It's not Who We are but Where We are: Skating the Periphery versus Pushing the Envelope

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> He that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. (Bacon, 1625, p. 109)

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY to survey a field. The seven articles in this issue of *Library Trends* reflect the views of ten individuals, each of whom was asked to comment on the nature of library work from an educator's perspective. It was decided that this issue could be concluded with this author's own take on the subject but decided instead that it might be better to take a different direction (and the word "direction" is not being used lightly here). Since becoming a full-time library educator six and a half years ago, I have pondered both the need and the nonsense implicit in the field's determination to reposition itself. Of course, it is nigh impossible to be involved in library education and not feel obliged to occasionally think about such matters; ever since the "L-word" acquired its scarlet letter status—worn so proudly by some, with such shame by others—no curriculum has emerged unscathed. But it has been suspected for quite some time that there is more to this matter than a desire to slip (or cling to) institutional bonds.

Today, the decision is to commit these suspicions to print. The conclusion? That we can never hope to understand the field, be it librarianship or library (and information) science, until we have come to terms with two self-realities: (1) the need to command space of some sort, whether or not we call it a library; and (2) the inability to escape it regardless of who we think we are and what we wish to be called.

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Consider, for example, our general obsession with the word "access": it pops up quite regularly at conferences, in job titles, and throughout the literature. Here are a few uncited examples:

> Gateways have been developed to provide universal access to selected [identifier deleted] ocean data holdings.
> All you have to do is ... set the permission record for the restricted directory to allow [identifier deleted] access for that group and to disallow [identifier deleted] access for the world.
> Students, faculty, and staff may now access the online version of [identifier deleted] via the library's Web page.
> Issues and problems [emerge] when offering Internet access through public-access workstations.
> Ironically, positivism also supports the belief of neutrality and access within the library world.

Now ask yourself, when we use the word "access," whether we aren't beginning to talk less about providing access to some*thing* than access to some*where.*

Downs and Stea (1977) make much the same point but do so with considerably more eloquence:

> In searching for *whereness* information, we know what we are looking for, but need to know both where it is and how to get there. *Whatness* information tells what is at a particular location and why anybody would want to go there. Included in *whatness* information is a subclass of information, *whenness.* We need to know not only where a place is and what is at that place, but also when certain things will happen there or how likely it is that things might happen there. (p. 39)

Implicit in both "whereness" and "whatness" then, is an almost Maslovian sense of "belongingness." Knowing what belongs to one (not to mention that to which one belongs) establishes a sense of relationship; knowing where one belongs establishes presence. Consequently, belongingness is what holds these concepts together and circumscribes the orbit within which they hold sway over the course of human action. They continue: "We know *whatness,* when we can identify and recognize a place when we arrive there, and can decide in advance whether we should go there or avoid the place . . . .The key to understanding *whereness* [however] is location" (p. 54). Admittedly, Downs and Stea (1977) are speaking of mental cartography and not librarianship. Still, substitute "library" for "place" and the aptness of their insights soon becomes apparent. Can we "identify and recognize [the library] when we arrive [and] decide in advance whether we should go there or avoid [the library]?" (p. 54). I think we can safely answer, yes. Despite our efforts to change its image, not to mention its name, no one so far has suggested that we do away with the skills that have faithfully guided the nature of library work. Rather, we

should be asking where this new place is to be located. Or, in our haste to acquire a new identity, have we forgotten that we will need an address as well?

The distinction between identity (whatness) and location (whereness) can be further explained as follows. When this author lived in Berkeley, San Francisco was always referred to as "the City." To say "I'm taking the BART over to San Francisco" was to brand yourself an outsider; in the Bay Area, there is only one city. On the other hand, now that she is back in Toronto, there is little point in describing Berkeley as being "across the Bay from the City." Identity, as the example shows, is often place-specific: in San Francisco, BART means Bay Area Rapid Transit, on TV, it refers to a young Simpson. In contrast, location can only be explained in terms of a well-known and commonly understood system of coordinates and a set of instructions explaining how to get there. We can look in an atlas and establish that San Francisco is in California—i.e., whereness. We can also recognize the Golden Gate Bridge—whether outside a plane window, in a Tony Bennett song, or on *Star Trek*—and know we have been transported to a place called San Francisco—i.e., whatness. In other words, whereas there is only one representation of whereness, whatness can command any number of guises.

Consequently, the issue of whether library work is practiced within a library or a media center or an information brokerage is of considerably less importance than the certitude that those who practice it and those who stand to benefit are working with the same set of coordinates.

In the interest of simplicity, and in keeping with the title of this issue, it is suggested that we allow the word "library" to serve as our place mark and turn our attention to the belongingness of those objects which traditionally reside within its four walls.

Let us take a particularly contentious issue as the first example: hate literature. While it would be foolish to presume that no library would ever stock such materials, one need not search far to discover that several libraries have set up policies to prevent its inculcation. But think, if we were really intent on keeping people from hate literature, would we not be concerned with more than our own collections? Would we not seek to eliminate it completely, if not at the source, at least in all of its tangible forms? Again, it would be foolish to discount those among us who feel that responsibility most keenly and have adopted an advocacy role. The point is simply that such practices are neither widespread nor universally embraced within the field, and so we cannot assume that our quarrel is with the production of hate literature so much as its presence within our immediate jurisdiction.

The "whatness" of this issue is fairly obvious: hate literature can be recognized well enough to avoid it if we wish. But how easily could it be found on our own? Could it be collected as rigorously as other kinds of

literature were we so inclined? "Whereness" suggests that we must know both where such literature is generated and how to get there, lack of inclination notwithstanding. This author readily admits no knowledge of either; not only lacking the idea of how to assess the authority of any sources that might be found, but also unsure of where to draw the line were it not already drawn for her.

Fahrenheit 451, clichéd as it has become, offers an even better example. In the novel, books are destroyed indiscriminately by one group—they are all considered hate literature—while their contents are painstakingly preserved by an underground movement of what one character calls "old heads" (p. 164). On one level, Bradbury's narrative simply returns ideas to their original source, the human mind, and reduces scholarly communication to a simple dialectic. However, by extending the metaphor just a little, that mind morphs into the ultimate library: controlled access and intellectual freedom in one convenient package. Here too, the dilemma lies not so much with "whatness" as "whereness." Note that these so-called "old heads" function not as active synthesizers but as sanctuaries for keeping "knowledge we think we will need intact and safe" (p. 165). Process plays a much lesser role compared to place.

Closer to present day, we have the filtering software debate, a matter so topical that readers a few years hence may have as much difficulty remembering its relevance as this author has in recalling the origins of the "Scarlet L." Still, it is an important debate, all the more memorable for its adherence to the attributes of good drama: outer conflict (between those who advocate and those who deplore its use); inner conflict (to block or not to block); conspiracy (profiteers encroaching upon the public domain); suspense (will the kid sitting at the terminal manage to break the code?); and, of course, plenty of sex.

This debate is the truest test of purpose librarianship has faced since we stopped chaining books to shelves. Library work has always involved filtering of one sort or another. Cataloging, reference, collection development—each purports to reduce chaos, ignorance, and excess, however fleetingly (or, in Downs and Stea's terms, addresses the whatness and "whenness" of the information search process). These functions in turn contribute to the library's institutional status to the extent that the social milieu in which it resides continues to canonize them in a particular locale (the essence of whereness). Since we have already determined that library work must ground itself somewhere, the question now becomes, Will it be conducted in a populated area or encapsulated in a software package?

Sack (1980) adds yet another dimension to our understanding of "whatness"/"whereness" by elaborating on this sense of groundedness: "[A territorial definition of society means] that social relationships are determined by location in a territory primarily and not by prior social

connections, whereas [a social definition of territory means] that the use of an area or territory depends first and foremost on belonging to a group (the determination of which is essentially non-territorial)" (p. 179). Replace the word "society" with "library" and a perceptual dilemma speedily ensues: do libraries owe their continued existence to [deliberate] positioning or [opportunistic] association? If, as Downs and Stea would have it, the key to understanding whereness is location, then key to understanding location are discernible measures of distance and direction. What makes the filtering software debate so crucial to the future of library work can now be summarized in three simple statements: anyone can filter; so can software; thus virtuality is its own reward (admittedly a poor pun).

That anyone can filter should come as no great surprise; you are exercising that option even as we speak. Less comfortable perhaps is the notion that those who work in libraries are not necessarily better at it nor those who train them the best of all. Whatever advantage we possess—be we educator or practitioner—resides in our self-awareness, the extent to which we "know our place." Long considered an admission of subservience, knowing one's place can mean, literally, just that: knowing where one is, having successfully staked one's claim. The difference, of course, is distance related: whether the person making the statement is talking down or eyeball-to-eyeball. In other words, who wields the power and with how much of an advantage?

Sack's (1980) claim that "space is an essential framework of all modes of thought" (p. 4) is an acceptable one. Spatial metaphors, such as "knowing one's place" and "staking one's claim," dominate our language—they allow us to harness the thoughts, impressions, and emotional reactions which course through our minds in frightfully intangible ways. Note too that, as we seek to describe this process, the mind itself takes on a spatial aspect: part holding ground for what we know, part uncharted territory for what we do not.

Hall (1992) conceptualizes maps as "a visual shorthand for how we conceptualize and integrate the unknown" (p. 22); as such, they allow us to feel secure in what we know, even as they direct us toward the next frontier. Cognitive maps serve much the same function, except they encompass internalized perceptions of knowledge and experience. For those who know how to decipher them, they indicate where the mapmaker has been and where he or she is apt to be going; for most of us, though, they are at best subconscious guides.

As with the machinations of the mind, so too the machinations of library work. Sack would attribute the earlier "access" examples to a change in social context; as he puts it, "the prevalence of technology and the division of labour, which have so complicated our activities and fragmented our responsibilities, have led us to think of decisions and actions in terms of their degree of connection with space" (p. 17). One need not

rack one's brain to come up with other references from within the field (itself a spatial metaphor): phrases such as "information society," "information highway," and "information landscape" easily come to mind.

The phrase "information landscape" (my favorite of the three) was reputedly coined by the late Muriel Cooper, founder of MIT's Visible Language Workshop. While Cooper's work focused mainly on design issues, her attention to matters of navigation mirror a number of our concerns. How does one maneuver through large and disparate data sets? How does one maintain a sense of context so that the journey, not just the final destination, is meaningful? How might one characterize relationship structures between information objects? What is the best way to organize and illustrate abstractions?

Cooper's line of thought clearly disregards matters of content, but it does serve to remind us that representations of thought are spatially bound in both genesis and expression. It also leads to the second reason that the filtering debate is important: for the first time in library history, we are faced with the very real prospect of software with the potential to fulfill that role—in others' eyes if not our own.

In *The Bush Garden*, Frye (1971) raises the provocative question,"where is here?" Of course, he is talking about Canadians and not librarianship, and that, being Canadian, his thesis may well explain the whereness fixation. Still, ask yourself the existential question, "Why am I here?" and see if your attempts at defining "Who am I?" are not situated in some sense of where you are and where else you could be.

Few would argue that filtering software, as currently developed, is an adequate replacement for library work as currently practiced. But its very existence reminds us that aspects of this work can be modeled with varying degrees of success and without the need to support an in-house population of workers. Certainly, filtering mechanisms are not new; they have been a part of Internet culture for at least two decades. Most such mechanisms are designed to scan a specified universe of documents in search of particular keywords, or to control document flow, or to match a particular user profile and, as a group, library workers have viewed them with varying degrees of optimism, skepticism, and consternation. They may have chipped away at tasks we have traditionally done. They may have empowered the end-user at our expense. But until blocking software entered the scene, they did not purport to "pass judgment" (carte blanche or otherwise) on matters of content.

Blocking software prevents access to certain Internet materials, either through exclusion (i.e., preventing access to selected materials) or through inclusion (allowing access only to selected materials). Its challenge to library work as we know it has less to do with its efficacy, which is dubious at best, than with the possibility that it one day will be. Patrick Wilson (1968) uses the term "exploitative control," the wielder of which "has

merely to say what he wants writings for, and is then provided with what will suit that purpose best" (p. 25). He goes on to argue that libraries, with varying degrees of success, have attempted to fulfill that role on behalf of others. While it is not clear from this particular example who the wielder is and to whom or what he relays his request—Wilson later discusses the political ramifications—there is no doubt that the ability to define "suitable" and, by default "unsuitable," places said wielder in a position of considerable power over what is, for the time being, an infinitely expanding "docuverse."

Filtering software's threat to library work is defined less by its existence than by its presence (defined earlier in terms of belongingness). Thus, whether or not such software exists and how it is used is inconsequential, apart from its effect on policy and procedure. It is where it exists that should concern us. By this the author does not mean whether it resides on a library terminal or in private homes, but refers to the milieu of its creation and, presumably, continued development.

In other words, just as filtering software presses one to re-evaluate the whatness of library work, so too does it expand the sense of "whereness." Virtual reality, digitization, artificial intelligence—by whatever name we call it—we are nonetheless compelled to metaphorically ground ourselves in a Cooperesque information landscape. For example, hypertext writing has been variously described as "topographic" (Bolter, 1991), "open-bordered" (Landow, 1992), and "a plane of *realization*" (Berressem, 1996), phrases designed to transcend its basic insubstantiality. By implication, library work (if not the library itself) must not only establish a locus of control but be able to chart a credible course across these topographies, borders, and planes.

Downs and Stea (1977) contend that proper cartographic representation must satisfy four sets of decision rules (pp. 64-66). It must serve some purpose, it must offer a particular perspective, it must be drawn to scale, and its correspondence to the size of the environment being represented made clear. And it must employ symbols meaningful to would-be navigators.

While sorely tempted to apply these rules to library work in cyberspace, to do so would carry this article beyond reasonable parameters. The earlier "punnish" phrase, "virtuality is its own reward," suggests that, just as in the physical world, one can hope to gain knowledge, meaning, and personal satisfaction through the simple fact that one exists. The danger lies in assuming we carry the exact same identity when we shift dimensions (for a compelling discussion of this point, see Sherry Turkle's [1995] *Life on the Screen*). And, if our perceptions of self are different, how can our perceptions of place not be different as well? Knowledge representation—whether in the mind, on the shelf, or over the Internet—is still subject to the polychotomy of human expression and classification.

So far an argument has been presented for viewing library work in terms of "whereness" as well as "whatness." However, to test the strength of this argument, we need a model to assist with the analysis. The model proposed here is both fairly new and outside the usual methodological repertoire: metageography.

Every global consideration of human affairs, say Lewis and Wigen (1997), "deploys a metageography, whether acknowledged or not." They go on to define metageography as "the set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world: the often unconscious frameworks that organize studies of history, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, or even natural history" (p. ix).

For example, denizens of the so-called Cold War divided the globe into First World (the industrialized democracies of North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand), Second World (the Soviets and their East European allies), and Third World (everyone else). "First World" and "Second World" have become meaningless terms since the collapse of communism, yet we persist in referring to "Third World" nations. "Third" in relation to what or whom? More to the point, do such nations know they are "third" and refer to themselves accordingly?

Up to this point, the use of the terms "professional" and "librarian" have been studiously avoided. Library work has been discussed as if anyone could do it (which, indeed, they can, to the extent that their filtering proclivities match the functions and routines of the library in which they find themselves). But, as the ten preceding authors agree, library work is not one-size-fits-all. The task here, then, is to highlight the boundaries each has drawn between that which is professional and that which is not and discern, if possible, the disciplinary structures on which they are based.

Lewis and Wigen (1997) offer ten principles of critical metageography, which will now be applied to the articles that have preceded this one. What follows is an attempt at extrapolating a sense of "whereness" from what are, in many cases, concepetualizations of "whatness."

1. *Combatting cartographic ethnocentricism*—i.e., assigning the same rank in the spatial hierarchy to roughly comparable units. Such ethnocentrism, say Lewis and Wigen (1997), reveals itself in "the spurious comparisons of a historically coherent West with a vast and heterogeneous East, and the related habit of counting the European peninsula as a 'continent' on the same order as Asia" (p. 195). Or, in our case, equating "the field" with "the profession." Reread the Introduction to this issue. What did I choose as my critical touchstone? *Change and Challenge*—a book devoted to the education of information professionals. Insightful words by an astute colleague—until you remember we are not talking just about professional librarians here. However inadvertently, my choice not only implies that what holds for the professional

holds equally well for the paraprofessional, but that professional librarians (and their educators) are somehow entitled to speak on behalf of all. Can we have a meaningful dialogue, with prejudices such as this embedded in our prose even if, superficially, others like me can persuade others of their relative nonimportance?

2. *Combatting geographical determinism*—i.e., positing iron links between environmental conditioning and social response. Lewis and Wigen call it "the vague notion that cultural regions correspond in some natural, inevitable way to the distribution of physical landscape features." A perfect example is the Canadian/U.S. border, which implies that the inhabitants of each country have more in common with those east and west than north and south (to which there is some truth). Still, one does not cross that border and immediately acquire the sense that a strange land has been entered. What then of the border between librarian and library technician? Neither Wilson and Hermanson nor Davidson-Arnott and Kay have any trouble envisioning this border; the role of a library technician is to handle the day-to-day activities of the library. The same cannot be said of those from the library educator side. On the one hand, we have Genz who likens today's librarian to a "railroad clerk" and advocates a stronger consultative role. On the other, we have Harris and Marshall, whose research suggests that librarians are being forced from the front lines, not to better use their skills or of their own volition but for administrative reasons, both economic and intrinsically patronizing. We might dismiss these positions as honest differences in opinion were it simply a matter of opinion. Rather, they appear to be both ideological and firmly entrenched in perceptions of practice.

3. *Typological honesty*—i.e., delineating regions on the basis of consistent criteria, insofar as that is possible and acknowledging clearly when it is not. Where multiple logics are at work, contend Lewis and Wigen (1997), they should not only be acknowledged but justified. Consider the social impact of technology on library work as viewed by our authors. Abbott implies that technology is and will continue to be the defining factor for quite some time; Davidson-Arnott and Kay view it as something so basic as to be barely acknowledged. Harris and Marshall and Wilson and Hermanson contend that it helps library technicians and hurts professionals and clericals, while Howarth postulates the opposite. Froehlich throws an additional category into the fray, the "nonlibrarian professional," an increasing number of whom are technologists. Genz does not mention technology at all. What can we make of this? That there is no absolute distinction made between professionalism and paraprofessionalism on the basis of technology either in terms of proficiency, adaptability, or intentionality.

4. *Mastery of the metageographical canon*—i.e., ensuring clear and consistent use of categories. Lewis and Wigen (1997) note that the term "South East Asia" is used differently by different geographers: consequently, one has a vague sense of where the area is but would be hard pressed to draw its exact borders. Without exception, each of the authors recognizes the category of "librarian." Less consistent is their use of the term paraprofessional which, Froehlich points out, may also carry derogatory overtones. Paraprofessionals are nonlibrarians, that much is agreed, but can they also be library technicians even if they have not graduated from a school of library techniques? That is much less certain.

5. *Sociospatial precision*—i.e., avoiding inaccurate conflations of a given social, economic, or cultural phenomenon with a whole macroregion. Lewis and Wigen (1997) use the Middle East as their example: a region strongly associated with aridity, oil, wealth, Islamic culture, Arabic language, early contributions to civilization, and a recent history of fierce strife. However, this description is not accurate for all countries in the region. If more proof is necessary, try to define the phrase "problem in the Middle East": are you talking about U.S./Iraqui relations, Israeli/Palestinian relations, or Turkish/Cypriot relations? If we carry this analogy to the world of library work, professional and paraprofessional together, what conflations emerge? Arnott and Kay attribute the "problem" to ignorance on each side of what the other does; some librarians fear that library technicians will take over the basic jobs held by librarians, just as some technicians are far from convinced that librarians deserve a higher salary for doing what appears to be a similar set of tasks. Wilson and Hermanson suggest that enthusiasm-killing library school educators and alumni negativity are contributing factors, implying that library technician programs are somehow immune (and perhaps they are). Howarth conjectures that paraprofessionals are at far greater risk of being replaced by librarians than vice versa; conversely, Genz believes that the reference desk had best be left to paraprofessionals with librarians moving on to bigger and better things. All in all, we are shown a world where everyone would benefit from having a generous dollop of expansionist thinking.

6. *Definitional integrity*—i.e., respecting cultural groupings of long duration. Such was not the case with Africa, Lewis and Wigen (1997) remind us, where the West African Conference of 1884 divided the continent among the British, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, and Belgian with scant regard for native heritage or tribal affiliation. Both Abbott and Harris and Marshall address this principle. At no point in his article does Abbott refer to paraprofessionalism; rather, he speaks

of the relationship between an occupation and its "work" with the caveat that too great a focus on matters of professionalism implies that we take that work for granted and, presumably, set ourselves up for a West African Conference of our own. Harris and Marshall actually appoint the members of that conference: senior administrators lacking in feeling and respect for human factors. For the rest, all parties seem comfortable with the notion of two-tiered library work.

7. *Neutral nomenclature*—i.e., avoiding regional designations that carry an unpalatable ideological charge. Think Old World/New World, say Lewis and Wigen (1997). The implication behind this distinction is that "New" is somehow better than "Old," thus disparaging, for example, the entire spectrum of pre-Columbian history. The question here is, how are boundaries drawn? Abbott speaks of cultural forces, competing occupations, and new forms of expertise. Froehlich emphasizes the importance of deliberation among the various players. Harris and Marshall deplore administrative short-sightedness. Davidson-Arnott and Kay call for mutual understanding. Genz insists that library education (and, by extension, reference librarians) bite the bullet and expand its horizons. Howarth recommends that paraprofessionals (specifically, cataloging technicians) consider doing likewise. Certainly the terms "professional/librarian" and "paraprofessional/library technician" are used by both sides without embarrassment and with mutual understanding. Less obvious is what is in each author's mind when employing these terms.

8. *Historical specificity*—i.e., recognizing that world regions do not constitute timeless entities (and that therefore a good regionalization scheme will not be applicable across all historical periods). Lewis and Wigen (1997) point to Pakistan, which today has more in common with the Middle East than South Asia yet is persistently associated with the latter. Here, Wilson and Hermanson, Genz, and Howarth each consider the evolution of library work, variously concluding that library work has changed in both theory and practice but asynchronistically so. As a result, neither professional nor paraprofessional development has resulted in a mutual strengthening of library work. On the other hand, all three articles suggest that change is in the air if not already in effect.

9. *Contextual specificity*—i.e., recognizing that regions often crosscut and overlap for different purposes. Lewis and Wigen's (1997) prime example is the area known as the Pacific Rim, composed of those countries sharing at least one coast with the Pacific Ocean. The United States and Canada are two such countries, yet they also belong to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation which, for example, Australia and

Singapore do not. This principle is illustrated par excellence by both Abbott and Froehlich, each of whom discusses at length the difficulties involved in claiming jurisdiction over a body of work. Accordingly, this author is led to wonder whether there is a tendency to focus overmuch on what distinguishes one aspect of library work from another, neglecting those which comprise the whole. The phrase "divide and conquer" comes chillingly to mind.

10. *Need to devise a creative cartographic vision capable of effectively grasping unconventional regional forms.* This final principle is the most difficult to define by either explanation or implication. The conclusion arrived at is that the difficulty stems from the general lack of "cartographic vision," creative or otherwise. First, a proper application of Lewis and Wigen's (1997) principles deserves several articles, not a cursory overview, however well intentioned. Their applicability in terms of our seven articles, let alone the literature in general, has by no means been exhaustive. Second, these analyses must be taken with a grain of salt. There is no accepted map of library work, complete with political borders and topographical distinctions from which to work, so naturally there is no master cartographer with whom we might take exception. Rather, we have a scattered research base and a plethora of considered opinion offering insight over strategy. Third, these contributors were unaware that there would be such an analysis conducted and, rightfully, may accuse this author of logical fallacy (inferring, from few shared characteristics, that all important characteristics are shared...or not, as the case may be). They were asked to address questions of whatness then held the results to standards of whereness. Finally, it is clear, as I hope it is to the readers, that we could well use a historical atlas of our field to which we could properly apply principles 1 through 9, and from these plot a new improved design according to principle 10.

Perhaps you thought the subtitle, "Skating the Periphery versus Pushing the Envelope" meant librarianship would be getting a nudge in the direction of derring do, and it must be admitted, until this writing was actually begun, that is exactly what was intended. We must be intrepid. Why restrict ourselves to an edge not of our making when so much more lies just beyond? But it was gradually realized that there was less interest in challenging the field's potential than my own.

The conclusion is that an institutional mind set is not as easy to escape as might be wished. Much as we might admire Bradbury's (1986) virtual library of the mind for its "flexible, very loose, and fragmentary" (p. 165) qualities, we secretly delight in the fact that it is organized nonetheless. By the same token, we may deplore the unbridled chaos of cyberspace, even as we luxuriate in the strange and wondrous ephemera

that only a search engine can provide. We want stability, definition, and (to the extent possible) certitude, and institutions have traditionally served that role. We may change their outward guise, but there is nothing to prevent us from simply transferring our notions of stability, definition, and certitude to a new milieu. And it is very likely that this will be the case. Trotter (1986) remarks that "the remedy for decadence is a journey to the frontier" (p. 146). He challenges the complacent to take a hike, find out what the real world is all about, put their lives on the line, and boldly go where no one has gone before. It is a safe guess that such thinkers are nowhere near the periphery or an envelope, let alone engaged in skating and pushing, and it might be dared to say that they did not make it past the fourth paragraph of this article. For those who stayed the course, however, you are referred back to the opening quote in the sincere hope that you will discover, in retrospect if not before, at least one Baconian "entrance into the language" of library work.

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