THE LIBRARIAN AND THE LIBRARY'S COMMUNITY

George S. Bonn*

EDITORIAL NOTE: The paper was delivered at the Annual Meeting of Chinese-American Librarians Association held on May 8, 1976 at De Paul University Lincoln Park Campus Library, Chicago, Illinois. Professor George S. Bonn was the main speaker and Miss Margaret Bush of National College of Education, Mr. Roy Chang of Western Illinois University, Dr. Leo C. Ho of Washtenaw Community College and Dr. Lee-Ihsia Ting of Northern Illinois University served as panelists. Mrs. Theresa Hwa of De Paul University Library presided at the meeting and introduced the speaker and panel.

One of the most significant developments in American librarianship within the past five years or so has been the recognition of the fact that no library, no library school — indeed, no institution, organization, or undertaking of any kind — can operate effectively without clearly defined goals and objectives: goals and objectives that are understood and accepted by the staff and that are realistic and up-to-date in regard to both internal and external conditions.

In evaluating programs of library education, for example, the new Standards for Accreditation 1972 of the American Library Association are applied within the framework of a library school’s publicly stated goals and objectives for its specific educational programs. Library acquisition policy, for another example, is now very often based on library goals and objectives. Library collections and services, again, are now more and more often evaluated against library goals and objectives which

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themselves have been established within the context of the goals and objectives or mission of the parent organization to which the library belongs. Goals and objectives do seem to have "caught on" in American librarianship.

Traditionally, in the United States at least, a library's reason for existing (the basis for its goals and objectives) has been to serve the needs, however they are defined, primarily of the library's particular community: the group of people who are entitled to the library's service, the people who established it, who determined its form, focus, and function, and who support it. (In other countries this concept of service — to a community, or even to an individual — may not be so well rooted. For that matter, practice varies widely in the United States, also.)

The typical public library in the United States, for example, exists to serve the needs primarily of all the people who live in the municipality in which the library is located and by which the library is established and supported. The typical academic library exists to serve the needs primarily of all the students, faculty, and staff who are associated with the college or university to which the library belongs and by which it is supported. Similarly, a school library, a company library, a government library, or any other kind of library, exists to serve the needs primarily of its own quite clearly defined community, the community by which the library is established and supported.

Note the use of "primarily" in these statements. It suggests that a library's first responsibility is to its own community, and, conversely, that a library's own community has first call on its services, two concepts that historically have been potent factors in setting library policy and in justifying library support.

But during the past few decades, as you know, a number of changes have occurred in society that have been brought about by changes in other areas: in economics, in communication, in research, in technology, to mention only four that have had profound impact on society and on libraries which both serve and depend on society in their own communities. It is no longer
possible for a library to be completely independent and self-sufficient within its own community, a consummation so devoutly wished by a number of libraries 30 or 40 years ago. But neither is it necessary.

Both formal and informal cooperative arrangements between and among libraries of all kinds have been developed in recent years and are expanding rapidly, so that very soon it may be said that even an individual library exists to do its share in serving the needs of all society, not just its own small part (its own community), and that all libraries exist to serve the needs of any part of society, through interlibrary cooperation made both necessary possible by one or more of the changes affecting society referred to earlier.

Now, just as society as a whole is made up of innumerable and multifarious communities, so each library community is made up of many and varied sub-communities, smaller groups of persons whose similar ages, interests, occupations, home addresses, cultural origins, educational backgrounds, and so on, tend to distinguish them from other sub-communities in one way or another at least some of the time. And in this same sense, of course, these sub-communities are never either clear-cut or stable; they expand, contract, shift, realign, interchange, and overlap constantly, not only within one library's community but also between and among communities of different libraries.

Thus, a chemistry professor may also be an opera buff, a who-dunit bug, a sports fan, a suburbanite, a parent of a teenager, and a technical literature referee, probably making use of both academic and public libraries—one hopes rather frequently—each time as a member of a very different sub-community. It should be apparent that all sorts of permutations and combinations of sub-communities are not only possible but also very likely, given the variety of interests a person can have and the variety of libraries that exist. So, any one library's community may be quite diversified indeed. Its resources and facilities to serve this community also must be quite diversified and must be made available locally either from within the library itself
or from elsewhere through interlibrary cooperative arrangements.

My concern this morning is primarily with the library's community, a remarkably varied and constantly varying group of people as we have seen, so it will be helpful to look briefly at the needs a community has that might be served or satisfied by its library. Serving the needs of its community is the *raison d'être* of the typical American library, as has been pointed out earlier, but how do these needs arise in the first place? Are they unique to American communities? It can be shown, I think, that the kinds of service an American library offers to satisfy the kinds of needs an American community has, all reflect to some degree rather basic American and western democratic social concepts: belief in universal education, faith in an "enlightened" electorate, assumption that personal growth is an individual matter, tradition of a moral society, acceptance of recreation and leisure as social goods, recognition of the importance of cultural heritage, and concern for posterity. Over the years American librarians of all kinds and persuasions have supported these concepts in many ways by collecting, preserving, organizing, and disseminating appropriate materials or the information which the materials contain.

Stated in another way, libraries in the United States serve society in one or another of the following commonly identified areas: (1) preservation of materials; (2) research; (3) information; (4) education; and (5) culture. Some libraries go beyond these five basic service areas, some emphasize certain ones more than others, and some limit themselves to only one or two, in accordance with the needs of their communities and with their own goals and objectives. These same five basic service areas, it should be noted, are found in libraries all over the world, but the extent to which they are emphasized depends on local tradition, social concepts, political environment, and economic conditions, among other factors.

In a footnote here I want to call your attention to an article in a recent issue of *Libri* which presents a balanced commentary on just one aspect
of library service in countries with differing backgrounds. The title of the article is "The librarian's commitment to intellectual freedom in America and developing countries" and the author is Rasu Ramachandran who is with the National Library of Singapore. It is on pages 324–331 of the December 1975 issue.

My foregoing brief sketch of a library as multipurpose agency serving multifarious needs of a well-defined but internally complex community may cause the uninitiated to wonder any library does any-body any-good any-where at any time. Yet we all know that libraries are effective, and each one of us knows at least one library that satisfies most of its community some of the time and perhaps even some of its community all of the time, if not all of its community all of the time.

It is my conviction that what makes the difference in the quality of service provided by a library is its director's knowledge of and involvement in its particular community. The larger the library, of course, the larger the number of librarians who must know and be involved in its community. It is, I believe, a major responsibility of every librarian to know and to be involved in his or her library's community.

Every director of a library and, to a lesser extent, every staff member, has a number of formal and informal relationships with the library's community, his or her extra-mural responsibilities so to speak, which must be carried out with both skill and determination in order to ensure the effective fulfillment of the purpose (the goals and objectives) of the library and thus to justify its (and the librarian's) existence and support. The essence of the matter is information, inward and outward.

Regardless of the kind of library, every head librarian has certain formal responsibilities to the library's community: (1) to the officials, the administration, of the parent organization; (2) to the staff members or the departments or other units of that organization; and (3) to the lay members, the general public, of that organization.

Every head librarian, for example, is expected to prepare
and submit formal reports to his parent organization at least annually, and certainly for special purposes as required. Every head librarian, also, should be expected to serve on relevant committees of the parent organization: research, development, curriculum, the library, special events, and so on, depending, of course, on the particular organization. All too often, however, the librarian is forgotten, overlooked, or simply ignored at the time the committee is authorized or appointed so he cannot be nearly as helpful to the organization as he should be, either directly through his personal knowledge and experience or indirectly through his increased ability to develop library resources, services, and facilities to meet the expected (or unexpected) needs resulting from the deliberations and recommendations of the various committees. Librarians must make their parent-organization administrations thoroughly aware of the benefits, indeed the necessity, of having librarians on important committees that may have some relevance to or bearing on library resources and services.

Every head librarian, again, has the responsibility to keep staff members (teachers, research workers, lower administrative officers) and all departments or other units in the parent organization continually informed about library resources, their development, and their use. He should make easily available a manual on effective library use directed to the needs of members of the staff. He should send out periodic lists of books and journals newly acquired. He should put out an attractive information bulletin covering items of interest and importance to potential library users. He should publicize procedures for staff members to recommend or to select new titles for addition to the collection, and for staff members to evaluate existing library service and to suggest new or improved kinds of service. Every librarian also has the responsibility to accept invitations to staff and department functions (meetings, convocations, and other formally organized gatherings). And every librarian must concern himself with the possible development and use of department libraries and other special collections that may better serve the needs of specialist readers, and be prepared to make rational
recommendations on possible courses of action.

Every head librarian has similar responsibilities to the lay members of the parent organization, the students, for example, or the general public or the clerical and other non-specialist workers. He must keep them informed about library resources and services through suitable publications or announcements. He should accept invitations to teach regular classes or groups of people in bibliography and use of subject literatures, in use of the library, or in some specialty he may have. And he should also concern himself with deposit collections, browsing collections, dormitory collections, branch libraries, mobile libraries, and other resources and facilities to serve general readers.

In a footnote here I want to mention an interesting development at Sangamon State University in Springfield, Illinois, where for the past five years a new approach to library organization has been freeing librarians from strictly administrative duties and has been making better use of their professional expertise as teachers, with knowledgeable non-professionals taking over as department heads. See the Journal of Academic Librarianship, September 1975, pages 4-7: “Organizing the academic library for instruction” by Howard W. Dillon. Mr. Dillon was University Librarian at Sangamon State from its beginning in 1970 until 1975. He is now with the University of Chicago library.

Experienced librarians will think of other equally important formal responsibilities which could be added to the few I have mentioned.

In a way, the informal responsibilities of librarians are among the most professionally effective—and usually the most neglected—of all the responsibilities they have. In one sense, they may be considered simply as good public relations for the library, which they certainly are when properly handled. But in another sense they may be considered as useful and efficient lines of communication between the library’s staff and the library’s public, which indeed they are—for the benefit of both the library and the library’s community.

Here are a few of the more important of these informal responsibilities:
1. Visiting staff and department offices or laboratories, to get to know both regular and potential library users in their native haunts, so to speak, to find out what they are doing and what their interests are, and to discover (or better, to anticipate) their probable library needs. Return informal visits to the library offices should be encouraged, too, to allow outsiders to see what happens in a library office and to make the library a somewhat more friendly and attractive place to come to. Coffee or tea helps, too, as visitors to libraries in other countries are well aware, but don't worry about not getting your work done because other people have work to do, too.

2. Aiding projects that individual staff members are working on: books, lectures, hobbies, and the like. Offer help in getting projects started, in coaching assistants in library exploitation (citation verification, e.g.), in developing bibliographies, in getting photocopies or books or films on inter-library loan, or in other relevant ways.

3. Mixing with staff members on semi-social occasions such as lunches, coffee breaks, teas, or dinners, again to learn more about their interests and points of view and to discover or anticipate needs as well as to offer any aid that seems called for.

4. Attending organization-sponsored activities of all kinds: meetings, lectures, sports or other entertainment programs, for example. Joining staff and civic associations or other staff-supported or public-supported groups, to become truly involved in the life of the community which the library is serving.

5. Setting up book exhibits, in the library and out of it at busy locations: continuing, month-long exhibits which are organized around anniversaries, timely topics, important persons or events, local authors, new library editions or additions, rare or otherwise unusual works, or other causes that come to mind. These exhibits should be attractively mounted and labelled and should invite both attention and users to the library.

6. Displaying newspaper clippings and periodical articles
covering current events, significant discoveries, obituaries, book reviews, pictures, or whatever else seems noteworthy. These displays, too, should be attractively mounted and should invite attention to the library. They should be changed frequently, every four or five days or so, and should be as varied as possible. They may be put up in or near the library but they should not compete with the book exhibits in order to get double exposure, so to speak.

7. Giving occasional talks and lectures on invitation, to classes, organization-sponsored groups and meetings, visitors to the library, and so on.

Again, experienced librarians will know of other equally effective but quite informal responsibilities to add to this short list.

I used to think that any librarian worth his salt would consider these kinds of extra-mural responsibilities as all part of his stock in trade, but as I have visited libraries in various parts of the United States and Canada I have gradually come to the conclusion that many librarians are simply not interested in getting out of their offices and into the real world of their particular communities. In talking with research workers some years ago in several of the most prestigious universities in Canada I was amazed to hear, on a number of occasions, that I was the first librarian, local or otherwise, who ever bothered to find out what their library needs are, let alone come to visit them in their labs as I was doing. In California on another occasion talking with technically trained persons to find out how and where they obtained information that would be helpful to them in their work, I was amazed to learn that many of them never once thought of the local public library as a possible source of the information they were looking for, even though the several libraries I visited had excellent resources in the very subject areas those persons were interested, and often, in fact, the very journals that were wanted. Rapport between the librarians and the library communities was all too often just minimal. And more recent experiences have corroborated
those earlier disillusionments.

All of you who are here today and others who may read these comments later on will be surprised to learn, as I have been, that there still are libraries and librarians in the United States that simply are out of touch with their communities.

Perhaps the decisive factor that determines how readily a person will accept and then fulfill his professional responsibilities is his basic professional attitude, a composite built up of his individual attitudes toward particular responsibilities and toward each element of his total professional experience.

Thus, a librarian's attitude toward his job is important; his job must be intellectually and professionally satisfying or his attitude will be negative.

A librarian's attitude toward the organization he works for is important; he must feel sincerely that he belongs to it, that he is involved in it, that he is appreciated by it, and that he can be proud to be a part of it, or his attitude will be negative.

A librarian's attitude toward his colleagues, his library's staff, is important; he must sense that he is part of a team striving toward the same goal, or his attitude will be negative.

A librarian's attitude toward his library's users is important; he must get to know them as individuals, and to know their individual interests and needs, or his attitude will be negative.

A librarian's attitude toward his library's program is important; he must understand it thoroughly and he must be able to explain it, interpret it, participate in it, and help develop it (keeping in mind the goals and objectives of his library), or his attitude will be negative.

A librarian's attitude toward library work itself is important; he must understand and be able to apply the principles of building, organizing, and utilizing library collections to serve the needs of potential library users, or his attitude will be negative.
A librarian's attitude toward library materials is important: he must know his own library's resources intimately, know their contents, and know how best to exploit them especially when resources are limited, or his attitude will be negative.

A librarian's attitude toward library service is crucial; he must be service-minded and he must know that service invariably is geared to the needs of the library's community, or his attitude will be negative.

Finally, a librarian's attitude toward the library profession is important; he must be proud of it and be willing to help strengthen it and be eager to recruit for it and, above all, be himself a professional librarian 24 hours a day, or his attitude will be negative.

The professional responsibilities of librarians—in their libraries, in their library communities, in the world beyond their communities—demand positive professional attitudes in all professional librarians. Today I have been discussing one important, but often neglected, segment of a librarian's professional responsibilities, the part relating to his library's own community. Every librarian's attitude toward his community and toward his responsibilities in that community will determine his success or failure as a professional librarian worthy of the name.

COMMENTS

Margaret Bush*

The community of users of any given library comprises a broad range of needs and abilities in dealing with the library, from the very unsophisticated user who may not even know what he wants—let alone how to find it to the highly specialized person needing very specific materials. In the one case the librarian needs some sensitivity to the person and good common

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sense about materials. In the second case, it is very important that the librarian have an expertise with tools and techniques for locating information. In both instances the librarian needs to be both physically and personally accessible, and the same might be said of the library materials.

The matter of accessibility involves both physical availability and attitude. Too often, unfortunately, one finds librarians who have unrealistic expectations of the user. When the librarian reveals irritation at the user's inability to locate what he needs there is a real barrier to communication and service. We have to realize from the outset that those of us working in libraries do many things to confuse our clients: we lock things up, use unfamiliar language, arrange the materials in ways that are not readily comprehensible, and have the strange notion that people will read signs. Although we like to organize things, we often don't like to pick them up or see that someone does. Any of these factors can cause considerable frustration and irritation for the user.

Attitude towards client may be one reason why the librarian is not accessible to the community, and another component may be the librarian's self-image. Somehow many librarians do not see their function as being to expedite the flow of information. There is too often a tendency to view ourselves as either executives or as experts in limited areas. This sort of attitude often keeps the librarian on one side of the desk—effectively separated from the user. The accessible librarian is one who makes many trips to the card catalog and to the shelves.

It has seemed strange and disappointing to me, as both librarian and library patron, that so many librarians are not readers. Most information needs are still verbal and require the use of print. The efficient servicing of these needs requires broad general knowledge and also skill and knowledge in using bibliographic tools and—increasingly often—some basic pieces of electronic equipment. A fumbling approach does not make the needed material accessible to the user.

While librarians serve that community of persons who are
just outside the library in an institution or municipality, those of us inside the library are also part of the community of users. We also need library service. It can be a great personal and professional pleasure to have colleagues who are alert and generous towards our own interests and needs. A sharing of time and materials can do a great deal to create a productive atmosphere within the library.

If meeting the broad range of information needs and interests of the community is a major function of the library then materials and the librarian must be readily available to the library's users. We need to be knowledgeable about the materials we provide, the needs and abilities of our clients and about the ways we can most effectively bring people and information together. A healthy respect for the material, the user, ourselves as librarians and for each other is vital.

Roy Chang*

All human institutions are established in response to certain human needs which also serve as the basis for their continued existence. A library, like any other institution, comes into being on the assumption that it meets a need or provides a common good for the community. If these assumptions are proved to be invalid, the continued existence of the library is no longer justified. It is also true that all human institutions have goals and objectives which usually derive from a thorough study of both theoretical and practical solutions to human problems. As time goes by and as other societal factors change, the original goals and objectives may need revisions from time to time. Therefore, the rationale for all institutions should be checked or reviewed periodically. For this reason, we librarians must take a close look at whether the library is progressing on the right course or not.

Although there are various types of libraries, such as public libraries, school libraries, college and university libraries, special

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libraries, etc., they all share a basic function: to provide library service to their communities. Each individual library must have its own approach to planning and policy-making in order to meet the particular need of the community it serves. It is only to be expected that an academic library collection is quite different from that of a public library. One will also find great differences both in size and in nature of the collection from one university library to another and from one public library to another, just as one will find that each community has its unique characteristics and makes somewhat different demands on the library.

It is generally understood that a thorough knowledge of the community is essential for meaningful library planning and effective library operation. Without a formal and systematic study of the community, the librarian's knowledge of community needs will be incomplete and library policy-making may be subjected to domination by the most vocal individuals. Dr. Bonn points out that the success of any library is largely determined by whether or not the librarian understands the community. As vital as community analysis is, many librarians neglect studying the community adequately. In the January 1976 issue of Library Trends, devoted to the subject of "Community Analysis and Libraries," it is noted by the editor, "While the profession seems to have a growing awareness of the need for community analysis, its practice is still quite limited." The reasons for this could be that most libraries are understaffed, or that librarians are not equipped with the knowledge necessary to conduct efficient community analysis, or both. Worth noting is the fact that library schools are increasingly recognizing the importance of the discipline of community analysis and more library schools are incorporating it into their curricula. I believe that this is a significant step toward understanding the importance of the library community.

Business institutions seem to be much more advanced in recognizing the value of community analysis. Their operation, of course, follows closely the principle of meeting consumers' needs. They not only try to understand consumers' needs but
also create needs for consumers. The library profession should be able to learn some lessons from business in this respect.

Since ideally library service is for everyone in the community, librarians would like to have all segments of the population in the community make use of the library's services. However, studies have shown that some segments of the community are never reached by library services. This is another problem that the library must study in order to be able to extend its service to non-users.

Library function is not limited to meeting the information needs of the community. It also provides enlightenment and guidance to the community for better quality of life. At times the library is behind the community providing for its expressed needs. At other times the library is ahead of the community giving it new ideas. Just as the community definitely influences library policy, the library also has an effect on community life, resulting in a two-way exchange of ideas between the library and the community.

On the other hand, a community does not exist in a vacuum, but rather among other communities, states, and nations. We all understand that each country has its own special ideals and interests which normally govern the policies of all its public institutions. A library has to operate in accordance with its national interest. A number of Western librarians have observed that many libraries in other countries, particularly in developing countries, are established to serve the needs of the government rather than the needs of the community.

New technology has greatly enhanced the efficiency of library operation and has heightened its service to its community. It has also expanded the scope of its service to other communities through on-line network systems.

Although community analysis is important for library planning, one should not forget that it takes efficient library operation to carry out its goals and objectives. Problems within the library such as personality conflicts, lack of communication,
politicking, credit-hunting, etc. are quite detrimental to the ultimate cause of the library. In order to achieve maximum service to its community, a library must have good planning based on community analysis, and efficient operation guided by enlightened goals and objectives.

Leo C. Ho*

A library that desires to serve the community effectively must thoroughly understand its clientele. Within the library's community may be clients representing many categories. The clientele of a central public library will include lawyers, journalists, and other professionals, as well as students at the high school, college, and graduate levels. Housewives, merchants, laborers, tradesmen, children, and retirees may all make use of small branch libraries. The academic library's community is made up of students, faculty, and staff. Engineers, businessmen, and managers provide the clientele for a company library.

A library serving as a source of information for its community must respond to its diverse needs in order to be able to plan for its own needs for survival. To exist it must function as a clearly recognized source of information for all members of its community. A library that ignores the various elements of its community does so at its own peril, for it is a fact of life that libraries are in very real competition for the tax dollar. A library is expected to be accountable to the public.

To achieve this goal careful studies of demographic, social, and psychological factors must be made before the librarian can make an accurate analysis of the community's real needs and be kept abreast of changes in those needs. After identifying the chief problems in the community, the library should assign priorities among them and then offer the resources to help solve those problems. It must serve as an active, rather than

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a passive institution, to be perceived as a vital force in the community.

Unless representatives of every area within the community recognize the important services the library renders, when funds are low it is the library’s budget that will be first to feel the cut.

On the other hand, if camera hobbiests know there are three shelves of books on photography, or that there is an annual display of local photography held at the library, if medical and hospital personnel are aware of publications available in their field, community support will be evident at the polls on that crucial day when a village vote is taken.

Today librarians must assume a non-traditional role and to break with the traditional image of being persons who remain behind desks, except to shelve books or to quiet whisperers. They must enter the mainstream of community life. Library representatives must, by contacting program chairmen of various professional and volunteer organizations, demonstrate for them the opportunities that exist for information retrieval to fill their needs; must inquire of them what new areas are important to them. Bringing examples to various groups of the newest reference books, colorful reading lists, booking dates for audio visual presentations or for exhibits in their field will increase their interest and support of a library that they will know as their library.

Contact must be made by regular visits to schools, unemployment offices, health departments, unions, and all major business and social organizations. In this way, trends can be spotted in advance, helping the library to make plans for new services. Acquisitions and budget allotments cannot be left as last minute responses to requests from the public.
Lee-hsia Ting*

In recent years, new technology has brought changes in library concepts and operations. Photocopying service has long been favorably accepted (although the copyright issue will have to compel us to do some re-thinking about the large-scale photoduplicating done in libraries). Machine-readable bibliographical data base and computer photocomposition have radically changed the economic feasibility of cataloging updating and printing. The on-line, interactive computer search services greatly facilitate information retrieval, especially in science/technology/engineering, business as well as some other fields of social sciences (although I believe the key to the entire retrieval problem is the effective design of descriptors). Microphotography offers the possibility of changing the libraries from paper to microfiche collections. Full-text indexing and COM (computer-output-microfilm) are only two examples of newer developments within the last few years.

The National Commission on Library and Information Science, which undertakes the long-range planning and goal setting for our profession at national level, for instance, seems still to place a heavy stress on the development of a complicated technological network. Computer and telecommunications technology are vital to its proposed national network. The Commission’s “ultimate objective is to provide every one in the country, regardless of social or economic condition equal access to the rich information resources this country possesses.” This statement induces one to ask: Does everybody want, or need, “equal access” to information? Does my old landlady in DeKalb who occasionally reads a novel or two have the same information needs as a surgeon having a patient on the operating table? What do we exactly mean by equal access?

With the growing number of applications of computer

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technology to library programs, specialists' attention seem to have concentrated on problems such as how to increase the speed with which data can be processed, and how to improve the capability to handle a mounting work load. Little attention has been paid to users' needs: in other words, how much information, information of what kind, in what format, and of what quality is needed. Of all the libraries, the National Library of Medicine is undoubtedly a pioneer and leader in library automation. And yet, do we know for sure what are the information needs of the medical personnel? In 1973, the University of Western Ontario School of Library and Information Science published its study, "Medical Information Network for Ontario--Determination of Need." This study reveals, among other things, that paramedical personnel depend on the so-called "gatekeepers" to obtain information for them. The chief "gatekeepers," the doctors, make little use of libraries. They simply do not have time to seek for information beyond what they can obtain quickly from colleagues or in reference books and periodicals in their private collections. "A network will not be cost effective," it concludes, "if no effort is made to change present patterns of information-seeking behavior. . . . A network might be viewed as a catalyst to change--change the information-seeking behavior and the role of the library." If this conclusion is valid and can be applied to individual personnel elsewhere, can we not help asking: Do we really need to use this expensive means to bring about a change in information-seeking behavior? Can programs of continuing education not do the trick?

How library and information services are to be funded in the coming decades is an emotionally and politically charged issue. Should the federal government, for instance, assume responsibility for the interstate components of a national information program and for matching incentive funding to the states to create the intrastate components? Will the public be willing, or able, to support such a program? Should the tax-supported public library continue to supply service and loan materials to the public free of charge, or should the public library charge its patrons for services they have already paid for through the federal, state
and local taxes? The 1970 Census of Housing and Census of Population are available also on magnetic tapes. What kind of information in the census for instance can be supplied free, and what cannot? If there is a user charge, how can we hope to provide “equal access” of information to every one in this country regardless of economic conditions. Are we going to bring welfare also to library service subsidize those who cannot afford to pay for their information needs? What will become of the interpersonal relationship between the librarians and the library users?

As librarians, we have to be concerned not only with the existing technologies and technological potentials in bibliographical access and control, but also their sociological and psychological implications, because the library is after all a social institution. There are many advantages and possibilities as well as drawbacks to computerization in the very near future. There are also many questions we have to ask, so that we shall not be trying frantically to solve the wrong problems. The impact of new technology on American libraries is, and will be, very great. Personally I feel that the long-range effect of microfilm technology on the book and library building may perhaps be greater than the computer, but we do not have the time to go into that aspect this morning.