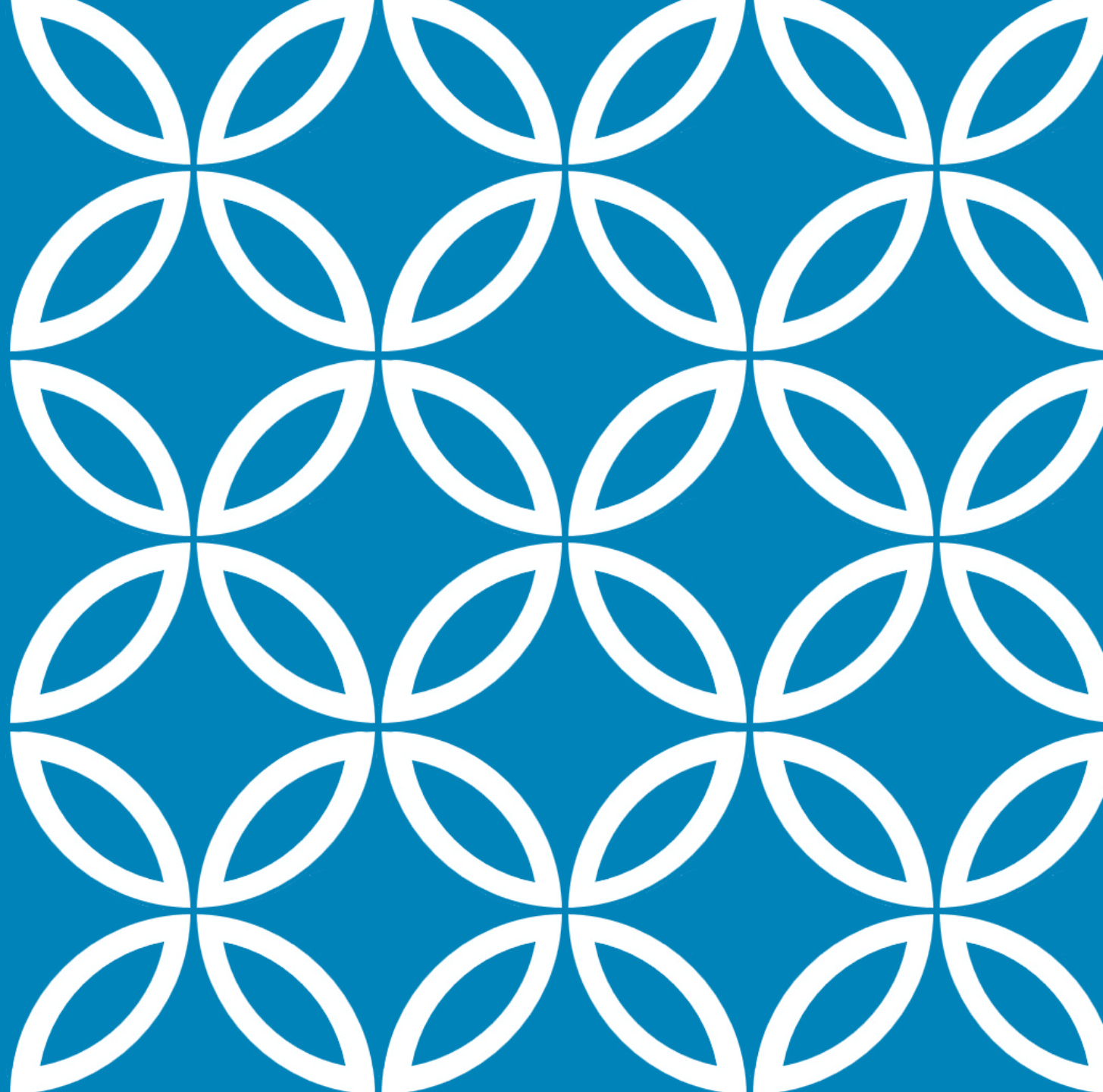


ELECTRONIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ON THE EVE OF 2020

George Stachokas





THE IDEAL LIBRARY?

- Electronic resources have greatly changed libraries in North America in less than thirty years.
- For most large academic libraries, the electronic library is arguably more important than the physical library in its overall impact on the research enterprise due to much greater expenditure, much higher usage, and ongoing decline in the use of physical materials.

FOR MANY USERS, THE LIBRARY CLOSELY
RESEMBLES THIS.



Photo by [Luis Quintero](#) from [Pexels](#)



THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE LIBRARY AS PLACE IS NO LONGER IMPORTANT!

IDEALLY, THE PHYSICAL AND ELECTRONIC LIBRARIES WORK IN HARMONY

Some organizations may not need separate physical libraries...



For most user populations, physical libraries are still essential and help to...

Organize the work of and foster community among librarians.

Provide makerspaces and research commons.

Serve as collaboration spaces for learning and research.

Support special collections, archives, and other unique physical materials that are of great importance for some user communities.

HOWEVER, ELECTRONIC RESOURCES CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE LIBRARIES



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Electronic resources management is more complex, dynamic and expensive than managing print materials.

Libraries suffer from a continued overemphasis on the book as brand.

Libraries face more competition.

Business models for electronic resources, despite advances in open access, continue to threaten financial sustainability.

MILESTONES IN ELECTRONIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



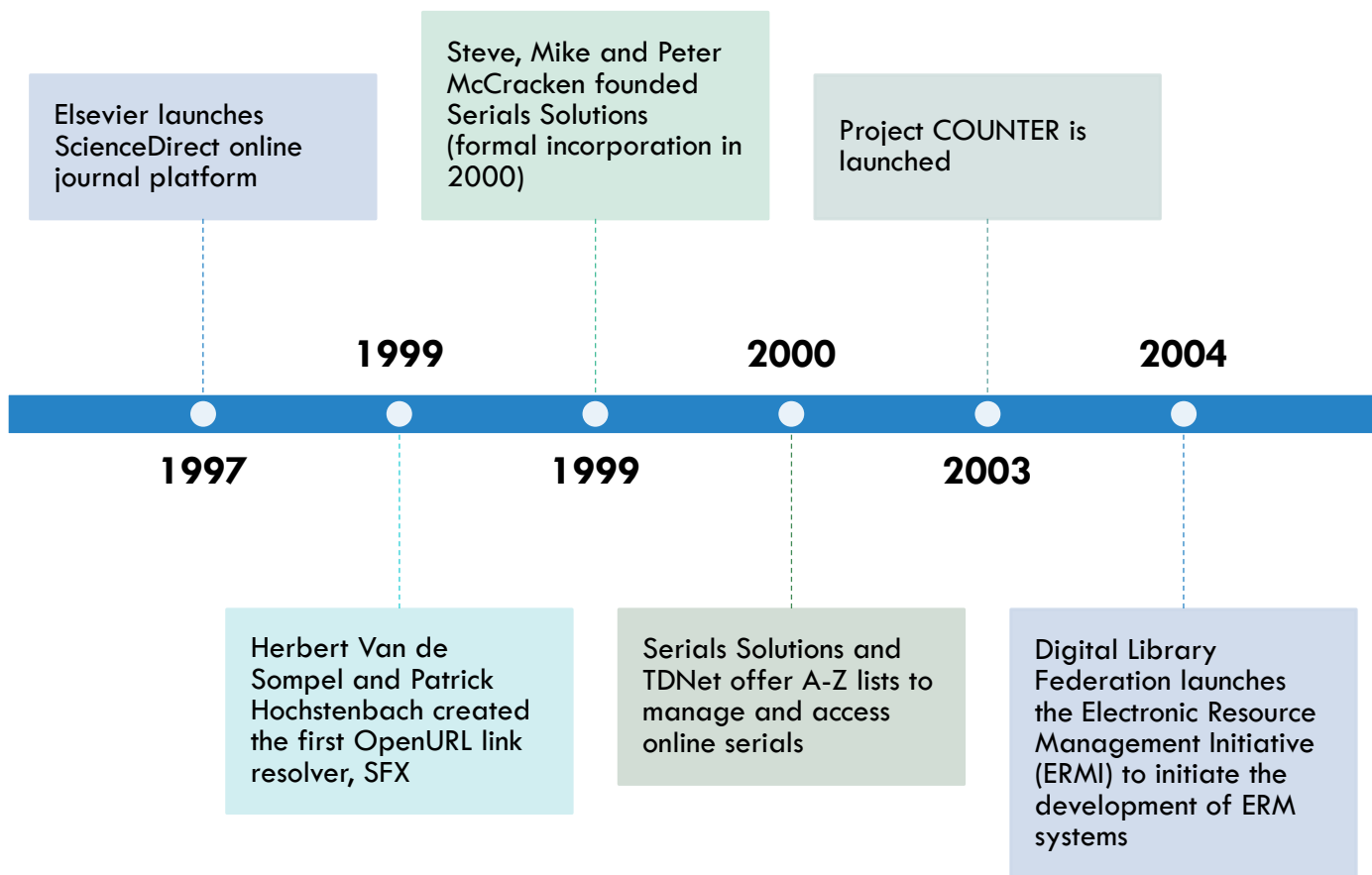
Electronic resources have a long tail going back in time. It is difficult to pin down the precise first example of many common categories, but here are some notable milestones.



1971 – Michael S. Hart created an early eBook by entering the Declaration of Independence in plain text as a single electronic document



1992 – First documented mention of the “Electronic Resources Librarian” position in a job advertisement



MORE MILESTONES

TRANSITIONS TAKE TIME

Progress toward the adoption of online journals in libraries was uneven due to:

- Some publishers changed more quickly than others
- Some disciplines, e.g., STM migrated more quickly to online information resources
- To make up for anticipated losses in revenue for print sales, publishers tended to charge several multiples of print rates for online journals. These early online business models favored libraries with the financial resources to pay for electronic resources
- Some libraries lagged behind others in adopting new tools such as A-Z lists and link resolvers to provide online access
- Philosophical differences and resistance to change also played a role in varying transition times

ARL library statistics*

Median circulation in 1991 = 509,673

Median circulation in 2009 = 414,482

Median number of students in 1991 = 18,290

Median number of students in 2009 = 23,303

[Circulation per student in 1991 = 27.9]

[Circulation per student in 2009 = 17.8]

*Kyrillidou, M. & Morris, S. (2011). *ARL Statistics, 2008-2009*. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.



DECLINE IN USAGE OF PRINT MATERIALS

CHANGES IN LIBRARY BUDGETS

ARL libraries spent around \$1.3 billion on library materials in 2008-2009*.

56.33 percent* of library materials budgets was spent on electronic resources during this period.

- *Kyrillidou, M. & Morris, S. (2011). *ARL Statistics, 2008-2009*. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.

KEY ASPECTS OF E-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO MEASURE OUR EFFECTIVENESS



1) Library organizational structure and personnel



2) Adoption of appropriate tools and best practices for managing electronic resources



3) Discovery services and tools



4) Capacity for assessment/analytics

Electronic resources analytics
Library-wide assessment strategy



5) Financial sustainability

The emergence of CD-ROM in libraries in the 1980s inspired the creation of the first specialized “electronic resources librarian” positions, originally found predominately in public services.

Many libraries in the 1990s and early 2000s initially created solitary electronic resources librarian positions with limited authority and great responsibility.

Arguably, the practical challenges of managing Web-based information resources, something entirely new to libraries, initial separation from other technical services staff due to being found in public services or other separate units, as well as different workflows required for acquiring, tracking, and delivering electronic resources all tended to reinforce siloed development.

LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

More recent trends

Most electronic resources librarians are now found in technical services in most research libraries, particularly ARL Libraries

Many ARL, large ACRL and other academic libraries have systematically reorganized technical services to manage electronic resources better and to continue to change

Broad competencies for electronic resources librarianship have been defined

Ongoing problems

Libraries still often lack support for adding staff, developing skills, and acquiring necessary tools

Successful reorganization of technical services also requires the successful reorganization of the library, a more difficult undertaking

Libraries continue to explore the best organizational roles and structures since electronic resources management is a collective responsibility

ADOPTION OF APPROPRIATE TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGING ELECTRONIC RESOURCES



Consolidation among vendors that provide library systems has arguably reduced innovation, increased costs, and limited choices for libraries.

Even though a transition to a library services platform (LSP) is anticipated for most libraries sometime in the future, it has yet to occur.

Recent efforts such as the folio project could help to reinvigorate the marketplace for library systems and tools.

PERSISTENT PROBLEMS IN E-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge bases remain critical to e-resource management, but the best ones are still proprietary.

Tracking detailed license data, including perpetual access rights is difficult.

Most systems have trouble keeping up with managing complex business models such as evidence based eBook programs.

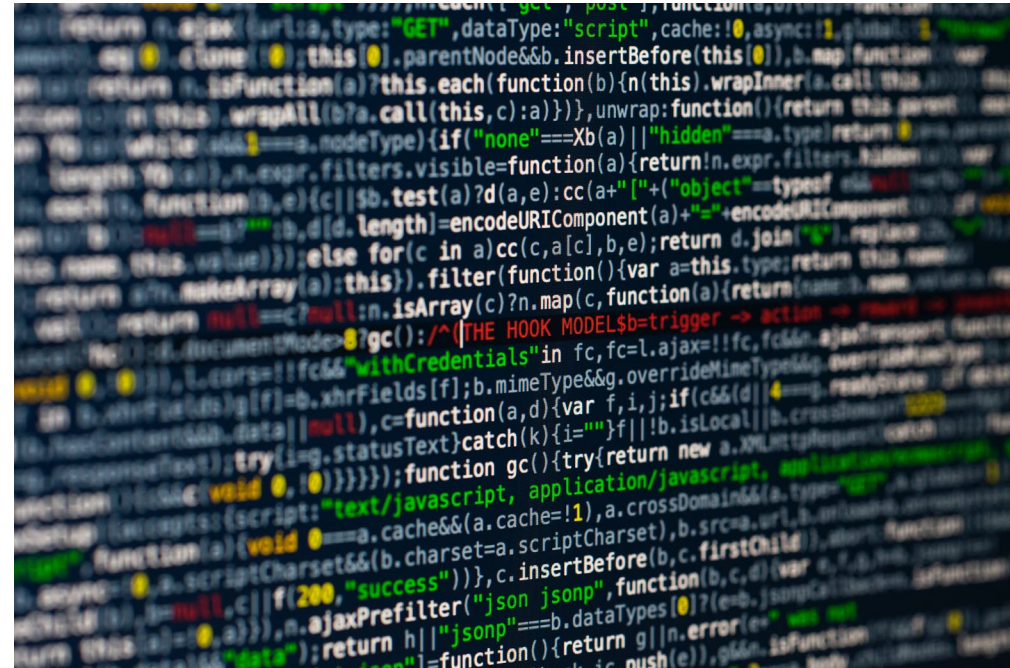


Photo by [Markus Spiske temporausch.com](https://www.pexels.com/photo/markus-spiske-temporausch-com) from [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com/)

DISCOVERY SERVICES AND TOOLS

Contemporary Advances

Powerful tools such as EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS), Primo, and Summon are available.

It is beginning to look like most large academic and public libraries seem to recognize the need to deliver a fast, accurate and independent search experience for their users

Problems

Vendor consolidation is much higher than in previous eras.

EDS, Primo and Summon are noticeably less powerful than Google to many users, although the comparison may be unfair.

Librarians as a profession have less influence over overall functionality and the quality of metadata than in previous eras.

CAPACITY FOR ASSESSMENT/ANALYTICS

Advances

COUNTER Release 5 builds on previous successes with significant enhancements.

Many libraries have taken the lead in the adoption of ORCID-ID which should contribute to better assessment, metadata, and discovery.

Other systems and tools, including Altmetrics, seem to have been adopted less consistently and used more unevenly.

Caution

Given the general push for more analytics and assessment in contemporary society, the problem for libraries will be in making judicious choices regarding what to use and why rather than having a lack of tools and standards.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Problems for Libraries

Subscription costs in excess of inflation



Strategies for Cost Containment

Multi-year agreements

Crafting/Cancelling Big Deals, Bundling

Pay-per-view

Interlibrary loan/resource sharing

Consortia/buying groups

Shared collections

Open Access?

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN LIBRARIES

Problems for Libraries

One-time expenditures (high cost)

Streaming media and new formats?

Strategies for Cost Containment

Just-in-time acquisitions, DDA/PDA, evidence-based acquisitions

Vendors currently seem to have the advantage. Options for outright ownership, discounts and flexible permissions are limited. Some libraries face taxes, as well as additional fees for these resource types.

Open Access is increasingly important for eBooks, online textbooks and other e-resource formats, but there may be less momentum than in the case of online journals.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF GREATER OPEN ACCESS?



Photo by [Mateusz Dach](#) from [Pexels](#)

New Open Access initiatives, including Plan S, if successful may require libraries and others to ask?

- 1) What is the real impact on cost?
- 2) What is the impact on scholarship, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative production overall, but also the assessment of individual scholars? Consequences could be good, bad, or more likely both.
- 3) What are the implications for the quality of metadata and discovery?
- 4) What additional work, if any, will be required by libraries and others to help preserve open access information over the long term?



Questions or Feedback?

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THANK YOU!