

The Librarian 2.0 and the visual Information Professional

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ABSTRACT

Based on the last decade of development in the field or domain of Library and Information Science, the role of the Information Professional and the qualifications and competences of the Librarian has also changed. In line with the electronic, digital and virtual development in the same period of time there have come new and interesting rooms and spaces for the Librarian to interact within.

These rooms and spaces can be both an advantage and a disadvantage for the library and the librarian however both parts are forced to interact or at least take position in this new 2.0 time. The current impact of the new technologies in the life of the Information Professional is relevant to involve in the discussion of the role of this new Librarian 2.0 between the physical, digital and virtual library (figure 1).

In relation to this point are it important to define the difference between especially the digital and the virtual library in connection to increase the role of the librarian in those libraries.



Figure 1: Librarian 2.0

The rise and fall of physical libraries is the focus for this paper and in relation to this matter the paper will discuss the difference of the three above mentioned library forms partly the physical, partly the digital and partly the virtual library.

Can the library today have all three parts included and fairly divide the resources relevantly between them? Is it relevant to have a virtual library? In this context the virtual library can be the library service in virtual worlds like Second Life.

We still experience libraries in the virtual communities and on this point is Denmark absolutely not behind, but is it used by anyone? What about the digital library

versus the virtual library? – And versus the physical library? The questions and possible answers will be discussed.

And: Based on the American Sign Language (ASL) and the Danish Sign Language (DSL) are an official and international sign language for the librarian 2.0 developed.

This language can easily be learned and used by any interested librarian from any country and this sign language is mainly consisting of the already existing international signs and natural signs. There are very few non-synchronic signs, which are the non-natural signs, and it is those signs that are difficult to learn. Information Professional, Information Management, Librarian 2.0 and their challenges within the New Information Professional is the main headings in process of develop and justify this language to the Library and Information Science domain.

These above-mentioned terms describing the new librarian (figure 2) are the argument for engaging and upon that looking further into the usefulness of this language in the field of Library and Information Science. This will be discussed as well as the above and below mentioned.



Figure 2: The new librarian

What is the purpose of a new common language for the LIS sector? Why have a new visual language in the LIS domain as a part of challenging the new Information Professional? Is it relevant with this visual sign language and can / will it be used? On which principles does this language rely?

That's some of the questions this paper will look further into, discuss as well as try to give an answer.

KEYWORDS

Library, Librarian 2.0, visual Information Professional, sign language, ASL (American Sign Language), DSL (Danish Sign Language)

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the last decade of development in the field or domain of Library and Information Science, the role of the Information Professional and the qualifications and competences of the Librarian has also changed. In line with the electronic, digital and virtual development in the same period of time there have come new and interesting rooms and spaces for the Librarian to interact within.

These rooms and spaces can be both an advantage and a disadvantage for the library and the librarian however both parts are forced to interact or at least take position in this new 2.0 time. The current impact of the new technologies in the life of the Information Professional is relevant to involve in the discussion of the role of this new Librarian 2.0 between the physical, digital and virtual library (figure 1).

In relation to this point are it important to define the difference between especially the digital and the virtual library in connection to increase the role of the librarian in those libraries.



Figure 3: Librarian 2.0 (Spelled with sign-letters)

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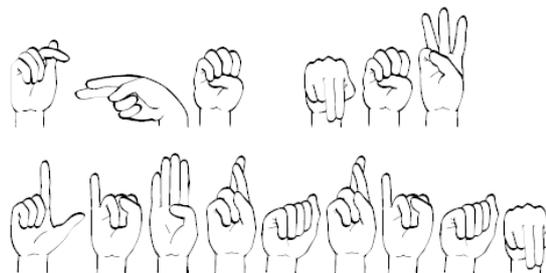


Figure 4: The new librarian (spelled with sign-letters)

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That's some of the questions this paper will look further into, discuss as well as try to give an answer.

Together these to parts contributes to a certain view on the librarian today and this paper will try to explain and discuss this plus giving an answer to the questions here above asked. This process of developing and expand this approach to the modern information professional and the Librarian 2.0 has started on the Royal School of Library and Information Science, but has first finished through my job as an all-round librarian, because here I experienced quite another site to the librarian than I have been thought at the school. It is my thesis that the Librarian School Librarian is much more academic than the librarian I met at this small village library.

Please note that the figures in this introduction plus several figures in the paper is an illustration of titles, names and words in the developed international sign language for librarians.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Librarian 2.0, the visual Information Professional and the new librarian are all parts of the librarian today and this paper will try to further into parts of the librarian A.D. 2009.

Through the paper I will try to hold focus to the main points of view as it is described in the abstract and introduction; and in addition to that set focus on the challenges for the New Information Professional as segment to work and describe the intellectual content of the paper – the theses etc.

The Librarian 2.0 today is often interacting between the three rooms or locations, partly the physical room, partly the digital room and partly the virtual rooms. Each one of the rooms is demanding there set of qualifications. The figure 5 below shows an approach to the technical developments improve on the new librarian 2.0 and how it has done its influence on the role of the librarian 2.0.

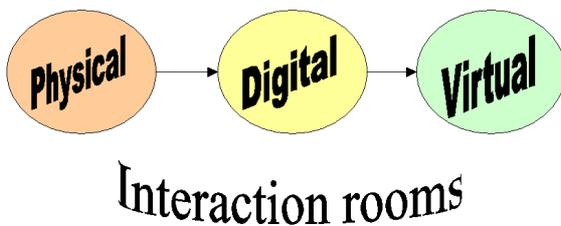


Figure 5 Interaction rooms

The figure above shows an approach, which is chosen to show how a part of the reality this paper tries to find/view. The physical library is the traditional library, as we know it. It has its place and you can physical go there, graze, get help, read the paper, reach a settlement etc. Concurrently with the technological development the libraries moved into the digital world and the librarians had to upgrade their competences in and time. The technological development continued and the virtual world became reality – also for libraries. It was time that libraries and librarians became a part of this new library room. The Danish Roskilde Library was, in a trial period, a part of one of the virtual worlds, Second Life, where they had weekly meetings to discuss and talk with whom ever there was in their virtual library room (figure 6).



Figure 6 Roskilde Library meeting example

A part of this trial experiment was to discover if they could get closer to their borrowers or local inhabitants at all. The part of the experiment I followed showed that it was mostly library- and Information Science related people who came and participated in the weekly meetings and discussions.

As a result of that, they stopped being in the virtual world, because they didn't reach their main target group. Another example from that time is a larger project named "Info Island DK" where several libraries went together in order to create a more optimal virtual library solution for the entire Danish population (figure 7).

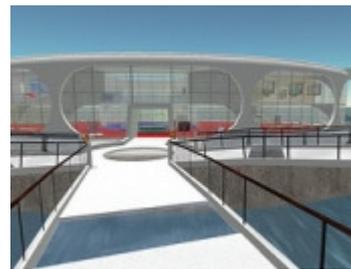


Figure 7 Virtual library example from Denmark

As far as I have followed them, it went well as they continued to develop and innovate. A follow up on this story will be that with cooperation among the libraries and librarians can give the result as wanted by the organisers and developers.

In the digital room for the libraries, there are plenty of solutions and digital services for the borrower. There are the digital reference librarian, the digital library solution, library catalogues and literature-, film-, music proposals and so on. So the digital library room has a plenty of stuff to offer their borrowers and whom else they serve.

The physical library is not past, but always a part of development. New stuff comes in and something else is throwing out. That's the deal as a dynamic library in constant innovation and developing stage.

2.1 Can the library today have all three parts included and fairly divide the resources relevantly between them?

There is no unequivocal answer to this question and in the public there are both for and against especially the virtual library and its function.

The three rooms in which Library and its staff worldwide are interacting within (more or less) are tried to be an integrated in the everyday in the library structure seen as a complete unit. Of course the small local village library always have resources to work with all the rooms, but will usual focus on mainly the physical library and then the digital library.

The three library rooms are illustrated on the figure below:

Library rooms

Physical room	Digital room	Virtual room
Traditional Library structure	Biblioteksvagten (Reference service)	Second Life
	Bibliotek.dk (National catalogue)	World of Warcraft
	Spørg Olivia (The Children's Library)	

Example

Figure 8 Library rooms

First the physical room and then the digital room which is the library on the Internet and on the figure is it Danish examples on digital library locations, but I have med explanation notes underneath each one of them.

The third room is the most interesting room to discuss because there have been so many opinions for and against the role of the library in this room. The argument for having library service in the virtual world is, as far as I have followed, that there is a fairly large target group (the young people who use this virtual world) who uses this so often, that it would be good for the library to represented their too whether the virtual world is Second Life, World of Warcraft or a third virtual world.

The argument against this could be that it is not in this virtual world the young people of today are, when they are on the Internet or they will not use the library even if they were there because we still are to borrowing, traditional or not "on the beat".

2.2 Is it relevant to have a virtual library?

In this context the virtual library can be the library service in virtual worlds like Second Life.

That would depend on how many are using it or does the library have something to offer in this virtual world that it can't offer in the physical and digital rooms.

- Or does the service become a new service because it takes a new shape and talks to this certain target group? That could be a question for further discussion if that's still an up-to-date question at the time.

2.3 We still experience libraries in the virtual communities and on this point is Denmark absolutely not behind, but is it used by anyone?

It is the general experience on several library forums that this virtual service is not used or not used in the extent that was hoped, scaled and based on from the start. But still World of Warcraft is still played for example. On the other hand seems Second Life and virtual world similar to be less popular and as a result less used and then there is less need for a library function. Should the virtual libraries, which exist today, continue to develop concurrently with the scale and level as the virtual world are? This question will here be unanswered for now.

2.4 What about the digital library versus the virtual library? – And versus the physical library?

Firstly there is the physical room as the traditional library room as we know it. This library room will be under continuous movement and develop new shapes to fit in the society around it.

Secondly there is the digital room, which is the library on the Internet, and on the figure "Library rooms" is it Danish examples on digital library locations, but I have med explanation notes underneath each one of them. Also here is it important that they continuous move and accommodate the users needs and wishes.

The third room is the most interesting room to discuss because there have been so many opinions for and against the role of the library in this room.

In the broad picture all three-library rooms have to act as one and that is the task for the Librarian 2.0 and the visual Information Professional.

2.5 What is the purpose of a new common language for the LIS sector?

The Visual Information Professional is not only visual by his or her presents and expertise, but also by the use of language.

Just a normal language – usually.

For at number of people does the visual Information Professional means something more than the ordinary common definition. For the deaf part of the population does the visual part mean the 'visual Information Professional' also can speak visual language, sign-language.

For those of us who aren't deaf are English the common language and the language we can agree on when we are together at e.g. the BOBCATSSS symposium.

The easy solution would then be that the deaf would English or American sing-language when they are together. But for them it is easier, in one way, to communicate because their alphabet and a group of signs are international, which means that they are similar in different sign languages. There is roughly the same amount of different sign languages as there are spoken languages in the world.

For librarians and other LIS professionals it can be hart to get good communications with deaf because the information professionals usually cannot speak their own sign language. Some Information Professionals have taken courses and the can of cause, but the majority cannot speak their sign language.

This leads to the question: What is the purpose of a new common language for the LIS sector?

The purpose of a new common language for the LIS sector is that more Information Professionals can serve the deaf part of the population much better than today. It should be easier to learn and easy to use and easy to remember.

It can be argued that this population are so small that it is seldom that the Information Professional gets questions from this target group, and when they does, they handle it by using simple signs and writing, but that can be a difficult process because there is a language barrier. So for all librarians and related professionals to avoid learning full-scale sign language, it could be nice with a little more simple common sign language which could be used and understood by all librarians, professionals and the target group.

Consequently a team of sign language librarians and I have developed a common sign language for the LIS-sector.

- But is there a need for this common sign language for the LIS-sector?

2.6 Why have a new visual language in the LIS domain as a part of challenging the new Information Professional?

As the new Information Professional gets more and more academic and more minded towards their target and target groups, it is necessary to be aware of this specific target group (deaf) also.

In order to accommodate the deaf target group a common language between the new Information Professional and the target group could be an idea and that idea is to challenge the new Information Professional by presenting this idea.

2.7 Is it relevant with this visual sign language and can / will it be used?

That is a good question and this paper will not give the answer to it, but try to impact a discussion around this question.

This is part of this project and paper that still turns forward and only the future can give supreme answers to this question.

Is it relevant or not? That is the first part of the question and the basis for starting this project and these thoughts was and is an idea of relevance, but as the project went on I did get my doubts of its relevance and as I am writing this paper I am still doubting of its relevance and in the same time I am believing in some kind of relevance, but maybe in much smaller scale than it is presented here.

Then to follow up with the last part of the question if this visual sign language will be used, I will be as vague as my answer to the first part of the question and incite or urge my doubts in connection also to write and formulate this paper. The argument for it will be used is that this sign language should be easy to learn and use so all can easy and fast learn and use it in their daily life and ideally help the target group even more than usual.

2.8 On which principles does this language rely?

This sign language is mainly consisting of the already existing international signs and natural signs. There are very few non-synchronic signs, which are the non-natural signs, and it is those signs that are difficult to learn. E.g. is the alphabet as you can see on the figure (9) below consisting of international signs and is already common for the deaf population.

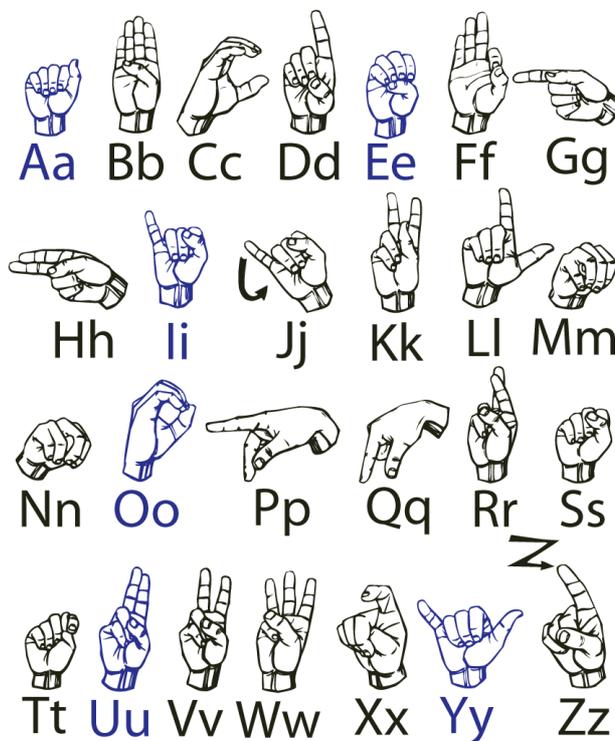


Figure 9 The international sign language alphabet

For the rest of this international sign language is it consisting of a mix between the international signs, American Sign Language and Danish Sign Language.

This paper will not go further into the linguistics and technical details in how the language is constructed and how it works, but science of gestures does also play a role in this language because the eyesight plays so large a part in the language.

3. CONCLUSION

The Librarian 2.0 and the Visual Information Professional was the paper of to sites of the same thing – to be an Information Professional in Library and Information Science today.

The Librarian 2.0 has to interact in many different contexts and have to relate to and act in several 'rooms'. Therefore is it important that the new librarian 2.0 has a broad set of competences in order to interact in this digital information and knowledge society.

At the time is it a challenge for this new librarian 2.0 or this Visual Information Professional to handle both the high expectations to academic qualifications and at the same time have communication skills. Especially at the interaction between with the users is it important with to be the visual Information Professional with academic skills and good visual communication skills and at the same time be the new Librarian 2.0 with good IT skills and can interact with the different medias and in the 'rooms' which is required at the present place and time.

It is then best if the Information Professional can communicate as smooth as possible with the target groups and the borrowers who address them. In this case the paper focused on a certain target group, deaf, and whether or not this common sign language can be used in reality is still a question, but those who LIS people actually needed it, have also learned it.

The Librarian 2.0 and the visual Information Professional is to focus points in the LIS sector. The first is well known today and several professionals before me have discussed this definition of the librarian 2.0.

On the other hand is the visual Information Professional and the discussion in this part of the paper much more exotic and not a common topic for discussion in the LIS sector but lets see if it is going to be in the future. This is a small target group for this particular topic so it is interesting to get the chance to write a paper where it can be included.

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5. CURRECULUM VITAE

Laurits Rasmussen is just starting on his master in Library and Information Science at Royal School of Library and Information Science, Aalborg Branch, Denmark (the figure below).



Figure 10 Laurits Thomas Rasmussen

Before that Laurits Rasmussen was working as an all-round librarian at Toender and Skaerbaek Library. Laurits Rasmussen was student at Royal School of Library and Information Science, the Aalborg Branch, Denmark, from 2003 to 2008. In addition Laurits Rasmussen was a member of the BOBCATSSS 2006 organizers team, and speaker in 2007. Laurits Rasmussen's special studied subjects are first structuring, designing and evaluation (of user-friendly-ness) of digital resources; second The European LIS culture exemplified by BOBCATSSS; and third Sign-Languages meaning for the LIS domain plus BOBCATSSS history and status as an organization and an annual conference