

# The Louisville Project



Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology

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MIT Design Lab, Americans for Libraries Council, and the  
Louisville Free Public Library

# I. Libraries are crucial to knowledge-based, creative, innovative economies



- **Cities are transitioning from manufacturing to high value-added services, implying new roles for libraries**
- **Innovation and creativity – knowledge-based activities – are increasingly crucial to economic success**

# I. Libraries are crucial to knowledge-based, creative, innovative economies

- Libraries should be seen not only as cultural institutions, but also as crucial components of innovation systems
- Libraries support lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world

*“Libraries have the potential to make the process of re-imagining, revision, consciousness-raising possible. People need to rethink what they can become.”*

Mary Catherine Bateson

# II. Libraries should support a full cycle of activities: acquisition, ventilation, creation, spinoff

- Add production facilities, fab labs, etc.
- Bring acquisition and creative application together
- Provide incubator space and mentoring to generate spinoffs



# III. Libraries can support communities of practice and formation of intellectual capital

- Bring together multi-generation, cross-disciplinary communities
- Encourage and support peer-to-peer learning
- Create opportunities for chance encounters and cross-connections



# III. Libraries can support communities of practice and formation of intellectual capital



- Display, make visible aspirations and standards of excellence

# IV. Libraries can create crucial public space in edge-city conditions

- Big-box retail is a magnet, but doesn't have Main Street's alliance of retail, public space, and civic buildings. Recreate this in a new context



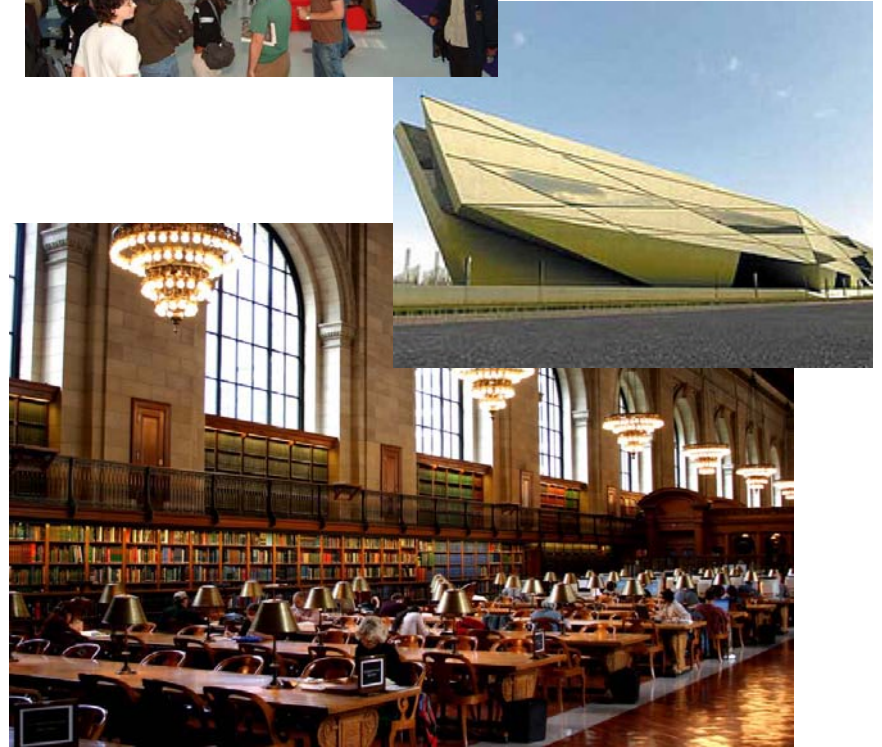
# IV. Libraries can create crucial public space in edge-city conditions

- Think like a developer, aggregate functions that reinforce each other
- Playgrounds, child care, coffee shops, etc



# V. Libraries can vividly represent important civic values

- Celebrate print and literacy
- Foster curiosity and discovery
- Demonstrate that knowledge is cool (Saturday night at the library)
- Neighborhood identity matters
- Requires inventive, high-quality architecture



# VI. Libraries can learn from retail



- Logistics, intelligence, and instant responsiveness – Zara
- Experience retail
- Stacks as dynamically managed supermarket shelving

# VII. Portable and mobile wireless technology creates new library design opportunities

- Any place is a workplace, appropriate space as needed
- New combinations and overlays of functions
- Functions rather than spaces



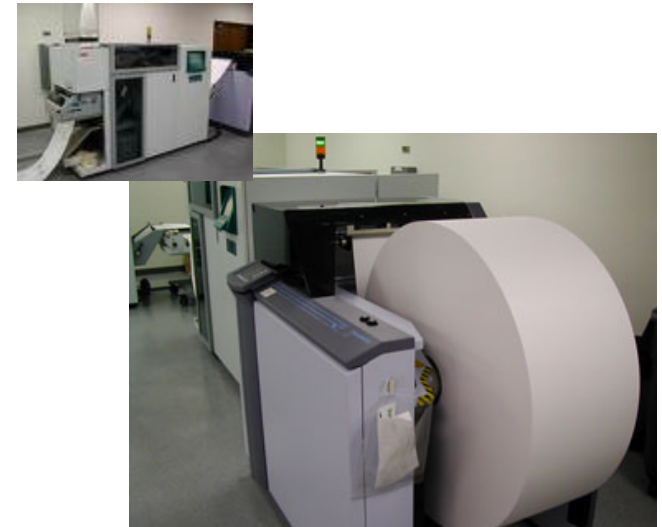
# VII. Portable and mobile wireless technology creates new library design opportunities

- No computer areas – computation and connectivity are ubiquitous
- Enhanced opportunities to create flexible, modular space
- Roving, connected staff appear as required



# VIII. Opportunity to radically rethink relationships of publisher, bookseller, library, and consumer

- **Print-on-demand in libraries**
- **Bind content to substrate at last possible moment**



# VIII. Opportunity to radically rethink relationships of publisher, bookseller, library, and consumer

- Deliver knowledge in situ, for example medical procedures on iPods
- Deliver to multitasking environments, such as audio books in the car and in the gym



# IX. Human touch, face-to-face contact are at the core of the library's function

- Differentiates the library experience from sitting at home surfing the Web
- Use technology to maximize direct human interaction, not to isolate and create distance



# X. Unobtrusive technology enables a new humanism



- Really good technology disappears into your pocket, into the woodwork
- Reduced need to organize buildings around technological imperatives and security requirements

# X. Unobtrusive technology enables a new humanism

- Download to your laptop or iPod rather than carry away a precious object
- Operable windows, natural light
- The laptop on the verandah



# Charrette Participants

1. **Bill Mitchell – director, MIT Design Lab; director, MIT Smart Cities Project**
2. **Ryan Chin – MIT Research Associate in Media Arts and Design**
3. **Marcel Botha – MIT Research Associate in Architecture**
4. **Edward “Tad” Hirsch – MIT Research Associate in the Smart Cities Project**
5. **Kenfield Griffith – MIT Research Associate in Architecture**
6. **William Schickling – President and CEO, Polaris Library Systems**
7. **Toni Garvey – director, Phoenix Public Library**
8. **Cindy Read –exec. director of the KY Institute for Family Literacy; immediate past chair of the KY community college system board**
9. **Ed Kruger – architect at Bravura Inc. in Louisville**
10. **Matthew Barzun –Founder and CEO of Brickpath.com; former chief strategy officer for CNET Networks**
11. **Graham Cooke – LFPL assistant director; former co-owner of a chain of independent bookstores**
12. **Craig Buthod – LFPL director**

# Charrette Staff

**Susan Imholz, ALC**

**Bruce Astrein, ALC**

**Lee Burchfield, LFPL**

**Amanda Hardaway, University of Kentucky School of  
Architecture**