

TWO TRENDS IN LIBRARY SPACE: SERVICE VIRTUALIZATION FOR INFORMATION RETRIEVAL AND PHYSICAL REORGANIZATION FOR TRAINING, SOCIALIZATION AND ACCESS OF PEOPLE. LIBRARIES WILL SURVIVE?

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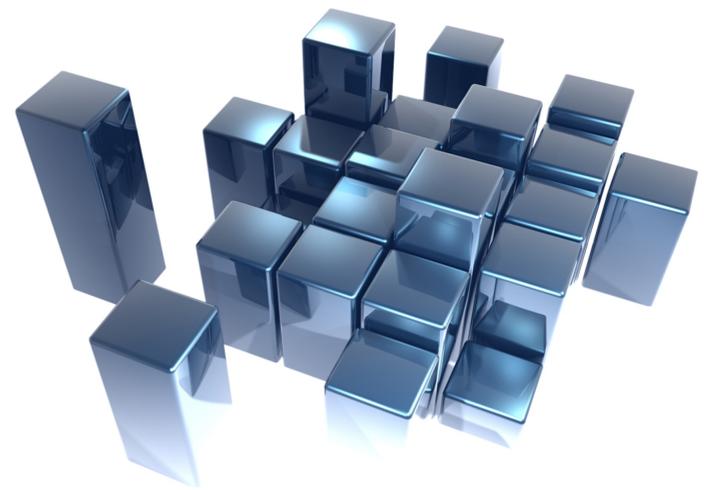
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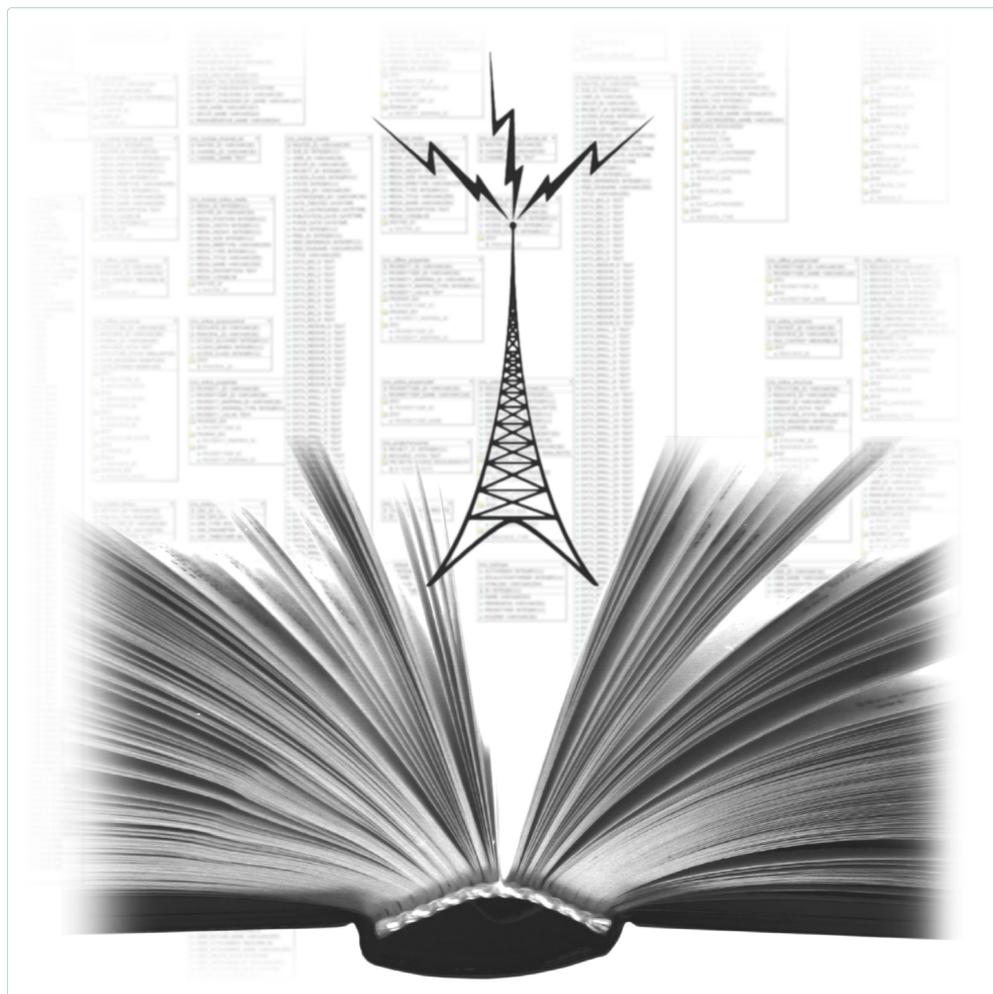
The expansion of the computer net and the online informative services are changing the goals of public Libraries.

This situation may lead to two different scenarios.

- » In the first one, the process of library space virtualization will make available to a wide number of users the bibliographic resources from remote work places.



Researchers, having the possibility to access databases or e-print repositories and download scientific papers directly on their own PC, will no longer physically get into the library space, that will gradually transform in a 'virtual node' of information interactions and librarians will become "controllers" of the



- » The second consequence, still quite absent, is based on the possibility to re-organise the library space in order to receive the 'new' users with appropriate comfort and advanced services, also based on entertainment and social events. Under this aspect, the library may represent a "network of social interactions" and a meeting place, able to reach multiple objectives:

- » Cultural, aimed at diffusing the scientific culture within a territory and mainly directed toward the youngest people;
- » self-financing tool, for the support of the entire library structure, thanks to the production and selling of goods and services, maintaining the occupation of people in the library itself;
- » multifunctional, organised to manage cultural and scientific events, based on interactions such as congresses, lectures, publishing meetings.

If libraries will not be able to re-organise their own activities, the challenges of the new electronic media will lead them to (almost) disappear, representing an unvaluable lost of important competencies.