

# Space assessment: a venue for defining the academic library

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# Observations to consider today

- *We don't assess library spaces like we use to*
- *Assessment feels like research*
- *Paths to assess library space look different depending where you start*

# 1. We don't assess library spaces like we use to...

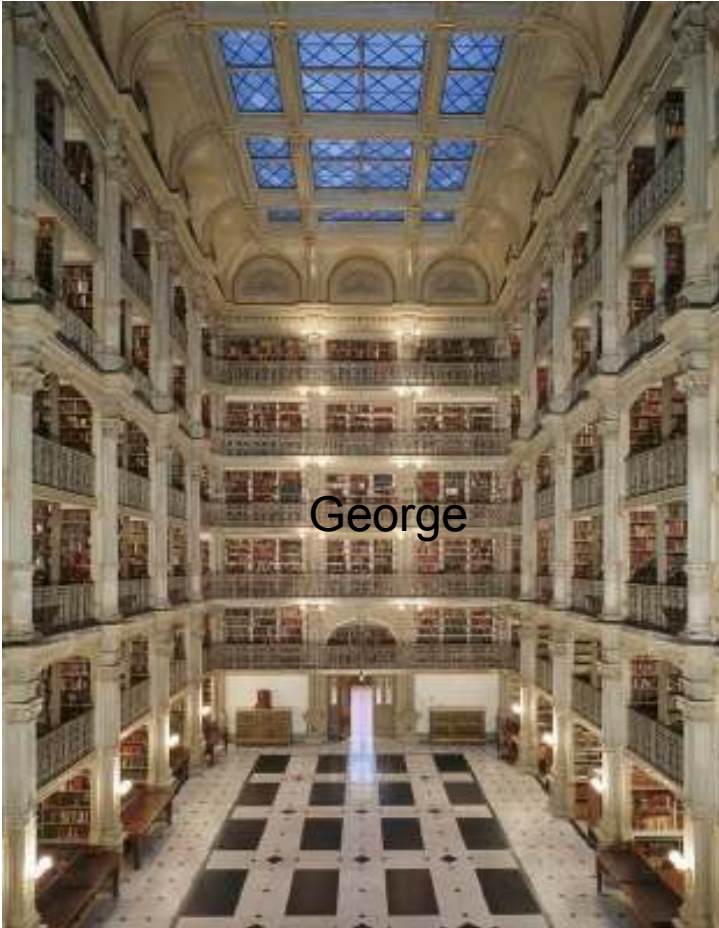


Beinecke Library,  
Yale University, New Haven CT



Biblioteca Geral University of Coimbra,  
Coimbra, Portugal

# Changes in library paradigms



George

George Peabody Library,  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA



Saxon State Library, Dresden, Germany  
[underground reading room]



Mills Learning Commons, McMaster U,  
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

# Core functions defining the library

1. Accumulator
2. Service provider
3. Facilitator

# Changing focus of space assessment

ASSESS  
[formative research]



EVALUATE  
[summative research]

# Space as cultural expression



Mobile library,  
Jakarta, Indonesian



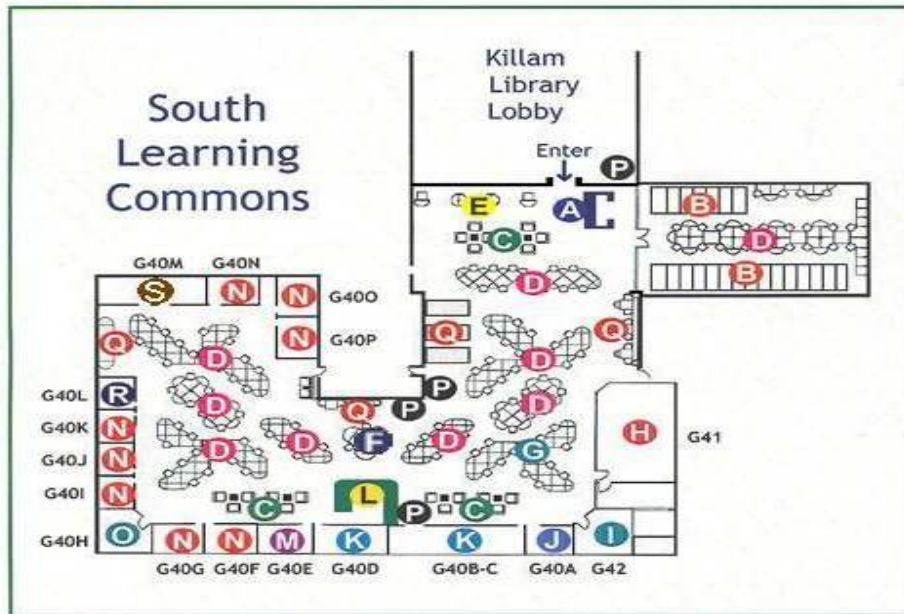
Bodleian Library, Oxford



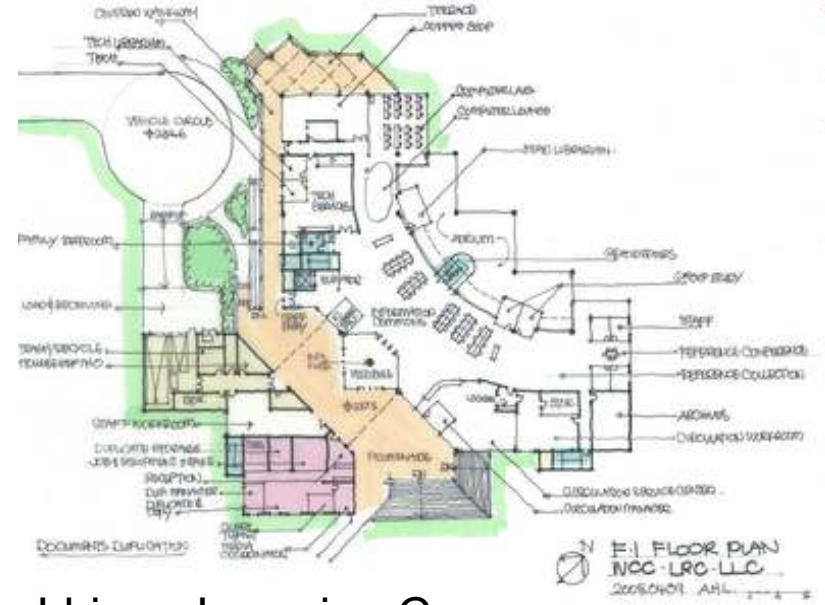
## 2. Assessment feels like research

1. Problem statement
2. Literature review
3. Research questions
4. Methodologies
5. Findings
6. Discussion
7. Conclusions

# Applied research guides responsible management



Dalhousie University, Halifax,  
Nova Scotia, Canada



Library Learning Commons,  
Windward Community College  
Kaneohe, Hawaii, USA



# Summative side of research

- Outputs and outcomes?
  - Punch lists for contractual deliverables and contractor performance
- Impacts?
  - Reinforce library's centrality?
  - Provide comfort, health, safety and security?
  - Address changing library needs over time?

### 3. Paths to assessment look different

...depending on the perspective of the library's purpose,

...identified through the assessment elements of:

- problem
- literature and observed practice
- questions to address
- procedures and methodologies

# Space for accumulation



Sterling Memorial Library,  
Yale University, New Haven, CT



# Assessment of space for accumulation



Library Shelving Facility  
Yale University

Drexel University Library Archives



# Assessment of space for services



# Marketing queries

- Does this place meet your expectations for what a library should look like?
- How comfortable are you in it? Do you like it? What does it do for you?
- How many students use the ...services?
- What resources are accessed from the commons?
- What happens in the space?



# Library “Web space”

- How many come to the websites and from where?
- What do they use?
- Are they satisfied?

# Gauging market penetration



# Assessment of space for learning



# Methods to assess information commons

- Statistics on service transactions or users 14
- Informal feedback from users 12
- Formal paper-based evaluation survey 8
- Computer-based survey 7
- Focus group [interview] 2
- Point of use computer pop-up survey 1
- Other [observations, staff feedback, one day paper-based survey] 3

# Assessment of learning

- How does the library as a place affect student capacity to learn?
- How does it affect the creation of new knowledge?
- There is very little formal assessment of learning that happens in learning commons or other library spaces.

# Assessment of space impact on learning activities

For example:

- Provide experience with multiple perspectives
- Emphasize student centeredness
- Embed learning in social experiences
- Encourage use of multiple modes of representation

# Assessment of alignment between design and values/mission

Scott Bennett's questions [sample]

- Why brick over virtual learning space?
- How to design space to encourage spending more time on studying?
- How will claims to authority over knowledge be managed by design of space?

# Formative assessment of learning environments

- Ethnographic studies at Rochester [Foster and Gibbons]
- Co-design process at San Jose State University and Cal Polytechnic State University [Somerville]



# Library space beyond the library



Nancy Roderer, Director  
Welch Medical Library,  
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine



# Assessment of space contribution to library mission

- To accumulate and house materials
- To provide services, especially access to information
- To facilitate knowledge creation

# Librarian for the future



# To continue the conversation. . .

Come see the evolving “Library Learning Terrace” and learning hubs at Drexel University to open spring, 2011

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