

A New Chapter on Libraries

Chesney Flynn
(McCracken County)

Hallie Harrison
(Madison Southern)

Megan Osting
(Sacred Heart)

Slayde Sizemore
(Jackson Independent)



Introduction

From the first library in the 7th century B.C. to the United States Library of Congress, libraries have always been a crucial part of life. Libraries have evolved from storage facilities for papyrus scrolls to high tech centers for community programs. As the purpose of modern day libraries comes into question, we must find a balance to protect the future of libraries. We must decide whether we prefer libraries to be quiet spaces for books and studying, or a place for conversation and technology to be implemented. In order to establish a strong foundation for libraries to build on, our group of scholars has developed a library system to mesh together libraries of both the past and future.

Abstract

As we look at the future of libraries, there are a multitude of things to consider. Things like decreased funding, increased use of technology, and lack of interest have led to the decline of library usage. Here we look at some of the issues facing libraries of the past and present, and how we can resolve them for libraries of the future. We look at trends like maker spaces, and how we can incorporate them into libraries. We discuss how libraries can be modernized, while still maintaining their original purpose of housing books and spaces in which to enjoy them.



References

1. Wagner, E. "Library Funding." *Advocacy, Legislation & Issues*, 24 June 2019, www.ala.org/advocacy/library-funding.
2. Guion, David. "Public Library Funding Cuts and Decline in Library Usage." *Reading, Writing, Research*, Reading, Writing, Research, 27 July 2018, www.allpurposeguru.com/2017/12/public-library-funding-cuts-decline-library-usage/.
3. Community Centered: 23 Reasons Why Your Library Is the Most Important Place in Town. (2013, April 30). Retrieved from <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2013/04/community-centered-23-reasons-why-your-library-is-the-most-important-place-in-town/>
4. "What Will Future Libraries Look Like?" *USC Library Science Degree Online*, 23 Aug. 2018, librarysciencedegree.usc.edu/blog/what-will-future-libraries-look-like/.
5. "Library Changes in 2018: Learn About Important Trends." *USC Library Science Degree Online*, 24 Aug. 2018, librarysciencedegree.usc.edu/blog/what-trends-will-affect-and-shape-libraries-in-2018-and-beyond/.

Trends That Impact Library Development

The new, up and coming trend is a "maker space." It seeks to create useful spaces where patrons can practice or try a multitude of different activities. Some ideas for a makerspace are: video and sound editing equipment, cameras/video recorders, 3D printers, laser cutters, vinyl cutters, weaving looms, and woodworking areas. Makerspaces would be large, open rooms to fit many activities, yet create a community for creation and collaboration.

Additionally, another trend for libraries are classrooms and large conference rooms. Many of these have video conferencing capabilities for meetings and presentations. If these are rented out, it could potentially become another source of income.

A lot of libraries have been creating performance spaces to host theatrical productions, poetry readings, and book presentations or signings. As well, cafes and coffee shops have been trendy for a while in libraries. This attracts a decent crowd, as patrons can purchase coffee or tea before exploring the library.

Research

As we move further and further into time, society is becoming more reliant on technology. Libraries have been an important part of history for hundreds of years and attendance to libraries is diminishing. New technology centers with eBooks and computers with online databases for research are taking over the scene for libraries. However, there are still many individuals that enjoy old time libraries and the beauty of their architectural features and lineage. The argument is whether to preserve old libraries or kick out the old and bring in the new.

Libraries are constantly evolving to meet the needs of their diverse communities. Far from being a simple repository of books and media, today's libraries serve as invaluable resources for everything from data analytics to 3-D printing and beginning lessons in coding. Through their community programs, direct librarian assistance, fitness classes, and basic internet access, libraries provide important equal access opportunities to those seeking health information and services.

Libraries are a very healthy component of communities.

Picture References

Left: Occidental College Library
Middle: Attributes of a Modern Library
Right: Consideration for Modern Library Design



What We Propose

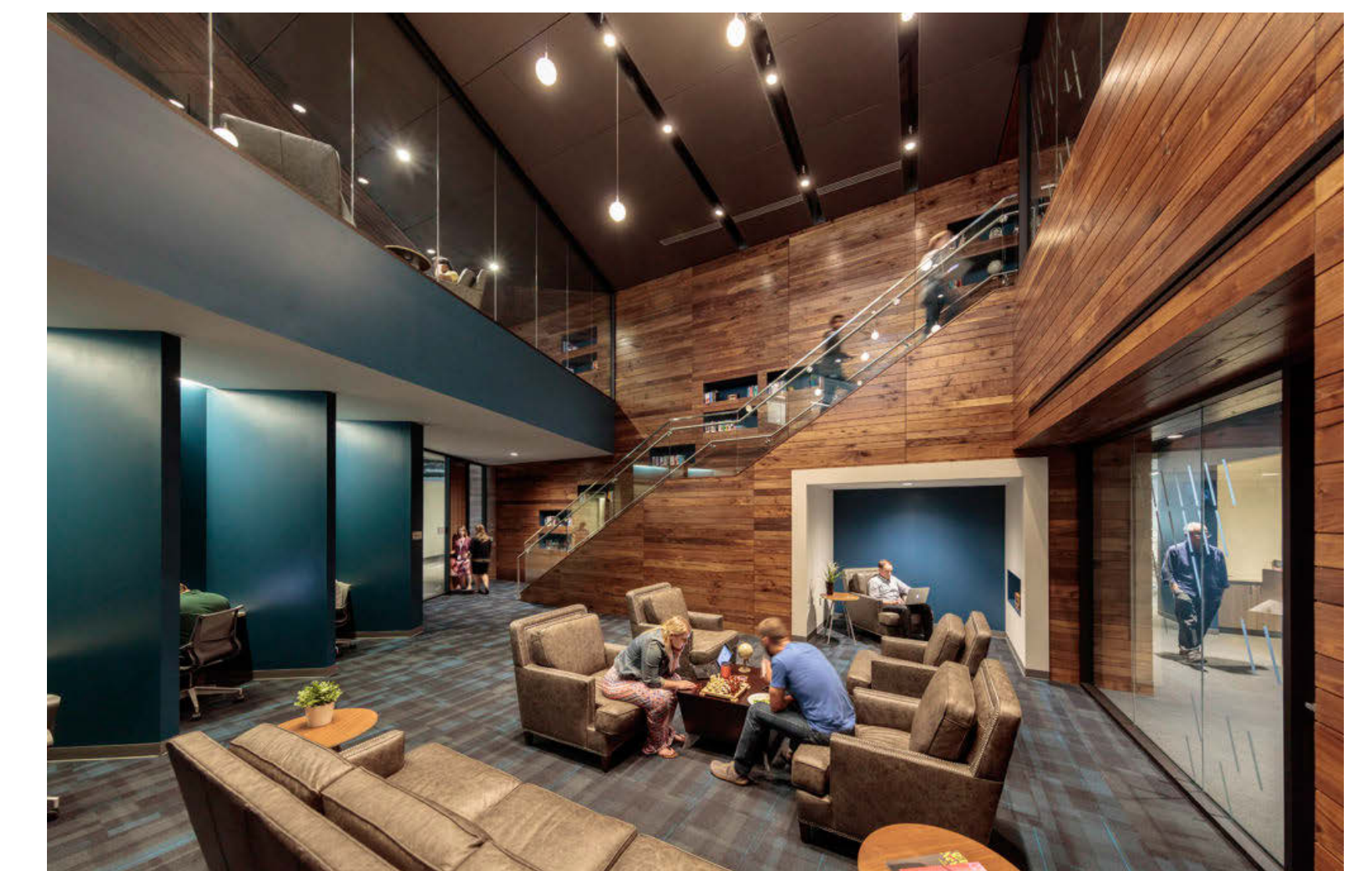
For future libraries, it is recommended to have certain features such as coffee shops, design spaces, and collaboration rooms to draw new patrons to the library. In addition, the traditional features of libraries such as reading rooms and research desks should remain the same to uphold the primary initiative. To accomplish both modern and traditional components, it is proposed that there be at least two sections of the library. Depending on the size of the library, one side of the building or one floor should have the typical shelves and reading tables in a lofty, window-filled space. As well, it should maintain silence to create a relaxing and intellectual environment. This area is aimed towards patrons who appreciate and enjoy classic libraries and the nostalgia connected. The other section of the library will be a technologically driven area where patrons can take technology classes, rent out equipment, and experiment in makerspaces. These spaces will encourage collaboration and taking intellectual risks. As well, this section of the library will foster creativity in the form of crafts, building materials, and media production classes. Classrooms and theater rooms will be available on this side of the library.

Possible grants to help with funding:

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) provides a majority of the federal funding for libraries through the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The U.S. Department of Education also has a grant program, the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL), which is in place to support school libraries working to create reading skills during the early years of a child's development. With the help of these two programs, libraries across the country have been provided with the needed financial support to give their community what they need.

Limitations

Over the years, library usage has gotten lower. The Pew Research Center conducted a study in 2017 showing the fluctuation of the use of public libraries. The survey showed that in 2012, 53% of respondents visited a public library within the past year. The next survey the Pew Research Center conducted was in 2016, which showed that the percentage for public library usage went down to 48% within the year. This drop in library usage could part be due to the community not knowing what their library has to offer, whether it be electronic services or specific classes. This can be a result of poor advertising/communication skills from the library to the community. Another limitation is finding space to put the library. Most cities already have a specific place they have their libraries, but in order to improve their libraries in our way, the size may need to be increased. Depending on the current library, or if a brand new library is wanted, the location may have to be moved, making it less convenient for the community.



Conclusion

As the library needs to evolve to continue meeting modern standards, we must allow proper resources and funding. Funding and space for things like makerspaces and media production classes, while still supporting the original idea of a quiet spaces to promote reading and intellectual thought. Community involvement and support is crucial to library success, so the library must be made so serve the community. This is why we support the idea of separated spaces, so every member of the community can find either a quiet place to read or a tech-heavy environment for success, meeting the needs of everyone in a community.