

Contribution to human-centered librarianship

مساهمة في علم المكتبات المتمحور حول الإنسان

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Article abstract:

The library is a living entity where human thoughts and aspirations mix. Shaped by critical reflection and participatory dynamics, it is a space for analysis and dialogue. But these approaches have their limits: one can become too elitist, the other can undermine cohesion. To meet these challenges, we need a librarianship that is Human-centered, where everyone is at the centre of shared knowledge. The library then becomes a living organism, weaving together emotions, memories and interactions to enrich knowledge. Its evolution is based on the alliance between technology and humanism, redefining the librarian as a transmitter of knowledge and creator of social connections.

Keywords: Librarianship; Human-centered librarianship; critical librarianship; participatory librarianship.

ملخص المقال :

المكتبة هي كيان نابض بالحياة، ونفس تتلاقى فيه الأفكار والتطلعات الإنسانية. تشكلت لفترة طويلة تحت تأثير تيارين رئيسيين: الأول نهج نقدي والثاني تشاركي، مما يجعلها فضاءاً للتحليل والحوار في آن واحد. لكن لهذه المقاربات حدود؛ فإحداها قد تغرق في فكرٍ نخبوي بعيد المنال، بينما قد تؤدي الأخرى إلى تشتت يُضعف تماسكها. لمواجهة هذه التحديات، يصبح من الضروري تصور علم المكتبات مُتمحور حول الإنسان، أين يصبح هذا الأخير جوهر المعرفة المشتركة. عندها تتجلى المكتبة ككائن حي، فضاء تتداخل فيه العواطف والذاكرة والتفاعلات لإثراء المعرفة. ولتحقيق هذه التحولات بأكملها، لا بد من التوفيق بين التكنولوجيا والنزعة الإنسانية، وإعادة تعريف دور المكتبي ليصبح ناقلاً للمعرفة ومهندساً للتماسك الاجتماعي.

كلمات مفتاحية: علم المكتبات، علم مكتبات متمحور حول الإنسان، علم مكتبات نقدي، علم مكتبات تشاركي.

Introduction

The library is not just a repository of knowledge, it is a living pulse, an entity that breathes to the rhythm of human thought. It has long been built around two dominant currents: a critical approach that dissects its institutional foundations, and a participatory dynamic that opens it up to multiple voices.

Critical librarianship and participatory librarianship illustrate this development by challenging power structures and promoting interaction between librarians and the public.

Critical librarianship draws heavily on the ideas of influential thinkers. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, outlined in *Pédagogies des opprimés*, sees education as a means of empowerment (Freire, 2001). Henry Giroux, for his part, critiques neoliberalism and emphasises libraries as spaces of intellectual resistance and social justice (Sandlin & Burdick, 2019). In this tradition, James Elmborg and Sheril Hook have introduced critical pedagogy into library practice, highlighting the role of the librarian as a key facilitator of knowledge (Elmborg, 2005).

Participatory librarianship advocates a more inclusive approach in which users actively shape the development of libraries. Raphaëlle Bats has explored this idea in depth, analysing both the challenges and the potential of participation, particularly in relation to democratic practices (Bats, 2015). David Lankes, through his concept of conversation-based librarianship, envisions libraries as spaces for dialogue and collaborative knowledge-building (Lankes, 2012). Meanwhile, Nancy Kranich emphasises their role as hubs of civic engagement and collective participation (Kranish, 2001).

While these perspectives offer valuable insights, they remain incomplete. The former risks being confined to an intellectual elite, while the latter risks losing coherence through excessive diffusion. In other words, despite their wealth, both approaches have shortcomings: one tends towards an insular intellectualism, while the other risks diffusing its impact to the point of dilution.

Here is an urgent need: to advocate for human-centered librarianship, a fresh approach that no longer sees the individual merely as a user or contributor, but as the very essence of library knowledge. A library is far more than an archive: it is a living entity, a matrix of intelligence where aspirations, emotions and interactions shape and give meaning to knowledge.

Developing such an approach requires overcoming significant challenges. The very role of the library must be rethought, not as a static institution, but as a dynamic and adaptable space that connects generations and responds to diverse communities. Technology and humanism must be reconciled, integrating innovation without diminishing the depth and humanity of the library experience. Funding and resource management must be rethought to ensure that this transformation does not remain a mere intellectual ideal. Most importantly, the role of the librarian must be reinvented as a facilitator of knowledge, a compassionate guide who accompanies every reader and researcher in their quest for understanding. At the heart of this vision lies an essential commitment: to protect the very essence of the library, to preserve it as a sanctuary of meaning, a place where memory endures with dignity and respect.

Human-centered librarianship is more than an emerging discipline: it is a necessary transformation, a call to rethink our relationship with knowledge and to reimagine the library as a living, evolving entity shaped by the depth and complexity of human experience. It is no longer just a place of learning, but a hub of collective intelligence, a home where every idea enriches a wider intellectual landscape, and where every reader finds a reflection of their own journey. A library is more than a building - it is a beacon of light, a living presence where the voices of the past, the dreams of the present and the promises of the future converge. The challenge is profound: to make

the library a beating heart of knowledge, fully anchored in the richness and complexity of human experience.

1. In search of the origins of human-centered librarianship

Human-centered librarianship is part of a long tradition of thinkers who sought to democratise knowledge and transform libraries into true spaces of exchange and discovery. Visionary minds had already planted the seeds of a more inclusive and dynamic approach to information access.

Among the most influential was Gabriel Naudé, who championed a revolutionary vision of the library. As early as 1627, in *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, he advocated an approach that defied the elitist norms of his time (Naudé, ed. 1963). For him, a library should not be a mere repository of knowledge reserved for a privileged few, but rather a vibrant, open space designed to meet the aspirations of those who wish to learn, grow intellectually and expand their thinking. His pragmatic perspective emphasised the usefulness of collections: books were not preserved for their rarity or prestige, but for their ability to enrich the reader, to provoke reflection and to stimulate curiosity. He envisioned a library that truly served the public, where knowledge flowed freely and everyone had access to essential resources without barriers or privilege (Akbal, 2012 a).

Two centuries later, Léopold-Auguste Constantin took this idea and transformed it into a structured vision that established librarianship as a cornerstone of knowledge and cultural transmission (Constantin, 1841). He refined and revolutionised the methods of documentary organisation, convinced that a library was more than just a collection of books: it had to be a dynamic space designed to enrich the reader's experience. For him, every shelf, index and classification had to be meticulously designed to facilitate access to information and stimulate intellectual curiosity.

Constantin played a key role in shaping a more fluid and harmonious management of library spaces, ensuring that their operation was optimised to serve the public. His approach laid the foundation for a model of librarianship in which human experience and scholarship come together in a perfectly orchestrated symphony, paving the way for a new era of access to knowledge (Akbal, 2012 b).

From the late 19th to the early 20th century, a quiet revolution took place in the world of libraries. Their organisation gradually became more systematic, driven by a growing desire to make knowledge accessible to all. It was in this context that Melvil Dewey, a deeply pragmatic thinker, developed his decimal classification system (Dewey, 2011). His method, remarkably simple yet highly effective, redefined access to information and transformed libraries into true crossroads of knowledge.

More than a method, Dewey created a new experience for readers. Every book now finds its place with undeniable logic, and every field of knowledge is arranged in a structured symphony that simplifies research and inspires discovery. Thanks to his ingenious classification system, browsing the shelves becomes a seamless and intuitive adventure; readers no longer feel lost in a maze of books, but navigate effortlessly along a carefully mapped path designed to guide their curiosity.

As Éric Delamotte points out, the Dewey Decimal Classification has become one of the most widely used classification systems in the world thanks to its remarkable efficiency and simplicity (Delamotte, 2013). According to Annie Béthery and Jean Maury, it is now used by more than 200,000 libraries in 135 countries (Béthery & Maury, 2018): clear evidence of its continued relevance in the digital age.

Eugène Morel championed accessible, dynamic libraries, rejecting the idea of silent, static spaces. He envisioned libraries as hubs of discussion and discovery, where readers actively engage in

shared learning. To him, every visitor contributed to a vibrant culture of curiosity and knowledge exchange (Morel, 1910).

Morel rejects the idea of a static, passive library. He envisions it as a vibrant, dynamic crossroads of ideas, where words flow as freely as the people who engage with them. His vision goes beyond the mere organisation of documents: he has reimagined the very nature of the library, making it a living space animated by the passion of those who inhabit it. Through his commitment, access to knowledge becomes not just an individual pursuit, but a deeply collective and enriching experience.

S. R. Ranganathan stands out as a pioneer who dared to rethink librarianship through a fundamentally people-centered approach. He saw libraries as living organisms, constantly adapting to the needs of their users. For him, a library should never be static; it should evolve, adapt and transform to meet the expectations of an ever-changing readership.

Driven by this conviction, he established a set of principles that remain the pillars of modern library management. His famous Five Laws - books are made to be used; every reader has a book; every book has its reader; the reader's time is precious; and the library is a growing organism – (Ranganathan, 1931) are not just administrative guidelines, but true statements of purpose that place the human experience at the heart of the system.

John Cotton Dana, an American librarian in the early 20th century, was notable for his vision of libraries as deeply embedded in social life. For him, a library should be a living institution, an engine of energy and engagement at the heart of the community.

Dana sees libraries as interactive spaces where knowledge is freely shared and tailored to community needs. He envisions them as vibrant hubs that foster discussion, discovery, and collaboration, reflecting local culture and driving intellectual and social development. His ideas and influence are explored in several writings and studies (Dane, 1990 & Mattson, 2000).

Under his influence, the concept of a static library is fading, giving way to a dynamic, evolving institution that is constantly seeking new ways to enrich the lives of those it serves. Dana not only refines collection management, he fundamentally transforms the role of libraries in society, establishing them as vital pillars of education, personal growth and civic engagement.

These pioneers helped shape a library model that puts people first. Thanks to their contributions, libraries have become dynamic spaces where sharing and accessibility are key priorities. Their legacy continues to influence modern practices, ensuring that libraries remain places where everyone can learn, share and enrich collective knowledge.

Michael Buckland is also known for his human-centered approach. He believes that access to information should not just be a technical process, but a seamless, intuitive experience tailored to users' real needs. His work explores the deep interactions between information and society, and he believes that libraries and information systems must continually evolve to meet the changing expectations of readers.

In *Information and Society* (2017), Buckland explores how information shapes behavior, decisions, and social dynamics. He stresses that effective information systems go beyond classification and archiving: they must enhance access, foster knowledge acquisition, and adapt to users' specific needs.

In *Redesigning Library Services: A Manifesto* (1992), he calls for a complete transformation of libraries, urging them to evolve with technological and societal shifts. He champions flexible, interactive services that adapt to readers' intellectual journeys rather than remaining bound by outdated structures.

In *Expect More* (2012), R. David Lankes redefines libraries as dynamic spaces where knowledge is actively created through exchange and interaction. He urges librarians, institutions, and citizens to see libraries as vibrant hubs of intellectual and cultural engagement, where visitors contribute to the conversation rather than passively consume information.

For him, the essence of the library lies in its ability to connect people, to provide a space where ideas meet, take shape and evolve. He advocates an inclusive and participatory approach, ensuring that every user - whatever their background or needs - finds an environment conducive to learning, discussion and self-expression.

Eppo van Nispen tot Sevenaer has played a key role in transforming libraries in the digital age, emphasizing user experience and the integration of new technologies. His work at the Delft Public Library (DOK) is often cited as an innovative model (Cucurullo, 2009). He told a conference, “*A library is not about books, it is about people*”, emphasizing the importance of human interaction and digital tools in improving access to information. Indeed, a library is not defined by the volumes it contains, but by the souls that bring it to life. It thrives on curious glances, hands turning pages, voices exchanging ideas and minds meeting. A library lives through those who inhabit it, for knowledge is only meaningful when it is shared, debated and advanced by those who explore it.

These authors have reimagined libraries as dynamic hubs of interaction, inclusion, and adaptability. No longer passive repositories, libraries now foster exchange and discovery, inviting every visitor to actively shape the space and explore knowledge on their own terms.

2. Human-centered librarianship pretexts and justifications

Critical librarianship is based on an engaged approach that examines the power dynamics, institutional biases and social forces that shape library management. It seeks to deconstruct established structures in order to promote greater equity and diversity in access to documentation and information.

However, it has three major limitations:

1. A predominantly theoretical and academic approach. Critical librarianship focuses on analysing systemic and institutional problems, but offers few pragmatic solutions. Its discourse, while relevant, is often confined to academic circles and theory, without necessarily leading to concrete changes in everyday library practice.

2. A stance of critique rather than a model for action. Critical librarianship highlights inequalities and biases, but struggles to propose proactive strategies that place users at the centre of library development. As a result, it does not promote direct, active interaction between libraries and their publics, who are often seen as recipients rather than co-creators of knowledge.

3. A system-centered rather than a human-centered vision. By emphasizing power structures and information policies, critical librarianship sometimes overlooks the fundamental relationship between the library and the individual. It does not sufficiently prioritise the user experience, the adaptation of services to specific community needs, or the integration of individual aspirations into library design.

Participatory librarianship, on the other hand, aims to actively involve users in library management, allowing them to take part in decision-making, organize events, or co-create content.

However, it remains limited for several reasons:

1. A level of participation that is often superficial. Although it aims to involve users in decision-making, participation is usually limited to occasional initiatives such as consultations, events and feedback sessions. Major decisions about library development are still made by politicians, experts and administrators, leaving the public with little real influence on fundamental strategies.

2. Community engagement does not guarantee personalisation of services. Participatory librarianship promotes collective interaction, but does not sufficiently address individual needs and user-specific expectations. It often overlooks personal experiences, unique learning paths and individual preferences- key elements in truly human-centered approaches.

3. A focus on events rather than user experience. This approach emphasises the organisation of collective activities and community engagement, but sometimes neglects the optimisation of individual library experiences. It does not offer deep transformations in library services, spatial design or access tools tailored to the sensory and practical realities of users.

Why is human-centered librarianship important?

In response to these limitations, human-centered librarianship offers a comprehensive and balanced approach that goes beyond critique and participation to place people at the heart of libraries.

It is based on three fundamental pillars:

1. A user-centered experience. Every service, space, collection, book or journal is designed around the actual needs of users, rather than pre-existing institutional models. It is not just about involving users, it is about completely reimagining the library around their expectations and the way they interact with information.

2. Individual and immersive interaction. Unlike participatory librarianship, which follows a collective logic, human-centered librarianship prioritises the personalisation of services. It uses design thinking, ergonomic spaces, artificial intelligence and intuitive interfaces to create a seamless, tailored experience.

3. An evolving and adaptive library. Far from being a rigid or purely critical model, human-centered librarianship is dynamically integrated into and evolves with society. It takes into account technological advances, cultural shifts and emerging needs to continually refine its practices and provide relevant, accessible services in real time.

This approach goes beyond the limitations of critical and participatory models by offering a library designed for and by the people, where everyone has a place and their needs are actively and inclusively addressed.

Critical librarianship analyses without fully acting, while participatory librarianship engages without deeply transforming. Only human-centered librarianship truly places people at the centre of knowledge by creating intuitive, adaptable spaces designed to enrich both individual and collective experiences.

In this resolutely human-centered approach, libraries evolve from mere repositories of knowledge to vibrant ecosystems designed by and for their users. No longer just visitors, users become active contributors, creating content, influencing strategic decisions and injecting new energy into these cultural spaces.

Through collaborative workshops, participatory debates and collective initiatives, they are transforming the library into a crossroads of ideas, a fertile ground where information is shaped by interactions and shared experiences. As a result, knowledge is no longer a passive consultation, but an interactive, evolving and open process in which everyone plays a role.

This transformation takes libraries beyond traditional models and fully integrates them into today's dynamics. They become hubs of innovation, deeply embedded in social realities, where knowledge is freely shared, learning is enriched by diverse perspectives, and everyone finds their place in a forward-looking community.

3. The issues of a human-centered librarianship

Human-centered librarianship challenges traditional notions of libraries by embedding them in a framework of interaction, adaptability and inclusion. Its challenges span several key dimensions.

3.1. Epistemological issues: Rethinking knowledge and its accessibility

Libraries are evolving into dynamic spaces where knowledge is shaped by human interaction rather than merely archived. A human-centered approach challenges traditional academic structures,

making knowledge fluid and adaptable through user contributions, experiences, and digital collaboration. This participatory model raises a fundamental question: how can we ensure the reliability of knowledge as it continuously evolves?

The rise of digital humanities has revolutionized how knowledge is produced, shared, and validated. Digitization is granting access to previously unavailable collections, while algorithms and enriched databases provoke reflection on scientific methodology. Transparency, reliability, and bias avoidance have become critical concerns in AI-generated research.

The transformation of research practices is redefining epistemological foundations, blurring distinctions between primary and secondary sources. As interdisciplinary exchange and digital tools reshape academic inquiry, libraries must adapt as platforms for dynamic knowledge creation rather than passive repositories. Ultimately, evolving digital libraries foster open, participatory, and cross-disciplinary learning, demanding new criteria for knowledge validation in a constantly shifting landscape.

3.2. Theoretical issues: Redefining the role of the library

From a theoretical perspective, this approach requires a rethinking of the role of the librarian and the principles of document management. The librarian is no longer simply responsible for selecting and preserving resources; it is becoming a mediator, a knowledge broker and a key figure in fostering social connections. It also means integrating a variety of formats and media, as well as new technologies that make access to content more interactive and personalised.

Today's library comes alive, evolves and breathes in sync with its users. The librarian is a true knowledge facilitator; a thoughtful guide who encourages exploration, fosters exchange, and weaves connections between readers. They create a space where learning is interactive, where every visitor can not only access information, but also contribute, enrich and share it.

In this transformation, the library embraces a variety of formats and media, moving beyond traditional print to integrate digital resources, collaborative platforms and immersive tools. New technologies enable a tailored experience that adapts to individual needs and aspirations.

The library is a living ecosystem where knowledge is constantly renewed, shaped and shared. In this sense, it is a hub of knowledge - a space for creation and innovation - where every reader plays a vital role in an ever-evolving intellectual dynamic.

3.3. Sociocultural issues: Strengthening inclusion and interaction

This transformation has a direct impact on the social role of libraries. By adopting a human-centered approach, they become spaces for exchange and collaboration, able to adapt to cultural and technological changes in society. This requires responding to the specific needs of communities, welcoming diverse forms of expression, and developing tools that foster the co-creation of knowledge.

There is also a democratic challenge: to ensure that libraries remain accessible to all, regardless of social, economic or technological barriers, while strengthening their role in building a more inclusive society.

Libraries are no longer just places of silence and contemplation; they have become vibrant spaces where inclusion and interaction are central. This transformation requires special attention to the specific needs of the communities they serve. It is about creating welcoming environments where everyone, regardless of social or economic background, can find both a place and a voice.

It also requires openness to multiple forms of expression - whether artistic, literary or digital - to foster creativity and encourage the co-creation of knowledge. In this context, libraries go beyond the mere transmission of information; they become incubators of ideas, laboratories of thought, where tomorrow's reflections take shape.

Beyond their cultural role, libraries have a profoundly democratic mission. They must ensure equal access to knowledge for all, breaking down the social, economic and technological barriers that

might limit it. In doing so, they actively contribute to building a society in which education and information are rights, not privileges.

4. The challenges of human-centered librarianship

Human-centered librarianship offers new opportunities, but its development poses several key challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability. Five key challenges can be identified.

4.1. Adaptability to diverse audiences

A truly human-centered library must be an evolving space capable of responding thoughtfully and sensitively to the diversity of its visitors. It becomes a living ecosystem where each user - whether a student seeking specialised resources, a researcher immersed in intellectual exploration, a child eager to discover, or a curious citizen - finds an environment that meets their needs and aspirations.

To achieve this balance, the library must seamlessly blend inclusion and flexibility with careful precision. Rather than imposing a rigid standard that erases individual differences, it should strike a delicate balance between personalisation and service coherence. Modular spaces, learning tools tailored to different learning styles, and a broad, accessible cultural offering are all key pillars in creating an environment where every visitor feels welcome and valued.

This adaptability is based on actively listening to user needs, constantly re-evaluating practices and embracing both technological and social innovation. As a result, the library becomes a dynamic reflection of society; a place where knowledge is shared, exchanges are enriched, and inclusion is more than an ideal; it is a tangible, everyday experience. It embodies a new vision of the connection between culture and community, making every visit an authentic and engaging experience.

4.2. Seamless integration of new technologies

The rise of digital technologies is profoundly changing libraries, reinventing them as true hubs of knowledge and interaction. More than just a functional upgrade, their integration must be seen as a natural, harmonious and inclusive evolution, ensuring that every user - regardless of their familiarity with these tools - can benefit without feeling overwhelmed.

Far from replacing traditional experiences, digital advances enrich and expand the possibilities of libraries, offering new ways to access knowledge, share insights and collaborate. Interactive platforms allow visitors to dynamically explore collections, engage in meaningful discussions and connect with cultural spaces in new ways. However, this transition should not be a race to modernity: it must remain Human-centered, providing tailored guidance, accessible training and intuitive tools to ensure that everyone can navigate the digital landscape with ease.

Another major challenge is the quality and reliability of online information. At a time when overwhelming volumes of data can sometimes obscure relevance, libraries play a crucial mediating role: curating, contextualising and illuminating content to help readers develop critical perspectives on the wealth of information available. In this mission, librarians become insightful guides, helping to decode and elevate knowledge in meaningful ways.

4.3. Managing resources and funding

Transforming libraries into participatory and dynamic spaces requires careful management of resources and funding. This interaction and inclusion-centered model requires more than simple restructuring: it requires a true strategic vision, where every investment improves the user experience and ensures the sustainability of the services provided.

Firstly, it means rethinking the design of spaces to adapt to new uses and the different expectations of visitors. Modular areas, collaborative spaces with interactive technology, creative

and relaxation areas: each element should encourage sharing and learning in a welcoming and inspiring environment. However, these developments cannot happen without thoughtful funding that supports these transformations while maintaining sustainable resource management.

In addition, the expansion of interactive and immersive programmes is a key driver in increasing the library's appeal. Co-creation workshops, interactive conferences and innovative digital tools all require targeted investment: not only to deliver them, but also to support users effectively. Training staff, providing tailored guidance and integrating accessible tools are challenges that require optimal allocation of resources.

Finally, it has become essential to diversify funding sources beyond institutional budgets. Partnerships with cultural and educational organisations, sponsorship and crowd-funding campaigns offer alternatives that help sustain initiatives and involve the community in shaping the library's evolution. Ultimately, a human-centered library is not just a place for consultation: it is a living, evolving space where intelligent resource and financial management upholds its mission of openness and knowledge sharing for all.

4.4. Training and the evolving role of librarians

In a Human-centered model, the role of librarians become true cultural facilitators, attentive guides who help the public explore information. This paradigm shift transforms them into mediators, educators and facilitators of conversation, fostering a dynamic in which the library evolves into a vibrant, ever-changing space.

This transformation requires continuous training, which is essential to adapt to technological advances and evolving public expectations. Being a librarian today means mastering digital tools, managing interactive resources, organising participatory workshops and leading engaging discussions. It also means developing strong listening and adaptability skills to ensure that every visitor feels empowered and actively involved in their experience. Through this evolution, the library becomes a dynamic platform for learning and knowledge sharing.

Achieving this new balance, however, requires great finesse: it is about balancing professional expertise with community engagement without compromising the quality of content and organisational structure. Librarians remain the guardians of knowledge, ensuring the relevance of sources, the accessibility of resources and the diversity of formats offered. Their role is to orchestrate these elements carefully, fostering a shared knowledge environment where both novices and experts can find their place and contribute meaningfully.

4.5. Preserving the library's identity

Preserving a library's identity while encouraging active user participation is a delicate balance in which tradition and modernity must coexist in perfect harmony. A library serves as a sanctuary of knowledge, a refuge for thought and exchange, but it must also be an evolving space that adapts to contemporary cultural dynamics without losing its essence.

Too much flexibility could dilute its core mission and turn this place of transmission into a fragmented space lacking structure and coherence. Conversely, too rigid a framework could stifle innovation, limit user engagement, and prevent spontaneous interactions or the emergence of new forms of collaborative learning. The challenge is to build a library that combines freedom and accessibility with rigour and high standards of documentation to ensure the relevance and credibility of the resources available.

Achieving this balance requires strengthening the library's role as a knowledge broker and catalyst for intellectual exchange. It must provide adaptable spaces that encourage user engagement, while maintaining solid reference points that maintain quality and integrity. The integration of new practices - whether digital or participatory - should be approached thoughtfully, preserving the library's primary purpose as a centre of culture and reflection.

A library that evolves without losing its identity becomes a true intersection between memory and modernity, offering visitors both a reassuring foundation and an invitation to explore, learn and contribute to the collective enrichment of knowledge.

Conclusion

Behind human-centered librarianship lie challenges that test the delicate balance between openness and structure, freedom and rigour.

One of the key tensions is the involvement of users in the management and co-creation of resources. While this dynamic enriches the documentary landscape by fostering diverse perspectives, it can also lead to fragmentation of content and dilution of intellectual coherence. Information, as abundant as it is, needs to be framed, organised and filtered to prevent the spread of inaccurate or misleading data. Without effective mediation, the wealth of contributions risks becoming a cacophony in which the essence of knowledge is lost in uncertainty and subjectivity.

Another layer of complexity comes from adaptability. The drive to accommodate all user profiles and meet ever-changing expectations can lead to institutional instability. A library that scatters in too many directions risks losing its identity and its fundamental role as a guide and reference point. The challenge is to strike a balance between flexibility and clarity, innovation and continuity, and to ensure that constant evolution does not lead to a perpetual questioning of its functional framework.

The digital transformation exacerbates these challenges, bringing both opportunities and complications. While technology facilitates access to knowledge, it also deepens digital divides and excludes those who do not have the skills or access to these tools. The power of digital interaction raises important ethical concerns: How can the integrity of data be ensured? How to ensure its longevity? And how to prevent dependence on interactive platforms from undermining neutrality and the free dissemination of knowledge?

Finally, behind the apparent spontaneity of this human-centered model lies a demanding level of work and commitment that can weigh heavily on librarians. They are no longer just gatekeepers of knowledge, but also facilitators, mediators and guides in a co-constructive process. This shift requires new skills, ongoing training and sustained commitment, which can be taxing over time. Finding the balance between participatory openness and rigorous management is a delicate task, where human involvement and structure must complement rather than clash.

So while human-centered librarianship envisions a library where exchange and interaction are at the heart of the experience, it must also carefully navigate these inherent challenges to ensure that knowledge is not sacrificed on the altar of innovation. The real challenge is to strike the right balance: to evolve without losing direction, to open without diluting, and to create a space where knowledge remains a beacon, even amidst the turbulence of rapid change.

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