

Report reveals opportunities for new era of patron-centered library services

November 3 2021



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Lean Library today released "Librarian Futures," a white paper based on a large-scale survey of 4,000 librarians and patrons that examines librarian-patron workflows and relationships. The report finds that while

patrons are unaware of the full extent of librarian support (with 77% beginning research discovery outside of the library), more than 80% greatly appreciate librarians and would want the library more deeply embedded in their natural workflows.

Lean Library, a company that delivers library services into the patron's workflow, is part of the newly launched Technology from SAGE portfolio of digital services alongside Quartex from Adam Matthew and Talis. Each of the services was created to improve the patron's workflow using technology based on years of librarian feedback and research on patron needs.

"Librarian Futures" synthesizes survey results with unique data from Lean Library usage alongside data from a range of librarian and library stakeholder interviews, and valuable contributions from partners scite, Springshare, OpenAthens and OCLC. It builds on previous research into the future of the library, positioning the librarian at the center of the analysis. Examining current trends in librarian-patron interactions and understanding, the report poses "innovation provocations," or potential solutions to embed the library in the patron's workflow, and recommendations for librarians to evaluate and debate.

Commenting on the report, Matthew Hayes, Managing Director of Lean Library said that "as a company founded by librarians, keeping the librarian at the heart of what we do is incredibly important to us. This report has been part of a broader listening exercise to understand how to embed librarians in the modern patron workflow. The findings are fundamentally optimistic, showing high levels of patron enthusiasm for their librarians and an appetite for closer interactions in their modern workflows—fertile ground for librarians to make the innovations needed for the next generation of the library."

Andrew Barker, Director of Library Services & Learning Development

at Lancaster University said that "'Librarian Futures' resonates with our new vision here at Lancaster, 'The Library Towards 2025,' which is about ensuring we not only remain relevant but also become more central to teaching, research and engagement. As this report shows, libraries do so much more than often our stakeholders realize. We need to increase awareness of our value, and ensure we are not seen as simply a repository of silent students and print books, but actually at the forefront of our users' university experience, both digital and physical. As librarians I would argue that we need to craft and articulate a new vision for our libraries and how we contribute to student and researcher outcomes. This will mean being smart about our resources and budgets, such as better use of demand driven content, but also taking a user-first strategy in what we do and how we do it. Ensuring our users have the right content at the right time will remain pivotal to what we do, but so will expanding our focus into new areas of service provision such as content creation, [digital tools](#) and teaching."

Key findings from the report include:

- A knowledge gap exists between patrons and the full extent of librarian support available to them, and between librarians and the emerging needs of their patrons. The paper examines how this knowledge gap may be contributing to perceptions of the diminishing importance of the librarian to the patron experience.
- 79% of faculty and 74% of students now begin their discovery process outside the library, on websites such as Google Scholar, but appreciation and use of library services remain high, suggesting further appetite for librarians to meet patrons in their workflow.
- Librarians are highly appreciated by their patrons, significantly more so than librarians anticipated. 84% of faculty patrons appreciate librarians' 'a lot' or 'a great deal'.
- 82% of librarians and 88% of patrons would want librarian and

library services embedded throughout their workflow, available to call on when needed. Patrons may have preferred routes outside the library in recent years, but this does not diminish their demand for librarian support. It underscores the need for librarians to come to them.

More information: Report: www.leanlibrary.com/community/...-rian-futures-report/

Provided by SAGE Publications

Citation: Report reveals opportunities for new era of patron-centered library services (2021, November 3) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-reveals-opportunities-era-patron-centered-library.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.