

## From traditional to futuristic libraries: Will we go a full circle and want to be traditional again?

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**Abstract:** In a September 2009 piece at [cnn.com](http://cnn.com), John Sutter (Sutter, 2009) announced that “the stereotypical library is dying – and it’s taking its shushing ladies, dank smell and endless shelves of books with it”, and that libraries were trying to define their future – with or without books. Alluding to increased digitization of books, lack of funding and a generation that would rather spend time on Facebook, Digg or Twitter, Sutter paints a bleak future for the traditional library. In an earlier 2005 report by the Loyola University of Chicago Libraries (Loyola University, 2005), the authors had made important recommendations about changes for the future which apply not just to the library at Loyola University but to libraries across the United States in general. However, similar voices of doom were raised when more and more people started using the Internet. Already, there is an increasing pool of companies that are crying hoarse over losing productivity due to employees spending time on Facebook and people trying to keep away from the Internet. Says British actor, Robert Pattinson, "(The internet) feeds the worst part of your soul. When you have nothing to do and you go on, when you're too tired to read a book, I'll read the news, you go on to the New York Times, you get bored and go on IMDb. Then you realize how pathetic you are. I have to delete my history (of visited websites)" (Celebrity Mania, 2009). While the increasing calls and the need for libraries to change and evolve is not unfounded, uninhibited change may put into question some of the very reasons and purposes of the existence of libraries. Using the case of the internet, its adoption and its avoidance, this article will argue that while many will join in hordes to welcome the libraries of the future, we may just come a full circle with patrons wishing to go the traditional route again. With an analysis of the dichotomy and the inherent contradictions between the traditional and the futuristic, this article hopes to make a case for calibrated change by libraries, while preserving some of the salient reasons for the founding and usage of libraries.

**Keywords:** future of libraries, internet, change, traditional libraries

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