



# Law Library Lights

## Picture It: Titan, 2316 . . . Attorney Sophia Patrillo Walks into a Law Library . . .

**Dan Odenwald**

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Last summer, if you happened to walk the streets of Washington, D.C., you couldn't miss it: the zombie hordes wandering, meandering, stumbling through the city, faces glued to their smartphones, looking, searching, hoping for a score.

The treasure? The elusive Pokémon of course. For some, summer 2016 will be forever marked by the Pokémon Go craze. Millions downloaded it, thousands played it, and sadly, an unhappy few — in Pokémon Go rapture, oblivious to the world around them — ended up injured or worse.

For the uninitiated, Pokémon Go is a free, location-based, augmented reality game with worldwide downloads of more than 500 million since its release in July 2016 ([Wikipedia, Pokémon Go](#)). Says Wikipedia: "In the game, players use a mobile device's GPS

### Table of Contents

Picture It: Titan 2316 . . . Attorney Sophia Patrillo Walks Into a Law Library . . . <i>Dan Odenwald</i>	1
<b>Editor's Column</b> <i>Shannon Roddy</i>	5
<b>President's Column</b> <i>Andrew Martin</i>	7
<b>Member Spotlight</b> <i>Andrew Lang</i>	9
<b>Tech Talk</b> <i>Matt Zimmerman</i>	13
<b>Book Review</b> <i>Andrew Lang</i>	15
<b>Eyes On Exhibits</b> <i>Lowell Rudorfer</i>	18



ability to locate, capture, battle and train virtual creatures, called Pokémon, who appear on the screen as if they were in the same real-world location as the player.”

As intrepid fans navigate the physical world alongside the virtual Poké-world on their phones, caution is frequently neglected. To wit, the poor souls who ambled into traffic, trespassed on private property, or generally ran afoul of the laws of physics. Chasing a digital avatar on one’s phone has its perils, not the least of which is the intensive care unit.

Coincidentally, something else happened in summer 2016: *Star Trek Beyond*, the latest feature film in the storied franchise, opened in movie theaters in July. Of course, Trekkies like me will know the Holodeck, the *ultimate* in augmented reality, courtesy of the 24th century. In the *Star Trek* imagining of, say, July 2316, the descendants of today’s Pokémon Go aficionados have “leveled up” by a factor of zillions. Entrants into the Holodeck *see, smell, hear, taste, and touch* their surroundings.

Entire immersive worlds are created and experienced by simple voice commands. Want to visit the Library of Alexandria? No problem. Want to meet Melville Dewey? Easy-breezy. Want to observe the writing of this article? (Well, for a small fee, that can be arranged; no need to wait until 2316.)

Stipulated: It’s a long way from Pokémon Go to the Holodeck, but the two points on the timeline may suggest a logical course of events, a natural “from here to there.” And, strangely, that fantastical continuum may have currency for today’s law libraries, scholarly inquiry, and perhaps how we

as law librarians teach legal research. In fact, as Pokémon herself rockets toward the 24th century, we may be along her digital path.

### **More, more, more**

Law librarians, wherever they may live — academia, firms, government, corporations, public institutions, the vendor community, independents and beyond — almost universally accept a mandate to teach. Effective legal research is an acquired skill, and the American legal system owes a Jupiter-sized hat tip to the untold number of teachers, trainers, and instructors who’ve transferred expertise generously over the years, almost always without credit or remuneration.

Consider my own legal research induction: a new colleague (at the time) and now a forever friend (because that’s just how we law librarians operate) took me by the collar and walked me through my first law library. Foreign-sounding words and phrases spilled from her mouth: Fed Supp., Decennial Digest, Wright & Miller, Key Numbers, Shepard’s, ALR, CJS, Black’s, CCH, Collier’s,

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and on and on and on.... Then we went online, and the rest was history.

Recently, I interviewed a former library school prof with more than 30 years of professional and teaching experience, and she shared a survey she conducts: Encountering former students (dispersed throughout America's library diaspora), she regularly asks, "What didn't we teach you that we should have?"

Almost to a one, they reply: how to teach. That is, they wished for more *instruction* on how to *instruct* – especially in today's increasingly complex technical environment in which the measure of solid research skills has as much to do with expert manipulation of subscription databases as it does with the considered weighing and evaluating of information resources.

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Relatedly, a doctrinal debate — familiar to every reader of this publication— about how to teach legal research has raged for at least 40 years. (Here, I seek only to describe the dialectic without regard to the merits.)

Purists insist upon tactile experience with books as *the* path to understanding or, at least, comprehension of legal research methods (says my forever friend, "You just need to see the books in the library, Dan"). Put more starkly: No card-carrying Shepard's user can rightfully claim her place in the universe without first having *done it in the books* (uphill both ways, in the snow, without shoes).

Still others, equally beloved and brilliant (a certain CUA professor, I'm talkin' 'bout you), regard books with dutiful respect, yet honor a world when, honestly, we could land my ex on Mars with an iPad (he's available). In other words, high-quality, cost-effective, client-ready legal research can *and* may originate digitally from anywhere: your kitchen table, the corner coffee shop, a beach in Aruba, or the confines of a bed in the I.C.U. (undoubtedly following a dark turn in the quest for Poké-gold).

This brave new world of linked authorities — powered by platinum metadata and search algorithms — no longer even requires knowledge of Boolean search techniques, however precise and exacting they may be, because the semantic web, well, just *knows*.

True, online legal research databases — which, for better or worse, wholly own modern legal research — once embraced the "stacks model" in their legacy products (*You just need to see the books in the library, Dan*). Indeed, their file-based organization schemes mirrored the physical law library itself.

But now they adopt a Google-styled model: Search and ye shall find. Underwritten by "smart search" and linked data, they make connections where before there were none. The result is mostly marvelous. If, for example, you've ever had the



good fortune to use the tax products of the major vendors, you know how truly brilliant they are.

Honestly, in my humble view, there's value in both outlooks; so long as searchers find what they need, when they need it, at the right price, hurrah! Also, it seems likely that the future of legal research instruction will pull from both traditions: a marriage of the law library space and omniscient online search.

Curiously, augmented reality, embodied by Pokémon Go and the Holodeck, may play the role of matchmaker. Here's what I mean:

Picture it, Titan, 2316. Lawyer Sophia "Pokémon" Patrillo walks into the Holodeck and a perfect replica of Earth's Harvard Law School Library (from the comforts of her perch upon Saturn's largest moon and its highest court). In holographic ecstasy, she's overtaken by the sights, sounds and smells.

Long-deceased Supreme Court justices seated at a roundtable in the corner argue over the very precedent for which she's searching. "Do you need our help?" asks Justice Scalia.

"No, no," Patrillo responds. "Just browsing."

Intuition (or is it the computer?) propels her to a stack of yellowed and aging casebooks. As she pulls one off the shelf and opens to a Ninth Circuit decision, the opinion's author materializes before her and whispers, "Bad law. I was overturned on that one. Try that later decision from the Second Circuit," pointing to a book down the way.

Guided by the physicality of her surroundings, she searches for just the right item, floating through the stacks, miles deep and inviting. Enhanced by bioengineered artificial intelligence, her brain's processing centers, infused with

hummingbird DNA, engage in a fine balancing act, weighing deep thought, layered subtext, and whimsy.

Relying on implanted memory sticks — powered by ancient humpback whale cognition protocols — she wanders, meanders, and stumbles through the stacks, dipping in and out of the Magna Carta, Justice RBG, the Neptunian Accords, and the Solar Code of Stellar Rights, 17 SCSR 238(b); 17 WL 238(b); 17 LEXIS 238(b); \$\$\$ out of plan \$\$\$.

As she browses, Attorney Patrillo conjures legal authority on Earth as far back as the 13th century. Her "inner ear" discards dicta, anticipates inquires, predicts false starts, and renders judgments — without her explicit acknowledgment or even understanding as to how. The answers themselves simply manifest.

Alas, she finds the spring 2017 issue of LLSDC's *Law Library Lights*, the "Law Library of the Future" issue, and lands upon her answer (or did she know it all along?).

"Drats!" she exclaims to her law clerk in the parallel multiverse beside her. "If only they had known . . ." ■

**"Honestly, in my humble view, there's value in both outlooks; so long as searchers find what they need, when they need it, at the right price, hurrah! Also, it seems likely that the future of legal research instruction will pull from both traditions: a marriage of the law library space and omniscient online search."**



## From the Editor

# Preparing for the Law Library of the Future: Required Reading

**Shannon Roddy**

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The theme of this issue is the Law Library of the Future. Predicting and preparing for the future of our profession may cause you great angst. Fortunately, *Law Library Lights* is here to help.

In this issue, Dan Odenwald, principal research consultant at Capstone Information Services & Consulting, gives an entertaining prediction of what the law library of 2316 may look like. In his tech column, Matt Zimmerman avoids making predictions about the future of library technology. Andy Lang reviews John Palfrey's *BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google*, a quick read from a legal academic and quasi-librarian. Lowell Rudorfer, research librarian at the DOJ, takes us into the past with his review of the museum exhibit *Lawyers without Rights: Jewish Lawyers in Germany under the Third Reich* in a new periodic column, *Eyes on Exhibits*.

I don't know that I have much insight into the law library of the future, but I imagine researchers will always need annotated bibliographies in some shape or form. So whether you're frightened, excited, or ambivalent about the future of law libraries (or all of the above), here's a short list of articles and books that will help get us there.



### Submission Information

If you would like to write for *Law Library Lights*, contact Shannon Roddy at [roddy@wcl.american.edu](mailto:roddy@wcl.american.edu). For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC website at [www.llsdc.org](http://www.llsdc.org).



# From the Editor, Continued

- ▶ Scott Frey, "[A History of the Future of Law Libraries](#)"  
This quick but fascinating *Spectrum* article gives an overview of law librarians' predictions of the future going back to 1915.
- ▶ Ronald Wheeler, "[Is This the Law Library or an Episode of the Jetsons?](#)"  
This 2015 article focuses on the role technology will play in the law library of the future.
- ▶ ILTA, "[Legal Technology Future Horizons: Strategic Imperatives for the Law Firm of the Future](#)"  
The International Legal Technology Association's report is important because the future of law libraries is inextricably tied to the future of law firms and legal practice.
- ▶ Nicholas F. Stump & J.R. Kerns, "[The Future of Academic Law Librarianship | Peer to Peer Review](#)"  
Two academic law librarians discuss ways in which the legal education crisis has impacted their library (for the better).
- ▶ John Palfrey, *BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google*  
While this book isn't specific to law libraries, John Palfrey is the former director of the Harvard Law School Library and a lawyer. And a big advocate for libraries. See Andy Lang's book review for more information.
- ▶ Roy Balleste, Sonia Luna-Lamas & Lisa Smith-Butler, eds., *Law Librarianship in the Twenty-First Century*  
A textbook for students studying law librarianship.
- ▶ Jessica Panella & Catherine M. Dunn, "[Embracing the Future on a Budget: Uconn School of Law Library Merges Its Reference and Circulation Desks](#)"  
Another quick *Spectrum* article on facing the reality of a future filled with budget cuts.
- ▶ Ellyssa Kroski, ed., *Law Librarianship in the Digital Age*  
Chapters written by firm, government, and academic law librarians.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please consider contributing to our summer issue, the Year-End Round Up & AALL Conference Preview. ■



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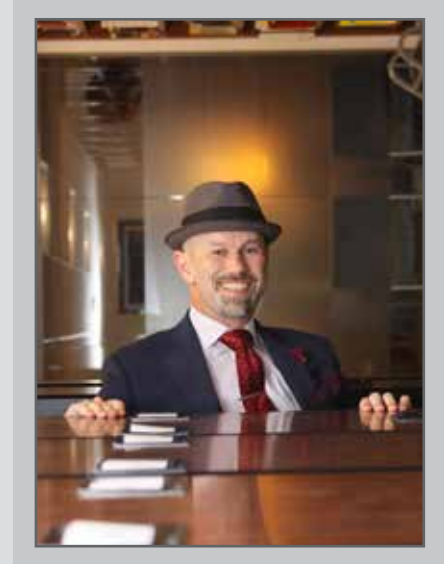


# President's Column

## LLSDC Brings David McRaney to DC for the Sandy Peterson Memorial Lecture

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This June, the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C. will bring you a chance to hear fascinating insights into human cognition, logical fallacies, and other pitfalls of information processing from the foremost adventurer in the realm of self-delusion.

David McRaney is an internationally bestselling author, journalist, and lecturer who created the *You Are Not So Smart* blog, books, and podcast.

He began the blog *You Are Not So Smart* in 2009, writing about the psychology behind biases, delusions, and fallacies. That blog became an internationally bestselling book of the same name. His second book, *You Are Now Less Dumb*, was released in July of 2013.

For the Sandy Peterson lecture, David will speak on the challenges facing librarians and other information professionals and knowledge communicators working in a world beset with self-delusion.

David cut his teeth covering Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast and in the Pine Belt region of the Deep South. Since then, he has been a beat reporter, editor, photographer, voiceover artist, television host, digital content manager, and everything in between. His writing work has been featured at *The Atlantic*, *The New York Post*, *Salon*, *Brainpickings*, *Lifehacker*, *Gawker*, *Boing Boing*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Big Think* among many other places.



## President's Column, Continued



David graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he served as editor of the college newspaper. While in college, he was named one of the top 10 college journalists in the United States by the Scripps Howard Foundation and won two William Randolph Hearst awards, one for feature writing and one for opinion writing.

He is married to Amanda McRaney, and they live in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He owns a cat who occasionally wears a tie.

The Sandy Peterson Memorial Lecture will be held on June 14th at noon, in the auditorium of Arent Fox LLC, 1775 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. Because David finishes each episode of his podcast by eating a cookie baked from a recipe sent in by a reader, we will be inviting people to bring their home-made cookies and recipes. After the lecture, David will be signing his books, which will also be available for purchase on site. ■



# Member Spotlight

## **Andrew Lang**

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### **Building a Career and a Library in Afghanistan**

On January 31st, Andrea Muto, Research Services Librarian at Georgetown, wowed a lunchtime crowd with her tales of building the law library at the University of Kabul, Afghanistan. She talked about navigating politics, not only as an American woman in charge, but also between secular law and sharia law faculty. She took us on the journey through stories and photos as she took a blank space, worked with her team to find books and furniture, and by the time she left, created a functioning law library used by students and faculty alike. If you would like to hear more about Andrea's adventures in Afghanistan, please watch her TEDx talk from October 2016:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdtbEO4ccJg>Introducing

### **Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP**

One of D.C.'s oldest law firms has a new name and some new faces. Arnold & Porter merged with Kaye Scholer on January 1, 2017, creating Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP with 14 offices and more than 1,000 attorneys around the world. In D.C., the two firms combined in A&P's new space at 601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Jim Shelar, A&P's longtime director, retired last year, along with legislative librarian Ron Seele and library administrator Avis Redfearn.

Joan Axelroth and Ellen Callinan have been named co-directors of research services. Joan wound down her consulting company, Axelroth & Associates, after 25 years. Lorre Mason is the new manager of knowledge systems and Cecilia Feltis is the new collection management supervisor. Mike Gentile was promoted to assistant manager of research systems, and the new manager of research systems will be on board soon. Mike Hartigan has been promoted to legislative analyst, and Tashia Alford and Donna Doering are now research analysts. Ashley Johnson, Julie Marks, and Ted Nigrelli are now senior collection specialists. There are new titles and some new employees in other offices, and they'll be recruiting for a few more positions in D.C., too. This is an exciting time at APKS!



# Member Spotlight, Continued

## **REDUX: The Future of Law Librarianship: An Interview with Mike Timpani**

Mike Timpani's interview on the future of law librarianship previously appeared in the summer 2014 issue of *Lights*. His updated comments are below:

Unfortunately, since this article was published, the trend now seems to be to close libraries and not employ as many librarians, as in the past. I was surprised to see and hear of some classic D.C. libraries closures that have gone the way of being just an office with no books or hard cover material. Several libraries, including the Urban Institute, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the United States Department of Energy, have gotten rid of their entire library collections and are now just a terminal and one person finding the information for the patrons at their organizations.

I did have the pleasure of touring the Martin Luther King Public Library in D.C., right before it was closed for a three-year building upgrade. I was pleasantly surprised to see all of the awesome, varied departments that one building had for the public patrons. I am looking forward to the reopening to see what improvements and upgrades they do with the building.

—Mike Timpani

## **Federal Reserve Board Libraries Tour**

The Federal Law Librarians SIS (FLL SIS) coordinated an informative tour of the Federal Reserve Board Libraries in Washington, D.C. on February 17th. Assistant law librarian Rick McKinney and the rest of the wonderful librarians at the Federal Reserve Board made everyone feel welcome! The tour started in the research library where the group got a glimpse of their historical display room and learned about the economists and research staff they serve to inform the board's policies and programs.

LLSDC members were then given a tour of the special library and the law library and its rich collection of legislative history materials. The group also learned about the board's Fine Arts Program, established in 1975 by former chairman Arthur F. Burns in response to a White House directive encouraging federal partnership with the arts. The building is filled with incredible paintings, drawings, photos, and sculptures on display in public areas and private meeting rooms. To cap off the event, the librarians were treated to a tour of the 80-year-old board room where the board and Federal Reserve Bank presidents get together to chart U.S. monetary policy.



# Member Spotlight, Continued



# Member Spotlight, Continued

## Venable LLP

Venable LLP has opened its new office at 600 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. Pickup service for inter-library loan is available from the mailroom on the concourse level. Building security can assist with getting to this level.

## Christine Ciambella

In November, Christine Ciambella joined Miller & Chevalier as assistant librarian.

## Rachael Roan

Rachael Roan, formerly reference/law librarian with the Executive Office of the President, accepted a position as interoperability and data policy specialist with the National Library of Medicine.

## Member Question

### What do you think the law library of the future will be like?

“I think the law library of the future will still have physical books on the shelves. It will be an amalgam of print resources, high tech learning spaces, and electronic materials used together to provide attorneys, law professors, and law students with the best information.”

—Tracy Legaspi, Law Librarian, Cadence Group, U.S. Department of Justice Main Library



## I'm Not Scoffing: A Reflection on Digitization and the Role of the Library Technologist

**Matt Zimmerman**

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I learned long ago to avoid making technology predictions. Tech changes too fast, and my perspective can be too limited for me to understand the broader implications of what's happening around me. This was especially true when I was less experienced. I scoffed at CD-ROMs because in the early years they were slow, expensive, read-only, and the games were poor. But then they got faster, dropped in price, and rewritable disks appeared. Plus, you know, *Myst* was pretty good.

I remain reluctant to prognosticate on technology trends. However, librarians have a fundamental obligation to worry about the future. We strive to preserve knowledge and keep it accessible even in the face of rapid change. It's in our best interest to be future-oriented and thoughtful about deploying technology responsibly and sustainably.

Consider efforts like Harvard's Caselaw Access Project, the Cornell Legal Information Institute, and my own library's work to digitize and provide access to our materials. The repositories they've developed are already invaluable in the way they preserve legal documents and make them broadly available. This is great. They're laying a foundation, preserving information, and facilitating access to it on a massive scale. But now what?

This is the part where I set aside my reluctance and make, if not predictions, then perhaps a wish-list for where I hope we are going. But first, a couple of caveats.

# Tech Talk, Continued

- ▶ I am a librarian who codes and not a lawyer. I therefore try to limit my prognosticating to areas that I know. This includes web applications, integrations, user experience, and certain library systems.
- ▶ I value strategic thinking, but I am mostly concerned with how the rubber meets the road. For example, as I wrote in my last column, high-minded discussions of artificial intelligence do me little good unless I can get my hands on the tools to make it do something useful.

Let's look at the Caselaw Access Project. This is a project to digitize and provide access to all US case law. That alone is exciting, but the part that makes me salivate is the promise of an API (application programming interface), presumably using modern standards. Such an interface will likely allow coders to query the database, search the metadata and full-text content, and perform other useful functions. They'll be able to write programs that call those functions in myriad ways. For example, vendors could use the API to integrate the cases into library discovery systems.

My sense is that it will indeed be library vendors and platforms like Google who tackle basic problems related to full-text searching large, widely-used open digital repositories. And developing solutions to the more challenging problems, such as using artificial intelligence to analyze the natural language of the texts or identify relationships between cases, requires

tools and knowledge that are beyond the reach of almost all librarians (see my previous *Library Lights* article).

So what does the future hold for library technologists, with both tech skills and an MLIS degree? The answer is familiar: work to align technology with the needs of our users and communities. For example, we won't necessarily be the ones to build complex applications on top of the Caselaw Access Project database. But we should be able to suss out what the API has to offer and work with dedicated programmers and vendors to get what our users need.

And yet, despite the potential, part of me is inclined to repeat my CD-ROM mistake. After all, the Caselaw Access Project isn't online yet, much less a usable API. The goals of this and other such projects seem so big, lofty, and remote, and my own ability to engage with them seems so small.

Why not shrug and scoff? The answer, as always with technology, is to see past the limitations, especially with approaches that are tried and tested. To scoff is to risk being further sidelined. We've been building to this point for many years in terms of digitization, full-text search and discovery, and interoperability via API. Let's make the future happen for libraries and legal information. ■

Comments? Questions? Drop me a line via email ([matt.zimmerman@georgetown.edu](mailto:matt.zimmerman@georgetown.edu)) or Twitter (@mlzman).

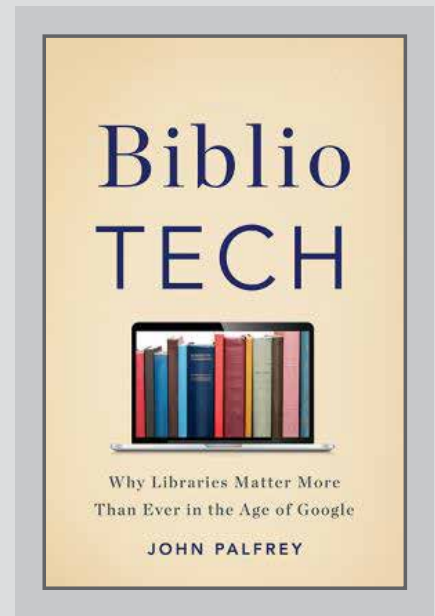


# Book Review

## **John Palfrey, *BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015)**

**Andrew W. Lang**

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In keeping with this issue's theme, the Law Library of the Future, I decided to review John Palfrey's *Bibliotech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google*, in the hopes of gaining some insight for the future of librarianship. Written with a non-librarian audience in mind, this book focuses on libraries generally, though many of the examples are drawn from public and academic settings. It makes for a fast and easy read, belonging to that subgenre of books about librarianship for a popular audience that includes titles like R. David Lankes' *Expect More: Demanding Better Libraries for Today's Complex World* and Marilyn Johnson's *This Book Is Overdue!: How Librarians and Cybrarians Can Save Us All*. Palfrey's message, which permeates a lot of this literature, is that although the digital revolution and declining budgets have put libraries on the defensive, librarians are still uniquely situated to reassert their relevance in the information age, but only if we are willing to adapt. For this reason, the book does not quite live up to its title: it's more a call to action and recognition of what's at stake (obsolescence) than an argument that libraries matter now more than ever. But times of great risk are also times of great opportunity, and each chapter of the book focuses on a different dimension of the library experience, describing both emerging challenges and examples of ways that innovative librarians have turned this to an advantage.

As the former director of Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society and former Vice Dean for Library and Information Resources at the Harvard Law School Library, Palfrey is a leading figure in both the field of internet law and envisioning the future for libraries. During his tenure with the Berkman Center, he helped found the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and served as the founding chairman until 2015. Since 2012, Palfrey has served as the Head of School at Phillips Academy, Andover, and continues to research and write on a wide range of subjects.

# Book Review, Continued

Knowing Palfrey's background, I had hoped that *BiblioTech* would provide more law library-related insights and was somewhat disappointed. There are, however, many points that he makes that are generally applicable to all kinds of libraries. The tumultuous transition from print to digital materials has placed libraries of all stripes in a bind—our patrons expect new materials and services, but limited resources leave many institutions struggling to keep up. Furthermore, libraries are often caught between patron groups who want different things; the law library example that comes to mind is the need to maintain certain print collections for attorneys or faculty members who continue to prefer the bound digests and reporters over the electronic research platforms. This hybrid, “digital-plus” environment creates challenges because, although demand is trending toward digital, this doesn't mean that print can be entirely replaced. As Palfrey notes, “[w]hen they listen carefully to library users, librarians come to the conclusion that they need to collect and provide access to *both* print and digital materials” (p. 33). While adapting to the demand for digital materials, forward-thinking librarians must keep the patrons' collection needs at the center.

Another major part of adaptation is recognizing the opportunities presented by new technology and envisioning ways to improve services to our patrons. Palfrey identifies a number of areas that he sees as major opportunities for libraries—primarily because many of them represent the logical extension of our traditional roles. For example, mass digitization projects have the potential to dramatically expand patron access to collections

across institutions, states, and even nations. Digitization also serves the longstanding library goal of record preservation; allowing digital copies to be stored in multiple locations avoids file loss or destruction.

Preservation of born-digital materials presents a related opportunity for librarians to reassert value by adapting our traditional roles to address new media formats. The sudden and explosive proliferation of born-digital content coupled with constantly changing platforms and file types has made it difficult to capture a lot of the content that forms a large part of the historical record for our times. There is an increasing awareness of the problems that this causes: link rot is always inconvenient, but it creates a major concern when URLs in Supreme Court opinions no longer direct to the correct materials.

The scale of these challenges *requires* inter-institutional collaboration. Several major projects have already demonstrated how successful this coordination can be. For example, the HathiTrust has preserved over 10 million volumes by pooling resources from its sixty member institutions (p. 156). Part of making this collaboration work is “reconceptualizing libraries . . . replacing the library as place with the library as platform, each library being a node in a series of interconnected platforms” (p. 114). Palfrey explores the idea of the library as a “platform” by describing the DPLA project in detail. DPLA is set up as a network of hubs scattered across the country and operated locally by individual institutions that can upload items from their digital collections (p. 98). The central hub aggregates the uploaded materials and then





# Book Review, Continued

makes them available to users across the entire network (p. 101-02). Under this mindset, the emphasis shifts away from individual, localized library collections and toward a more collective whole, which Palfrey believes will increase our efficiency and our value in the eyes of our patrons.

But creating new collaborative projects is not enough; rather, these efforts to tackle specific problems must be part of a larger reimagining of the “proper” role for libraries. Palfrey contends that one of the main reasons we keep having to justify the need for libraries is that we have “a very simple and skewed idea of why libraries matter” (p. 7). This traditional sense of the library as a passive information repository permeates the public imagination, but places institutions in jeopardy as patrons increasingly believe that the internet performs this role better, faster, and easier. Libraries have (at best) a mixed record when it comes to embracing change. Too often, Palfrey contends, libraries rely on feelings of nostalgia to justify their existence, which can evoke strong emotional responses from the public, but are not sustainable in the long run. Instead of clinging to our traditional roles and services, he encourages librarians to view the changing environment as an opportunity to create “new nostalgia” (p. 222). Palfrey believes that even in “a digital era, spaces where people can come to study, read, and think are essential for communities and individuals to thrive” (p. 67). However, adopting a broader sense of the library’s roles—one that proactively anticipates technological changes and emerging patron needs—could shift the paradigm and would go

a long way toward ending the perpetual battle to justify our existence.

Palfrey’s greatest concern is that if libraries do not adapt, for-profit organizations, unrestrained by tight budgets and historical baggage, will usurp the library’s roles. The fear is that a profit-incentive could replace or alter the public interest motives that drive publicly funded institutions (p. 212). Variations on this theme surface in law librarianship as well, ranging from debates over the copyright status of legal materials to students’ (over)reliance on subscription electronic research platforms.

Although many librarians are working hard to shake off the dust and get ahead of the curve, Palfrey acknowledges that this is not universally the case. “The services that librarians offer today are often creative and inspiring, a far cry from what most people expect from libraries. But at too many libraries changes in services are happening at the margins, not at the core” (p. 43). This is undoubtedly true, but the counter-argument that does not appear as frequently in this kind of literature is that for many librarians, the struggle is not to figure out how to do more with less, but how to keep doing the *same* with *much* less. Unfortunately for libraries, the stakes are high, though they’re not insurmountable. Rather than refighting the same battles over library relevance, Palfrey encourages librarians to change the terms of this debate by recasting the role of libraries and librarians. The future of libraries belongs to the bold, the proactive, the collaborative, and the innovative. ■



# Eyes on Exhibits

## **Lowell Rudorfer**

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*Have you recently seen a museum or library exhibit that you think would be of interest to LLSDC members? Consider writing a brief review and submitting it to Lights. Thanks to Lowell Rudorfer for the suggestion and the following write-up.*

*Lawyers without Rights: Jewish Lawyers in Germany under the Third Reich* was up for a brief stop, from February 22nd to March 2nd, at the Washington Hebrew Congregation. Presented by the German and American bar associations, this poster-based traveling exhibition (it was in town last year as well, at the German-American Heritage Museum) traces Jewish lawyers as they, a diverse group for centuries, were yoked together, their professional privileges revoked, and finally all but annihilated. They shared this trajectory with many German

groups, but many of the mile markers they saw—the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, the Nuremberg Laws—were put up by their fellow lawyers. Then again, so were the Nuremberg trials.

*Lawyers without Rights* tells of this first at a professional level, law by law and policy by policy, and then through dozens of stories of individual German Jewish lawyers. How all this could have happened to human beings is no less baffling by the exhibition's end, but how it could have happened to the legal profession is. A profession built on laws can be destroyed by laws.

Much of the exhibition is online, along with resources for further reading and viewing, at [lawyerswithoutrights.com](http://lawyerswithoutrights.com).



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