Reimagining libraries, learning & innovation for the 21st Century

The 21st century entrepreneurial learner seeking resources outside/inside of formal schooling

21st C infrastructure: no stability in sight
driven by continual exponential advances in computation

20th C infrastructure
S-curve stable over decades.

In a world of increasingly rapid change,
the half life of many stocks/skills is constantly shrinking.
(perhaps as low as 5 years)

Stocks =====> Flows
protecting/delivering authoritative knowledge
participating in knowledge flows
creating new knowledge
(canons/genres relatively fixed)
genres fluid: institutional warrants less valuable

Too Big to Know:
By david Weinberger (Jan, 2012)

“We used to know how to know. We got our answers from books or experts. We'd nail down the facts and move on. We even had canons.”

“But in the Internet age, knowledge has moved onto networks. There's more knowledge than ever, but it's different. Topics have no boundaries, and nobody agrees on anything.”

We, as learners, need new strategies and tools

“Knowledge is no longer that which is contained in space, but that which passes through it, like a series of vectors, each having direction and duration yet without precise location or limit.

In the future, it seems, there will be no fixed canons of texts and no fixed epistemological boundaries between disciplines, only paths of inquiry, modes of integration, and moments of encounter.”

Carla Hesse
our vision of libraries is, itself, in a state of flux.

Let us ponder the grand library

Bodleian Library at Oxford

Revisiting the Bodleian Library

But now with a new kind of magic

Revisiting the Bodleian Library

Hunt Library at NCSU

Where thinkers, dreamers and doers can come together to seek solutions to the grand challenges facing this world. …offers spaces custom-built for collaboration, equipped with cutting-edge tools to make concepts concrete. We’ve invested in immersive, large-scale visualization technology to create canvases that measure up to your ambition.

Students at work in the iPearl Immersion Theater
Large scale visualization in the iPearl Immersion Theater

Large Scale Visualization in the Creativity Studio

BUT WHAT ARE WE AIMING AT?

Learning dimensions

content -------> can be taught
skills -------> can be mentored
dispositions ----> can be cultivated

Dispositions of an entrepreneurial learner.

curiosity – driven by awe
questing – seeking, uncovering, probing ... but always doing (curiosity in action)
connecting – listening to others, engaging...
reflecting – on performance with the help of cohorts. Reflective practitioner

Spaces for cultivating the imagination and dispositions of the entrepreneurial learner

21st Century Urban library ?
Core Values

Equity: educational opportunity should be available to all

Full participation: everyone should be engaged and contribute

Social connection: learning is built around relationships

Today's kids – creating in a multi-modal world

A pragmatic pathway to discovering your interest/passion

A Place where Youth can Hang Out, Mess Around & Geek Out
A surprise finding

Although this room is outfitted for mostly digital activities with many digital tools & resources (but where the walls are mostly lined with physical books) they have more check outs (700%) of real physical books than ever.

The traditional epistemology

*homo sapiens*
man who knows

We need to honor an extended or blended epistemology

*Homo Sapiens*  
man who knows

*Homo Faber*  
man who makes

content/things
Tools as instrumental

The maker movement and beyond

Maker spaces for/in community libraries

3D Printers for Makers  
~If you can dream it you can print it~
Extending the blended epistemology

*Homo Sapiens*  
man who knows

*Homo Faber*  
man who makes

Content/things &  
CONTEXT  
Tools as instrumental

This could mean many things...

Developing new reading practices for reading context is now more important than ever in our 21st world of fluid genres??

Hmmm, maybe today’s kids can help us as we help them.

Mentorship meets reverse mentorship: a winning move

Ah, let me change the music of a film and I can alter not only its meaning but also what you actually “see”.

Ah, in a fluid world judgment and critical thinking is more important than ever...

Reading context is king, the millennials believe there are no authoritative sources!

Extending the blend still further

*Homo Sapiens*  
man who knows

*Homo Faber*  
man who makes

*Homo Ludens*  
man who plays

- Probing & pushing boundaries
- Invention within a space of rules

Play is a space of invention and permission

Based in reality but different from reality. Play creates a space to try out new things.

Homo Ludens  
a highly nuanced concept of play

As in permission to fail, fail and fail again, then get it right. Think of extreme sports or tinkering.

As in play of imagination – poetry.

As in an epiphany – suddenly falling in place as in solving a riddle.

Play is the progenitor of culture & innovation.

Johan Huizinga
A critical blend

- Homo sapiens: man who knows
- Homo faber: man who makes
- Homo ludens: man who plays

A pathway forward
Blending epistemologies for combining learning in school with learning in the wild

Learning Networks: with an infrastructure that accesses all these resources

From Networks to Ecosystems: and a platform that scaffolds these

Cloud + Mobile + Social + Big Data + Badges (OBI)
From Networks to Ecosystems: and a platform that scaffolds these

Where curation and mentorship take root.

And perhaps there is an ever bigger role for urban libraries of the 21st Century

Creating a social space or a CREATION SPACE for the play of imagination— the world of “what if” and “why not”

Harry Potter & world building

Fanfiction.com
65,000 stories & podcasts

Fanfiction.net
6,314 communities of interest
1,774 discussion forums
386,000 stories archived

But they are doing more than creating a set of stories. They are building worlds; exploring the what ifs, building a physics and a sociology—a first stage of world-building.

Imagination
Thriving in a world of “what if....” (crafting a context in which the imagined ‘wand’ now seems familiar, e.g. world building)

Making the strange familiar

Wait, there is more to this story

How might this play out for expanding The Civic Imagination?

The Harry Potter Alliance turns fans into heroes. We’re changing the world by making activism accessible through the power of story telling.
A vast and emerging topic – See: http://civicpaths.uscannenberg.org/blog/

Networks of Imagination

Networked imagination emergent from collective action

Networks of Practice    Communities of Interest

What lies behind all this?

A Fundamental Transition in how today’s millennials create their own identity

I am what I wear/own/control

I am what I create, share and others build on.

And the ‘others build on’ is critical.

An Identity Shift

I am what I wear/own/control

I am what I create, share and others build on.

Remix Culture
An Identity Shift

I am what I create, share and others build on.

Open Source Culture

Agency + Impact

The Big Picture

Three priorities for a 21st century public library service
1. Place the library as the hub of a community
2. Make the most of digital technology and creative media
3. Mentoring, connecting, guiding & curating

Library as a new kind of design studio where content and context come to play. Where folks of any age can imagine, create, learn & innovate and a social space scaffolding all the above

Thank You
Mixing & mingling at the Dojo

Peer learning/making/creating.
Arc-of-Life learning & what wasn’t learned at college