

LibraryCrunch

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

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Change

I and [many others](#) have been talking about the merits of Library 2.0 for many months now. [Other thinkers](#) have been pushing Library 2.0-like ideas for many years. The crux of my argument has always revolved around increasing our user base through the judicious implementation of flexible services and the adoption of new and external technologies and ideas – going after that Long Tail. But what has fueled this latest surge in L2 thought? Part of me thinks that the wave of Web 2.0 technologies has allowed us, librarians, to think outside the proverbial box and see ways to deliver new services and reach new users.

But what explains the din of conversation about Library 2.0? I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that the primary reason so many of us are talking about change is because we fear for the future of our libraries. It doesn't take a Harvard MBA to see the [financial cycles](#) we all seem to live through – the [brief ups](#) and the [long downs](#). And while our ability to offer internet access has kept our door counts high, we know that as soon as [high-speed connectivity](#) reaches a certain saturation point those numbers will begin to drop. Customers are demanding a wider variety of materials and services, and our inadequate resources are limiting our ability to respond. We cannot stay the current course and expect to maintain the same level of importance within our communities. Change is a requirement.

Fortunately, we see many [libraries](#) taking the lead and trying new [ideas](#). We see [disruptive technologies](#) being implemented in an effort to stretch resources and maintain services. But these steps are only a start. Change will be gradual but it will be far deeper and invasive than many think. Library political hierarchies, operating procedures, procurement philosophies, and success measures will all need to change. The role we play (or do not play) in our communities will ultimately determine our success or failure.

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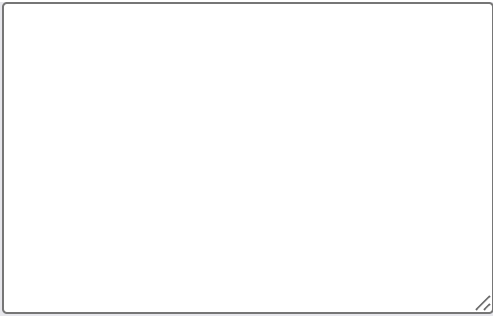
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