Master of None

R. David Lankes, PhD
Doomsday Scenario

• Back filling an abandoned town square of social services
  • Increasing support at the margins
  • Increasing government for none rhetoric
• Core functions challenged
  • Inadequate shift from narratives of neutrality to narratives of expertise
Doomsday Scenario

- Back filling an abandoned town square of social services

Assumption of a single future

- Increasing government for those meters

- Core functions challenged

- Inadequate shift from narratives of neutrality to narratives of expertise
The Many Futures

• There are as many futures as communities served

• As we center the community at the heart of the library we benefit from broader support, but we are also tied to a broader part to that community.

• No longer can we just depend on the elites, the cultured, or the library supporter for our success. We must seek to engage and improve the whole community.
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

Librarian

Library

Community

Community

Community
Library

Library

Library

Community

Community

Community

Librarian
Community Centered Done Well

• Libraries should seek to meet the aspirations and character of their communities
Feeding the Mind and Body

Toronto  Philadelphia  Charleston
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

A library is a mandated facilitated space maintained by the community, stewarded by librarians, and dedicated to knowledge.
Physiological needs:
- food, water, warmth, rest

Safety needs:
- security, safety

Belongingness and love needs:
- intimate relationships, friends

Esteem needs:
- prestige and feeling of accomplishment

Self-actualization:
- achieving one’s full potential, including creative activities
Community Centered Taken Too Far

- Community centrality is not an abdication of our values, mission, and professionalism

- “Community Libraries” in England

- Materials challenges and the exclusion of professionals and self-censorship
Community Centered Taken Too Far

• Jack of all trades, master of none
  • Adapt, don’t adopt: need to kill the idea of toolkits and best practices
Community Centered Taken Too Far

• Instead of seeking to be all things to all people, we must strive to do Less; Better
  • Not the same as every other library though

• This is particularly vital now, as our communities atomize

• We must weave together the fabric of the community
  • We need to stop serving our communities and start saving them

• We are part of the community and must use our own agency and power to not simply serve our communities, but save them
NOT Bibliofundementalism

• This is not about retreating to our book palaces

• Rather this means we must throw off the pretense of being unbiased

• Need to argue against book banning through our professionalism and understanding of the whole community, not a simplistic definition of neutrality as all points of view

• TLA Launches Texans for the Right to Read, EveryLibrary Banned Bookstore, NYPL Supports the Right to Read Banned Books
Saving the Community’s Soul
Librarian, Know Thyself

• It begins with defining a librarian

• Relationships over transactions

• Library as:
  • Information to Service to Platform to Movement
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

Librarian, Know Thyself

The mission of librarians is to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities.

Mission

Access, Knowledge, Environment, Motivation

Means

Learning, Openness, Diversity, Intellectual Honesty (not Unbiased), Intellectual Freedom & Safety

Values

Librarian
Librarian, Know Thyself

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Podcast

Coming Soon