

Jennings, Susan. (2009). "Traditional Values... Changing Times..." *Tennessee Libraries* 59, no. 2. Conference presentation at the Tennessee Library Association 2008 meeting, Version of record: <http://www.tnla.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=305>  
ISSN: 0162-1564

## **Traditional Values...Changing Times...** **Susan L. Jennings**

**TLA 2009 Conference Program Abstract:** Written in 1931, Ranganathan's Five Laws are the foundation upon which libraries are built. Are the Five Laws, written so long ago, still relevant? Explore the Five Laws in providing and sustaining high quality public services to library users today.

---

# Traditional Values . . . Changing Times . . .



---

Susan L. Jennings  
Appalachian State University  
Tennessee Library Association - April 10, 2009

Good Morning! I want to thank everyone for coming to my presentation today. My presentation is entitled "Traditional Values, Changing Times."

---

## The Topic . . .

**"What should Appalachian State's  
Belk Library be doing now to  
provide and sustain high-quality  
public services to library users?"**

---

In an earlier presentation, I was given the topic "What should an academic library or a library and information commons be doing now to provide and sustain high-quality public services to library users?" I was asked to "address this topic broadly (in terms of philosophy and standards) as well as specifically (in terms of particular services and/or initiatives)."

In contemplating how I would approach this topic, my mind naturally turned to my other love... history. What better way to view what we as Appalachian State University should be doing now and in the future to provide and sustain high-quality public services to library users than to learn from our past.

For this, I returned to the foundations of library science and Ranganathan.

---

## Traditional Values . . .

## Ranganathan's Five Laws . . .

- **Books are for use**
- **Every reader his [or her] book**
- **Every book its reader**
- **Save the time of the user**
- **The library is a growing organism**



*Shiyali Ramamrita  
Ranganathan  
1892 – 1972\**

---

SOURCE: [www.librarian.net](http://www.librarian.net)

I choose to approach this topic based on the Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science. S.R. Ranganathan was one of the “founding fathers” of library science.

In 1931, he developed these five laws . . [read laws below].

But how do these laws, written so many years ago, have relevance today in the digital world? The answer that I came to was . . . . these laws ARE relevant. . . . the definitions have just changed a bit.

---

## Ranganathan's Laws as Applied to *Today's* Library and Information Commons . . .

- **Books are for use;  
Every reader his [or  
her] book; Every book  
its reader**  **Create better access for  
users**
  - **Save the time of the  
User**  **Develop services for a  
more user-centered  
organization**
  - **The library is a  
growing organism:**  **Adapt and change to  
meet the needs of the  
patrons**
- 

This is how I see the laws translating into guidance for libraries today. . . This is a new spin on Ranganathan's Five Laws and forms the three major points of my presentation today:

---

## Create Better Access for Users

- Evaluate Policies
- Revamp Services
- Collaborate across teams
- Remove Barriers
- Become “Shifted Librarians”\*
- Emulate outside-the-library successes

---

SOURCE: [www.shiftedlibrarian.com](http://www.shiftedlibrarian.com)

First: Create better access for users. How do we do that?

Number 1: critically evaluate current policies. Over the years libraries have tweaked a policy here and there but it is time to do a major evaluation of them. One question is central: Are our policies allowing our patrons access to our collections and services to the extent needed? We must have the most up to date policies in order to serve our patrons well. We must evaluate what policies are essential... that have been set years ago but may need to be changed... We also need to look at new programs (Nursing program) and young programs (like the EdD program) and see if we are meeting their needs. And look at the services we provide to Distance Learning since this movement is growing exponentially.

Number 2: We need to revamp our services. With the merging of part of Access Services with the former Reference, we must look ahead to how we can make services consistent across the board. What services can be combined and what services are unique.

Number 3: We must collaborate across teams. Access for our users does not happen in a vacuum. Other teams across the library should be consulted and involved in the decision making process. We must collaborate in order to determine model services and best practices. This is a collective effort.

Number 4: Remove barriers. Provide ease of use of services and navigating both the library and the virtual library. Distance users (whether in distance learning or from across town) need to accommodate and provide alternative ways of providing access – especially to those that might have physical, social or communication barriers. Look at services that create a virtual space. Look to Library 2.0 initiatives like blogs and facebook groups and delve further into

Second Life services to create a presence and provide yet another way to create a conversation with our patrons.

Number 5: We must develop the concept of becoming “shifted librarians” I love that term coined by Jenny Levine from the Shifted Librarian. This means in this case librarians must be mobile and move library services to where the users are and make them more convenient.

And lastly, we shouldn’t ignore successful customer service examples outside the library environment. ... this last statement segues nicely into my next point... making our organization a user-centered organization.

---

## Developing services for a user centered organization –A Model Service



---

SOURCE: [http://www.ukrops.com/about/about\\_ukrops.asp#team](http://www.ukrops.com/about/about_ukrops.asp#team)

If any of you are familiar with Richmond, Virginia, you will be familiar with the name “Ukrop’s.” Ukrops is a locally owned and operated supermarket chain. But don’t let this locally owned & operated Mom & Pop business fool you! It is the premier grocery store in the region and people in Richmond love it. Ukrops, while having food, of course, also was the first I had ever seen to have a bank, a pharmacy, a café and a dry cleaners all under one roof. Their prices are also about 10-15 cents higher than any other grocery store in town. They are closed on Sundays... so why do people flock there? It all boils down to their attitude about customer service and what they do well 6 days out of the week: customer service. On their web site, they spell out exactly who they are and what they believe in. I love their Team Values Model pictured here: As I researched them, here are some key phrases that could also be applied to the library environment and I think should be adopted by libraries.

We're a chain of grocery stores. But chances are, we're unlike any other supermarket you've seen. We're not just here; we're here to help. Just come into any of our stores. You'll find friendly faces and caring attitudes. . . .

[What this means]...treating every person, customers and associates alike, with the utmost respect.

They promise to keep adding more and more services in our stores, to make life a little more convenient for our customers.

And this last point really was poignant...

Our list of Team Values, Business Commitments, and Leadership Principles, (all that you see here)...honors our past and will guide us today and tomorrow in a constantly changing marketplace and world.

---

## Adapting and changing. . .

- **Image**
- **Staffing**
- **Evaluation**
- **Effectiveness**



**And we have to do all of this in tight budgetary times**

---

So how do we adapt and change in this constantly changing marketplace and world? Glen E. Holt in his article "What Makes A Library Great" says that libraries are no longer defined as place and collections but services. If services should be geared to the user how do we accomplish this and become even more of a user center organization? This requires several steps:

1) We must change our image. We must not be the "sour/dour" librarians with shushing action but take our cues from other libraries and definitely Ukrops that we are here to help. Publicizing our commitments or core values and let us and the patron be reminded of that. Following guidelines like Reference and User Services Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of

Reference and Information Service Providers RUSA provides helps. no matter how that customer interaction takes place... whether person or face to face on virtually

2) We must continue our commitment to instruction... whether that instruction be one of point of need face to face or online at the reference desk or a library instruction class. This is especially true in light of our new General Education requirements for information literacy which will impact the instruction plan coming this fall. Approximately 100 sections of First Year Experience IL components will be taught by our librarians

3) We must best utilize the skills and talents of our staff and continue training all staff in this growing and changing environment. It is no longer acceptable to just be proficient... we must be fluent in the services that we do and continue our cross training efforts and let the staff and students grow in their skills.

4) We must thoroughly evaluate what we do, how we do it, and if we should still do it... or something else. We can assess what we are doing through analysis and application of the LibQual results and, as the strategic plan dictates, the balanced scorecard. Assessment is more than tics on a tally sheet or a gate count but must be measurable outcomes.

5) And then, most importantly, we must gauge our effectiveness on the things we do. Are we meeting the needs of our users and if not we need to move forward.

## Adapting and changing to meet the needs of patrons: Ideas?



You may ask, what COULD we do to provide high quality services to our patrons: Well, I have a few ideas...

1) The library should continue our support and become vocal advocates of the implementation of a netID. This netID would make one user name and one password our patrons' passport to seamless access across campus! Authentication to open the doors to information.

2) We need to investigate and pilot the circulation of new technology and develop new programs to showcase the new technology. Some ideas that spring to mind are testing a new Amazon Kindle Reader for circulation. Working with collection development, we could set up a limited Amazon account and users could download the material needed. This would help us bridge gaps in our collection, could provide an avenue for "reserve readings" of material we don't own, provide at the point of need service and reduce ILL requests. Another possibility is circulating MP3's... with the assistance of the elearning librarian and others, we could develop library podcasts, create self guided audio tours of the library for anytime tours, etc. We could also utilize other technologies in assisting patrons by publicizing our desk numbers in the stacks for call assistance. We also could create webcasts of general library instruction sessions so the time could be better spent on tailored class instruction.

3) Librarians with Lattes and Laptops or Coffee Talk: In keeping with our Information Commons idea, we should be shifted librarians and go where the patrons are. This is not a new idea... libraries have been reaching out to their patrons with bookmobiles, branches, and websites for years. Why not have librarians set up shop at times in the coffee shop or atrium for one on one informal consultations? What better way to have one on one attention over a cup of coffee. One school that is doing this is Johns Hopkins. The Touch Down service...they take their services wherever student touch down. This would carry our instruction program outside the walls of the classroom and into the coffee shop

4) But more importantly and more prominently in my mind is what I would term a "No Detours" model of tiered service for reference. In reading the literature, I came across a wonderful program by Texas A & M. It is a tiered reference model. Tiered reference is certainly not a new concept. The concept was first proposed by Virginia Massey Burzio in 1992. But Texas A & M took a new slant to this and it's one I like. Their program is called "the Loss Prevention Service." They wanted to make sure that they didn't lose not one patron coming in the door. It pains me to see patrons – walking in and looking around in awe and wonder but MOSTLY confusion. Stop... it is at the desk nearest them. What if we had a "triage" desk – a no detours model. This is how I see it work: we truly have an "ask" desk manned by highly trained staff, graduate assistants, MLS candidates and the cream of our student assistant crop. This would be the first stop. ... even the best signage will not help. Triage service for those seeking assistance. Take the traffic off the circ desk (the first desk people come to) and ref and allow them to do higher level services. The staff could also man chat or help patrons search for books.

---

## How to accomplish these goals?

- **Communication**
  - **Publicity**
  - **Experimentation**
  - **Training**
  - **Risk taking**
  - **Innovation**
  - **Evaluation**
- 

How do we accomplish our goals of creating better access, becoming more of a user centered organization and adapting and changing to growing needs?

1) Communication: both with each other (and we have been working on that in committee with the development of a library wide intranet) and with our patrons. This could be as simple as incorporating a link to a blog from our website to begin a conversation with our patrons, or incorporating other library 2.0 initiatives like creating a library Facebook page. There should be faces with the institution. We must be shifted and go where the patrons are.

2) Publicity: No matter the stellar services we provide, publicity is a must. Patrons must know they exist. Working with public relations, this can be accomplished. Strive to become more of a presence in orientation brochures and create web brochures for services virtual tours. Open Houses with giveaways, jump drives with logo for sale... already have pencils available at the desk with your name on them.

3) Experimentation: Nothing says that if we try something and it isn't successful that we must continue it.... we must be fearless and experiment and tweak. We shouldn't be afraid of trying.

4) Training: Our information environment changes so rapidly. And the skills needed must be current in order to compete in this Google age, we must commit ourselves to being a continuous learning organization devoting the time necessary to provide training for staff and students alike.

5) Risk Taking: goes hand in hand with experimentation. We must be bold in developing new services.

6) Innovation: as in the Ukrops example, taking good ideas from other entities even outside the library environment is crucial to our ongoing relevance in our patrons lives. We must be proactive in order to keep up with with the needs of our ever growing numbers of patrons. Enrollment continues to rise.. needs shift and we have to look for creative services to meet to meet those needs.

7) And then, we must better evaluate what we do. This could be as simple as employing students to sit on a focus group panel and getting input in order to keep our fingers on the pulse of need. On line and in person surveys with an added incentive of “take this survey and be entered in winning a \$25.00 gift certificate to the bookstore/Amazon/coffee shop”, you name it. Creates a new conversation with our patrons and evaluates what we do at the user level.

---

## **Results . . .**

- **Promotes research and scholarship**
- **Becomes the “intellectual heart of campus”\***
- **Provides seamless service**
- **Encourages communication**
- **Gives greater visibility**

---

SOURCE: Model Services Task Force Report, ASU, 2004.

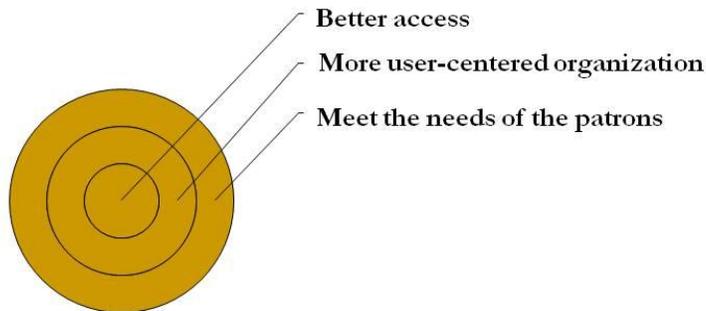
And if done well... the results will be

- 1) Promoting research and scholarship
- 2) We will truly be what the 2004 Model Services report hoped for & become the “intellectual heart of campus”
- 3) We will provide seamless service to our patrons and not lose them to this “Google” everything on the internet world.
4. Communication with our patrons will help as and we can continue to develop quality services and programs – this in turn will make them feel likes valued partner in the process.

5) And ultimately, it will give us greater visibility within the Appalachian community.

---

## Library Philosophy:



### Belk Library's Goals

**“Don’t wait for ideal conditions, assess the current situation, make informed choices, take creative risks and move ahead expediently.”\***

---

SOURCE: Frank, Donald G., et al “Information Consulting: the key to success in academic libraries.” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 27, 2 (March 2001); 90-96.

Although written many years ago, Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science are still applicable today as translated. They mandate that we look to the past for a firm foundation... yet we live in the present and therefore prepare for the future. This is the true measure of a viable library. ...a growing, living, changing organism... it is up to us to grow and change with the needs of our patrons in order to continue to be a viable partner with the Appalachian Community.

I would like to leave you with a great quote that I have paraphrased from Don Frank’s from his article "Information Consulting: the key to success in academic libraries."

This should be our guide in providing and sustaining high quality services for our patrons.