Chapter 9
International Scholarship and the Role of American Research Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Research libraries play an enormous role in supporting and promoting international scholarship and collaboration. This chapter explores methodologies employed by research libraries in the United States to advance an international focus for internal and external audiences. There are several reasons for a more intense library focus to encompass planet earth, 21st century universities are more globally oriented. Scholars are more connected than ever to their overseas colleagues. The 21st century research library environment is more collaborative, proactive, and outwardly connected.

THE NEW INTERNATIONALLY INVESTED UNIVERSITY

Universities in the United States are ramping up efforts to promote international education, scholarship, and student/faculty engagement. One example is the University of Tennessee’s Ready for the World initiative (n.d.). Initially the Provost began the initiative with themed semesters. The Africa Semester was an example and included performances, lectures, book discussions, a major African Art exhibit, and specialized curriculum about Africa. The Ready for the World initiative built on this concept and became a comprehensive University-wide program to infuse the international experience into every aspect of the Tennessee educational experience.

The Pennsylvania State University has developed a sharp international focus with Global Penn State (Pennsylvania State University. Global Penn State, n.d.) based on the principles of global citizenship and global leadership. It involves educating the next generation of global citizens and leaders by providing students with diverse opportunities to experience world cultures and helping students develop a global perspective. Becoming a global citizen requires a strong understanding of the major challenges that all citizens of the world share. Penn State is also committed to partnering with institutions around the world to help find answers to major global challenges including poverty, environmental sustainability, food security, health, climate change, energy security, and social justice. The partnership aspect recognizes the mutual benefits of strong international ties between institutions. Many other colleges and universities are pursuing similar programs on a long term basis. Research libraries contribute a great deal to these comprehensive efforts through traditional and newly emerging roles.

THE 21ST CENTURY SCHOLAR

Who are 21st century scholars, scientists, and professionals? And what does it mean to be an educated person on planet Earth as we move into the second decade of the new millennium? The new global scholar is competitive, visible, attuned to excellence and quality, collaborative, high-tech, and embraces new modes of communication and commentary. The new global scholar must now work in a time of tremendous political, social, personal, and global transitions. Although transition periods are often characterized as disruptive, chaotic, and fraught with uncertainty we should be comforted by the fact that people have naturally made cyclical life passages over eons of time. Those who navigate various life transitions successfully naturally internalize change oriented philosophies focused on the characteristics of the journey. Humankind must be prepared to pass through life’s transitions on a global scale.

21ST CENTURY ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

American research libraries are experiencing an awakening about what constitutes powerful leadership for today’s world. This new kind of leadership is based on several core values and traits that epitomize the ability to work across and respect all cultures. Here are some words and their opposites that describe the characteristics of new leadership:

- Selfless and User Centered (as opposed to selfish and ego-centric)
- Mutual Respect (as opposed to disrespect)
- Collaboration (as opposed to working in silos)
- Flexibility (as opposed to rigidity)
- Outwardly focused (as opposed to inwardly focused)
- Proactive (as opposed to reactive)

Essentially, new leadership is based on the theme of connecting externally rather than focusing internally. Academic librarians throughout the world have a unique view of higher education because we work with everyone regardless of discipline, location, or status. Libraries and librarians will continue to lead the way to advance global scholarship and understanding.

KNOWLEDGE CREATION IS GLOBAL

21st century scholars, students, and librarians are fundamental partners for the creation of new knowledge. Knowledge creation is a global phenomenon and is increasingly produced, accessed, and preserved in the virtual, digital environment. Decision-making to improve our collective ability...
to advance these virtual knowledge systems need to be collaborative and transcend departmental, institutional, governmental, and organizational boundaries. Academic libraries not only nurture global knowledge creation but are partners and co-creators of new knowledge. The growing philosophy of the embedded librarian supports new approaches locally and globally. The concept of embedding implies a more comprehensive integration of one group with another to the extent that the group seeking to integrate is experiencing and observing, as nearly as possible, the daily life of the primary group (Dewey, 2006). The primary "group" is an individual student or faculty, an academic department, another institution, another library, or another culture.

Scholarly inquiry is the source of knowledge creation. Research universities are at the nexus of the process and steward the end result. Research libraries, virtual and physical, play a critical role in knowledge creation as the iconic environment for access to scholarship and creative work leading to new scholarship. New technologies for group work and social networking are making it possible for research libraries to develop, through collaboration, tools to support new methods of collaboration. New and emerging trends in global research reflect a growing trend towards virtual laboratories of dispersed experts working on interdisciplinary problems. These virtual labs and intellectual "commons" require support and coordination. Research libraries are beginning to understand their role in providing expertise on appropriate communication systems, data management, access, and preservation. Sciences, social sciences, and humanities formulations of what is often referred to as cyber infrastructure are emerging at different levels and on different scales. Collaborative support in research institutions, research libraries, and governmental agencies is key to developing support mechanisms for worldwide knowledge creation.

NAVIGATING AT THE INTERFACES OF CULTURES

Michael Harris Bond (1997) writes about the interfaces of cultures where he talks about examining the psychology of the known, the repository of taken-for-granted constructs and propositions that constitute the cultural legacy for its members. He challenges people to seek out alternative ways of thinking and living. He says "teaching such questions requires that one travel in atypical ways; one must first expose oneself to the unfamiliar." Academe represent the interfaces of cultures where knowledge creation explodes into purposeful action. These days we often speak of constraints on our global society but we actually face a different problem – an abundance of scholarship and information in a world where conventional wisdom is not always the answer. And, there are many new frontiers of knowledge to explore. This is the ideal climate for innovation and breakthroughs. According to Steven Johnson (2010), author of Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation, "easy money just tends to generate more followers than leaders." He goes on to say that innovation has always been achieved through a combination of religion and politics.

A relevant and vibrant future requires that research libraries navigate at the interface of a hugely diverse set of campus and academic cultures that approach learning and scholarship in very different ways. Librarians, throughout the world, need to learn from cross-cultural research in building collections and services based on how these different cultures work and what they require rather than on what we think they require.

Research libraries need to build to scale when working in at the interfaces of cultures to advance collections, programs, services, and physical/virtual spaces to meet the requirements of global knowledge creation. Successfully building to scale means ramping up to meet the reach large numbers of students, faculty, and global scholars. It means dealing with the hugeness of scholarship resources in digital and print forms from around the world as well as how these resources are stored and acquired. Calculating the proper scale is more of an art than a science, and is a fundamental requirement for future success of research libraries worldwide to address our networked, abundant world of scholarship, teaching, and learning.

STEWARDING INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIONS

Research libraries have long been involved in print and multimedia collections from around the world. In the United States there are many collections of deep distinction focused on specific parts of the world. Some of these collections contain scholarly resources that might be at risk because of environmental or political risks. For example, in 1954 Northwestern University Libraries (n.d.) established the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, "the largest separate African collection in existence." Its scope ranges from anthropology, economics, history, law, and religion to question the status quo. Universities and their libraries set the stage for creating, building on, and preserving the world's knowledge.

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NEW INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The digital age is providing new ways of "collecting" and innovative partnerships which cross country, political, and societal boundaries. These new strategies do not require that physical items leave a particular country or region but can be preserved and accessed in different ways. The Human Rights Documentation Initiative at the University of Texas Libraries (Heath, Kelleher, Sangwand & Wood, 2010) preserves human rights documentation and "exemplifies how research libraries may continue to prove their relevance only for the advancement of human knowledge, but also for the promotion of social justice." The HRDI is committed to the long-term preservation of fragile and vulnerable records of human rights archival materials, and the advancement of human rights research and advocacy around the world. It also archives websites, reports, audio, and video, photographs on human rights struggles that are produced by individuals or small organizations who lack resources for widespread distribution of their work (University of Texas at Austin Libraries, n.d.). Examples of this growing collection include:

- Free Burma Rangers
- Genocide Archive of Rwanda
- Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (El Salvador)
- Texas After Violence Project
Other human rights libraries with similar missions are found at Columbia University, Duke University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Connecticut, and the Center for Research Libraries (Global Resources Network Human Rights Archives and Documentation Project). These efforts are made possible by sensitive and creative partnerships combined with the application of innovative technologies.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE APPROACHES

Research libraries are embracing 21st approaches to supporting indigenous knowledge and these efforts are often done with partnerships. At Penn State the University Libraries collaborate with the Interinstitutional Consortium for Indigenous Knowledge (ICIK), part of a global network of more than 20 indigenous knowledge resource centers in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. ICK is the only active resource center in the United States. As their website notes (Penn State University Libraries, n.d.), “ICIK is a network that promotes communication among community residents, students, faculty and staff from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who share an interest in diverse local knowledge systems and would like to engage with communities that generate locally-useful knowledge to enable their survival in a rapidly globalizing society.” The University Libraries has participated in a host of initiatives supporting this effort including:

- Co-sponsorship of the ICK seminars throughout the year
- Creation of a Research Guide for Indigenous Knowledge
- Acquisition of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge for Agriculture and Rural Development (CIKARD - originally housed at Iowa State University), a rich collection of literature and ethnographic descriptions related to indigenous knowledge for agriculture and rural development

The indigenous knowledge movement underscores the reality that knowledge is not always expressed in traditional print forms or even through words. It exists in a variety of forms and should be appropriately stewarded and preserved for future generations.

THE ROLE OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION AND UNIVERSITY-BASED PUBLISHING

Universities now recognize the value of the collective intellectual output of its faculty and students largely through the urging of librarians to implement policies and frameworks espoused by scholarly communication best practices. Initiatives such as SPARC (Association of Research Libraries, n.d.), ARL’s Create Change (n.d.), and the open access movement as a whole provide strategies for institutions to disseminate their intellectual output broadly to the global information society. These efforts have generated an army of scholarly publishing methodologies based on broad access via the Web. Examples include the University of Tennessee’s Newsstand Press (n.d.), an open access press featuring a variety of peer reviewed publications, mostly in the "born digital." The repository movement is another methodology to widely disseminate publications, creative works, an institutional output, and data. The DigitalCommons at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (n.d.) features more than 40,000 articles, papers, e-books, documents, presentations, creative activities, master’s theses and dissertations all available on the Web. Collectively digital repositories are bringing more scholarly resources to a worldwide audience.

PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

American research libraries are becoming much more involved with the international library scene. Part of this involvement includes working with librarians from other countries providing development opportunities and supporting exchanges. A stellar example of this work is the University of Illinois Mortenson Center for International Library Programs (n.d.). Mortenson Center’s mission is “to strengthen international ties among libraries and librarians worldwide for the promotion of international education, understanding, and peace.” The Mortenson Center Associates Program exposes international librarians to innovative services and best practices through visits to a variety of libraries, exposure to professional organizations and conferences, and workshops from experts in library and information science. Mortenson Center staff also consult internationally to advance libraries throughout the world.

Collaborations and agreements with between American universities and universities worldwide contribute to greater understanding of needs and opportunities for higher education in different countries. Research libraries are often part of the exchanges, projects, and other aspects of these partnerships. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda developed a cooperative partnership with funding from the Carnegie Corporation. Joint ventures included electronic document delivery of scholarly resources, digitalization initiatives, and two-way exchanges. The partnership expanded to include a close relationship between the University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences and Makerere’s East African School of Library and Information Sciences.

In addition to exchanges libraries such as the University of Maryland and the University of Pittsburgh have deep relationships with large international libraries. The University of Maryland Libraries (n.d.) has a strong partnership with Japan’s National Diet Library including a major digitalization and preservation project of fragile Japanese documents of the post World War II Era. The East Asian Gateway Service at Pitt provides research support to thousands of China scholars in the United States and researchers and scientists in China and also has an extensive partnership with 16 academic or research libraries in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.). These relationships spawn projects with mutual benefit such as digitization, preservation, improved access to scholarly resources, educational opportunities, and specialized research services.

CONCLUSION

New leadership, proactive partnerships, innovation, and creative use of technology all come together to support global knowledge creation so critical to solving the world's challenges and promoting quality of life for humankind moving forward. We know that resources of all kinds are not easy to come by but when people collectively have the world’s knowledge at their fingertips they have the tools to change the culture around and beyond them to one of integrity and worthiness. The American research library and its librarians play an important role in stewarding international approaches to knowledge discovery with our worldwide partners.
REFERENCES


Section 3
Collaboration in Specific Subject Area