather than through glancing over a motionless diagram in a conventional book. Through the incorporation of a diversified range of media, I think that we would greatly enhance the effectiveness of absorption of knowledge for future library-goers, as they would be able to fully utilize the assorted strengths of such mediums.

To organize such a broad range of items would require a well-developed library system. My ideal library in the future would have its wares be divided through subject matter and then through media, but to truly provide convenience there would also have to be a sophisticated searching function in place so that people could find what they are looking for with ease. There may be inspiration to be uncovered in today's website designs, where tags and filters are often applied to enable quick discovery of things which one is interested in.

If such comprehensive organizational structures could be obtained, then I would also wish for the rise of automation to bring along a more effortless means of actually getting one's hands on a physical piece of media. Library codes are all very well and good, but in larger space this may become somewhat of a time drain. By manufacturing both software and machinery capable of 'playing fetch', a great amount of hassle could be saved for people in the future.

Furthermore, beyond having libraries be just passive containers of information as they have been all along, with new days coming ahead, there could possibly be more thought given to advancing creative space within future libraries. As according to "The Future of Library Space", due to the increasing dissemination of technology, more productive pursuits may be engaged in at a library through the utilization of computers, like video-editing and coding. Working on such content should be encouraged as not only would people gain useful skills and enjoyment out of such experience, but it would also provide a massive push for a world of media, allowing it to reach new depths.

To that end, the environment of my ideal library in the future would have to be set up right. The current relatively calm and serene atmosphere of most libraries should be preserved, so that people can work and spend their time in peace and quiet, while adequate resources and tools should be offered for maximum efficacy. A high degree of accessibility, permitting more individuals to make the best use of libraries, whether through further digitalization of media items or through having fewer physical barriers in places, would also be desired. Most importantly, everyone deserves a chance to step foot in or benefit from places of such learning.

In conclusion, I believe that libraries will survive and even improve in the future in order to better fulfill their aims, helping a much wider audience acquire knowledge and develop themselves, so long as they adapt with the times and enhance themselves with the potential of new technologies. My ideal library in the future will, with some luck and hope, not remain purely an ideal.

Comments

Well referenced and clear illustration. Fluent.

SZE kit Ying Heep Yun College

Topic Evolution Of Future Libraries

Time has always been the greatest enemy of cultures. The same goes for the culture of library. It is commonly believed that as technology reaches new height, digital libraries are destined to gain an edge over 'real' libraries; however, if future libraries are able to evolve with time and make full use of new technologies, it is possible that they will reach new height as well, instead of being crowded out.

Before introducing the ideal library, we should first take a look at the natural roles that a library plays in our society. The idea is that library should evolve, but within its territory. This means that its roles as storage of knowledge and an ideal place for meditation should act as the foundation of all changes made in the future.

To begin with, the storage of books is one of the most universally accepted 'functions' of a library. Yet the question arises as to whether a library is simply a case containing books. If that is the case, it is only natural that it fades with time, since its role can be easily replaced. In reality, the uniqueness of a library lies in its selectiveness when accumulating knowledge, which comes naturally with its limited storage space. An actual library cannot store everything, nor does it close its eyes and randomly pick books out of a stack. The process of careful selection is involved, in which only books with widely gained recognition are chosen and stored. Thus, the quality and reliability of the knowledge are ensured.

In the future, an ideal library should maximize its advantage of being highly selective and able to guarantee quality knowledge. The large capacity of information in digital library might appear to be fearsome but it has disadvantages too. For instance, storing too much information makes it difficult to identify high-quality works from the piles, thus making it not an ideal tool to gain quality knowledge. The future library should make good use of this 'problem' to prove its worth. This involves an ambitious scheme that allows library to not only select books at quicker pace, but also personalizes the selection to suit the needs of every reader.

The first step is to install an enormous system capable of assessing most of the e-books published. This is to answer the call of digital age as well: there is no doubt that e-books will dominant the world of reading materials. And there is simply no point in arguing how parchment pages might be better than e-books when digital books have the advantages of being formless, weightless and highly accessible. Therefore, instead of rejecting books in digital form, an ideal library should use the high accessibility of digital books to its own advantage.

Once the e-books are accessed through network connection, automatic judgment will be made by the system based on various sources of information, such as online comments, book analysis, even news related to the society situation so as to estimate the potential impacts of a book to the society. Needless to say, the greater the impact, the greater it is worth. Afterwards, selected e-books will take the shape of actual books in the form of projected 3-D images and be placed on shelves. It is hoped that the current practices of selecting books from bookshelves and using hands to hold thick books will remain intact. Although it might be strange to take weightless digital books from the bookshelves, it is believed that the turn of pages, the pleasure of touching a book, even the ability to read without staring at shining screens, will provide satisfying reading experiences that only actual libraries can provide in the future, when books are usually read from paper-thin mobiles. This way, the uniqueness of an actual library can be shown in the digital age.

To further reinforce the place of actual library in society, the selection of books should be personalized so as to compete with digital libraries that are capable of offering books based on 'search history'. In an ideal library, the arrival of visitors should activate an automatic scan for digital footprints, which will provide the library system with insights into the readers' interests. Afterwards, appropriate books of interest can be offered through visualized screens that appear in front of each reader, showing brief introductions of each book to arouse interest. The suggested books might as well light up like light bulbs on the bookshelves for easier identification. Upon the show of interest from the readers, video clips or book comments related will also be shown to persuade readers to try their luck with the books. Hopefully, this will spare the pain of not being able to find a desirable book.

The use of digital footprint will undoubtedly mark the beginning of a new relationship between readers and libraries. By then, libraries will no longer play the passive role of a mine where ambitious readers dig for golden books; instead, it will play the active role of a guide to bring appropriate readers to suitable books. This is similar to the way online advertisements are selected to suit consumers' needs and desires, except the aim is to make reading more desirable instead of maximizing the profit gained.

Furthermore, library is also a valuable place for relaxation, where barbaric noise of the city falls to invade. The calmness of reading builds up the serene atmosphere, in which reading and whisper seem to be the only appropriate actions. The power of imagination awakens the joy in readers, making the library quiet but comfortable. The role of library as a place for escape, study and self-reflection, should definitely remain unchanged. In the future, the architectural design of the library will be grander and greener. It will be a circular structure in which bookshelves settle along the walls, rows on top of rows, going up all the way until they touch the transparent glass ceiling. The ceiling will be made of light sensitive glass, which will be transparent on a sunny day to allow bright sunlight to warm the library, and turn dark brown to look like a regular ceiling on a stormy day to protect readers from outside disturbance. The sofas placed in the center of the structure will be ready with cushions for visitors to rest with books in hands. The grandness of the interior of the library, along with its soundproof walls, will be the strongest defense against troubled minds. Thus, the readers will be within and without; the city will be just beyond the walls, and yet they will be deep inside their world of imagination. No amount of noise or trouble can awake them from their sweet dreams inside this library.

It has long been expected and feared that the age of library will fade out as the new digital era emerges. However, it is during this period of time when anticipation and fear walk side by side that we should reconsider the purposes of libraries; and from there, we shall get a glimpse of the library in the future which will evolve to become an even better place to provide quality knowledge and space for relaxation.

Comments

Fair work with elaboration.
Great ideas and structure. Clear presentation. Well done.



作品排名不分先後，以獲獎者姓名排序。
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TSANG Kin Man

Concordia Lutheran School - North Point

Topic Library In The Future - A Networked Learning Hub For All

To most people, a library might be a musty, carpeted room with outdated technology. A library without books is unthinkable. However, now it seems almost inevitable. As the world goes digital, the library for the new generation should be a hub for learning, creativity and innovation which caters to the diverse needs of different age groups, ethnicities and community groups. Well-equipped with high technology, the library in the future will connect the society for exchanging culture, literature and innovation.

Traditionally, a library provides a public means of assessing information for free. What people are looking for there is wisdom and knowledge. Although we have evolved from the Information Age to the Digital Age, not everybody can afford a laptop, home Internet and even a portable library that sits on their kindle. To become a center for new digital learning and a point of reference for the local community, the new library will be networked, in addition to the original mission to transfer knowledge.

So, what will the library in the future really be?

First of all, keeping up with the changing times, the new library should be well-equipped with high technology. A diverse set of multimedia materials such as paper, video, digital and audio would be provided. Vast majority of the book collection would be stored in a compact system of metal bins accessed by book-fetching robots. The robots work 24 hours a day and can retrieve a book ordered from a computer or mobile device in just a few minutes. The robots will replace human librarians serving visitors as knowledge navigator. To cater to the needs of some, 24-hour self-service book check-out & return would also be offered. What is more, free wireless Internet, hundreds of computer terminals, laptops and tablets would be provided to meet the great demand of them. There will also be 3D printers and other cutting-edge tools that make it not just a place of learning but creation.

As the library is networked, there would be a good e-book lending program. All the books would be electronically-coded and could be found in the online catalog. Simply search the online catalog and click your request button for as many books as you need. In addition to your target book, related (audio & visual) reading materials of similar topics would also be displayed. A digital bookmark which will also be served as your library card will be issued for you to keep track of all the books you have borrowed. Another amazing innovation would be the visualization labs. There, digital books can be read at your fingertip. On the digital reading desk, you can drag a photo or a part of the reading text to a certain buttons – 'read', 'explain' and 'explore'. As for the 'read', you will be able to learn the pronunciation of a single word as well as the text. By touching 'explain', you will be given explanation and definition of the word or the relevant part. To 'explore', further information and even videos would be provided for additional knowledge. The new library will be of hyper-connectivity and heavily relied on social media and open-source data.

The new library would have multiple functional rooms. Themed reading rooms would be provided to promote 'leisure reading'. In the rooms, people can read quietly and resume peacefulness and calm. The themes are a display of different cultures and architecture. In addition to the 'quiet rooms', 'loud rooms' would also be established. The library in the future will become a place where we not only download culture, but upload it too. In this collaboration space, people and visitors can organize workshops and seminars. Exhibitions and performing arts can be disseminated. In this open space, users can develop their interests, find connection to each other and find their place in the changing digital world. The library will become a dynamic place. Visiting the library will be an 'experience' to all.

In order to connect people, the library can co-exist with coffee shops and theatres. Gallery and exhibition hallways can be established. Changing themes and seasonal events can be organized in those areas. Opportunities to hold events and activities would be open to all. Finally, contributing to creating a sustainable world, the library will be built as a diamond-level green building. Green technologies will be adopted for facilities design such as using transparent glass and solar energy roof.

It is hoped that under the transformation of the libraries, even those who spent little time there such as the unemployed, immigrants and the elderly will be attracted to the innovative social hub. Libraries will only survive if the communities they serve want and need them to. With the establishment of the new era of library – an all-in-one space for learning, sharing, creating and experiencing, people will come to see libraries as places to create the future, not just learn about the present.

Comments

The essay is interesting, concise and contains a lot of brilliant ideas for the future development and modernization of our libraries in Hong Kong.

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