

# Radical Collaboration: Advancing Scholarship in the Age of Perpetual Crisis

CEAL 2021 Annual Meeting

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# Topics Today

1. Contextualizing Crisis
2. Centering Values and First Principles
3. Charting the Future



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Crisis or Condition?

# We face existential challenge

“The changes wrought by the digital revolution add up to a perfect storm for libraries and librarians.”

“This perfect storm is so terrifying because the role that many librarians have seen for themselves historically is not a great fit for the current era.”

– John Palfrey,  
*Bibliotech* (2015)

# Radical Uncertainty

"Faltering budgets compound an intensifying existential crisis resulting from profound shifts in information, scholarship, technology, and academic organizations. The purposes of collections are particularly uncertain in this radically fluid context."

"Libraries are on uncertain ground as they engage with this fractious, seductive, alien, and essential universe."

– Dan Hazen,  
*“Rethinking Research Library Collections”* (2010)

# We have been here before

“As **an agent of change**, printing altered methods of data collection, storage and retrieval systems and communications networks.”

– Elizabeth Eisenstein,  
*The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*  
(Cambridge, 1979)

“We inhabit a moment of crisis, which is at the same time a moment of possibilities.... The old options are widely felt to be unattractive but new ones have yet to define themselves.”

- David Scott,  
*Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality*

## postcoloniality

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# Centering Values and First Principles

- Diversity, Inclusivity, and Equity
- Democracy
- Public Good
- Responsible Stewardship

*\*Taken from ALA Core Values of Librarianship & SAA Values Statement and Code of Ethics*

# Centering Values and First Principles

- How shall we foreground values of diversity, inclusivity, and equity not only in our collections and services, but in how and when we collaborate?
- How does Open Access and the push to create an open knowledge ecosystem change our approach to collective collecting?
- How to we responsibly steward analog collections in a digital ecosystem?



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Define Community

# Embrace Paradox

Local

Global

Diversity

Authority

Contemporaneous

Prospective

Analog

Digital

# Past as Prologue

“For centuries – for millennia – **the scribes and scholars who produced books often were also the ones who organized them in collections** and devised ways of helping readers find and master what they needed . . . in the last few years, as sales of university press books have dwindled and journal subscription prices have gone through the roof, **this ancient model has been resurgent.**”

– Anthony Grafton,  
*Codex in Crisis* (2008)

# Revisiting Professional & Disciplinary Identity

"A new kind of professional is needed, one whose primary domain is the information meta-community and who can function effectively in the dynamic interdisciplinary information environment."

- Anne Gilliland,  
*Enduring Paradigms, New Opportunities: The Value of the  
Archival Perspective in the Digital Environment* (2000)

# Celebrate Community

Humor is essential to the integrative balance that we need to deal with diversity and difference and the building of community.

– bell hooks



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Center *for* Research Libraries  
.....  
GLOBAL RESOURCES NETWORK

# Thank you

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