

Turning the Page: The Role of Public Libraries in the Digital Age

Martin J. Gomez

General Manager & City Librarian



LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY



*2010 Stanford Center on Longevity

- **City of Los Angeles Demographic Profile ***

- **Diversity**

- 48% Hispanic
- 11% Asian
- 09% Black
- 40% foreign born

- **Age Structure**

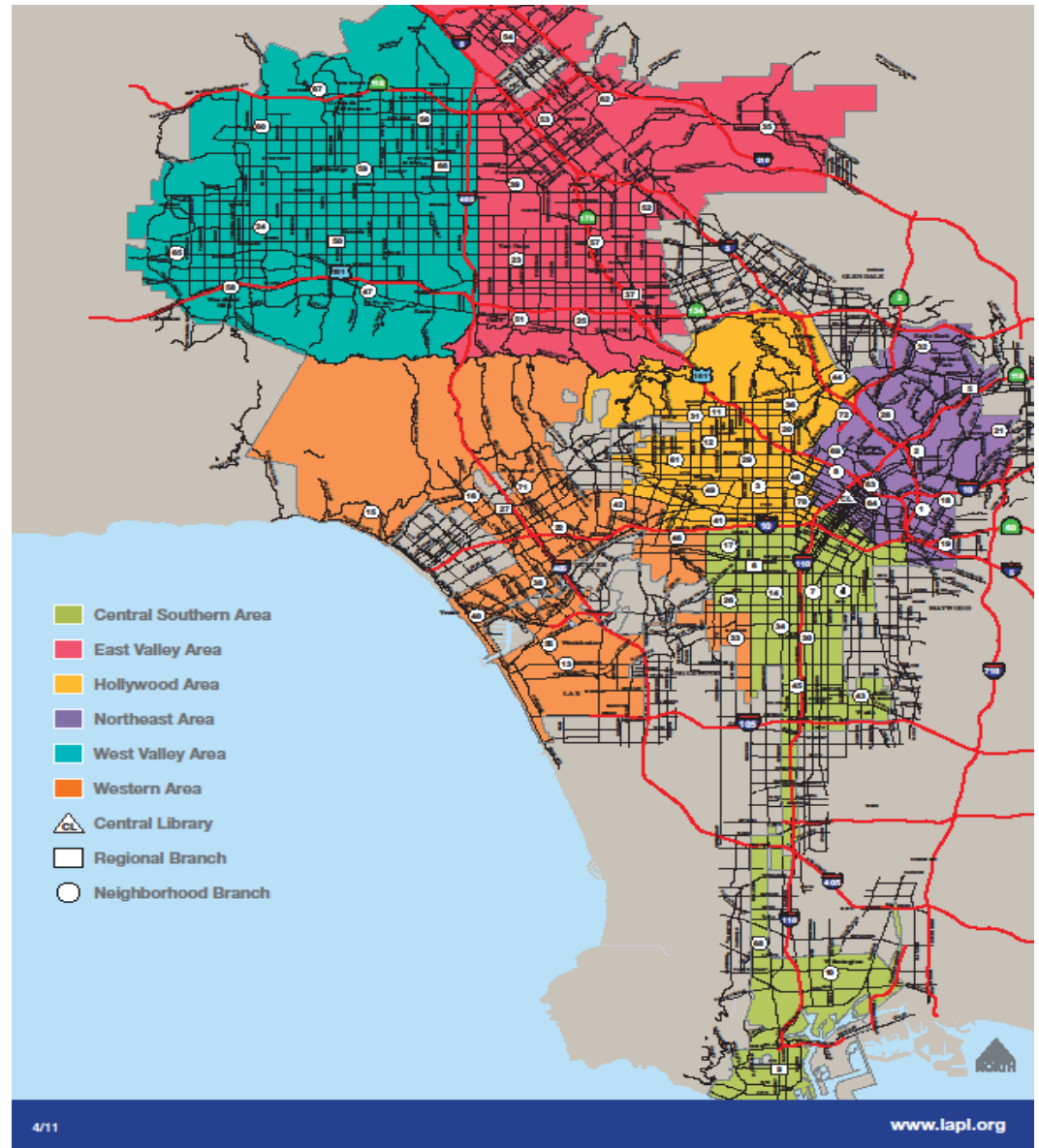
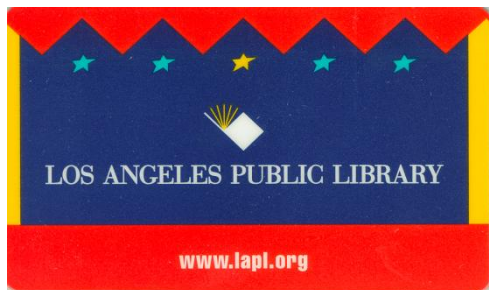
- Median Age 34

- **Income**

- \$49,000 – household median
- 14% unemployment

Los Angeles Public Library Overview

- Established in 1872
- Richard J. Riordan Central Library
- 64 Community Libraries
- 8 Regional Libraries
- \$95 Million Budget
- 828 FTE



Measure L – Charter Amendment

Manage Newsletter Subscription

LIBRARY JOURNAL.COM
a media source publication

Home | LJ in Print | Newsletters | Libraries & Lib

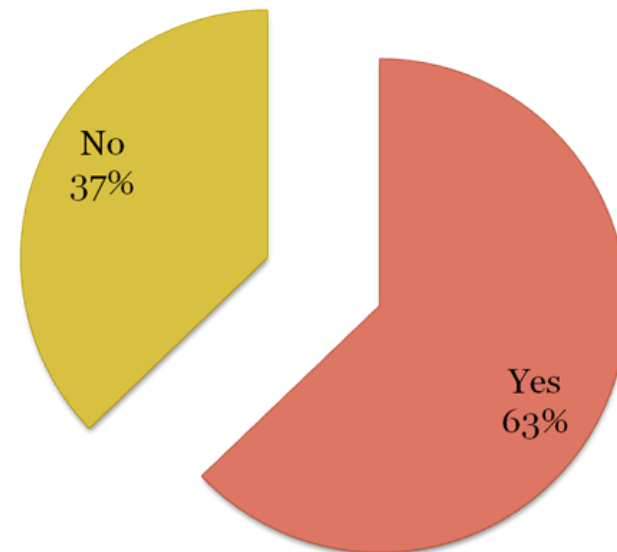
Google™ Site Search Any time

Los Angeles Public Library Wins Big with Voters, Measure L Passes

[+](#) Share | [f](#) [my](#) [v](#) [t](#) | 1

By Michael Kelley Mar 9, 2011

Measure L Results



Measure L - Charter Amendment

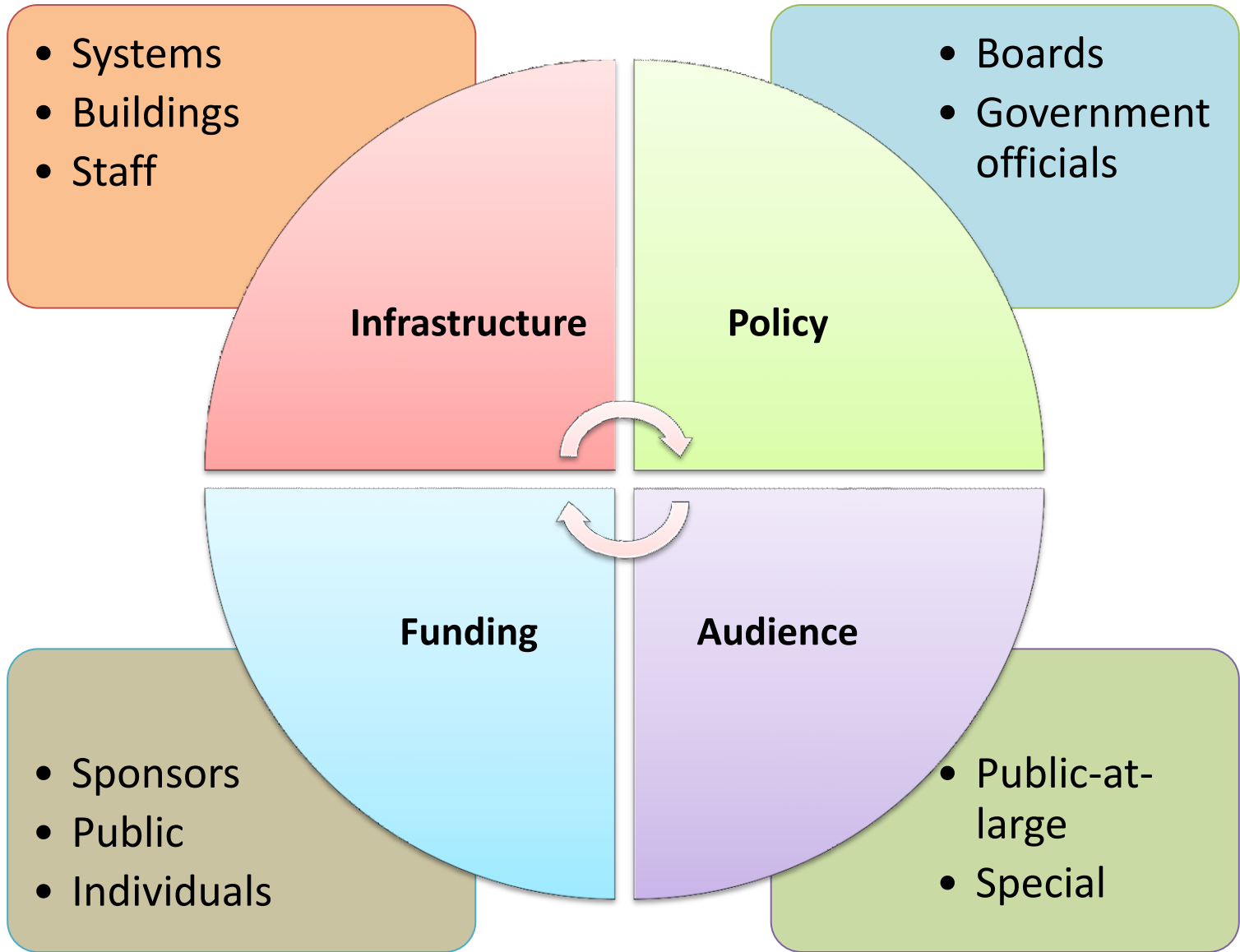
- Voters love neighborhood libraries and librarians
- Support across City (approved in every Council district)
- Libraries ARE “public safety” argument won
- What’s the message?
 - Education
 - Public safety
 - Job seekers
 - Community centers

What Public Libraries Do

Promote lifelong learning

Build community

Provide and create content



Making Cities Stronger

- **Early literacy services** contribute to long-term economic success
- **Library employment and career resources** prepare workers with new technologies
- **Small business resources and programs** lower barriers to market entry
- **Public library buildings are catalysts** for physical development

Future of Public Libraries

The future is here and the community isn't waiting. The future is here and its digital.

Birth of the Digital Revolution?



Scientists from the RAND Corporation have created this model to illustrate how a "home computer" could look like in the year 2004. However the needed technology will not be economically feasible for the average home. Also the scientists readily admit that the computer will require not yet invented technology to actually work, but 50 years from now scientific progress is expected to solve these problems. With teletype interface and the Fortran language, the computer will be easy to use.

Digital Landscape



DIGITAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF AMERICA



Digital Realities

Advances in Technology

Demographic Transformation

Financial Constraints

Heightened Competition

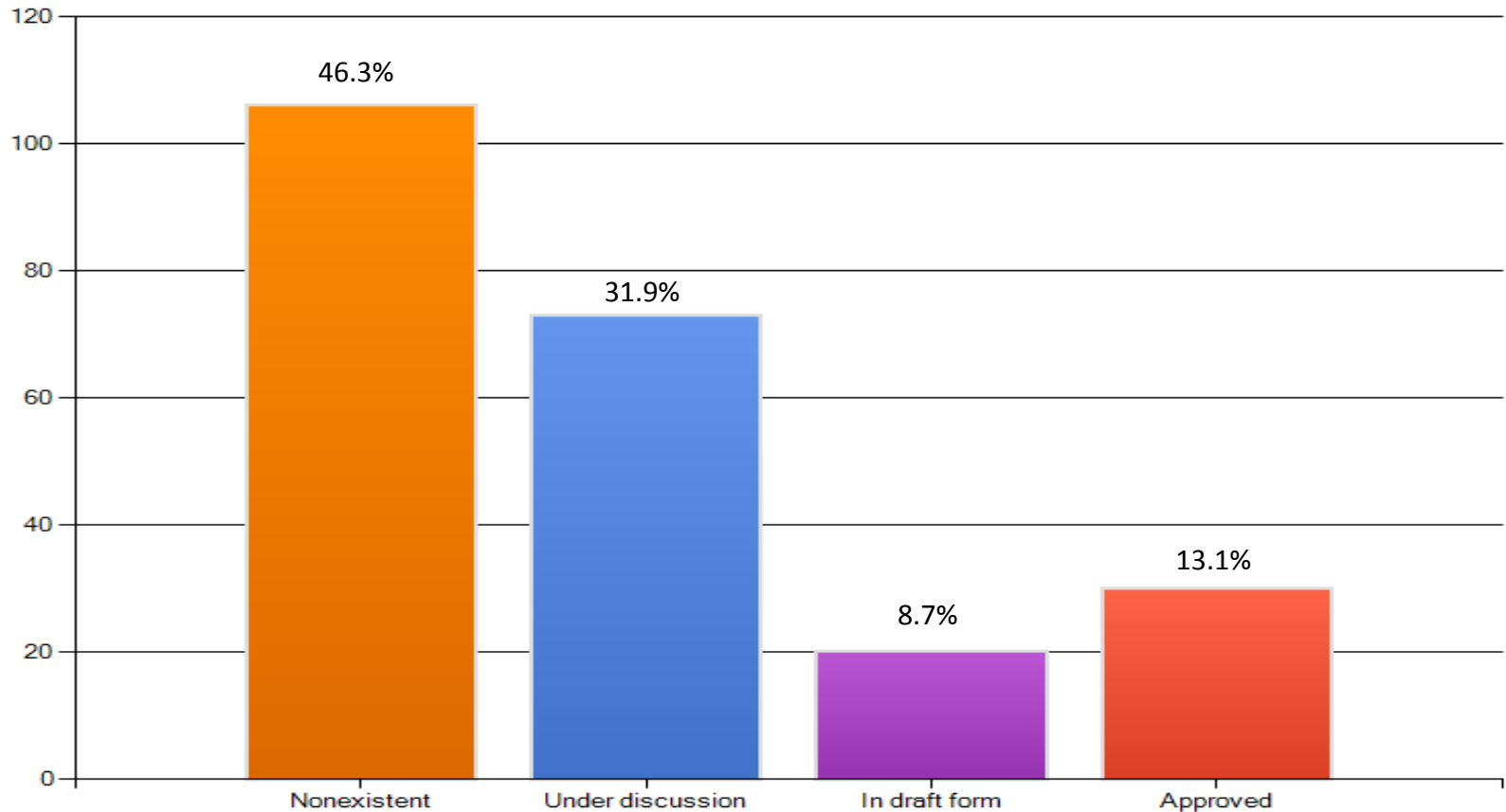
“A potential library patron with a computer and an Internet connection, as well as an iPad, Kindle, or other e-reader, can already gain access to far more books, videos and music than any other public library can provide.”



Digital Challenges/Opportunities

- Historical & Unique Content
- Digitization of Books
- Content Born Digital
- Commercial Digital Content

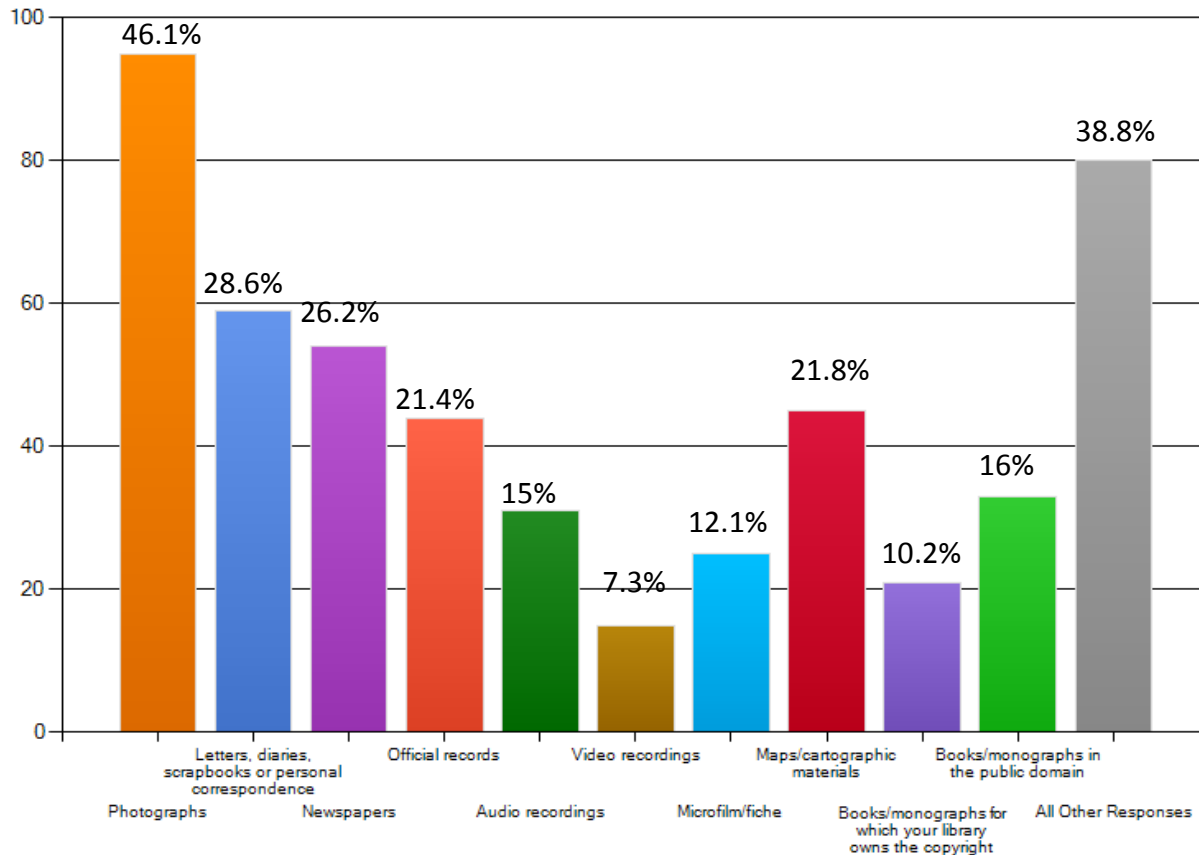
What is the Status of Your Library's Digitization Strategy?



Answered: 229

Skipped: 1

What Types of Unique Collections Has Your Library Digitized?



Answered: 206
24

Skipped:

Threat or Opportunity?

“As a public librarian whose entire bread and butter is first-run, new, hot stuff, if we lose that we will have to completely reinvent ourselves,”

Sari Feldman, Executive Director



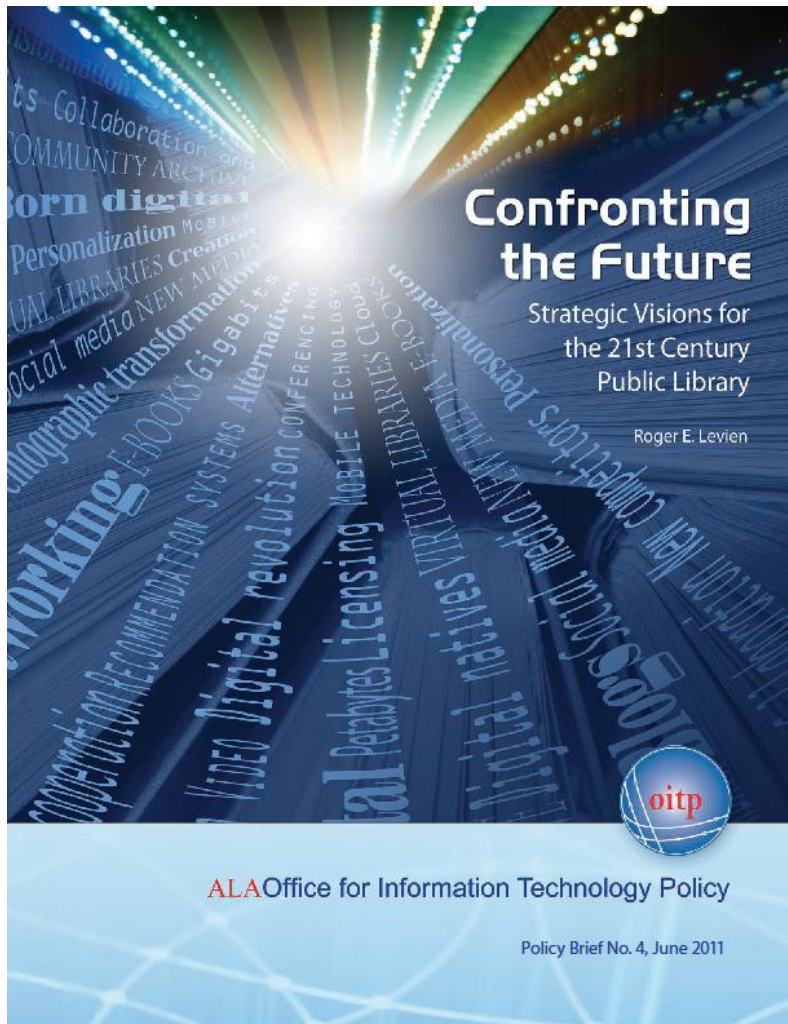
Cuyahoga County Public Library
browsing is just the beginning



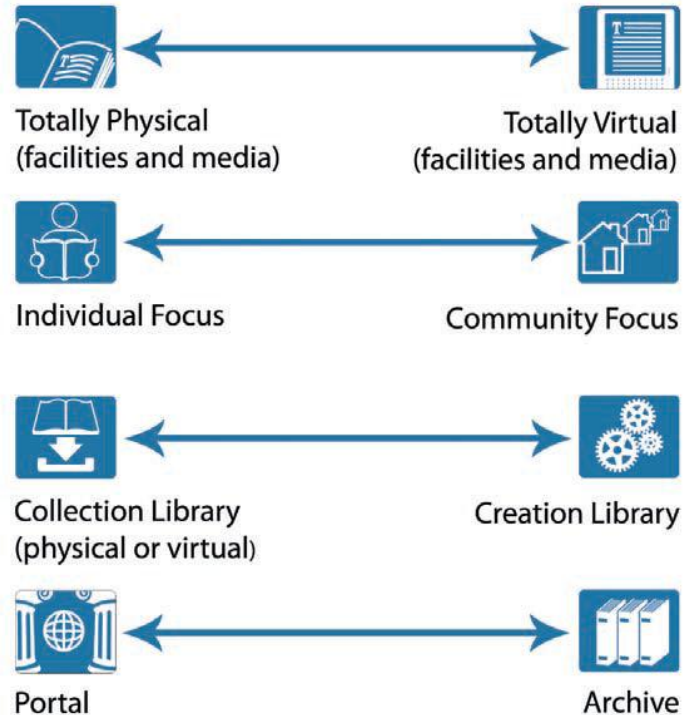
“People are beginning to notice that big publishers are not really all that interested in authors or readers; they are interested in consolidating control of distribution channels so that the only participants in culture are creators who work for little or nothing and consumers who can only play if they can pay.”

Barbara Fister, Inside Higher Ed, February 16, 2012 (insiderhighered.com/blogs)

Alternative Visions – Strategic Choices



Public Library Service Dimensions



New Directions

“No one institution acting alone can build the needed infrastructure or explore the full range of new technologies as they become available; it requires a coordinated, community-wide effort that also reaches out to other communities, such as the world of e-research.”

Coalition for Networked Information
2011-12 Program Plan

Digital Public Library of America



A project of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society
Harvard University

Purpose: to explore and understand cyberspace; to study its development, dynamics, norms, and standards; and to assess the need or lack thereof for laws and sanctions.

DPLA seeks to develop a strategy to build a national digital public library.

Digital Public Library of America

- Workstreams
 - Audience & Participation
 - Content & Scope
 - Financial/Business Models
 - Governance
 - Legal Issues
 - Technical Aspects



- Digital Literacy
 - An entry point to the library
- How youth interact with digital media
 - hanging out
 - Messing around
 - Geeking out



<http://vimeo.com/6214459>

What's it all about?

- It's not about technology
- It's not about the business model
- It's about – ACCESS!

Digital Solutions

- Helping communities create, store and distribute local content
- Making local history accessible
- Creating digital information solutions
- Ensuring public access to digital content

