Devil’s Advocate

take a moment to ponder

I feel a desperate need to be irritating... and, perhaps, to reform society.

self-discovery of a gadfly
The plan

• I will gripe
• Add some gripes
• Choose a gripe and discuss them in groups
• Report back new insights and any rationales or solutions
1. Federated search
2. Research Guides
3. Library Jargon
4. Library Databases are safe

→ Publish or Perish conundrum
5. Atriums in Libraries

Tidewater Community College/City of Virginia Beach Joint-Use Library, opened in 2013
5. Atriums in Libraries

James B. Hunt Library, NCSU
6. Technology
Now you try...

7. ???????????

8. ???????????

9. ???????????
Pick your poison

1. Federated Search
2. Research Guides
3. Library Jargon
4. Library Databases are safe
5. Atriums in Libraries
6. Technology
7. Technology replacing librarians
8. The disappearing reference desk
9. Hard to change library website
10. Dumbing down library positions
11. Leadership issues
12. Libraries hard to change
So what’s the verdict?
1. Federated search + Library Databases

group notes

• Federated search is not going away and making it harder/more complex defeats the appeal of a one-box search.

• It all depends on how you teach it – there is an opportunity to discuss how to limit results and finding credible sources
  • Show them the advanced search

• Also an opportunity to explain to research newbies that researching is about constructing an answer, not finding one (NCSU video – The Perfect Source)

• Sources are reasonably credible

• Library databases are complicated but a useful skill
6. Technology combined w/ library replaced by tech. group notes

- Is computer easier? or faster?
- b/c we can doesn’t mean we should
- We as librarians are supposed to encourage others to think. Don’t spoon feed the info.
- what technology won’t be outdated too quickly?
- Commit it frequently
- Make them work together
- finding the right tool
  - does it add to the library?
9. Hard for libraries to control & change their websites group notes

- Website controlled by marketing department
- Stalled out by institution-wide website redesign – very slow to implement
- Lost a bunch of control when Creative Services Dept. took control of website 5 years ago
- Can you teach people to scroll down
- Alternative: Many libraries using LibGuides for Library website management.
10. Dumbing down library positions +
8. Disappearing Reference Desk
   group notes

• Reference desk is slowly disappearing or has been
• Roving reference – some have students do it.
  • End ups being more directional than reference
• Subject liaisons offices in other parts of campus
• Students are told to make an appointment with a librarian, but many don’t
• Can’t take students’ questions at face value – need the reference interview to pull out what they actually need (something they often don’t know).
• Reference is a relationship
11. Leadership Issues group notes

• What is a leader?: can follow/be followed, persuasive, has vision, cheerleader, team builder, trust team, advocate and not micro-manage (or manage at all), good listener, know your people (abilities, potential), information sharing, ability to understand what each team member does

• distant, uninvolved leader – not personable
  • not everyone is leader material

• need to focus more on management training

• management & leadership are separate
  • leadership is innate
  • a good organization recognizes that if he doesn’t have leadership skills to find help in leadership from someone who is


I’ll leave with this head scratcher:

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