VALUE, IMPACT, AND THE TRANSCENDENT LIBRARY: PROGRESS AND PRESSURES IN PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

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Libraries are under pressure to prove their worth and may not have achieved this fully successfully. There is a resultant growing requirement for value and impact measurement in academic and research libraries. This essay reviews the natural history of library performance measurement and suggests that proof of worth will be measured by the higher-order beneficial effects that libraries deliver. Evaluation within current frames of reference will therefore be insufficient. Compelling proof will reside in transcendent contribution beyond immediate temporal, spatial, and influential boundaries of libraries. Answers to value contribution will not arise from goals but from values, as concepts of value depend on values systems. A reflection on the meaning of value for libraries is presented. A new, higher-order framework for evaluation and performance measurement based on a values scorecard is suggested. The concept of the transcendent library is offered as a route to further progress.

Introduction and Summary

This essay is a response to the assumption that libraries are under pressure to prove their worth and that library leaders have not achieved this fully and successfully. The essay suggests that this proof of worth will be measured by what higher-order beneficial effects libraries deliver and that evaluation within currently used performance frames of reference will therefore be insufficient. The essay contends that what is sought includes an indication of transcendent contribution that is beyond the immediate or currently recognized temporal, spatial, and influential boundaries of libraries. Because what is sought is transcendent, then the right place to seek answers to value contribution will not be in immediate goals but in values, as concepts of value depend entirely on values systems. The essay

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therefore suggests a new, higher-order framework for evaluation and performance measurement based potentially on a values scorecard. The essay argues that this is not merely a measurement issue but a strategic one, because the indications are that current measures based on short-term goals might influence behavior and activity in a way that reduces transcendent value rather than increases it.

"Worth" is used to incorporate concepts of both the value and impact of libraries. This essay focuses mainly on the growing requirement for value and impact measurement in academic and research libraries but may be seen to be relevant to other library sectors. A natural history of library performance measurement is proposed, which places the requirement in context, and a reflection on the meaning of value for libraries is presented. The concept of the transcendent library, which contributes to organizational and social values, rather than simply to a narrow notion of economic value, is offered as a route to further progress.

Context and Cross Pressures

The aims of the academy and scholarship are transcendent, relying on a shared belief that there is an impact through higher education on individuals and society, and beyond that there is a value arising from being educated, which relates in a fundamental way to human flourishing. This has always been difficult to quantify and measure. Academic and research libraries have historically been considered to be distinctively "academic" services, implying that they also contribute to these higher and broader goals and values.

In the first Library Assessment Conference, a demand for proof of worth was voiced by a university leader [1] that, when developed [2], suggested that there were only two "bottom-line" measures of worth: impact on research (and ultimately research reputation) and impact on the financial bottom-line. This reflected the two lines that have been developing recently in library assessment: the quest for impact and value measures. The term "worth" is used to mean the combination of these two strands, although it will become clear later that "value" should be used as the more appropriate collective term (incorporating impact).

This demand for proof of worth is an additional pressure on libraries and does not reduce or replace the need for the many other forms of assessment in use. There is, however, an associated danger of reductionist thinking by stakeholders and librarians in understanding and responding to this pressure, especially when paymasters attempt to reconfigure broader aims and values toward a limited range of utilitarian measures.

A recent paper based on focus groups with senior UK academic li-

brarians, commissioned by the Research Information Network, is worth quoting at length; the author was a member of one of the focus groups:

> There is a strong feeling among senior librarians that they have failed effectively to communicate the value of their services. . . . There is an increasing risk that much of what libraries actually do may be invisible in a virtual environment. . . . We believe it is important that libraries should be able to show . . . that they provide services with demonstrable links to success in achieving institutional goals. Return on investment is thus an increasingly important issue. Libraries need to be more proactive in seeking to understand user behaviour and workflows; and in rigorously demonstrating the value of their activities. . . . The focus of performance indicators up to now has tended to be on inputs and outputs . . . rather than addressing the much harder issues relating to impact and value. . . . We believe it is essential that more work is done to analyse the relationships between library activities . . . and learning and research outcomes. [3, p. 16]

This is a helpful summary of the current position and also hints at some potential answers. In simple terms, it suggests that we need to understand our users better, as this will be a route to value, and we need tools such as return on investment (ROI) to make the link to value and ultimately to institutional goals. As will become clear later, specific assumptions are made here that define solutions perhaps before sufficient analysis has taken place.

A key element of our current context is the world-changing economic crisis. A positive side effect may be that a dominant worldview focused on a limited range of economic values and judgments is being challenged. An example of this thinking is Michael Sandel's 2009 Reith Lectures, as commented on in a British newspaper editorial [4], based on a new appreciation of the common good: "The credit crunch has exposed myriad mirages, demonstrating how the market can get things badly wrong when it comes to valuing things. . . . When bureaucracies price things which should not be priced, they start trading them off against other objectives, instead of appreciating their absolute obligations." This suggests that a simplistic move to adding a few economic value indicators to our current assessment armamentarium may not be the right response: "cost benefit analysis can have nasty results" [4]. What is needed first is broader reassessment of value in terms of these absolute obligations. There has already been recognition of the cross pressures on library performance measurement arising from different value sets. To quote an example [5, p. 51]: "Civil society has more to do with attitudes, feelings and symbols. . . . Leadership [sees] an increasing emphasis on values. . . . Value-based management is second only to change management [in importance to leaders for continuing education] . . . but most organisations consist of different

value sets. . . . There is a focus on the importance of leaders as value creators." This suggests that there are conflicting values between different trends in public sector management but that an understanding of values will be critical to effective future performance. Again, these demands do not replace the many other existing cross pressures for data and evidence arising from earlier management trends, such as the quality movement.

The conclusion is that there is a specific new pressure for proof of value, which libraries have not yet succeeded in developing. However, a response based solely on a limited economic model may not be the answer; rather, there is a need for a broader assessment of the meaning of value and recognition that value is dependent on values sets or systems.

Transcendence and Value

In developing the idea of value measurement, it is probably important to consider both the general and more technical understandings of the term. The exploration below is developed from a paper delivered at the 2009 Northumbria conference in Florence [6].

"Value" has been variously defined as "worth, desirability, utility; on the qualities that these depend"; on "estimated worth"; or as a financial exchange or other form of equivalent relation [7, p. 1549]. More generally, value as "the quality or fact of being excellent, useful or desirable" has been used as a starting point for discussions of value theory, accompanied by conclusions that precise terminology has not yet been obtained [8, p. 1]. There has been much philosophical debate about what constitutes value over more than two thousand years, so it is not possible to do full justice to that discussion here. There are some points worth noting from that debate. First, there is ambiguity over what value means. Consequently value will mean different things to different people. Value is an idea: in other words, it has no independent existence; like any idea, it can be described as "arbitrary," and there is not likely to be a single wholly satisfactory answer to value measurement [9].

For libraries, the challenge is to compute their own value. Because values are manifested, there will be something that we can measure arising from the way values are enacted in our libraries and the way value is generated as a result. Additionally, we would like any assessment to be comparable across institutions, but the above debate suggests this might be optimistic.

A philosophical debate exists around the value of an object being intrinsic or extrinsic [10]. If libraries have intrinsic value, then they would have value for their own sakes. It seems that one of the difficulties of the current context is that an assumption of libraries delivering a timeless list of intrinsic goods is no longer broadly held to be true. This may have been

the view in a past where collections were unique and libraries had monopoly on access, but it is increasingly challenged in the digital age. The concept of libraries having extrinsic value seems more appealing; we exist for the sake of something else; our value is largely instrumental value, and we can develop measures of value around our relational properties. However, there would seem to be a danger of instrumental concepts of value becoming horizon limiting, hence, the need to seek a more encompassing term on which to base a value framework.

A key problem with the computation of value is that it needs to be holistic. All current measurement frameworks we employ have failed to meet this need, otherwise we would not be under pressure to provide more. In the next section the history of our evaluation efforts will be considered in more detail. It is sufficient here to note that internal and immediate external measures have not delivered proof of value because they are neither holistic nor high level enough to be satisfying. The value of the whole as being more than the sum of its parts requires a different approach to analytical separation of categories or dimensions of service. The recognition of the system value of a library needs to be placed within a broader accepted value system. In this way some of the contribution to higher goods that are missing from current analyses might be captured. Some library leaders maintain a pessimistic view that libraries would not have been invented if we had started within the current digital context. This kind of thinking demonstrates exactly the lack of recognition of value that libraries add as a system and leads to a misunderstanding of where we can and should add value.

A better expression of the level of value proof we are seeking lies beyond these debates and might best be categorized as *transcendent*, in the sense of above or outside the immediate. This is a more appropriate view in the digital world, where libraries transcend their physical space, but the strength of the term is, more importantly, in recognition of the full value of libraries in their contribution to more intangible wider benefits, which seems to be what stakeholders are seeking when talking about value and impact measures. However, this is also relational to something more than the instrumental benefit of the immediate needs and demands of parent organizations—to other, less concrete aspects of institutional or societal intent.

This presents a different level of challenge and justifies offering the concept of the transcendent library, one in which the value can be judged beyond the immediate and that contributes not only to institutional objectives or immediate bottom-lines alone but also to broader value systems within the institution, and beyond, to a higher-order beneficial contribution to individuals, groups, and societies.

In the next section, reviewing the history of library evaluation, we will see

that it is possible to arrive at some similar conclusions from the way in which library performance measurement has developed and is developing.

Library Evaluation: A Natural History

The previous section might be seen to imply some criticism of our performance measurement and evaluation efforts. In reality the history of performance measurement in libraries is very rich and strong, and central to effective management [11]. Few areas of public endeavor have such a long, thoughtful, and active tradition of measurement and evaluation. Nothing in this essay should suggest that any of these efforts have not been worthwhile or have not added to our understanding of our work or to improved performance. Much of this previous work is likely to contribute to a broader holistic value story told by the library.

Nearly sixty years ago a prescient paper was written that suggested a natural history of the development of academic libraries [12] and, by implication, the way in which measurement systems might also develop, and this was taken up later [13]. It suggested a history of three phases of focus for academic libraries: storehouse, service, and education. This analysis seems both valid and useful, and also can be used to characterize the history of evaluation: largely internal measures based on the original value proposition of the library as storehouse, followed by the recognition of service and service quality driven by the broader quality movement, and now in the current challenge to link our measures to the broader aims of our institutions (education, in the case of academic libraries). This may simplify the picture too much; perhaps there has always been some evaluation activity across the whole spectrum. However, the evidence of the balance of content of successive conferences appears supportive. What is predicted is a shift toward value-related measures and evaluation, and, again, the evidence from this 2010 Library Assessment Conference reflects this, with proportionally many more papers in this area than hitherto.

Almost thirty years ago an influential paper [14] distinguished between the "how good" of libraries as opposed to the "how much good is done" by them, laying the framework for the former as reflecting quality (equated with effectiveness) and the latter as reflecting library value (equated with benefit). Orr did not reflect specifically on the philosophy of value, as the paper was a response to perceived pressures to incorporate new management science into libraries, but the distinction between these two aspects thus characterized has held. While there has been great progress in measurement of quality, measurement of value has remained more intractable. Later work [15] suggested that this is because what is lacking is coherence, a sense of the whole, in our measurement systems.

Ten years ago I [16] produced a paper reflecting on frameworks for evaluation and the way in which choice of measures might inhibit rather than support performance. One challenge that remains largely unanswered from that paper is the development of measures for staff, and this would seem to be an essential element of value-based measurement, given the large expenditure commitment made in this area and the uncertainty of stakeholders around what value is added by staff. The conclusion of that paper supports this one. Our interest should remain focused on what will lead us to valuable performance as opposed merely to value measures, and what constitutes valuable performance requires some consideration prior to developing practical measurement.

Value and Impact Measurement in Libraries

Thus, the challenge of developing value measures has existed for some time, and the resurfacing of a demand for proof of value is not surprising. What is perhaps surprising is the lack of data and focus on financial measures in our profession. This might simply demonstrate that there are more interesting truths to discover about libraries. However, these truths may be in danger of being submerged in a world that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

In the United Kingdom and Ireland, developing and collating a coordinated response to the demand for value and impact measurement in academic libraries has been through the SCONUL Value and Impact Programme (known as VAMP), reported previously in various assessment conferences [2, 17]. At the outset, value and impact were seen to be two distinctively different things but accompanied by the recognition that they are both about measuring the beneficial contribution of libraries.

When SCONUL began its program, there was already a body of theory and practice from existing work in the United Kingdom further and higher education sector [18], including the LIRG/SCONUL Impact Initiative [19], on which to draw. The SCONUL impact initiative was considered to be the basis for a model for evaluation and measurement in this field. An impact tool was subsequently commissioned, developed, and mounted on the VAMP site [20]. Interestingly, the majority of test beds in this program were related to information literacy, despite the initial desire to concentrate on research impact, and it would seem that the development of information literacy in individuals is a very good example of something transcendent that is created and that continues to deliver value well beyond the boundaries of the library or parent institution. With the advent of information literacy the idea of a contribution that was both transforming from the individual's point of view and an addition of transcendent value from the

library's perspective has helped sharpen concepts of impact in a positive way. The optimism of clear and accepted measures and unambiguous proof of impact has perhaps not been fully realized in this case but was at least felt to be in sight. The SCONUL work sits alongside other efforts to measure outcome, and there is insufficient space here to analyze these in depth for their underlying assumptions about value. It may be that these connections are obvious, but they remain difficult to quantify.

Turning to value measurement, what follows is a brief review of recent views on value measurement, again taken from the Northumbria 2009 presentation [6]. This reveals some concerns about the danger of seeking the single magic bullet that is going to solve our value measurement problem arising from the assumption that value measures will be framed on economic value alone.

R. Missingham [21] reviewed a range of recent value studies. In so doing, she proposed a natural history of value initiatives, suggesting three steps on the road: activity based costing for output efficiency, perceived value based on labor saving, and balanced scorecard pressure for "hard" value measurement. Note that this assumes value to be solely an economic question, although Missingham does also make the key point that the demonstration of value needs to be linked to the organization's value statements. The paper's conclusions were based on five studies, including the those of British Library, three U.S. public library systems, and a national bibliographic service in New Zealand. These initiatives suggested varying benefit ratios for libraries around the 1:4–6.5 levels. Some questions arise from this. Does the variation reflect real differences across communities? Larger libraries give higher returns, but what is the precise level of good? A 1:4 return might appear slight in absolute terms.

In a more recent study (a meta-analysis) of return on investment [22], S. Aabo considered this to be a new field and, driven by the financial crisis, Aabo's work is a review of reviews, covering seventeen U.S. public libraries and forty-three other international initiatives. It finds a lack of consistency in methodology and limiting valuation comparisons, but, again, the scores are generally within the 1:4 range. Notably, 80 percent of the studies are from the United States, and over 80 percent are from public libraries. The variety of methods included cost-benefit analysis, contingent valuation, and secondary economic impact.

L. N. White [23] considers ROI an old tool with potentially new uses. This paper recognizes that use of the tool in libraries has often been defensive or reactive and echoes the previous conclusions that there is currently no professional consensus on methodology for value determination. White suggests a more internal and instrumental use of the tool for predictive small-scale investment decision making, for postimplementation value assessment, and for introspective use to evaluate unit-to-unit

service within the library. A key comment is that these tools could also be applied in more offensive use for library intangible benefits, and this seems an important suggestion, leading toward methods that might answer the need for a more holistic picture of library value.

Thus, the last selected paper is one on intangible assets [24], because the recognition and evaluation of the full range of value of assets is key to assessment of overall value. The valuation of intangible assets will supplement that of real assets, which have tended to be based on the concepts of the library as storehouse, or a set of clearly defined service processes, and therefore do not satisfy the criteria of transcendence or of holism. This paper equates intangible assets with knowledge assets, and these are recognized as difficult to evaluate. However, there are methods for resolving this, and an approach of this type requires an intellectual capital reporting model, using similar tools to those already recognized above, such as ROI and contingent valuation. A key area where this paper broadens the viewpoint toward the holistic and the transcendent is in the recognition of additional dimensions suggested for assessment: human capital, structural capital, and relational capital. This list begins to recognize that there are valuations to be computed not simply for what the library does in instrumental terms but that there is also a value in what has been built by the library in terms of its staff capability and capacity, in the services built around both real and virtual collections, and in the relationships that the library has with both its immediate stakeholders and broader society. Most of these aspects are not only not measured by current frameworks but are not yet generally recognized as being objects for measurement and evaluation.

The conclusion from this is that the traditional tools for value measurement will only provide a partial answer to the demand for proof of worth. Economic value tools may be primarily instrumental, offering something new within our current frame of reference but not providing a transcendental answer of the kind sought. Some of these tools may be better employed internally for individual valuations rather than a whole library approach, because their frame of reference fails to take into account either intangible assets or broader definitions of value.

Value, Values, and Valuation

The connection between the quest for value measurement in academic libraries and their related values systems does not appear to have been made. M. Gorman [25] has been a strong exponent of values in the broadest sense underpinning library work, with the apparent intent to define a timeless (and therefore transcendent) list of values. However, Gorman

takes the position of rejecting current existing values that conflict with those more traditional values offered. This is not sufficient to resolve the real existence of conflicting values and to deal with the current context of cross pressures for measures and proofs that library leaders face. We have to place our values measurement firmly in today's context, resolve conflicting values debates, and provide evidence of contribution to values achievement beyond mere espousal.

It is worth returning to theories and philosophies of value and to use these and some experience of practical work on values to make the important connection between values definition and value measurement. Some further relevant quotations may help to establish this link. First, "Whenever valuation takes place . . . values must enter in. . . . In evaluation an indispensable recourse to underlying values is involved" [8, p. 71]. Second, "values cannot be deduced from . . . data or logic . . . they have to be chosen" [9, p. 167]. Finally, "acts or series of acts are steered by multiple and changing clusters of values" [26, p. 287]. This suggests clearly that there is a link between values and value, that values are a matter of choice, and that values are manifested in what people do and the choices they make. This manifestation helps to make them measurable or observable, and, consequently, values guide conduct. Thus, a values-based approach to measurement within libraries may be a better basis than traditional measurement systems, which tend to treat both users and staff as blind actors in a rational process of exchange, and one that might, therefore, need to be squeezed to be as efficient as possible. A values perspective might suggest that these often messy interactions are also a source of real value creation, generating relational capital in the trust, confidence, and knowledge on which new forms of service can be built.

There would seem to be a broadly accepted management science view that values and value are connected and that both are relevant to effective organizational performance: "Value creation is the objective of every enterprise, every worker and every leader" [27, p. 4]. Core values in the work situation provide purpose to a job on the part of individuals, and motivation is considered to be proportional to the values perceived in the job. Because a value represents a slogan for the rationalization of action, values will be key to correct actions, which then lead to value creation. Many libraries have value statements, but it may be that these have not been fully recognized or utilized to support improved performance or to help recognize how value is being added other than in superficial or general ways. An example from industry of the way this link has been recognized is the IBM experience [28], in which the company saw a need to improve "working together" within to reflect the company's new integrated solutions offerings for the external market. The solution was seen as a new set of corporate

values, achieved through a "Values-Jam": an Intranet discussion among 320,000 employees to "weigh in" on the new set of corporate values. Ten thousand comments were received, mainly dissonant and discontented, but the company leadership had the confidence to let the debate run, eventually leading to the resurfacing of some original company values lost in the recent transition: dedication, innovation, and trust. Note that these may be difficult to measure, but it was accepted that soft corporate values (and by implication measures of those) had to coexist alongside hard financial metrics.

At the University of York Library and Archives, we used this inspiration to conduct our own values investigation using a Web 2.0 consultation tool, followed by an all-staff conference to settle a new statement of values [6]. This included recognition of conflicting values sets as characterized by K. S. Cameron, R. E. Quinn, J. DeGraff, and A. V. Thakor [27]. While this started out as an investigation of staff values, we extended the question to what users valued or would value about our services. This would make the link between our internal value set and the addition or creation of value for the broader academic community. By asking what users value, instead of what they want, need, or rate as satisfactory, we received answers that were surprisingly different from what we had learned through quality approaches. A holistic academic vision of the library as the physical expression of knowledge emerged, which revealed current weaknesses in our appreciation of what is needed to deliver the virtual equivalent of former physical libraries. This had not been identified through our satisfaction surveys, which separated content, service, and physical dimensions. The student vision also revealed a new set of priorities, much more closely linked with day-to-day pressures and contextual experiences, suggesting a need for much closer involvement of this group in the design and delivery of service. Almost no response to our question suggested economic tools as being particularly relevant to proofs of value, although value for money was an issue for students in an increasingly difficult economic climate.

A number of conclusions appear to arise from the above. Value measurement must be linked to values, and in this sense it may be qualitatively different to rational instrumental measures, which require little sense of the shared beliefs inherent in values sets. Because values are chosen, value measures cannot be formed before the values set is agreed upon. Much of this relates to people, and, therefore, relevant measures are going to be closer to people than to process. The source for values measurement is not in institutional goals but, rather, in institutional value statements. These value statements give more ready insight into how we should act, as opposed to what we should do: the latter, in the past, being given more focus and also being more readily accessible and quantifiable.

Synthesis: The Transcendent Library

How might we use the concept of the transcendent library to assist the development of assessment of value? This seems to require a response to four questions. First, what are the value propositions of the transcendent library? Second, how do we compute the value that libraries are adding? Third, how should we present our valuations? Fourth, why is it necessary to engage with these ideas and questions?

It is probably already clear that the answer to the question "What is value?" is, to a certain extent, contextual. Value reflects values, and these are chosen. However, the act of defining and agreeing what values sets underpin value assumptions is an important part of this process and, for academic libraries, may result in resolving conflicting values within the library and beyond it among institutional stakeholders. It is apparent that values set statements produced by many academic libraries have a common core. However, a revisit of these, engaging a wider range of inputs from other stakeholders in the process, may well be worthwhile. Part of this process will be recognition of competing and shifting values. This is not a problem but an essential part of the process of evaluation because values must be actively chosen. This work also helps to reclaim the agenda and to move away from the narrow values sets espoused by some stakeholders. The value propositions of the library should arise from these statements, providing that the approach has been holistic and collective, and has sought values that transcend immediate institutional or library goals and capture those broader common goods to which we contribute. These should include more than the obvious range of individual impact or contribution to institutional income, ranking, or reputation (important though these are), but reflect more intangible value created within and beyond the institution.

It is not possible to present a full answer here to the question of how to compute value associated with value propositions, as these will differ in different contexts. It is already recognized that value has been difficult to measure and prove hitherto. Some existing data and measures will be useful in providing approaches or surrogates for value, particularly where these are focused on outcomes (as opposed to inputs or outputs), and, of course, most of our current activities and processes do add value and therefore will remain the objects of study. What is different is the conceptual consideration; what needs to be drawn out is the higher order, or transcendent effect delivered, rather than the immediate quality of the process or service. Academic libraries have spent much of the past twenty years rightly focused on quality improvement, but it is now time to broaden our viewpoint. Quality may be where the user says it is, but value requires an opinion from a much broader range of stakeholders. What might a values-based

scorecard look like and include? Such a framework will need to reflect the chosen values and provide some specific measures or indicators associated with each. It will be important here to recognize the difference between the traditional balanced scorecard based on balancing stakeholder interests, still focused largely on input/output/satisfaction, and this higher-level values scorecard. It may be that in some places value measurement already figures in such a framework. This is not to say that existing balanced scorecards can be abandoned; the focus of these on service and institutional goals and strategies remains essential.

The starting point for the development of the values scorecard will probably be the organization's view of itself as a creator of value and a holder of values. This may be in the form of, say, a mission statement that describes the university as a player in knowledge processes with a set of values statements that provides some clear directions as to how the addition of value is conceived. At the University of York, for example, values statements include the cocreation and custodianship of knowledge, assisting students to achieve their full potential, and participation and openness. In many of these it is not difficult to recognize that the library is contributing and adding value, but our current measures are generally directed toward narrower and more instrumental concerns or toward quality rather than the addition of value. In the work of creating value measures, it will be important to eschew narrow, individual, or reductionist approaches, or to merely reproduce existing process measurement in a different form. The transcendent contribution of the library and a holistic viewpoint should always be guiding principles. This means moving beyond the immediate pressures to achieve practical goals of efficiency, satisfaction, cost effectiveness, and staff capability to more transcendent goals, recognizing the library's broadest influence on, for example, education, research, knowledge assets, corporate health, innovation, inclusivity, internationalization, and partnerships. The concept of the library as a service has been very helpful to us over the past twenty years; it is now time to remind ourselves that we are not only an information delivery service but also a key nexus of knowledge-related activity within and beyond the institution.

These new valuations will need to be based on a deeper understanding of both our own and users' behavior and context in a changing world; recent and further work on understanding and improving student experience will be helpful here. The assessment of intangible value added will be key to developing a compelling story around our overall value proposition. The established threefold approach to the measurement of knowledge/intangible assets is likely to be a good starting point for recognizing areas for developing new measures or, in some cases, revitalizing older ones. The area of structural capital demands a refocus on some of our traditional professional strengths in building and deploying knowledge

systems and in demonstrating how our new digital libraries and retrieval systems add value as both intrinsic and extrinsic goods. The area of relational capital suggests clearer recognition of not only internal institutional partnerships and collaborations that add value and support institutional values but also the many external relationships that libraries build for long-term benefit. Finally, the evaluation of our great asset in human capital remains a neglected area and is diminishing in general appreciation in the digital age. Much, if not all, of the added value we create is initially built on the skills and capabilities of staff, and yet we still lack any full coherent framework for proof of worth in this area.

The presentation of proofs is often as important as the proofs themselves. It may be that we already have enough evidence available to demonstrate value, but the impression remains that we have not done so. It seems likely that the form of this will be largely based on narrative rather than through numbers alone, and this is not surprising in the current context [29].

Finally, it is an important truth that libraries have always been an act of faith in something beyond the immediate. Great libraries have always transcended their parent organizations, not just by physical presence or through collections and service but also in more subtle contributions to education, research, and scholarship. That contribution is worth recognizing and recording, and may be essential for survival in the digital age.

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