

# LibraryCrunch

Bringing You A "Library 2.0" Perspective, by Michael Casey

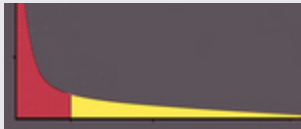
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## Is There a Library 1.0? Does it help to ask?

*I notice that you have not provided a definition of Library 1.0. You and I have previously discussed this and how when discussing (debating?) the transition from Library 1.0 to Library 2.0, it is natural for those interested in this concept to first seek a definition of Library 1.0. Personally, I think that defining Library 1.0 would be difficult, and possibly even counterproductive. I'd love to see your comments on that here on LibraryCrunch.*

This comment from Laura revolves around an issue that the two of us have been discussing for several days now – what are we moving away from? I'm going to agree and say that providing a **strict** definition of Library 1.0 would be counterproductive. However, Library 1.0 can be illustrated in a few ways.

First, Library 1.0 really is whatever point you are at now. The crowds we are serving now are the crowds that we have served for some time. Using the [long tail](#) concept, most libraries have become quite adept at serving the users who populate the left axis – we know them well, we know their needs, and we have tailored our collections and services to meet the majority of their desires. However, as the long tail idea illustrates, as needs begin to differ and as that tail expands out to the right, the number of users and the diversity of needs grows. The reality is that the number of users who have needs that are not being met outnumbers those whose needs we are meeting. In other words, we are offering services that are not wanted by a majority of our population.



Another illustration of Library 1.0 is the current project cycle of planning, implementing, and forgetting. Libraries (and any bureaucracy) are excellent at planning and preparing – we often prepare and plan for years – but when those plans are put into place and executed we have a tendency to walk away without performing constant follow-up.

These are but two things that reside in the world of Library 1.0. I think that what we need to remember is that Library 1.0 is a restrictive place, governed by strict hierarchies, rigid boundaries, and underpinned by change-avoidance. Perhaps this is sufficient -- knowing what we are wanting to move away from and where we want to go. The mechanism that is [Library 2.0](#) will assist us in this journey.

Posted by Michael on October 25, 2005 01:01 PM | [Permalink](#)

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## → Comments

I agree with the loose, introductory definition of 1.0 as you've begun to explain it. Again, it is difficult to define, and as you stated, "Library 1.0 really is whatever point you are at now." I really do think it is just that simple. If a detailed definition is desired, it should be crafted around a particular library such that it is specific only to that library.

Also, I really like what you said about this cycle libraries seem to have of planning, implementing, and then letting it go forever. In a Library 2.0 environment, libraries would frequently update or change their services—even those that were planned to perfection down to the last detail—to meet the changing needs of their users. Rather than having a rigid stance, we should be open and flexible.

-Laura

Posted by: Laura Savastinuk | [October 25, 2005 01:55 PM](#)

Locally crafting a definition of Library 1.0 is a very good idea. I can almost see this plugging into something like Sandra Nelson's Planning for Results -- you define where you are and where you want to go, setting local goals based on your current position, not against some unattainable "perfect" library.

Posted by: [Michael](#) | [October 25, 2005 04:36 PM](#)

Yes! I think that what you and I are saying is not that that libraries shouldn't plan -- in fact, it is imperative that they do plan. But they shouldn't walk away after implementing a new service or reaching an objective. We're talking about continually revisiting and fine-tuning.

-Laura

Posted by: Laura Savatinuk | [October 25, 2005 05:22 PM](#)

While reading this, I had a thought...it might be totally off, but I'd be interested in your opinion. I think that maybe public libraries are the left side of the long tail, and academic libraries are the right. My thinking is that public library circulation seems to benefit more from heavy circulation of a few popular items - Oprah's Book Club novels, Harry Potter, and so forth. Academic library circulation seems to me to be a bit more spread out...at my place of work, I would think that we probably circulate fewer popular materials and more "unpopular" materials. Perhaps one vision of Library 2.0 would be a mixed model, like the San Jose Library?

Posted by: [Rikhei](#) | [October 25, 2005 08:26 PM](#)

Rikhei -

I hope Michael doesn't mind me jumping in here to respond to your thoughts about a mixed model. When I think about the transition from Library 1.0 to Library 2.0 I tend to view it from a public library's perspective because I work for a large public library. Michael and I recently discussed possible changes in collection development as part of Library 2.0. While I don't think Library 2.0 means the popular materials would go away, one thing we discussed was how the focus may shift somewhat back to those customers we have not reached because we don't have the more obscure titles they seek. Maybe this will lead us to a mixed model like you've suggested?

-Laura

Posted by: Laura Savastinuk | [October 25, 2005 10:17 PM](#)

I think that a collaborative arrangement like that at San Jose would work for some library systems. It would be inevitable that some of each library's long tail would be served by the uniquely different collections possessed by the other library. That being said, simply merging the collections would, in fact, create a new graph and a new long tail that would still need addressed. The beauty of a bigger system like that formed by an academic-public merger would be the sheer amount of resources it could bring to bear on conquering that long tail.

Posted by: [Michael](#) | [October 25, 2005 11:49 PM](#)

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