

How Smart Can Be Library Space Planning – a meditative thinking based on Ranganathan’s five laws and 10 commandments of Harry Faulkner-Brown

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Introduction:

“When everything is online why do come to library at all?” Aarhus public library in Aarhus, Denmark built their new library using a process they call participatory democracy in action. They did so by asking their community the question in quote above – “when everything is online why do come to library at all?” Feedback came from all over, children and adults. And that is proved that the library that is sustained by the community will be the library that sustains the community.

When we speak of the library space there normally arise two implications –

1. The space we select for the library
2. The space we set in the library.

All the libraries, except the village libraries, state and public libraries will be attached to an institution – may be academic research, business and industrial institutions. As far as public and state libraries are concerned the best suitable place is rated according to its convenience to the users to reach. The best idea is that, make sure that it is built in the busy area of the town or city. When we come to the libraries connected to institutions, especially the academic libraries, they are considered to be the most important learning center of the institution. Since the rise of the universities across the world, the academic library has always had a central position as the heart of an institution – both symbolically and in terms of its physical placement. The age we live is information age. The development of a nation depends heavily upon access of newly generated information through study and research. The power, strength, and wealth of a nation also is determined in terms of the newly generated information and its access. So one thing is sure - information is everything. As we all know processed data is information and when this information put into practice it creates knowledge. Evaluated and assimilated knowledge becomes the wisdom. Library is the place where accumulation of information takes place and the library staff classifies it and display in a way to get the information at the earliest easiest and effective way. Usage of the library in the most effective way reproduces new data, new information new knowledge and new wisdom. It is the duty of the librarian and library staff to assure the maximum utilization of the services by producing such a climate and service facilities in the library. There comes the importance of the planning of the library space.

1. Academic libraries and Library Space

For several generations, academic librarians were primarily preoccupied with the role of their library buildings as portals of information, print and digital. Despite their handsome exteriors, the interior spaces were often dim and confining, the buildings were difficult to navigate, and specialized services and collections were in accessible to all, but the serious scholar. But today

everything is much different. The library and library services are open to all. To meet the academic needs of the day as well as those in the future the library must reflect the values, mission and goals of the institution of which it is a part, while also accommodating myriad new information and learning technologies and the ways we access and use them. We must say that the library is the cultural capital and learning hub, where the culture and history is to be preserved and inherited to generations. In recent years, we have reawakened to the fact that libraries are fundamentally about people – how they learn, how they use information and how they participate in the life of learning community. As an extension of the classroom, library space needs to embody new pedagogies including collaborative and interactive learning modalities. Keeping the silence and calmness of the library itself the librarian must be able to find space for interactive and combined learning in the library, for collaborative work, meetings and other group activities are more common in libraries. Some new libraries are incorporating specific glassed-in quiet areas. Other libraries are creating zones of e-working and technology rich areas of the library and keeping them separate from the quiet, low technology areas. Significantly the library must serve as the principal building on campus where one can truly experience and benefit from centrality of an institutions intellectual community. The library must be spacious enough to support the learning, teaching and research aspirations of the institution, not only for the immediate future, but also for succeeding generations of users.

College and research libraries present increasingly complex challenges based on:

- Providing and storing information in a multitude of formats and venues
- Storing information in a variety of ways
 - Open versus closed stacks
 - Remote storage
 - Automatic retrieval systems
 - Environmental concerns
- Complex building use patterns – sometimes 24/7 access
- Provision of traditional services and expanded services such as media production and presentation facilities
- Students and faculty working in diverse collaborative ways
- Partnerships with other campus services such as information technology or centers for teaching excellence
- Student and faculty expectations for reliable, pervasive technology
- Shared space for seminars, lectures, art exhibits, concerts, and other campus functions

2. Library as a place for community and contemplation:

One of the fascinating things that we are now observing is the impact of redesigned library space on the so called “psychosocial” aspect of an academic community. The library’s primary role is to advance and enrich the student’s educational experience; however by cutting across all disciplines and functions, the library also serves as a significant social role. It’s a place where people come together on levels and in ways that they might not in the residence hall, class room or off-campus location. Upon entering the library the student becomes the part of a larger

community – a community that endows one with a greater sense of self and higher purpose. Students want their library to “feel bigger than they are”. They want to be the part of the richness of the tradition of scholarship as well as its expectations of the future. They want to experience a sense of inspiration.

2.1. Library a place of reading and relaxing in safety and in quiet:

Day dreaming, contemplation, thinking, reading, and, yes, sleeping are cherished private, even intimate aspects of the student experience supported by the library. Of course libraries with physical structure can only provide these nostalgic experiences.

3. Ranganathan’s Law and library space planning:

Ranganathan's five laws (1931) cover, theoretically and practically, the activity fields of the library in general and those of the academic library in particular. Following are the laws:

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader his or her book.
3. Every book its reader
4. Save the time of the reader
5. The library is a growing organism

We may discuss here only on fifth law. The fifth law, that the library is a growing organism (Ranganathan, 1988) states that libraries will continue to grow in the future. Ranganathan sees the library as an institution that is active in a constantly changing environment, and according that, the institute should change and adapt itself with spirit of time so it can serve best those who need it. Though the growth of the library has manifold dimensions – say – growth in the collection, growth in the technologies, growth in the forms of services, growth in the needed skill of the information professionals etc.. We may deal the growth which will directly affect the needed physical space of the library. Even in the digital world, the analogue continues to be important. Book publishing remains healthy, and indeed a much less expensive endeavour than it was in 1931. Libraries will continue to struggle with space problems. This is reflected in the statistics of information generation and the acquisition of information resources of libraries of any type. Even the presence of e-resources does not stop the acquisition of new print material, and the pace at which they grow has not changed. Lancaster's dream of a paperless society is not likely to come true in the near future. The sacrifices librarians have to make between space for books shelves and space for computer terminals to deliver this ever- expanding need will continue to be an issue. Perhaps we could argue that both libraries and the profession of librarianship are growing organisms. The fifth law has got a specific implication to see into the matter of library space planning to accommodate all the new documents, technologies, services, and pressings needs of the time which is to be fulfilled through the libraries. When we plan the library space specifications we need to look into are: future user needs, including mobilizing resources, dealing with uncertainty about future user needs, new services, new customer groups, new environment, etc. The library should also transform its services to keep up with other changes in the world. The library must not lag behind in adapting to new technologies. Growth resembles expansion which naturally call for more space and for effective planning and

utilization of the space too. So Ranganathan's fifth law is a call for the proper planning of the library space so as to fit the library into the changing needs of the library users.

4. Library Standards: Buildings, furniture according to Ranganathan

Planning for optimum utilization of space is an important task. This implies the development of a functionally effective layout of the Information Centre. Planning of the physical layout should, among other things, consider the overall objective and function of the Information center and assess the space requirements.

Indian Standards Institute which is now known as Bureau of Indian Standards, appointed Dr. S. R. Ranganathan as the Chairman of its first Documentation Sectional Committee, which fixed (accorded) priority to the areas of *library buildings, furniture and fittings*. The Committee finalized its draft for Standards regarding Buildings, Furniture's and Fittings, and as a result IS: 1553 – 1960 (<https://law.resource.org/pub/in/bis/S03/is.1553.1989.pdf>) Code of practice relating to Primary elements in the design of library building came into existence that gives information on the following things: -

- i. The average size of different types of libraries in terms of the number of books bound volumes of periodicals, number of current periodicals for display, the number of seats for readers, and strength staff;
- ii. The different kinds of rooms required for different libraries; and
- iii. The basis and method of estimating the dimension of each kind of room, etc.

Ranganathan has touched and envisaged minute details of all the areas to be adhered to while constructing the libraries. If we are following this it will help us to plan for a library which is capable of accommodating all the future needs even.

Since 1960 the following more Standards have been developed by the Indian Standards Institution, that are as follows: -

1. IS: 2672 - 1966 Code of Practice for Library Lighting.
2. IS: 1892 (Part I) - 1978 Specifications for Library Furniture's and Fittings, Part I: Timber (1st Revision).
3. IS: 1892 (Part II) – 1977 Specifications for Library Furniture's and Fittings, Part II: Steel.
4. IS: 1233 – 1969 Recommendations for Modular Coordination of Dimensions in the Building Industry (1st Revision).
5. IS: 1172 – 1971 Code of Basic Requirements for Water Supply, Drainage, and Sanitation (2nd Revision).
6. IS: 1883 – 1975 Metal Shelving Racks (Adjustable Type) (2nd Revision).
7. IS: 8338 – 1976 Recommendations relating to Primary Elements in Design of School Library Buildings.
8. IS: 3312 – 1974 Steel Shelving Cabinets (Adjustable Type) (1st Revision).
9. IS : 4116 – 1976 Wooden Shelving Cabinets (Adjustable Type)(1st Revision)

All these Standards laid only the essential dimensions for proper functioning of the Fittings and Furniture. Otherwise full freedom is given to the Architect to Plan and design the Library Building according to the best of his creative ability.

5. Harry Faulkner-Brown and his 10 commandments:

Harry Faulkner-Brown is of the opinion that although internal arrangements and user services vary from place to place, and from one type of library building to another, recent buildings of all sizes have several common factors, which have been crystallized into the following desirable qualities, otherwise called by his colleagues as 10 commandments. It is like this

A library should be:

- Flexible : with a layout, structure and services which are easy to adapt;
- Compact : for ease of movement of readers, staff and books;
- Accessible : from the exterior into the building and from the entrance to all parts of the building, with an easy comprehensible plan needing minimum supplementary directions
- Extendible : to permit future growth with minimum disruption;
- Varied : in its provision of book accommodation and of reader services to give wide freedom of choice
- Organized : to impose appropriate confrontation between books and readers;
- Comfortable : to promote efficiency of use;
- Constant in environment: for the preservation of library materials;
- Secure : to control user behaviour and loss of books;
- Economic : to be built and maintained with minimum resources both in finance and Staff

6. Ranganathan's envisions of the library buildings Vs Harry Faulkner Brown's 10 Commandments

Dr.S.R.Ranganathan, the father of Library Science in India is a man who has contributed a lot for the development of library and library science. In the words of P.N.Kaula we may acknowledge him as the "greatest of the giants" the world has produced in our profession. Among many other works, initiatives he has undertaken he was also appointed by the Indian Standards Institute as the chairman of its first Documentation Sectional Committee to prepare a report on the norms and standards of the library building, its furniture and fittings and also its personnel. The report prepared by him now is available as IS standards, which is a blue print of his vision and thoughtfulness for the libraries – not of his age alone but of all the ages to come even. When we read parallel the document along with the five laws especially the fifth law, i.e., the library is a growing organism' one will never get diverted or deviated from the correct path while making the blue print for the new library building. While S.R.Ranganathan has given minute details of the plan in correct terms and units Sri Harry Faulkner Brown made an attempt to put the same thing by attaching certain qualities which are to be there in the proposal or blue print of the new library building. Both of them give stress to the users and their varied needs for various information. The users are ever changing and ever growing as well as needs are also

ever changing and ever growing. So while we build a library we need to see far ahead future. It is in this sense they want to propagate and make sure while planning the library.

7. How to start planning - Initial Considerations

To begin the work of designing new library space, there are several important documents and resources that planners may wish to review. These include:

- Institution and Library vision, mission and/or goals statements
- Institution and Library strategic plans
- Campus master plans
- Campus history, culture and demographics
- Library needs assessment and environmental scan
- Documents from other library projects
 - o Concept documents
 - o Building programs
 - o Architectural plans
 - o Construction budget
- Standards : National, regional, and state standards and guidelines for library facilities
- LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification <http://www.usgbc.org/>
- Tours of other libraries in construction or recently completed
- Library building consultants <http://www.libraryconsultants.org>

When beginning to conceptualise and plan a library for the future, we must first ask obvious question: if faculty, scholars and students can now obtain information in any format and access it anywhere on campus, then why does the library, as a physical place, play such an important role in the renewal and advancement of in institution's intellectual life? The answer is straight forward. The library is the only centralised location where new and emerging information technologies can be combined with traditional knowledge resources in a user focused service rich environment that support today's social and educational patterns of learning teaching and research. Whereas the internet has tended to isolate people. The library, as a physical place, has just done the opposite. When undertaking a new project, it is important to analyse a wide variety of successful planning and design elements from as many projects as possible. Our objective is to draw from the best of these elements and to add to them in new ways to meet the unique requirements of a given institution's library programme today and the future.

As we go forward, we must recognize the meaningful contributions that the library can provide if planned correctly. The goal of effective planning is to make the experience and services of the library transparent to the user. Rather than hide resources, the library should bring them to the user, creating an easy shopping experience. Whether users access e-mail, digitized resources, or special print collections, or are reformatting and publishing a paper, the library should be the place to enable them to advance their learning experiences. So in the planning stage we could ask several questions that may include:

- Why do students enter the library

- What is the sequence of the user of services or technology students require?
- How should service points be configured with respect to anticipated types of inquiry and use patterns
- Do we bring together library staff in a central information commons, or should they remain with specific collections or services?
- What information of services is most flexible?

The answers to these questions will certainly generate the formation of the library as a unique place. In addition to local studies, planners may want to consult studies which outline how users will likely use the space, considering the various types of library users as well as the role of technology. These sites are recommended:

1 OCLC. Perceptions of College Students, 2006.

http://www.oclc.org/reports/pdfs/studentperceptions_part5.pdf

This major study contains data on user needs, preferences, uses of technology, and behaviors.

2 Learning Spaces (e-book, freely available) <http://www.educause.edu/LearningSpaces>

This e-book has chapters on many aspects of learning space design, emphasizing learning principles, student needs and behaviors, technology and case studies. See especially Chapters 1-13. Searing, Susan E., and Karla Stover Lucht (2006

3 General topics and non-academic libraries. Internet Archive URL:

http://web.archive.org/web/20070107121636/http://clips.lis.uiuc.edu/2006_09_print.html.

4 Academic and research libraries. Internet Archive URL:

http://web.archive.org/web/20090420170803/http://clips.lis.illinois.edu/2006_09P2.html. This site includes many summaries and pointers to key articles and documents, with some focusing on users.

8. Some more suggestions by, Nancye Browning and Lesneski and Traci Browning:

Nancye Browning is assistant director at Louisville (Ky.) Free Public Library and Lesneski and Traci Browning is the principal of Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. He has presented 10 steps to better library interior. They expect to customize and personalize their experiences. They also expect comfort and amenities. Cafés, gaming spaces, cozy chairs—perks in the past—are now expected. To help libraries meet these expectations, Lesneski and Browning offered 10 design-related tenets.

1. *Use a fresh perspective:* Pretend you're entering your library for the first time. What do you see? What can't you see? How do you feel? If everything in your library was put in the parking lot, what would you bring back inside first?
2. *Remove barriers:* Barriers can interrupt flow. Browning explained that a movable book shelf has allowed the library to adapt a single space for a variety of needs. Consider if any of your "permanent" structures can be made flexible. Can staff space ever be used for public space?
3. *Less is more:* This tenant has a variety of applications, including furniture, color, lighting, and signage. The more there is, the less our eye can focus on what's important.
4. *Unclutter:* Put simply by Lesneski, "Chill with the signs."

5. *Clarify*: All aspects of design suggest something. Make sure your design is clarifying your intent, not complicating it. If you want people to sit in an area, are the seats inviting? Are they easy to walk to?
6. *Leverage assets*: Local furniture dealers are assets. They can offer discounts when they need to clear their showroom. Local contractors are assets, both for consultation, or work. Windows are assets. Views are assets.
7. *Zone your interior*: Remember personalized experiences. Every patron who comes to the library has a different experience in mind. Different zones help deliver these experiences. When zoning, think of zones within zones. Your teen space may be far from your quiet area, but within the teen space, you can still zone a quiet section.
8. *Create variety*: Different furniture or color will help create different zones. (Of course, too much variety is bad. Remember tenet #3).
9. *Light to shape space*: There are people who have dedicated their lives to lighting. Librarians usually aren't those people. Find them and talk to them. For an introduction to lighting, visit [Discover Lighting](#).
10. *Embrace color*: But carefully. And not too much.

10. Conclusion:

Libraries remain amongst the most socially-inclusive, enduring and well-used 'places' in modern society, and creating good new buildings is critical, not only to the future of our universities, but also to the intellectual capital of our countries. We are witnessing unprecedented and dynamic change in society, higher education, technologies and management. These trends, and the considerable challenges they present to planners are likely to continue at an ever-increasing pace. Tomorrow's libraries will look and feel very different 'places' from yesterday's buildings. Even though demonstrating the impact of good library design on learning, teaching and research remains an elusive challenge, it is reassuring for all those involved in the planning process that successful new libraries continue to encourage even greater use of both traditional and virtual services, often stimulating a two or three fold increase in demand.

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