

This Free E-Book is brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**Which Future For Libraries?**

**By Sohail Inayatullah**

Will libraries becoming increasingly virtual, the librarian becoming a knowledge navigator? Or will

libraries disappear as the world goes wifi - will Google become the future library? Or will place remain central, as libraries become anchor tenants in co-located in commercial and public transit-orientated developments? Or is social justice what libraries are really about - a place for empowering, for creating a better society, finding spaces for young and old, for books and digital media?

The library, while appearing to be stable has changed throughout history. It has moved from being elite based, for the few that could read, to being a public space, and funded by the public as well, instead of by wealthy benefactors. And while the advent of the printing press changed the nature of the library, moving it from the monastery and the painstaking efforts of monk scribes, the recent digitalization of the world is leading to even more dramatic transformations.

The library has entered a contested domain - its definition, its bundle of services are up for grabs - who defines it, who pays for it, what are its basic purposes. And with the onset of edu-tainment and as the peer-to-peer knowledge revolution, might libraries become places not just for receiving knowledge but for directly creating knowledge.

Other issues that challenge a stable future for libraries include:

·Local and state governments dramatically decreasing their funds for libraries - other financial models  
- user pays, McLibrary.

·Users changing from the young to the aged OR from the aged to the young.

·Libraries buildings as examples of "green" and even developing cradle to grave green technologies for books and for facilities design.

·The library as a place for escape from a chaotic world, eg the Slow Movement: slow time, slow learning - slow everything - as the world quickens and moves to hypertime and culture, libraries find niches by providing places of quietness and calm.

## Which Future For Libraries?

·The librarian becoming a digital avatar, interacting with users, learning about their changing needs, and even in the longer term, organizing our memories.

·The off-shore Call Centre Library.

·Death of the book - continuing emergence of new media formats.

The impact of these emerging issues point to libraries changing dramatically from today - particularly in the areas of funding and location; purpose and skill sets for librarians and core activities.

But would libraries be more digital or slow; for the young or the aged; in suburbs or co-located in denser cities? Which future?

### SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE

There are four plausible futures.

The first is the "Lean, Mean, Information Machine." This future would arise from concern about the costs of buildings, space becoming too valuable and libraries moving down the list of core priorities for funding.

Libraries in this future would need to seek funding through philanthropy to supplement government funding. The choices would be: from the user, from community groups, from Federal and Global grants and from corporate sponsorship. With the expected rise in triple bottom line reporting, it was anticipated that corporate sponsorship may become more attractive as libraries would be an easy and safe way to show that they were good corporate citizens - helping young and old.

The role of some librarians would shift, becoming entrepreneurial, a broker of services and entities (community groups, corporations, city, state and federal authorities).

The second scenario is the opposite of this. Civilizing the world, civilizing ourselves is the foundational purpose of the library. No corporation should fund it, as over time market values would poison human values.

The purpose of the library is that of community builder - providing ideas to all, those who can and those who cannot afford. Books cannot be overlaid with digital sponsorship, purity must be kept.

However, the best way to serve as community builders is to go to the community. "Co-location for Community Capacity Building" is the title of this scenario. Libraries move to areas of intersection - of young and old, poor and rich, information savvy and digitally challenged. Among possible areas could be transport hubs. Libraries could continue to develop as anchor tenants, co-existing with other government service providers, with coffee shops and commercial tenants. As passengers stepped out of light city rail carriages, they would enter the library. In front to them would be transparent glass, the lighting illuminating knowledge.

## Which Future For Libraries?

Libraries would have multiple shifting rooms, focused on the needs of different groups. Or libraries could segment, based on citizen travel patterns. Some libraries would be more classical – book focused, other edutainment, others as places for social community groups to meet ...Or libraries could change during the day - shifting who they were from noon to three pm to evening time.

The librarian would need to be multi-skilled, understanding the diverse needs of different age groups, ethnicities, community groups – engagement with the community would be primary. The library in this future would model what it meant to be civilized: deep and diverse democracy!

In a third scenario, the library and the librarian becomes a "Knowledge Navigator". Users would see and then create - use information to create new knowledge, new communities, learn and recreate. Libraries would be a hybrid of physical and virtual space with cutting edge technologies, cultural maps of the world, to help users develop their interests, find connection to each other and find their place in the changing digital world. The library would be an 'experience'.

For those new to the digital world and for emerging technologies they would , it could train them, ensuring democratic and enabling access for all; for those adept, it would create games for them to

learn, indeed, gaming may become a metaphor for the library. Users would find their knowledge treasures through clues left by the knowledge navigator or other users engaged in knowledge sharing and production - the division between the fun of electronic gaming and the seriousness of the library would breakdown. Public space would become an open and porous, local and global public space.

The last scenario, takes the knowledge navigator future but makes the tough observation – given the billions of dollars Google and other web engines have to play with, and given the skill sets of their employees and owners, what makes us think libraries can survive. Aren't they the "Dinosaurs of the Digital Knowledge Era". The globalization of the coffee shop eats up one market; digital search portals eat up another market, until through continuous dis-aggregation there is very little left. The future of the library is easy to predict - there won't be any. Funding will move to other core areas for cities - traffic, water, dealing with global warming, competing for young people in an aging society; post-oil energy problems. Libraries will slip down the priority radar as they will not be seen as a response to these issues.

Many librarians as well are unable to meet the challenge of the skills shift. They are unable to be relevant with the new world dis-order. As the library monopoly dies, other competitors enter the fray and foundationally change the nature of the library. A few survive as some still want to see and touch books, but with the virtual book about to include physical senses, the writing is already on the virtual wall.

### WHICH FUTURE?

Will one future emerge triumphant? Or will there be a mix and match? Which ever future results, for the librarian, this can be both a trying time to be working, or the best of all possible times, where new futures are emerging, and where she and he can weave the strands of alternatives and create a new future for and of libraries.

## Which Future For Libraries?

Sohail Inayatullah is a futurist and political scientist. He is presently a professor at Tamkang University in Taiwan and is the author of several books and hundreds of journal and magazine articles. You can read more of his articles at his website

<http://www.metafuture.org>

### **Improvement In Florida Schools Libraries Boosts Fcat Scores And Students Reading Abilities**

**By Patricia Hawke**

The purpose of any school library is to promote reading and improve reading and research skills. Educators have long agreed that good libraries are essential to academic success, since students must be able to read by third grade in order to learn other subjects, such as history and science.

A study by Donna Baumbach, professor and director of the Instructional Technology Resource Center at the University of Central Florida, has found there is a direct link between professionally-staffed libraries and the number of Florida schools students reading at grade level or above.

The year long study analyzed more than 1,700 Florida schools libraries and found that well-stocked libraries had a direct correlation to better students FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) scores. The elementary schools had increased FCAT reading scores of nine percent. The middle schools improved by three percent, and the high schools by 22 percent. The study also showed that FCAT scores were even higher at Florida schools with certified media specialists running the libraries.

The study found two aspects to a good library -- (1) A well-stocked library with current selections, and (2) a certified media specialist in charge.

#### Need for Newer Books

A few years ago, the Orlando Sentinel did a story on the shape of Florida schools libraries. Their findings were gloomy at best. They found that most Florida schools libraries were full of antiquated collections of books and run by untrained clerks. The publicity gave the libraries a tremendous boost in unexpected funding. Generally, half of a school library's annual budget comes from book fairs, parent organizations, candy sales and profits from school supply sales.

Though state funding of Florida schools libraries remained at its previous \$15 million, the Sentinel story encouraged Florida community groups, businesses, charities and churches to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars for library improvement across the state.

Yet, the Florida schools libraries still have fewer books per student than the national average. The state buys more books than the national average, but the Florida schools are not keeping up with the influx of new students each year.

The counties of Orange, Lake, Volusia and Polk have one out-of-five books published before 1980. Osceola County had the best book collection with 11 percent published since the year 2000.

## Which Future For Libraries?

Baumbach's study indicates a desperate need for fresh library resources for the Florida schools.

### Need for More Certified Media Specialists

The second half of the equation is the need for more certified media specialists. The study showed that Florida schools libraries with these professionals had more books per student and more subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals. They had more students using the libraries, a greater circulation of books, and more computers per student.

Certified media specialists bring to their positions knowledge and experience that Florida schools libraries with part-time help, teachers and clerks cannot provide. These specialists can actually supplement library funding by applying for grants. They take the books to the students by rotating books among classrooms, rather than leaving them sit on the shelves. They create reading incentive programs and provide multimedia instruction. They can even work with teachers to assess student test scores and determine areas of reading where some students may need further assistance.

The counties of Seminole and Volusia, however, have decreased these professionals over the past few years. The counties of Osceola, Polk, Brevard, Lake and Orange have shown an increase.

Florida schools are making improvements to their libraries, but not all Florida schools are equal. If you are determining which school is right for your child, be sure to take a look at the school library before making your final decision.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in-depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. Patricia has a nose for research and writes stimulating news and views on school issues. For more on Florida schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Florida/index.html>



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**