Sustainable Library Services For All

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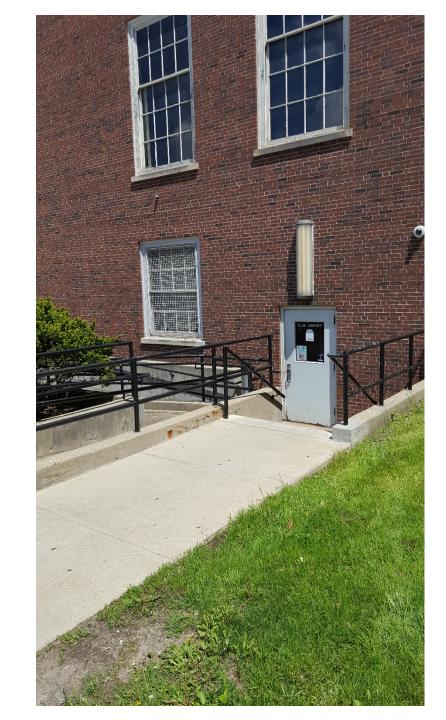
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15% or about 1 billion people have a disability
-WHO, 2011

"The front door for a person with a disability is kind of a back or side door for everyone else."

-Pionke, 2015

Is this welcoming to patrons?

Sustainability: "…meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs….The concept of sustainable development does imply limit – absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities."
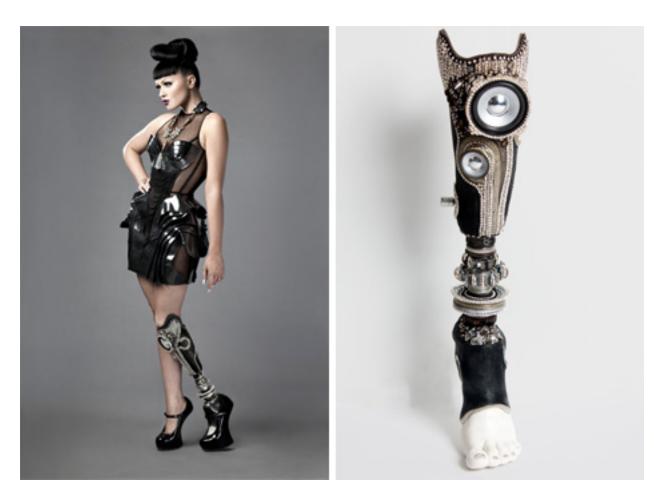
-Gro Harlem Brundtland, United Nations, 1987

Models of Disability: Medical

Models of Disability: Rehabilitative

Models of Disability: Independent Living/Social

A few words on language

- People First

- Functional Diversity
  - Palacios and Romañach, 2007

"…I have a $50,000 elevator that is used by less than six people! People must soon learn that a lot of things in life aren't fair. There just are not enough resources to provide every individual and every group with everything he, she, or it desires."

-Scheimann, 1994

"I've seen incremental progress over time. I think I've mentioned that the [computer] workstations are still [not accessible]. [The workstations are] still coming from the perspective that someone needs it there, but it's not taking my needs into consideration...progress, but not success."

-Pionke, 2015

What does accessibility actually look like?

Do we know?

Universal Design

User Experience

STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

A BUSINESS MANIFESTO **ADAM WERBACH**
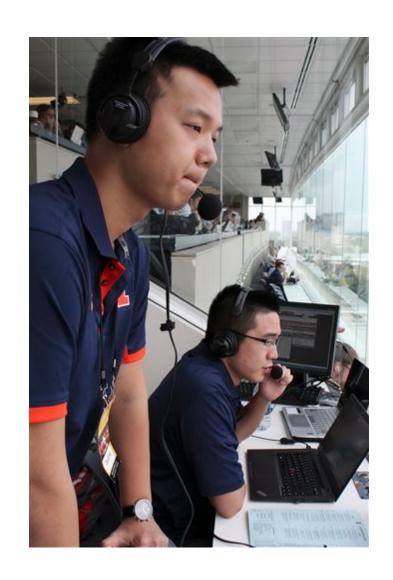
HARVARD BUSINESS PRESS

7 Tenets, 5 of which are library related

1. ~~Natural resources will become increasingly scarce and expensive~~

2. Massive demographic change is occurring

3. People are the most important renewable resource

4. ~~Cash flow matters more than quarterly earnings~~

5. Every organization's operating environment will change as dramatically in the next three to five years as it has changed in the last five

6. A chaotic external world requires internal cohesion and flexibility

7. Only the truly transparent will survive

Massive demographic change is occurring

- Who exactly are our users?
- How have our demographics changed over the course of our library's lifespan?
- What kinds of trends can we see in our demographic shift?
- How do we adapt to those trends?

Broadcasting football games in Mandarin

People are the most important renewable resource

- How do we support employees professionally and personally?

- What is the attitude towards library change?

- Beyond skillsets, do we support employees to develop compassion and empathy for our patrons and each other?

Every organization's operating environment will change as dramatically in the next three to five years as it has changed in the past five

- How do we view our mistakes?
  - Do we "deal with" them or do we embrace them as learning experiences?
- Is our library culture accepting of iterative learning and the mistakes that invariably come with it?

"Unleashing creativity requires that we loosen the controls, accept risk, trust our colleagues, work to clear the path for them, and pay attention to anything that creates fear"
- Catmull & Wallace, 2014

A chaotic, external world requires internal cohesion and flexibility

- What are the stories that we tell ourselves about our work and our patrons?

- How do we manage our own internal work conflicts on professional and personal levels?

Language and attitudes

- Deal with
- We don't want them in our library
- They smell, sound weird, act strangely
- They cause discomfort for us and other patrons

Only the transparent will survive

- How well do we market our services?

- How well do patrons know what we do and what we can do for them?

- Are we all responsible or is it a designated person? What if they are sick or away or retire?

- How well do employees know what's going on and why and do they have a say?

"I have a theory that books in the library are near books of similar topics but I'm not sure."
-Pionke, 2015

What next?

- Talk to your patrons with disabilities.

- Educate yourself.

- Reach out to your disability office and partner with them.

- Use UX and Universal Design to make your buildings, spaces, and services more accessible.

- Walk your building and look at it with new eyes.

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