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Editorial

Peggy Johnson



Thomas Frey, the executive director and senior futurist at the DaVinci Institute, has identified ten trends that he believes are affecting the development of libraries.¹ I share a synopsis with you to encourage thought about how these trends will likely influence what you do in your work and how you plan for the future. Some of the trends Frey identifies might serve as starting points for thoughtful papers about the future of technical services. Does anything here speak to you?

1. Communication systems are continually changing the way people access information.
2. All technology ends. All technologies commonly used today will be replaced by something new. Frey suggests that writing and books are technologies with limited life spans.
3. We have not yet reached the ultimate small particle for storage—but will soon. Standards for information storage will become more critical as storage particles become smaller, and the most critical component of stabilizing information storage will surround the issues of findability.
4. Search technology will become increasingly more complicated. As searching technology expands to include the ability to search for such attributes as taste, smell, texture, reflectivity, opacity, mass, density, tone, speed, and volume, the role of the librarian becomes more and more important.
5. Time compression is changing the lifestyle of library patrons. It is affecting nearly every aspect of our lives. As human need grows, the opportunities for libraries to meet these needs is also growing. The library of the future needs to be designed to accommodate the changing needs of its constituency.
6. We will be transitioning to a verbal society. Keyboards remain as the primary interface between people and electronic information, yet the days of the keyboard are numbered. There will be a strong trend toward verbal information.
7. The demand for global information is growing exponentially.
8. The stage is being set for a new era of global systems. Our ability to learn about and understand the cultures of the world is central to the global society of the future. Libraries will play a central role in developing global systems because libraries will be charged with archiving and disseminating the information necessary for the new systems to flourish.
9. We are transitioning from a product-based economy to an experience-based economy. Books will transition from a product to an experience. As books change from words on a page to digital manifestations of information, they will be reviewed and evaluated by the experience they create. How patrons experience libraries, as well as books, will become a key measurement criteria.
10. Libraries will transition from a center of information to a center of culture.

Reference

1. Thomas Frey, "The Future of Libraries: Beginning the Great Transformation," DaVinci Institute (2006), www.davinciinstitute.com/page.php?ID=120 (accessed Jan. 9, 2006).