The Power of Partnerships in Canadian Research Libraries

LOOKING FORWARD:
Re-imagining the academic library’s role in teaching, learning & research
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Let’s start from this big picture perspective.

In my view, libraries are all about inspiring learning and sparking creativity. You feel the world at your fingertips, the knowledge of the ages and the potential of the future.

This is a picture of the earth at night, over Asia and Australia, from a NASA series called Black Marble, released in late 2012. As well as being beautiful, it relates to one of the themes I want to explore today – that libraries are in a global information system, and yet there are these separate points of light. We all exist in our local community, and our libraries are places where we feel welcome and connected with that community.

In other words, we’re developing our libraries as part of a larger system, but we’re developing with our own local context in mind -- our teaching, learning and research environment.
We talk about target audiences... and my mind shifts to another round-shaped image, a target, and the Jasper Johns painting, *Target*... and I've shamelessly constructed this image to mimic that painting. An homage to Jasper Johns, minus the wonderful brush strokes and the ambience of the Museum of Modern Art.
As I looked at the Jasper Johns painting, I thought it might make sense to think about concentric circles of partnerships, starting with you – the student/faculty researcher – at the centre, then the academic relationships between you and the library, then the library’s other campus partnerships, then national/regional partnerships and finally global partnerships. I’ll talk about some examples in our current landscape that speak to particular matters I’d like to highlight (there are for more partnerships than I can cover here – apologies if I leave out your favourite) and end with some thoughts about future directions.
LEVERAGING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS
RETHINKING SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING
REPURPOSING SPACE
REDEPLOYING STAFF

David Attis’ report presented the future of academic libraries using these good themes, and I’ll be referring to many of the ideas falling within them, but I’d like to look at things through a slightly different lens.
I want to approach this from the perspective of what we’re trying to achieve at our universities, and the unique role of the library in that endeavor. Essentially, the library is the entity on campus that focuses on information -- information that’s at the core of teaching, learning and research.

I’ll talk about two aspects of this... content and services, for want of better terms.

Content is the information itself – the articles, data, images, physical artifacts, etc and how you get hold of them. David’s report and our own experiences speak to the transformative changes in the nature of that content and the library’s relationship to it, but our mission of information access and preservation remains at our core.

And services refers to the intellectual work that surrounds the content – knowing it exists, ways to analyze it, manipulate it, share ideas with others and make new content.
This image comes from a paper about one of the great Canadian partnerships, the Canadian Data Liberation Initiative.

It helps to frame what it is we’re addressing in all of our partnerships – research communications in the knowledge transfer cycle. Each of these stages – of having an idea, exploring it, finding relevant information, analyzing and developing a thesis, and sharing the results – is something that involves content, whether it’s material you’re reading, data you’re gathering or publications you’re producing, and each involves forms of thought and interaction.
And because I’m really enjoying this circle theme...

As we think about content and services, and the evolving role of the academic library, we should do it with an eye to what we know about infrastructures.

Cyberinfrastructure is a word we heard a lot in the previous decade, now generally replaced by ‘e-science’ or ‘e-research.’ Some of us talk about ‘ecosystems.’ This image comes from the report of a workshop on the history and theory of infrastructure at the University of Michigan in 2006. It showed aspects of infrastructure along these global-local and technical-social axes. For any given problem, different elements of social or technical solutions or global or local solutions come into play. An example given in the report is email security. There’s an aspect of relying on technology, but also our social and organizational expectations around privacy.

Our information infrastructure is a combination of organizational practices, technical infrastructure and social norms that support the academic work on our campuses and in our networked world – people as much as technology.
I found it interesting to consider the cyberinfrastructure circle in thinking about library collaborations. We have great successes, but we also know that there are tensions in infrastructure formation... Are there social/local needs that inhibit global/technical solutions? Are there global solutions that enable a local focus?

And back to this circle...
And the individual at its centre... you, the researcher (whether undergraduate, graduate student or faculty)...
...in the knowledge transfer cycle.
... here at McMaster, in the academic and social context of this university.

And you are unique – there is no ‘typical’ undergraduate or graduate student, or faculty member. McMaster is as diverse as any of our universities – diverse in the sense of cultures and individuals with a range of abilities.

And whoever you are, you are not working in isolation... you’re looking for those academic collisions – amongst faculty and students and across different disciplines – that will inform your thinking.
It’s impossible to think about the library as a discrete piece of the university – it’s completely woven into its academic fabric.
Content – “collection” development

Collaborating on...
Tailoring to academic programs and research
Access to print collections
Redefining scholarly communications
Leveraging research

“Collection” – it’s a word we used when we were physically amassing content but we still use it today to refer to virtual access as well. And we care not only about the information we ‘collect’ virtually (e-books, subscription e-journals, etc), but about the entire information realm, including openly available sources (hooray!) and social media. We’re part of the larger collaborative endeavor of information access and preservation.

Tailoring to academic programs and research

Libraries work closely with faculty and students to develop the collections relevant to particular courses and strands of research.

Access to print collections

As we look at repurposing space, we need to do so with an eye to enhancing access to the print collections that are still important to some disciplines, and we need to think about sound stewardship. Open shelves? Local storage? Preservation conditions in special collections? Remote storage? Are there materials we can
confidently give away? We answer those questions in collaboration with faculty and students.

Redefining scholarly communications

We’ve heard a lot today about open access, and we’re certainly seeing some amazing developments in the open access movement. I’m sure you’ve all heard about the release last week of the White House Memorandum on Open Access: it directs federal agencies with annual research and development budgets of $100 million or more to open up access to the results of publicly funded research. Here in Canada, as of January 1, 2013, CIHR-funded researchers are required to make their peer-reviewed publications accessible at no cost within 12 months of publication at the latest. Later in March there is a joint workshop of all the Canadian granting councils to talk about developing a harmonized open access policy, with CIHR as a possible model.

There are various stakeholders in the open access equation – librarians and faculty amongst them. We’re working closely together on various initiatives, including thinking about things such as journal impact factors and the role they play in our promotion and tenure processes.

Leveraging research

In addition to thinking about scholarly communications in terms of publications, we’re getting increasingly concerned about our mechanisms for sharing and preserving research data. This is an element of the national and regional partnerships I’ll come to soon. Within our own campuses, librarians are working with researchers to explore their particular needs and potential solutions, helping with matters such as metadata creation and data deposit in appropriate repositories.
Services

Collaborating on...
Learning outcomes
Research services
Campus and library as place

Learning Outcomes

Librarians have immersed themselves in the curriculum, meeting students in the classroom as much as, and often more than, in the physical library. This takes many forms and is done in partnership with faculty – embedding services and resources in online learning, teaching classes on information research, advising instructors on effective inquiry-based learning assignments, being available to advise students one-on-one about their research. In Ontario, the recent introduction of undergraduate degree level expectations and graduate degree level expectations has provided opportunities to engage with faculty in embedding information skills at the best points in the curriculum, with a view to building information literacy programs that are both effective and sustainable.

Research

Librarians are supporting research teams in various ways... with information research for grant applications or for the research itself, and with various aspects
of information management and dissemination. Graduate students build strong relationships with librarians, often making regular appointments throughout the course of their research to discuss their information needs.

Campus and library as place

I think we're all aware of the value of the space we have in our libraries and 'library as place' is a major theme in the future of academic libraries, as we've heard again this morning. In collaboration with our faculty, students and administrators, we have to think about how those spaces relate to the rest of campus – what is it that makes it a library, how does it relate to other teaching and learning spaces being designed in other buildings? Students tell me they come to the library as a neutral, welcoming place, and that they just feel smarter when they walk in the door. It's by talking with and observing the habits of our students and faculty that we can build truly great spaces that bring together all members of the research family and build strong academic communities.
How...

Individual relationships – in person and virtual
Curriculum committees
Advisory committees
Administrative councils
Governance bodies

So how do we go about these academic partnerships? We have individual relationships – in person and virtual – that are so important, and we see each other in groups… librarians serve on curriculum committees, we have library advisory committees, the university librarian sits on groups like the Dean’s council, and we’re situated within governance bodies like Senate. In terms of thinking about these axes of infrastructure, these seem to emphasize the importance of the local/social quadrant.
We support our academic partnerships by working collaboratively with other groups on campus who have roles in supporting the academic mission.
I think we’re all very familiar with the Learning Commons model – usually not only a space but a partnership involving groups such as the library, the writing centre, learning strategies, IT services and adaptive technologies.
At my own campus, we’re just beginning to see some interesting partnerships emerge around research. I’d like to give two examples.

One is a focus on undergraduate research... we strive to be a balanced academy, where the undergraduate learning experience is enhanced by immersion in a research-intensive institution. One of the manifestations of that has been an initiative called Inquiry@Queen’s, a partnership of individual faculty, the Library, the VP Research and student groups. For the past seven years we’ve hosted an undergraduate learning conference, co-chaired by a faculty member and a librarian, that brings together students across all disciplines to present research they’ve done in a course or work setting.

The other example is the Research Data Centre, which is part of the Canadian Research Data Centres Network. The Library was asked to take on administrative responsibility for the RDC last year and a librarian became the Academic Director. It
quickly became clear that this arrangement would be beneficial to researchers. The Library has connections with all disciplines on campus, so we can easily connect researchers to the data opportunities available to them, we have an administrative infrastructure that easily takes care of matters such as budgeting and facilities, and we have strong connections with ITServices for the technical infrastructure.

Information Technology

And that brings me to IT...

Libraries have been partnering with the IT groups on their campuses in numerous ways for years. One example is how we approach our information systems, such as the institutional repository – it makes most sense for some schools, like Queen’s, to have ITServices take care of the hardware and operating system, and to have librarians supporting the application in the user community.
Another ‘content’ partnership we see on some campuses is around the university press, as in this example of the University of Calgary. Here the library and the press have worked together to explore an open access model and really push the digital envelope.
Our individual institutions benefit from, and contribute to the development of, national and regional partnerships relating to both ‘content’ and ‘services.’

There’s a great deal to talk about in terms of ‘content.’ It may help to think of it in three categories:
Born analog,
Analog to digital, and
Born digital.
Following my circle theme, here’s a great picture from 1967 at the card catalogue in Douglas Library at Queen’s University. It’s also evocative of the strong and long tradition we have in resource sharing in libraries.

This was an early ‘discovery system,’ one very much built on collaboration. Cataloguing rules and bibliographic standards date back centuries, and in the early 20th century the Library of Congress began a program of providing catalogue cards to other libraries, decreasing the need for ‘original cataloguing.’ With the advent of technologies and MARC records in the 1970s, collaboration really took off. In Canada we had UTLAS, originally a development project at the University of Toronto, as an important online cataloguing support utility. In Ontario we also had something called UNICAT/TELECAT from 1974 to 1980, a co-operative cataloguing service that enabled shared access to catalogue records across all OCUL members, reducing costs in cataloguing new acquisitions. These early efforts paved the way for the technical services landscape of today, where much is done at the global end of the spectrum and local variation is much diminished.
The sharing of bibliographic information in union catalogues in turn enabled the interlibrary loan programs we still use today.

As well as interlibrary loans, we've made it possible for anyone to walk in the door to access materials on site, and we've made arrangements for some groups outside our own institutions to have borrowing privileges. In Ontario, the Inter-University Borrowing Project (IUBP) was introduced in 1974; it was an agreement, unprecedented in Canada or the United States, allowing Ontario students and faculty members to borrow directly from any OCUL library. Since 2002, we've had a similar Canadian University Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement.

We've never expected that we're all going to have everything, and we've been willing to share.

There are also two examples of collaboration in the creation of content in analog form that I'd like to note:

LAC's Canadian Theses on Microfiche Service was launched in 1965 at the request of the deans of Canadian graduate schools. The goals of this program are similar to ones we have in digital projects today: to preserve Canadian theses, in this case by microfilming according to archival standards, and to facilitate access to them.

The Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions project began in 1978 and, like the theses project above, is an early example of format shifting. It had a goal of preserving and providing access to Canadian heritage by copying onto microfiche early materials published about Canada, in Canada or by Canadians. Many libraries, like mine, with strong Canadia collections, made those collections available for the project. Just over 20 years later, in 1999, some of those materials were made available online, as Early Canadiana Online, and work continues on digitizing the CIHM microfiche.
Here’s another great picture… if you’re ever wondering what to do with your old National Union Catalogue volumes…
Another area of collaboration around the analog world that we’ve been considering for quite some time is the issue of how much all of us need to retain in our separate libraries. There have been some efforts to look at this on a national scale, but there’s been more success at regional levels. Here in Ontario, in 2008 the Ontario Council of University Libraries agreed on a strategy to address the challenges of maintaining low-use and last copy print materials. The agreement focuses on coordinated retention of print journals and is essentially a distributed model in which we all agree that if we hold the last print copy we will keep it. It was called the Thunder Bay Agreement because the meeting where the strategy arose was held at Lakehead University.
Moving into the digital realm, there’s lots happening here...

This is a document of interest to me, as I continue to read about history related to Kingston… it’s the bill that united Upper Canada and Lower Canada and created the Government of the United Province (after which Kingston became the first capital of the united Canada). I found it looking in the ‘Canada in the Making’ site about the history of Canada, built around the Government Documents collection of Early Canadiana Online. This is a nice example of the work being done to package digitized content in ways that draw people to it. In this case, it’s the work of Canadiana.org, a Canada-wide network of research libraries and public libraries working to preserve Canada’s print history and make it accessible online.

There are many national, regional and local collaborations in digitization… these are just a few, but I think they’re fairly representative of the sheer will of the people behind them and the constant seeking of funding opportunities to make them happen.
The *Multicultural Canada* project was made possible through the cooperation of eight participating institutions, with funding, materials, and support provided by several additional agencies. The intent is to provide free and greater access to non-English language materials and other artifacts originating from minority groups, including newspapers, interviews, photographs, print and material culture.

OurDigitalWorld offers various programs and services, including access to over 4.1 million digital images, videos, scrapbooks, newspaper collections and more through OurOntario.ca. Of note is that it has created the largest online archive of Ontario newspapers, which is the fourth largest public newspaper archive in the world. It also provides access to more than 32,000 Ontario government documents.
Content - born digital

*Acquiring*

*Publishing*

*Curating*

Moving on to born digital content, the partnerships here could take up several presentations. I'll try to pick out the most important aspects in these three areas: acquiring, publishing and curating content.
Acquiring digital content from publishers happens through a variety of collaborations that help contain costs and explore new models such as patron driven acquisitions. This includes our regional consortia, such as OCUL, but I want to concentrate on the internationally renowned Canadian Research Knowledge Network, for several reasons.

First, it has an unusually large reach: it is a partnership of 75 member universities dedicated to expanding digital content for the academic research enterprise in Canada, and the content it secures is made available to approximately 99% of university researchers and students in Canada. This feels like an infrastructure that for the most part has successfully navigated the blend of local needs and global solutions. It’s worth spending some time thinking about what has made that work, and where the challenges arise.

Certainly one thing that made CRKN possible, and is a factor in many partnerships, was seed funding. It began in 2000 as the Canadian National Site Licensing Project.
after securing a $20 million award from the Canada Foundation for Innovation. This award leveraged an additional $20 million from the provinces and $10 million from participating universities, for a total project worth $50 million over three years. A similar award and model occurred again in 2007, and other projects funded purely by members were initiated as well. The challenge that we see in all of our partnerships is the transition from initial grant and project funding to the sustainability period where members fund all costs. The sharing of costs has to be done in a way that feels fair to all members, from the very largest to the very smallest. CRKN has addressed this periodically throughout its lifetime with good results overall. Its membership has grown from an initial 64 institutions to the current 75 today.

Another point to consider about CRKN is the environment in which we create our partnerships, and how they change. CRKN is at an interesting stage. As members we created it to deal with a particular aspect of scholarly communications – licensing of subscription-access journals at a key point in the age of digital content – now in a state of transformative change with open access models. Just as we think about the future in our own institutions, we also have to think about how we evolve and grow our partnerships – what would we create in a national "research knowledge network" if we were starting it today? CRKN is a partnership that has caught the attention and accolades of senior administrators and federal agencies, and my hope is that we’ll build on its success to meet new challenges and opportunities.
Scholars Portal is another phenomenal partnership, also widely renowned. And it too was created with seed funding, initially through Ontario Information Infrastructure in 2002 and then in further projects through other Ontario funding programs.

For anyone who might not know, Scholars Portal is a shared technology infrastructure and shared collections for all 21 universities in Ontario, supported directly by each of our budgets and by the involvement of many of our staff. It has evolved from a journals platform for content licenced through CRKN and OCUL to a suite of content including ebooks, numeric data, geospatial data and more.

I have musings about Scholars Portal similar to those about CRKN... where do we want to take it next? And there advantages to a partnership at the regional level that may diminish as you move towards a broader reach? Is there something about the local-global axis that we need to pay attention to?
I'm thinking about this because we are such a success story, and we're garnering lots of attention that may mean new opportunities.

We were very proud to announce on February 19th that Scholars Portal is now the first certified Trustworthy Digital Repository in Canada. This is hugely important in supporting our commitment to the long-term preservation of scholarly resources for the benefit of future students and researchers. This certification is the only generally recognized certification for digital archives and was issued by the Center for Research Libraries after an extensive audit process.

This helps us overcome the worry that licenced electronic resources could simply disappear, and it also provides new opportunities for research. Access to all of this data enables uses other than reading, such as text mining to generate new information and reveal hidden relationships.
The Synergies project, another partnership enabled by CFI funding, is intended to transform Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities journals from mostly print to digital. It is a five-university consortium with 16 regional partners that provides a distributed technical environment and publishing services for an aggregation of digital journals. It also acts in a producer-to-consumer relationship with university libraries and purchasing consortia like CRKN.

I mention Synergies not only because it’s a significant project with federal funding, but because it highlights what an interesting information infrastructure we live in – a permutation of partnerships, where libraries are involved in being both the producer and the consumer.
One of the partners in Synergies is Simon Fraser University, the original home of the Public Knowledge Project and the Open Journal Software that so many of us are using in our libraries to host open access journals.

In July last year, OCUL entered into a major development partnership with the Public Knowledge Project (PKP). The partnership means that OCUL, will contribute to software development, testing, support, and hosting of the PKP open source software suite - Open Journal Systems (OJS), Open Conference Systems (OCS), and Open Harvester System (OHS), with Open Monograph Press (OMP) due for release this year.

At times as I think about all the different relationships amongst different partnerships, it feels like a square dance, where if all goes well you reach out to the right partner at the right moment and it all meshes beautifully. Thankfully, none of our partnerships feel like high school square dance classes, where palms were sweaty and nobody really wanted to be there!
Moving on to curating... I’m so happy that one of the sessions this afternoon is *Supporting Research in the 21st Century: Repositories, Data Management and Digital Preservation*. I just want to say a few words about data curation from the partnership perspective.

The first is that good things beget good things. Some of the early thinking around data really set the stage for the data work we need to see happening now. It was members of the Canadian research community who came together in 1993 and worked together for three years to create the Data Liberation Initiative, a program for improving access to Statistics Canada data resources at Canadian postsecondary institutions and we’re still benefiting from it today.

The other I want to mention is another interesting permutation of partnerships, again involving Scholars Portal – The Canadian Polar Data Network. The mission of the CPDN is to provide a sustainable research data management infrastructure, encompassing preservation and access, for polar (Arctic and Antarctic) science
research and monitoring initiated from and taking place in Canada. It involves several federal agencies and academic institutions, including the University of Alberta Libraries and Scholars Portal.

I mention this not only because it’s a great data preservation initiative, but because it’s partnership that relates to a discipline cluster. I think it’s important to remember that the researcher that I placed in the context of McMaster University at the beginning of this presentation is likely in the context of a discipline that spans institutions around the globe.
The partnerships we have at the national and regional level in terms of services are not as far advanced as those for content, but there are significant developments.

Staff development
As noted in David’s presentation, the nature of the work in academic libraries has changed dramatically, and that has meant proactive changes in staff roles and skill sets, usually from the perspective of libraries being learning organizations where development is ongoing. Staff development initiatives beyond individual institutions include, for example:
- The 8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study
- CARL’s initiative to define core competencies for our current workplaces
- CARL’s recent research data management services course

Teaching
In Ontario some collaboration is occurring around our library teaching programs and institutional quality assurance programs and learning outcomes based on provincial requirements.
Virtual reference
Several regions have virtual reference services, like the Ask service in OCUL, where institutions collaborate in staffing online help across many hours, providing greater availability of help than would be possible at any one institution.

Research services
Data librarians have been collaborating extensively in service development for many years, and we’re now turning to thinking about how that can translate into standard approaches to research data management services, so that we’re not all reinventing the wheel.

Accessibility
We’re all grappling with how to make our information and services as accessible to individuals with disabilities as they are to anyone else, particularly given the requirements of the AODA. A partnership example here comes again from Scholars Portal. The Accessible Content E-Portal project, or ACE, will enhance the ability of University libraries in Ontario to provide barrier free access to books, journal articles and documents for students and faculty who have a print disability. The project builds on the Scholar's Portal Books platform, which will be extended to support delivery of alternate formats and accessible PDFs for research resources. A multi-media information toolkit will also be developed to help library staff better understand obligations under the Information and Communications Standard of the AODA.

Copyright
As we all deal with changes in the copyright landscape, we are all working on services to help our faculty and students understand their rights and obligations. We’re sharing content for our copyright websites and sharing our experiences with services such as copyright clearance. We’re also sharing supportive infrastructure: UBC developed a database to provide public access to the copyright provisions of our licenced information resources, and OCUL created a version of it that can be used in a consortial context (the OCUL Usage Rights database, or OUR).

Library as place
This is an area where I don’t have any examples of partnerships around particular initiatives (tell me if you do), but I mention it because we certainly share ideas – for example, through venues such as the Canadian Learning Commons Conference
– and because it’s an area that is so incredibly important to us. It’s interesting to think about what kind of partnerships might emerge in future.

I’m going to mention only one example in the global partnership circle, because most of what I would say about anything here would be repeating themes I’ve already mentioned, but I do have one additional observation.
Google Books is a frequent example of a mass digitization initiative, but I hope you're all aware of the Internet Archive as well, a non-profit organization driven by philanthropic motives. It currently contains about 4 million texts, as well as other files such as audio and video.

I was visiting the Internet Archive facility at the University of Toronto last week, and was struck again by what a significant digitization project this is, involving institutions around the world. I’m also struck by the role the U of T has played in it, and by the importance of the interplay between the large and smaller institutions in any partnership.

The U of T embarked on its work with the Internet Archive as an institutional priority, which then opened the door for the rest of us to make use of this digitization service, and as well our involvement has contributed to what the U of T and the project as a whole is trying to achieve. A large institution with a strong vision, combined with a set of institutions with commons interests and a shared belief in partnership, is a beautiful thing.
Future Partnerships

Collaborate to customize

Content is easy (?) ...
- web-scale systems
- data infrastructure
- collection development

Services...
- virtual teams
- teaching, learning, research

Keeping you, the researcher, as the focus, we'll continue to collaborate in ways that then allow us to customize our services to your particular needs. We need to work within our own campuses and across all of our institutions to harness our horsepower and recognize the power of what we can do together.

Webscale systems

With such a long tradition of collaboration around content, it seems this is an area where it may be easiest to do more. We're all thinking about moving from the silos of our individual information management systems to web-scale URM, and whether this is an area where it would make sense to collaborate. We've seen ILS collaborations happen successfully in smaller scale projects involving a few institutions, such as the Tri-Universities Group of Waterloo, Guelph and Wilfred Laurier, or the Conifer project that implemented the Evergreen open source ILS, now involving about 20 small university, college and special libraries in Ontario.
We have to think about the factors that drove those partnerships and made them succeed, and what they tell us about the possibilities in this new realm.

Data infrastructure

We’re going to see a lot of work in this area, spanning all of the concentric circles of partnership. One aspect of this I haven’t mentioned yet is the relationship of libraries to other organizations that build partnerships amongst institutions in other ways. They’re very important partnerships for us. I’m thinking of groups like CANARIE and the Canadian Access Federation – bringing us easy access to the internet and authentication to web resources – and our high performance computing virtual laboratories.

Collection development

It’s likely we’ll see more examples of collaborative collection development like the one recently announced by the University of Toronto and Columbia University. That collaboration is designed to increase the availability of Tibetan resources to a wider community of scholars in both Canada and the United States, through jointly sponsored acquisitions and a shared point of service for research consultations.

We should also be thinking about how we approach the collections that make each of us unique – our archives and special collections. Do we want to collaborate in defining areas of focus, and do we want to share our expertise across our institutions? A travelling archivist is an idea I’ve heard in other consortia, to help smaller institutions that would otherwise not have that expertise on staff.

At least some of our institutions will be seeking new opportunities for collaborations around print repositories. This might mean simply co-locating some collections in joint storage facilities, or it could go further to studying the overlap between collections and developing agreements to jointly own unique materials and reduce multiple copies.

Services – Virtual teams and teaching, learning and research

The field of knowledge management tells us a great deal about how virtual organizations work, and we need to think more about that to see what we can achieve in collaborative service development. For example, we have been saying
for decades that we should share learning objects relating to teaching and information resources we have in common, yet there seem to be barriers. As with all aspects of teaching, learning and research, tailoring to our particular context is important, but we may be able to do that even better if we leverage the things we have in common.

My prediction is that these concentric circles of partnerships will continue and become increasingly important – our local relationships and partnerships will drive what we do on a large scale, and the large scale will enable good things at the local level...
...and our re-imagining of the academic library's role in teaching, learning and research will be built on this inspiring feeling of being part of a very large enterprise. Essentially, our job is to provide access to information for all people, for all time.