

## **A Review of the Concept, Relevance, Processes, and Planning Strategies for Marketing Library and Information Services.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The digital era has proven to be the most challenging period for the libraries in an effort to maintain relevance and customer loyalty, especially as the users resort to the internet, and social media for their information need. It behooves therefore that the libraries should sit up and re-strategize to prove that they are still relevant in the information provision. Marketing its services to the customers becomes the ultimate tool for the library to regain the users' patronage and loyalty. This study employed a review of the literature to highlight the necessity for and importance of marketing library and library services. The concept of marketing, reasons for marketing of library services, effective planning for marketing as well as the processes, and marketing mix are thoroughly highlighted. The conclusion was made in a way of recommendations on how the library can be sustained through a shift from the collection development consciousness to user conscious service orientation.*

**Keywords:** Marketing, Library services, Marketing mix, Strategic planning, Information services.

### **1. Introduction:**

Exponential growth in information media triggered by huge development in technology, social media, and network sites, has increased the users' aspirations. The library as a social institution operates in a dynamic environment attended with a diverse nature of user

aspirations, expectations, and ideologies that reflective of our ever-changing demands and needs (Soong & Chan, 2010). The library as a growing organism, (Ranganathan, 1931) should exhibit dynamism that correlates the ever increasing and continuous information and technological development. Having achieved this objective through the creation of diverse products and services' updates, customised services such as public relations, advocacy, etc, it became necessary for the library to makes its services known among the clients. A dynamic marketing of library services becomes the relevant tool through which library and library services can be made popular among the patrons. 'Marketing is an approach to achieve users' satisfaction, and is vital for libraries to enhance their reputation and usage' (Bhardwaj, & Jain, 2016). Marketing in libraries is not a new phenomenon (Khanchandani, & Hasan, 2016), the concept of marketing in academic libraries rose steadily during 1969 to 1973 when eminent scholars published some articles in the field (Bhardwaj, & Jain, 2016), while formal term of libraries and marketing started after Kotler propagated the idea of not-for-profit marketing (Kotler, & Sidney, 1969).

In the library context, Marketing is necessary because it offers benefits to users' want, reduce barriers to use and access, persuade and inform the users about the services library offer, and carefully plan to satisfy users need exceedingly (Gupta, 2016). Growing amount of information, changing media of information, budget crunch, and staff shortage, etc., has posed a huge challenge to the library, therefore, marketing of library resources, services, and products can prove to be a strategic tool to overcome these challenges (Madhusudhan, 2008). These challenges culminate into user' needs that spans across educational, technological, scientific, cultural and political advancements that increase simultaneously with globalisation. These becomes attainable only when the library discovers them through environmental needs assessments, package them into an interesting service brand and disseminate to the society through vibrant marketing strategies. Successful libraries are influenced by the application of marketing (Gupta, 2006). Marketers are engaged in marketing ten types of concept: experiences, events, goods, information, ideas, organisation, properties, persons, places, and services.

Marketing communication in libraries is often used different terms as public relation, publicity, promotion, lobbying, advocacy, and advertisement (Gupta 2006). In addition to services of a different kind, Information is as well regarded as a marketable product and also as a valuable asset (Eagleton, 1992). Hence, Information, likewise other product and services, now competes in the market with other commercial services and is affected by factors as technology, income, expectation, population, preference, and market prices (Kanaujia, 2004). Library services and products marketing become necessary both in research, to create awareness, support or advocacy services, also, a concerted effort must also be made to implement it as well, (Adeyoyin, 2005). Marketing drives social responsibilities associated with various stakeholders, and the role of marketing is much broader than many people anticipate (Hill, & Langan, 2014). This view is yet to be embraced by library managers, especially in the less developed countries as most libraries do not market their services effectively or at all. As most librarians seem to lack knowledge about library and information serves marketing, and its importance, some do not see it from a positive perspective. Also, some librarians have doubt as to whether marketing is an appropriate activity for them. This is because traditionally, marketing is viewed as an activity for profit-making businesses (Shontz, Parker, & Parker, 2004). Moreover, most librarian and staff of libraries in these countries lack expertise due to technological backwardness; they are still alien to the tools for marketing in the libraries. While according to (Ewere & Austen, 2006 cited in Gupta, 2006), "most libraries have lacked strategies to translate marketing management into the functional management of their operations". It is based on these prevailing issues that this study is

undertaken through a literature review of the concept of marketing in the libraries marketing processes. Issues like the need for marketing, marketing processes, strategic planning of marketing and marketing mix were highlighted in view to understanding the need for marketing in the context of library and information services.

## **2. Concept of Marketing**

Marketing has been conceptualised differently by researchers and marketing research organisations. In other words, marketing is conceptualised based on the perception of the researcher and from the inclinations of the research. Over the years, the Marketing Association of Marketing Teachers (NAMT), the American Marketing Association, (AMA) and Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) have come up with an accepted concept of marketing. The NAMT (1935) provided the earliest and accepted definition of marketing. "Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers (Teinila, 2012)." Furthermore, AMA adopted and maintained this definition in 1935 and retained it for 50 years with minor revisions in 1948 and 1960; and redefined marketing as organizational activities and individual that facilitates and further share connections in a very strong atmospheric environment via the creation, advancement, and distribution, servicing and pricing of ideas, goods and services. Similarly, the definition was revised to read: as a set of organisational techniques for modelling, delivering and communicating value to consumers and for relationships management in such a ways that both the Stakeholders and organisation will benefit in 1985 (AMA, 1985 cited in Gundlach, 2007).

In the library context, marketing is conceptualised as the librarian doing his job to the best of his abilities; it is conveying worth in an attempt to increase services, which is important to the libraries (Swanson, 2012:50). More jocularly, Horn, (2013:55) said: "Sure, there will always be the regulars that come to the library for the latest Patterson book or to use the computers, but what about the rest of the population that doesn't come to the library regularly?" Since people who don't come to the library regularly are more than there are people who do. In this author's words, "If the Farmington Library and, specifically, the Teen Space were to become a centre of learning and community, then I needed to show the community what the library had to offer its teens. This included marketing space, the collection, and the programs". The change in the society prompted an adjustment in what marketing means, similarly, AMA in 1985 redefined Marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, services, organisations and events to build and maintain relationships that will satisfy individual and organisational objectives. (Keefe, 2004).

From library services perspective, (Helinsky, 2014:8) viewed the concept through the lens of communication, he said, "We all believe sincerely that we are doing important and meaningful work, but do our customers know about it? Do we communicate it to them in the most effective way – one which gets through to them and which they can understand?" Helinsky further compared library marketing as branding. This means making your product worthwhile, constant update in consonance with the change in people's need, society, and technology. Citing the example of a library of congress and the space suit, she said: "the branding of the Library of Congress means that I can easily use this anecdote whenever I want to explain something about libraries and how they can fulfil any information need, and also how it pays to store information". Similarly, Bedbury & Fenichell, (2002) summed brand as the sum total of everything a company does – the good, the bad and even the off strategy – that creates a large context or an identity in the consumer's mind. Kotler, (2003) opined that

marketing for non-profit organisations (libraries) is designated as “societal marketing”. According to this author, the concept of Social marketing as the organisational task is to oversee the interest, want, and need to provide effective and efficient desired satisfactions of targeted markets than competitors, and to beautify the customer’s and the society’s well-being. Further, any organisation be it a library, depends on the efficacy in identifying the customers need and want in addition, this puts a demand on marketers to build ethical and social reflections into their marketing process. Marketing plans are varied for the sake of getting a product into the hands of the customer. According to Armstrong & Kotler, (2015) the concept of marketing is managing profitable customer relationships with twofold goals which are to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep and grow current customers by delivering satisfaction.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1 The Need for Marketing of Library and Information Services:**

With the emergence of ICTs, the Library and Information Science professionals need to learn how to achieve a lot with a little, in order to promote awareness of their programmes and services in their libraries due to shrinking budget (Prasad, 2016) The operating model that has been established for libraries is being undermined by the digital revolution, to repackage and redefining the way that knowledge and information are created, disseminated, accessed, preserved and used (Wade, 2013). In view of the social, economic and technological changes, the studies encourage a paradigm shift from conventional marketing scheme into more active and dynamic strategies for marketing library services (Donna & Novak, 1997; Van Cuilenburg & McQuail, 2003). A marketing awareness operation is required to educate users on the resources and services provided by the libraries (Kanaujia, 2004).

This actions can further be sustained by the provision of the right information service to the right user at the right time (Das & Patra, 2008), and complemented by adequate qualified librarian and dynamic library management (Adeyoyin, 2005). Walker et al. (1987) argued that control is possible when embarking on a marketing plan, if the performance standards have been set, data feedback has been collected and carefully evaluated to measure gaps between given and actual performance standards and to take the necessary corrective action. Rizal Library shows that communication, customer satisfaction, and visibility are the key ingredients of a good marketing strategy (Sagun, 2014). Conversely, a satisfied customer only tells three (3) friends, while an angry customer will tell up to 3,000 (Blackshaw, 2008). Other marketing relationship strategies are to open a channel of communication and involving the faculty and student to be more visible to the library and increasing satisfaction (David & Sagun, 2012). To improve on the new information services provided by the library as well as an information aggregator, there is a need to educate users at various levels. In the case of a higher institution of learning, librarians, faculty and student should be included.

Furthermore, library, through SMS messaging and other social media can successfully engage and motivate the users to use the resources, and have the potential to market the services (Anbu & Mavuso, 2012). Kaur and Rani, (2008) argued that; librarians and other professional staff should admit a positive approach with the provision of full-time professional to handle related marketing activities and mission statement. However, no library specifically designated personnel for related marketing activities, mission statement or its own logo. The library should seek ways to share information with numerous users, using the tools as; newsletters, media coverage, annual reports. Kiran (2009) found out that; promotional activities are lacking in academic libraries, she further maintains that Library

websites are not fully utilised as a marketing tool to reach out to the general community for the promotion of resource and services. According to Martin (2012), the project for Identifying and utilising the foundation of existing library resources are provided by expertise, and teamwork within the faculty and other departments to play a significant role in developing a campaign for promoting library resources and services at the university. Furthermore, Facebook is considered as one of the ways to advertise the library services. Xia (2009) recommended that activities of the Facebook should be tailored towards general topics so as to keep the discussion alive, and to be controlled by experience librarian. He further argued that; the Facebook participants should not be restricted to students alone, but also include academic and non-academic staff in support of teaching and research activities.

Academic and public library administrators have embraced marketing activities and even to some extent a marketing philosophy (Rowley, 2003). Information resources and services are being considered as a commodity that can be lent, exchanged, transmitted and sold (Madhusudhan, 2008). Marketing as a discipline concentrates on the practical application of the concept and the management of organisational resources and activities which being applied in Library and Information Science. However, applying marketing in any library is not only to increase profit but to increase user satisfaction (Gupta, 2006) and to justify the accountability and budget to the parent organisations (Kiran & Diljit 2011). The strong market-oriented approach brings more satisfaction to customers (Singh, 2008). Due to the rapid increase of information technology at the global level, more information is available in the market, therefore, it's imperative for the library management to meet user's information needs. "The world in which libraries exist has changed dramatically. It relies on technology to moves faster and competes more intensely. Despite the fact that marketing activities in library and information service profession is not a recent phenomenon (Gupta & Jambhekar, 2003). Ranganathan's five laws of library science are clear, reasonable and simple, further, it brought knowledge on management, and enlightened passion for the library movement. The marketing campaign is necessary to increase awareness and educate the library users about available library resources (Adeyoyin, 2005).

However, within the library and information context, there seems to be much confusion as to what aggregates marketing to be effective (Gupta & Jambhekar, 2003), and the relationship between market orientation and service performance has yet to be explored (Singh, 2008). Unfortunately, marketing is mostly reduced, when, most of the spectacular and visible aspects; communication (promotion, publicity, etc.) and marketing research (surveys, etc.) were not understood in depth (Jose & Bhat, 2007; Nelson & Winter, 2009). However, these studies are extremely demanding and more inspiring, without limiting itself to these perspectives (Muet & Salaun, 2003). From existence, Library and information services have been identified as anonprofit venture. However, in presenttime, nothing comes out free (Jose & Bhat, 2007). Social services in the oldest age like education, health and justice were made available free of charge, but as the time goes on is becoming irrelevant (Raina 1998 cited in Jose & Bhat, 2007). This is true with the services provided by library and information services.

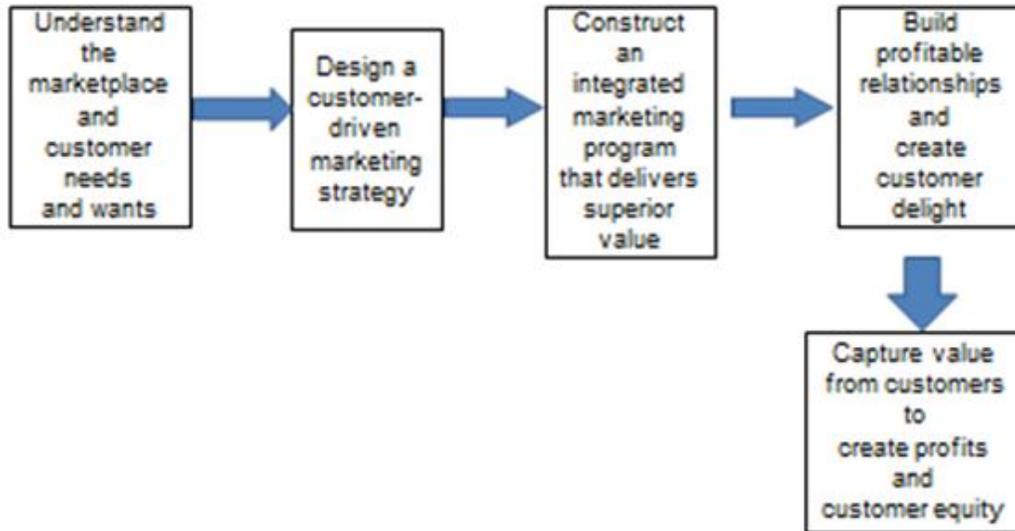
The organisations which are involved in such services are enjoined to be self-sufficient if they are to survive in competitive oriented cost appraisal, environmental and social arrangements (Jose & Bhat, 2007). Further State budget for such organisations is currently being challenged, while certain instructional limits opposed to institutional service-learning (Butin, 2006). Hence, the fundamental activities of libraries are to facilitate access to information resides on the intangible services and seek to influence the ability to anticipate the desires and requirements of actual and potential use of their resources and services

(Mittermeyer, 2003). Currently, libraries are engaged with multiple issues; budgets continue to dwindle, and the prices of resources (books and non-book) are increasing rapidly (Fabunmi, 2009; Jose & Bhat, 2007). Effective and efficient marketing in the libraries requires an expertise (Madhusudhan, 2008; Jose & Bhat, 2007). Marketing library services must not only be strongly campaigned for but also must be meticulously implemented (Adeyoyin 2005). Snoj&Petermanec (2001) as cited in Jose and Bhat, (2007) said that libraries engage in marketing strategies to:

- Improve their organisational status and image to different stakeholders
- Develop new services or change existing ones to satisfy their users
- Improve their performance in general like timely procurement of books.
- He further enumerated the underlying marketing philosophy needed for Library and library services as:
  - A focus on the customer; like any organisational services, libraries recognise and maintain the needs of their customers. Marketing libraries exist to provide services to the respective customers, and it also helps to achieve the higher level of customer satisfaction which in turn results in the willingness to use the services offered by the institutions (Gupta & Jambhekar, 2003).
  - Library image improvement: many people perceived libraries as merely a store of printed materials and related information sources. Nowadays' library services are robust, with the development of Information Technologies make it possible for the libraries to offer effective and efficient services to satisfy the clients' demand in a much better way.
  - Rapport building with the corporate world: libraries are the first corporate gateways to teaching and learning, and to the academia in general. It helps the organisation to grow their existing communicative strength and to grow their networks.
  - Cost recovery: The cost of both printed and electronic library resources are on the increase speedily. Likewise, peripheral costs, furniture, maintenance, and other facilities kept moving upwards. The fact that, budget in most of the libraries is being cut short while some others remain stagnated; hence, it becomes necessary for libraries and information services to move up in income generation in modern knowledge economy for re-investing in their resources and services”.

### **3.2 Marketing Process in the Library.**

Marketing in every organisation, especially the non-profit ones like the library is very vital in customer retention and to fulfil objectives, therefore, it requires a systematic process through planning. Armstrong and Kotler, (2015) segmented marketing process into four broad activities that underlined the significant factors of successful product and service marketing an organisation. These include the knowledge of the marketplace. Everyone trader takes his products to where there are buyers and potential buyers of his goods and services, the ability of the trader to locate his users of his products and strives to satisfy them is of utmost necessity. Another important process is the device a way to get the customers' acceptance of the seller and eventually the product, this is called marketing strategy. Constant upgrading of products and services, branding, ensuring the superior value of goods, bearing in mind that competitors are waiting at the corner stand out the seller always. These processes will be capped with robust customer relationships, promotions and likewise to create customer delight. These processes, when put in the right place, will ultimately generate greater customer loyalty, equity better profit margin (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1: Marketing Process (Armstrong, Kotler, Harker, & Brennan, 2012).**

### **3.3 Planning Strategy for Marketing Library and Information Services:**

Strategic planning is very vital to actualize the goals of effective merchandising of library and library products. Akpan&Madu (2014) asserted that an effective planning strategy is an act of developing a hierarchy of plans which can be translated into action. There are different approaches to effective planning for marketing of the library and library services. Helinsky, (2014:33-34) outlines Four Ps as cardinal points in library marketing strategies, these include products, place, promotion, and price.

**3.3.1 Product:** The library products are the overall offering of goods and services to the potential customer. This includes its look, how it is to be used and even its packaging, and also any support provided or other intangibles which the customer will receive. The library products should be packaged in an easy to understand and aesthetic form so as to encourage old customers and entice the new ones as well.

**3.3.2 Place.** This signifies how and where the library distributes its products. Also, the channel through which this is accomplished, maybe directly, agent (middlemen), through the internet or other media. the library's physical location is good enough to attract users into the library, however, the challenges posed by social media network sites has forced the library to embark on 'library on the go' in order to render services to those who may not be able to visit the library building.

**3.3.3 Promotion.** This is the part of marketing where you are trying to create and build up demand. Sometimes a distinction is made between push and pull promotions. Advertising 'pulls' by making the potential buyer aware of your product or service and then, you hope, asking for it or at least for more information about it. (p.34). This is made possible when there is a vibrant public relation practice in the library

**3.3.4 Price.** This is of course how much you charge for your product or service. The sorts of things you have to bear in mind include whether you will charge the same price all the time, or modify it in some way. Most libraries do not charge for most products or services,

but all the same, we do need to consider whether we can justify some of the costs of providing them because, in the end, they determine what we can offer (p.34).

Strategic planning is one of the best ways to implement the action that would strengthen the competitiveness of each business organisation (Bryson, 2011; Mintzberg, 1994). According to Helms (2006) strategic planning achievement required a successful marketing that is tenable; this pertains to clear development of vision, mission, and goals setting (Vision, Mission and Goals) marketing principles and strategies, thus, this demands further and sustained studies in:

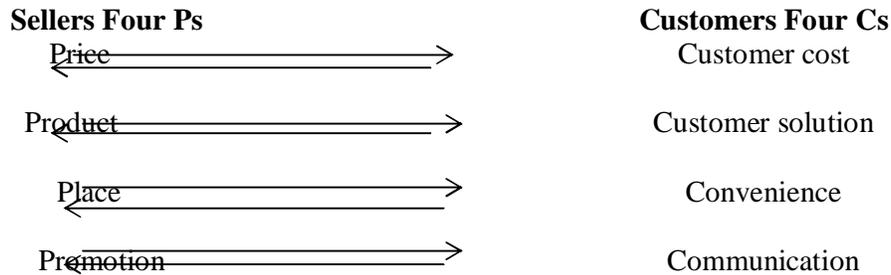
1. Customer's perception towards services as well as service provider.
2. Users' need, want and demand
3. Satisfaction
4. Preferences.

Libraries cannot satisfy everyone ordinarily, breaking down marketing plan into subunits and area mapping according to customers' needs. This is followed by market segmentation into subsets thereby concentrating on the components of the market which can be served effectively. Successful library service marketing needs proper strategies in order to achieve goals and this involves some key components. The key strategies elements according to (Jose & Bhat, 2007) are to:

1. Understand your client (market research)
2. Identify your client market (segment and target)
3. Identify your strengths as a competitive business (position)
4. Know the products your clients want and where they want to use it (product and place)
5. Develop effectively and efficient procedures and systems that facilitate outcomes for clients (processes)
6. Employ and train staff in both work skills and client relationship marketing (people)
7. Communicate the benefits and advantages of your product over competitors, such as the chaos of the internet (integrate marketing communication).

### **3.4 Marketing Mix in the Libraries**

The concept of "marketing mix" emerged as a result of marketing strategy, and became the most popular concept in LIS marketing. The marketing mix is commonly referred to the four 'Ps' of marketing namely, place, price, product, and promotion, and through which target market could be reached. The concept was initially introduced by Jerome E. McCarthy in 1960, (McCarthy, 1960) while Kotler (1983); Armstrong & Kotler, (2015) works created more awareness about it. According to Armstrong & Kotler, (2015), "to deliver on its valued proposition, the firm must first create a need-satisfying market offering (product). It must then decide how much it will charge for the offering (price) and how it will make the offering available to target consumers (place). Finally, it must communicate with target customers about the offering and persuade them of its merits (promotion). The firm must blend each marketing mix tool into a comprehensive marketing program that communicates and delivers the intended value to chosen customer". The concept lays the foundation for the modern marketing theory. They further suggest that the sellers' four Ps (4Ps) correspond to the customers' four Cs (4Cs).

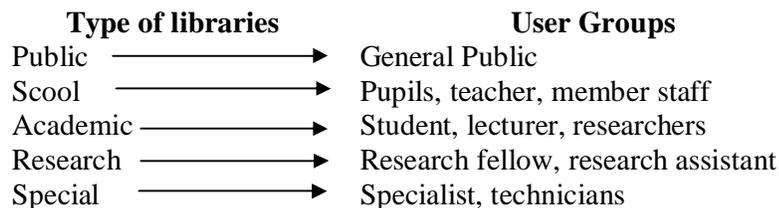


**Fig. 2: Marketing mix (Armstrong & Kotler, 2015)**

**3.4.1 Price:** Price is one of the factors that must be considered. It can be expressed in currency; however, it can use goods or services. In the library, the price can be used to express the value of information services: a physical product like a CD-ROM or a fee of a service or membership (Madhusudhan, 2008). Libraries must identify what cost to provide the services? Price is used to balance supply and demand, to be a stimulus, and to distribute income (Rowley, 2001)

**3.4.2 Product:** Product refers to the services that libraries offer to its users and client. It is really in important to identify the services that library can be provided or need to provide. In the library, the product can be mean loaning, interlibrary loan and referral services. Loaning is a service in charging and discharging library material and referral services is offering services to users. Interlibrary loan is the service for a patron that needs unavailable material from the library and the library helps to loan from another library through interlibrary loan services.

**3.4.3 Place:** It is important to identify library type and targeted user. Thus, network outlook is really important to find what the suitable services can provide refer to the place. For example, below is the type of libraries and user groups, by that library, can determine the suitable services for them. Odeyoyin, (2006) summarised the Types of Libraries and user groups as;



**Fig. 3: Libraries and Users (Adeyoyin, 2006)**

**3.4.4 Promotion:** Users must be made aware of library services. The objective of promotion is to raise awareness about our services, to provide information, to maintain the brand image and to remind users what we do. This can be done by public relations through news release, photo release, public service announcement, web page publication, direct mail etc. promotion must be customer oriented as a market strategy. Thus, the advertisement must highlight incentives, designed to draw customer attention and create goodwill. For example, free online search, a bookmark or button describing the service and free demonstration. Another way is by using direct mail. It works because users understand the message the way that others marketing cannot because it's highly focused, personal and easy to control and measure. But the potential problems are junk mail, lack of time maintaining a list and mailing out. Winning

companies are those that meet customer needs conveniently, economically and with effective communication

#### 4. Conclusion

This study identified the importance of marketing culture in the context of library and information centres which are yet to utilise marketing as a tool for service promotion. It is important for library staff to be more responsive with a good attitude towards patrons, and ensure credibility when faced with new challenges and opportunities. However, libraries and the librarians have not adopted marketing as an integral part of library services. It further, calls on the libraries to move away from traditional collection development and engage in dynamic and proactive information services to meet the global challenges of their teeming users.

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