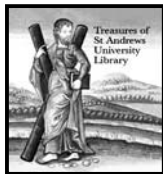


Transforming a Medieval University Library



John MacColl
University Librarian
& Director of Library Services
University of St Andrews



1

Papal bull of foundation, 1413



2



Early history

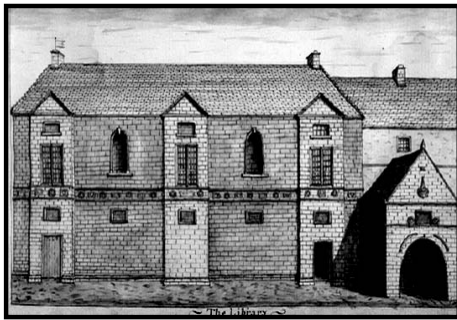
- 1410 – Teaching Begins
- 1413 – Official Foundation
- 1612 – Royal Deposit creates the 'Common (King James) Library'



3



King James library



Drawing of the library building's exterior, circa 1767 by John Olliphant, OLU-33.

4



'Elegant and luminous'

Samual Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1775



5



Library history

- Collecting from 1410; Collections in college buildings
- First reference to a library - 1456
- Founded in 1612 (though library activity from 1410)
- King James library ('common library')
- A copyright library from 1710-1836
- Centralisation in the common library
- Building extensions – late C18th
- 'Old library' (late C19th)
- 'New' (main) library, North street (1976)
- St Mary's library
- J.F. Allen library (physics & astronomy)
- Class libraries
- Library annexe (store) (2010)
- 1.2m volumes
- 34k journals

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The 'old library'



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The 'new library'



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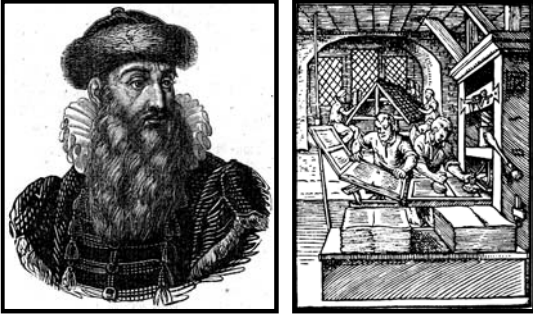
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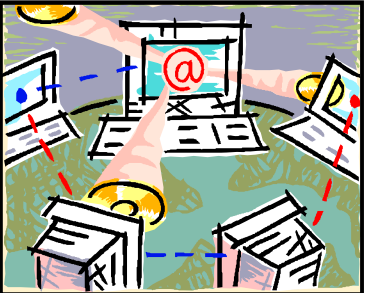


Transformation no. 1




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Transformation no. 2



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Content in the cloud



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Our contemporary main university library

- To understand St Andrews, it is important to recognise two key facts:

1. Size matters
2. Wealth matters



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Location



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St Andrews cathedral ruins



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Main library environment

- Only recently consideration has been given to the idea that the library should be provided with features that go beyond the merely functional
 - Comfort, attractiveness, beauty

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Digital transformations in research university libraries

- Transformations in research university libraries in recent years, have had more in common than was ever the case in the pre-digital age
- This has been due to the new way in which a large part of the 'content' of research libraries – primarily the journals and also the indexing and abstracting services – have been marketed
- With digital content, once a resource exists it can be reproduced and sold multiply at marginal additional cost

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Joint information systems committee banding scheme

- 10 bands exist to cover both further and higher education institutions
- St Andrews falls into 'band D'
- This model evens out the disparities in funding, and is particularly useful for small research-intensive universities such as St Andrews



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Holdings and access

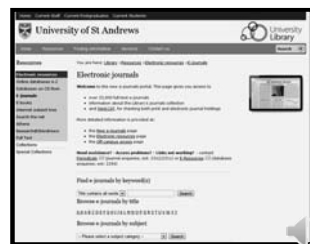
- Libraries have continued to hold content, but have moved away from the traditional position in which their exclusive business was 'holding', and then offering access to what they held
- A growing percentage of the content libraries provide is 'electronic' or 'digital'

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Digital content transformations

- The 'academic content' market is relatively inelastic
- One of the most dramatic changes in scholarly life that has happened in the digital age is the shift from scarcity to abundance



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The 'online library' arrives



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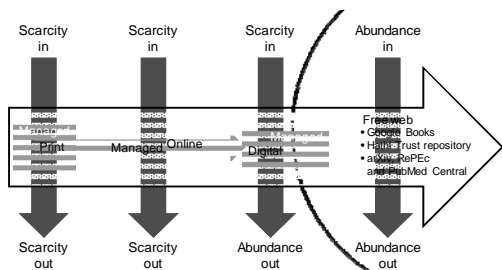
From the online to the digital library

- This system still relied upon the idea of scarcity
- But in today's access environment, much has changed
 - Moore's Law has reduced the cost of computer power
 - Ubiquitous network connectivity has liberated and democratized the wide-area network
- Abundance has replaced scarcity in a dramatic way

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From scarcity to abundance



- In a new world of abundant resources, libraries are still needed to manage scarcity, but the resources that are scarce have changed, and the meaning of scarcity has been expanded
- The challenge in managing the digital library is to present an apparently abundant world of materials to users
- The medieval university library offers the broadest possible spectrum of library resource

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Scale leaps forward

- Manuscript to print
- Legal deposit
- The age of 'library science'
- Digital abundance

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St. Andrews university library open access repository



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Special collections blog



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Special collections at St Andrews

- The great leap forward in the current age, is the 'heritage' leap forward for special collections, by the university's recognition of their value and the need for proper housing
- St Andrews is a university which has a historic legacy of underspending on its libraries
- In the current age of global competition for student market share, the signs are positive that the university recognises this and is beginning to address and correct it
- The materials which now form the extensive special collections were subject to intensive efforts of pre-digital age cataloguing throughout much of the 20th century
- These challenges are faced to some extent by the special collections departments of all of the medieval university libraries in Scotland
- The 'exile' of special collections, and the resulting difficulties make this a difficult and challenging period in the library's history

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Investing in libraries

- When UK university librarians look across the Atlantic, they see many university libraries where the levels of investment and the wealth of the institutions in endowment terms massively outreaches what we in the UK can attain
- This is a consequence of a market in higher education which has been operating for a long time, and has allowed financial investment to follow – and create – high quality provision



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Thank you for listening

Thanks to Library colleagues – particularly in Academic Liaison & Special Collections

Some ideas from MacColl, J. 2010. 'Academic libraries and the challenge of abundance: the impact of the explosion of retrievable information on universities' In: De Corte, E. and Fenstad, J.E. (eds). From Information to Knowledge; from Knowledge to Wisdom Wenner-Gren International Series, vol 85. London: Portland Press

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