Futures for university libraries

A view from MIT
Chris Bourg, Director of Libraries
@mchris4duke
Talk outline

• Context setting
• Future of libraries
• Covid-19 impacts on vision & strategy
• MIT Libraries’ forays into future
• Some speculations and provocations
First ... some context

- My bias and experiences
- Goal: Spark ideas and conversation
About MIT

- Highly ranked, research intensive
- Engineering, science and technology
- Long history of open
Future of Libraries: View from ChatGPT

- Digital Transformation
- Advanced Technologies
- Virtual and Augmented Reality
- Open Access and Open Science
- Collaboration Spaces
- Personalized Services
- Global Access
- Lifelong Learning
- Preservation and Curation

AI generated image of “University Library in 2050”
Future of libraries

View from MIT
Digital Transformation

Print .... ... to Digital
Computational transformation

Scarce, restricted, static .......................... Open, abundant, dynamic

PLACE
- Physical

SERVICE
- Physical
- Digital

PLATFORM
- Physical
- Digital
- Computational
Covid-19

Colleges Ask Students to Leave Campuses

A roundup of how the coronavirus continues to wreak havoc on higher education.

By Elizabeth Redden  // March 11, 2020

Financial impact of MIT’s COVID-19 response already $50 million

MIT pauses hiring except essential personnel

By Rajul Gandhi  |  Apr. 15, 2020
A newly urgent mission

“This crisis demands an accelerated transformation of our library into a platform for the creation, discovery, use, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge that is fully open and equitably accessible.

From MIT Libraries Vision: A New Urgency, May 6 2020
libraries.mit.edu/about/vision/new-urgency/
Some Strategic Principles

- Digital first
- Essential core of physical resources
- Open and equitable scholarship
- Support for data and computation
Digital First + Essential Core

- What is essential and why?

*Imagine a future where all print is distinctive*
Digital First

- 96% of collections spend is digital
- 82% of book spend is e-books
- Use of collections (FY22)
  - > 10 million digital uses
  - 85,000 print circulations
Why Digital First …

enables open, equitable, and computational
Open & Equitable

“We are relentless in our pursuit of a more open and equitable scholarly landscape that prioritizes inclusion and reduces the marginalization of scholars and scholarship from disadvantaged communities.”
Open and Equitable Scholarship

- 60% of faculty articles open
- MIT Framework
  - 10 contracts
  - ~2400 OA articles
- No Elsevier, June 2020 -?
Open and Equitable Scholarship

- Open Data Prize
- Open Monograph Fund
- CREOS: Center for Research on Equitable and Open Scholarship
CREOS:
Center for Research on Open and Equitable Scholarship

- Library based research center
- Focus on:
  - Incentives and barriers
  - Impacts
  - Economic models
- Library researchers, visiting scholar, postdocs, students
Collective Action: HELIOS and Ivy Plus

• HELIOS = 90+ universities
  • Coordinate on best practices
• Ivy Plus = 13 elite universities
  • Leverage influence
White House OSTP memo

• Eliminates embargo
• Includes data

“… highlight the dangers of allowing the interests of commercial publishers to dictate the paths available …”

- Ivy Plus Libraries letter to OSTP
Data + computational

• Data management planning
• Key principle of MIT Framework
• Text and data mining support
“...a repository of knowledge and data that can be exploited and analyzed by humans, machines, and algorithms...”
Libraries in an AI future

- Address bias and ethical issues
- Access to tools, training, data
- Advocacy and education on responsible use of AI
- Leverage AI/ML in own work
Imagine an open and equitable network of libraries …

Where anyone, anywhere can access and contribute to the knowledge, tools, and expertise needed to meet global challenges and solve local problems.

AI generated image of “University Library in 2050”
Speculations and provocations

What is the role of university libraries in:
• Ensuring open scholarship is also equitable?
• Leveraging and promoting responsible use of AI?
• How will libraries be ranked in the future?
• What skills & expertise will library staff need?
Thank you!

2 MIT Library staff, heading to work at Hayden Library