Is this any way to run a Library?
Dealing with people who will not leave, search engines that
want everything, and collections that are dangerous

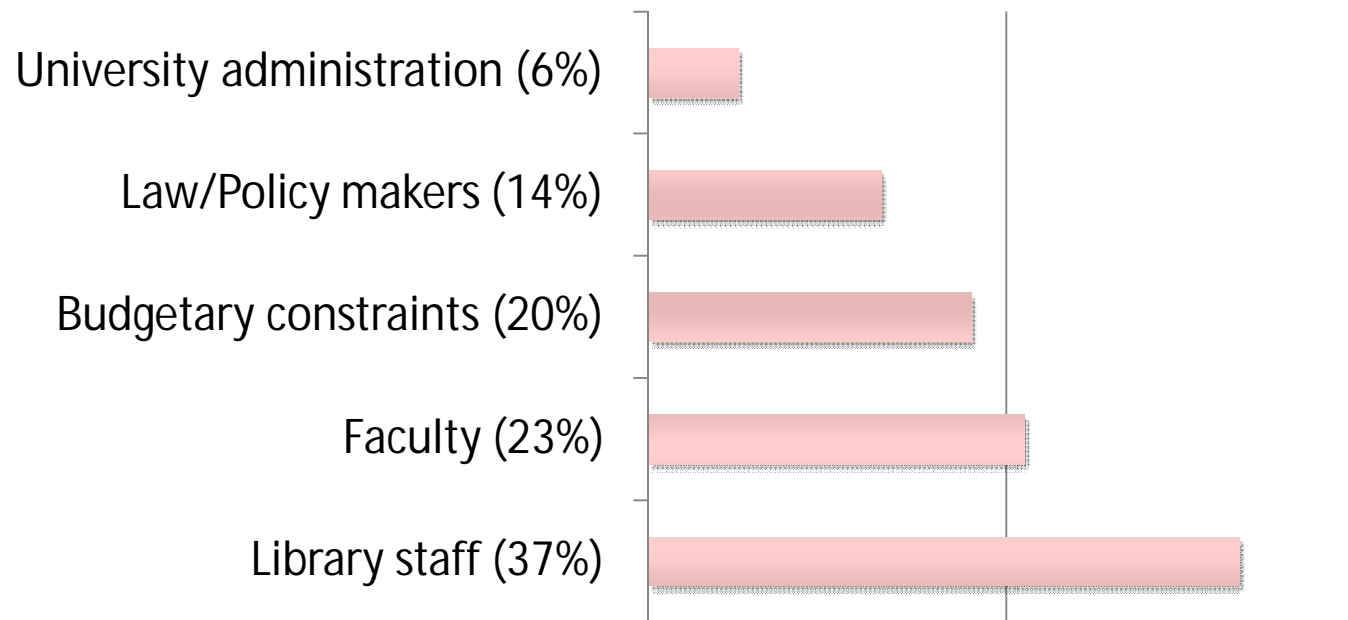Seminar on Information Ethics

Helsinki, November 25, 2009

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ARL ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES

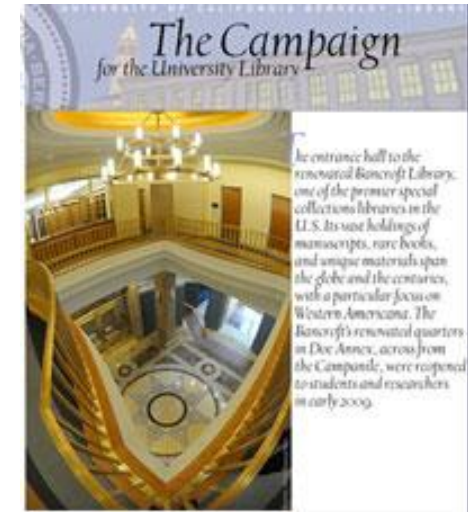|	
Mission:	Shaping the future of research libraries in the changing environment of public policy and scholarly communication.
Members:	123 major research libraries in North America, including the national libraries and research publics.
Ratios:	4 percent of the higher education institutions providing 43 percent of the information resources.
Users:	4.2 million students and faculty served.
Expenditures:	$3.9 billion annually, $1.3 billion for acquisitions of which 46 percent is invested in access to electronic resources.

The major barrier to library collaboration is:

University administration (6%)

Law/Policy makers (14%)

Budgetary constraints (20%)

Faculty (23%)

Library staff (37%)

Results of informal audience responses from ARL May 2009 Membership Meeting

Dealing with people who will not leave...

The official view of Berkeley's Library:

Some unofficial views:

Dealing with search engines that want everything . . .

- We have never met an intelligent mass digitization program that we did not like, e.g. Google Book Search, Open Content Alliance (Internet Archive partnering with Microsoft and Yahoo! at first)

- Some 2.5 million of our volumes have been scanned by our partners.

- Core values of access and privacy have been severely tested.

Doubts about Google Book Search

- We purchased, cataloged, and preserved millions of books, and now we are giving them away for free.
- All corporations are run for the benefit of stockholders, not necessarily the general public.
- Corporations abandon some of their products as they grow; eventually they go out of business.

Backing up, if these partners fail us:

<http://www.hathitrust.org>

Currently Digitized   4,602,857 volumes

1,610,999,950 pages   171 terabytes

709,758 volumes (15% of total) in the public domain

Dealing with collections that are dangerous. . .

What to do with content that puts reputations in danger in an age of networked information?

The unhappy Rabbi.

What to do with content– even meta-data– that puts lives in danger?

Collections on genocide at University of Texas:

[http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/mm09heathbarnet t.pps](http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/mm09heathbarnett.pps)   (23 mb file)

Japanese maps: enlightening or discriminatory?

In sum:

Every step in running a research library today requires ethical review: Are we doing the right thing?

This is true because physical space is deeply symbolic and contested.

This is true because our new capacity to network information raises questions we have not faced before.