Delft University of Technology

The future of libraries? Just move forward

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The future of libraries? Just move forward

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Via Emre Hasan Akbayrak I read an interesting report from the Aspen Institute (Amy K. Garmer) covering a Leadership Roundtable on Library Innovation. In the roundtable three strategies were identified that "focus on libraries embracing technology as a means to anticipating and addressing consumer needs".

I used the reference in a short talk about the library of the future when our TU Delft Library colleague Frits van Latum retired (exactly one month ago at time of writing, time flies!). Within this past month a few things happened in our Library that reminded me of these strategic lines.

Superconnectivity
Think 10G! Re-imagine your staff as community activators working on relations and collaboration. Create superconnected creative spaces.

I find resemblance in what we are doing with our research data management programme within the university. Together with our faculties we are assembling the right framework and tools for their researchers and design relevant faculty data stewardship. This is all about relationships and collaboration.
A Library as *Supertape* or *Superglue*. A Library as Su*perbrain*, that you can connect to and trust.

America Civic square
Facilitate the debate as a neutral player. Act as a living platform, and safeguard the local and national conversations.

From the report this seems to be more focused on public or national libraries, but the neutral role of the Library is of great value, also for us as a university library. It is with that reason that Studium Generale operates as part of our organisation. And the social part of the platform can be enforced by the renewed Coffeestar (that officially opened on 10 September 2016). However, there is much opportunity to grow in this area!

App-Library
Anybody can add content to the library, though the library still checks and validates, and by doing this a rich online library emerges, where usage and participation are key for its success.

Opening of our new depot for academic heritage. Photo made by Marcel Janssen.

The content you can add can be so much more than the traditional text and images. On 26 September 2016 we opened the depot of our academic heritage, which moved to our building (and is now part of our book depot). We want to add material like this to our online Library collection, and want to hear user's stories connected to these objects. We are also planning to do that with our tinkertable devices and material.
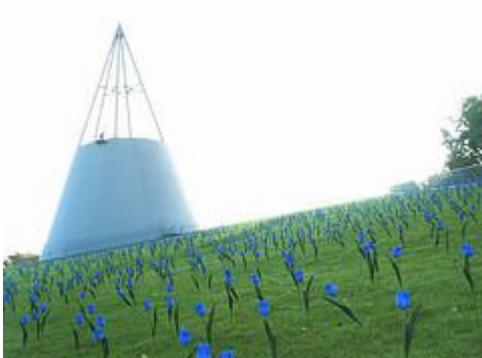
The App-Library can add to the educational experience, and the content can be (re-) used in education. A good example for this was presented in the exhibition Chairs, tables, lamps and sets that started in our Library, and now (until 9 October 2016) is displayed in the Prinsenkwartier. The chairs of the Faculty of Architecture were taken out of their shelves and into education. Three design courses challenged students to start "a dialogue with a Chair" and – inspired by that research – to make a new design for a Lamp, Table or Set.

As I said in my presentation on 1 September, we cannot predict the future. We should continue to do relevant work, dare to innovate, and move forward. There are enough metaphors that come to mind when reading the report. I already mentioned Supertape, Superglue or Superbrain. With the retired Frits in mind, you can also have a:

- Library as espressomachine (strengthens your senses)
- Library as mindmap (ordens your mind)
- Library as sailing boat (takes you whatever direction the wind blows)

There are enough metaphors around for us. That is for sure!

My Library could be an open square, where I have a comfortable seat, and where I get a new insight, from the people I meet or the things I encounter.

TU Delft Library heritage, innovation, strategy