

The 5 Rules of Engagement for Librarians – à la Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

图书馆员融入读者的5条规则 - 以阮甘纳赞的图书馆学五定律

Choy Fatt Cheong 蔡发翔

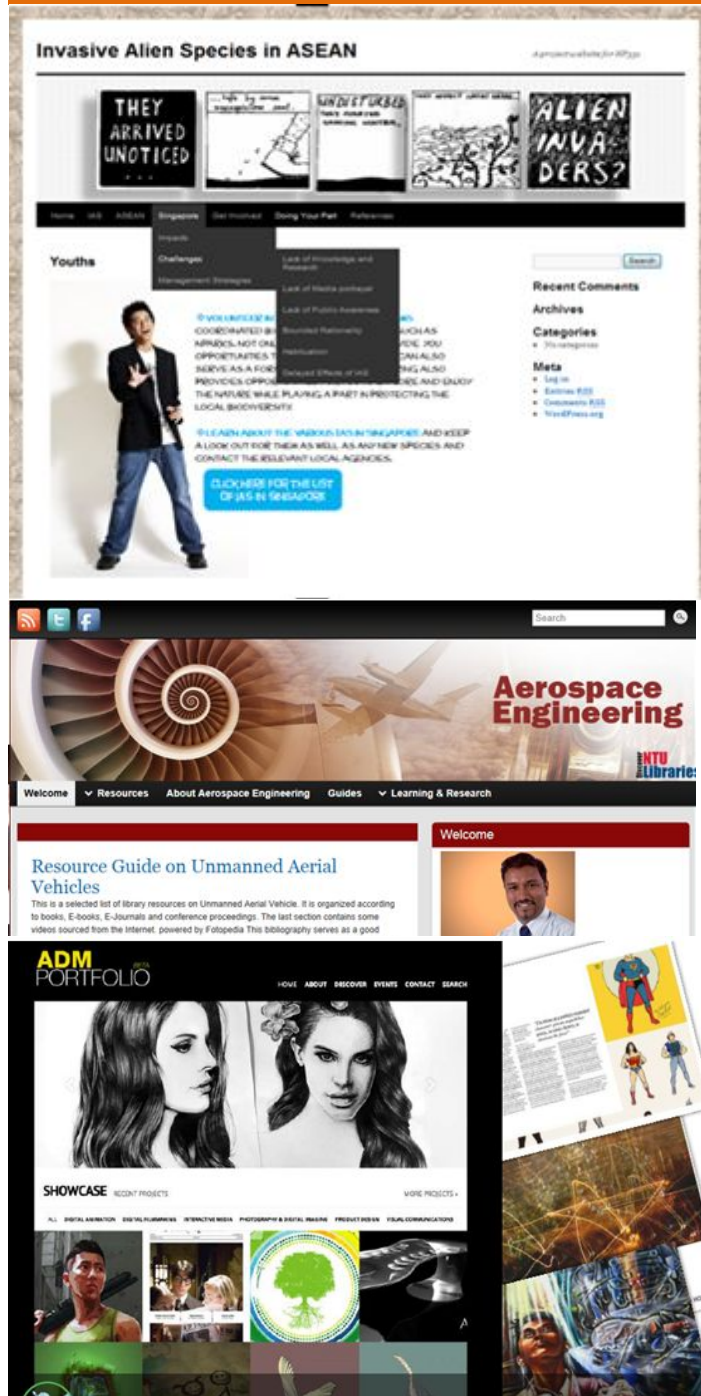
Nanyang Technological University

新加坡 南洋理工大学图书馆

Web services librarian	Online instructional design librarian
Planning and data services coordinator	E-services librarian
Digital humanities librarian	Social Sciences data librarian
Digital technology development librarian	Repository manager
Application support librarian	Education Research Manager
Research data and metadata librarian	Digital Asset librarian
Data management services librarian	Digital project librarian
Continuing education consultant	Manager of digital experience
Digital scholarship librarian	Copyright/licensing librarian



Librarians moving
into new work areas



Discover NTU Libraries
南洋理工大学图书馆

MOOCs

Course blogs

Social media

Digital content development

Open access

Scholarly communication

Data management

Learning commons

Research integrity

Collection development

Stacks management

Acquisitions

Cataloguing

Circulation

Reference

Outreach

Serials

Shift of focus from
COLLECTION

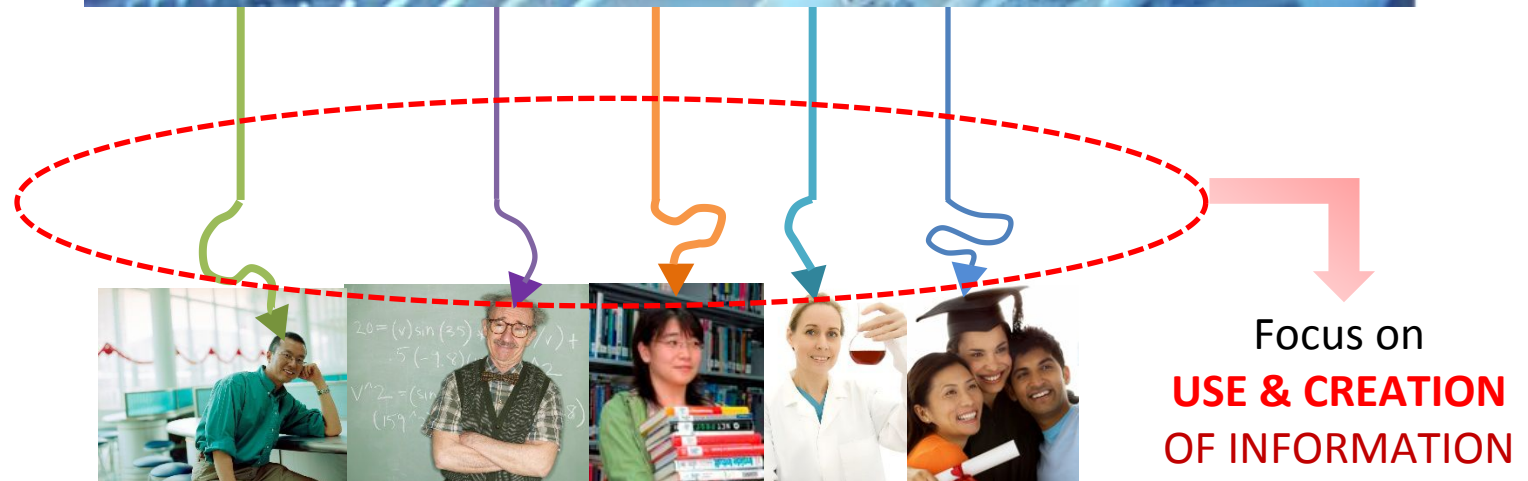


to
USERS



information landscape - Mostly free, Instant, Convenient, Easy access

Libraries
only a
small
portion



Role of libraries : Enable USERS to maximize the use of cumulated knowledge of mankind, wherever it may be.



1. Books are for use
2. Every reader his book
3. Every book its reader
4. Save the time of the reader
5. The Library is a growing

organism

Picture of Ranganathan from <http://www.libraryjournal.com/2010/08/some-useful-online-resources-on-dr-s-r.html>

Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

- Places the user at the centre of everything that the Library does
- Therefore users are the key to all successful libraries

Libraries today realize the importance of strong engagement with users

What is user engagement?

It is the librarian's interaction with the user which motivates the latter to want to use the library's services continuously.

- Librarians must prepare themselves - expertise, skills and attitude - to make the engagement meaningful & useful to the user
- Librarians must create and sustain a positive long term working relationship with the user
- All librarians in a library must have a common and consistent approach and philosophy in relating to users

Five Rules of Engagement for librarians

图书馆员融入读者的5条规则

A guide on how we should approach our work as librarians from a user-centric perspective

Inspired by Ranganathan Five Laws of Library Science



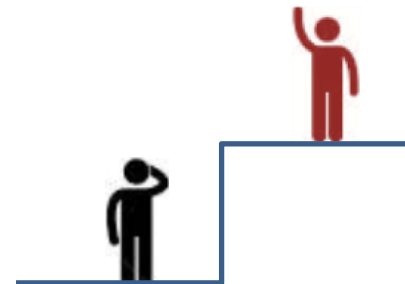
FIRST RULE

Librarians are experts

每个馆员是一位专家

First Rule - Librarians are experts

- A user will only engage with a librarian if he can gain something useful
- Librarians must offer expertise, not just administrative power to engage users successfully
- Asymmetry of knowledge between librarian and user in information domain is necessary



What is the librarian's expertise?

- Deep understanding, practical knowledge and experience
 - Users' information seeking behavior
 - The characteristics of information & knowledge, use and creation
 - The nature of the information environment

- Strong in facilitation rather than provide “expert answers”

(Stover, 2004)

“The postmodern librarian will recognize that professional resources and professional knowledge are not secret commodities to be protected or monopolized. Instead, this librarian will seek to share these gifts with patrons in a relational, interdependent, and non-hierarchical manner”

This type of expertise fit in very well in this era of self-empowered individuals

- Expertise is the foundation for successful user engagement

SECOND RULE

Every librarian a friend of users
每个馆员是读者的朋友

Second Rule – Every librarian a friend of users

Friends are people
whom we can trust
and rely on for help

Patient, supportive,
understanding, eager to
please, not patronizing

**Treat our
users as we
treat friends!**

Dunbar number – a
limit to number of
stable relationships

More of an attitude than of a
personal nature

Empathy



Each user is
different and
should be
treated as
individual
accordingly

A willingness to share – finding common ground with our users

- Librarians have wide connections & perspective of the community



Friends

~~Users~~ are not allowed to enter library offices.

In case when a ~~user~~ *friend* needs to consult a librarian, he should make an appointment one day before. ~~Users~~ *Friends* must pay fines promptly otherwise their loan privileges will be

withdrawn immediately

- Thinking of users as friends when planning library services & systems

- Think of users as friends - removes communication barriers, build greater rapport – increase value of engagement

THIRD RULE

Every encounter with users
should add value to them

每次与读者接触都应该让读者受益

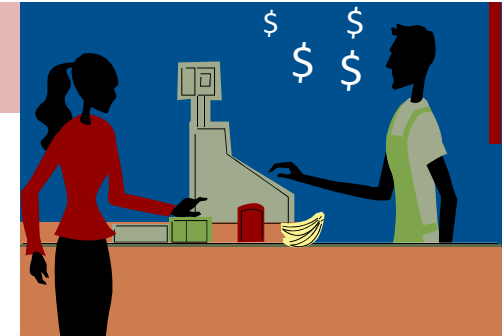
Making every encounter counts

- Librarianship is a service oriented profession – depends on encounters to deliver services – face-to-face or virtually
- Successful encounter – user obtain something needed
- Unfulfilled encounter – user unable to obtain what is needed
 - Offer alternatives
 - Create opportunities for future successful encounters

The uniqueness of a library encounter

Commercial transaction

- Consumer gets goods needed
- Supplier gets profit



Library transaction

- Users get services or resources (mostly free)
- Library gets continued patronage and goodwill



Libraries are considered more trustworthy because of non-commercial and non-partisan stance

- Every good encounter counts towards better engagement in the future

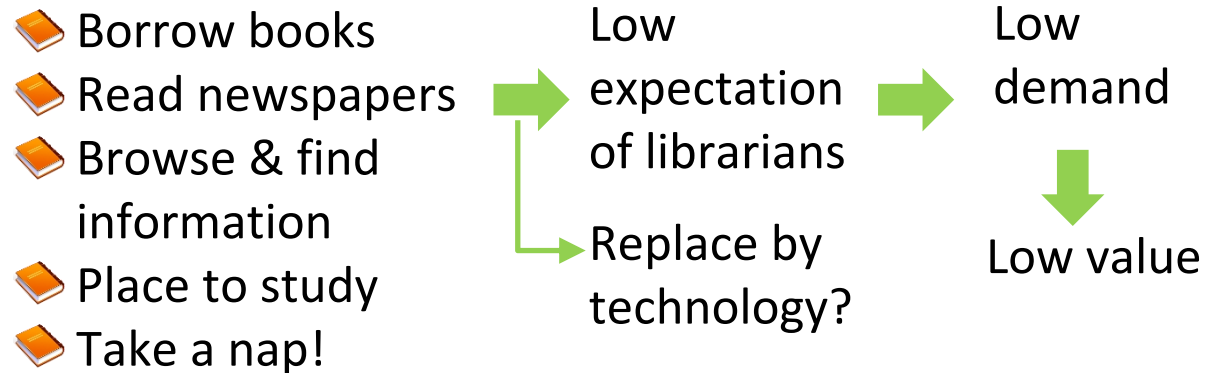
FOURTH RULE

Users must have high demand
and expectation of librarians

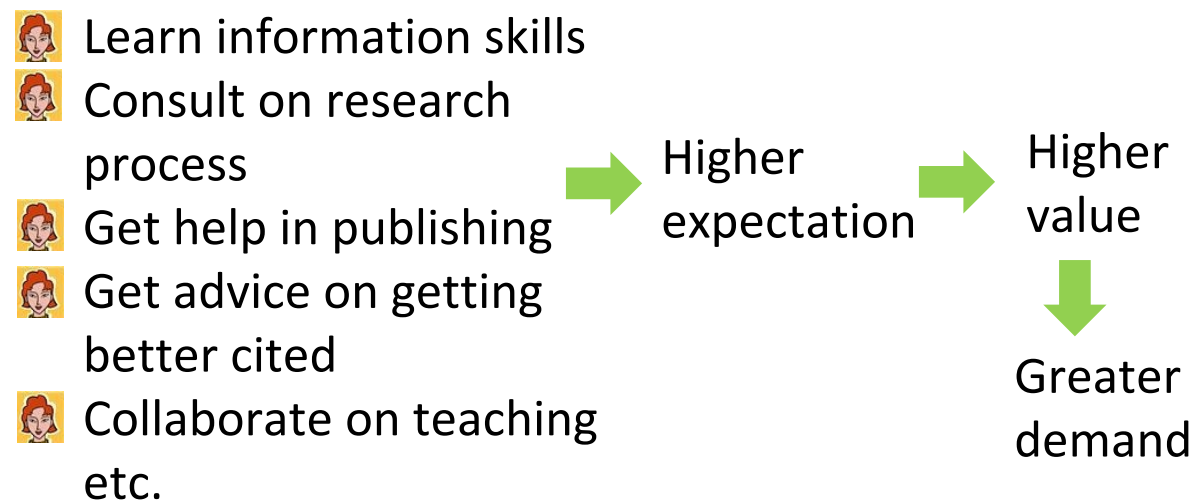
读者应该对图书馆员有很高的要求和期望

Low expectation - Librarians are seen more as administrators

Typical perception of libraries

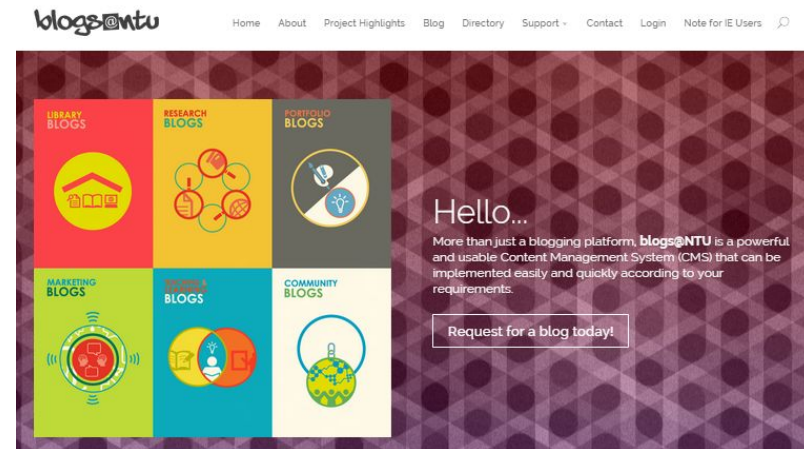


Less common Perception



If people expect more, it shows their recognition of our value

- Librarians must not shy away for fear of more work or lack of confidence in entering new areas



- Important to be proactive, less cautious – Generate DEMAND!
- Greater demand is a measure of the value of our work

FIFTH RULE

The Library's critical role in
knowledge work must be widely
recognized and acknowledged

图书馆在知识工作上的重要作用
应当被广泛认同

- Low awareness on actual roles and societal contribution of librarians compared with other professions



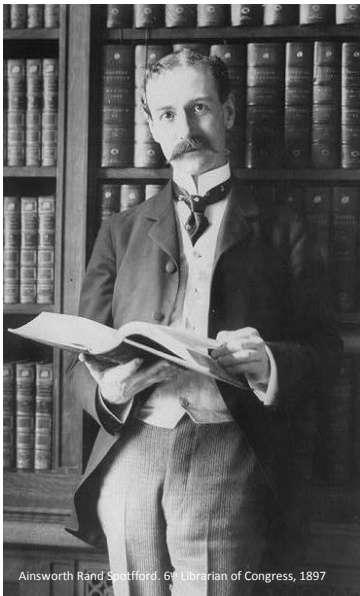
Doctor



Lawyer



Architect



Ainsworth Rand Spofford. 6th Librarian of Congress, 1897

- How about a librarian?
Articulating a higher role

Role of libraries

The preservation and transmission of the cumulated knowledge of mankind?

Role of librarians

Facilitate the use of recorded knowledge for learning, understanding and creation of new knowledge?

Importance of better awareness of librarians' roles among users

- Users more disposed towards greater involvement by librarians in their work and needs
- Create more opportunities for engagement and involvement
- Lead to more exploration and development of the roles of libraries and librarians

The Five Rules of Engagement

- 1 Librarians are experts
- 2 Every librarian is a friend of users
- 3 Every encounter with users should add value to them
- 4 Users must have high demand and expectation of librarians
- 5 The Library's critical role in knowledge work must be widely recognized and acknowledged

Uses of the Five Rules

An expression of the user-centred philosophy of libraries directed at librarians

- Discussion with staff members on common values
- Align current practices to user-centred approach
- A framework for training and introducing new staff on user-centred philosophy

CONCLUSION

- Librarianship is undergoing profound changes today
- Users determine the success and failure of libraries
- User engagement is critical - librarians are the primary agents in engaging with users
- The Five rules provide a framework to guide librarians in practising user-centred and user-engagement work

END OF PRESENTATION



fcchoy@ntu.edu.sg

Discover NTU Libraries
南洋理工大学图书馆