The increasingly digital environment in which corporate library services operate has put increased pressure to prove their value and integrate their services directly into business processes. The combination of increasing corporate end-user expectations and a plethora of digital data services and resources is positioning corporate libraries to re-think their service models and shift their strategic directions. The era of too-much-information is driving demand for greater filtering and clarity as well as more value-add to support scanning and insight derivation from massive quantities of news and other information behind the floodgates. End-users see that the library services can save them time and demanding higher level services. They want more highlighting of critical content, summaries of complex documents, organized information into briefing packages with context highlighted and professional information evaluations, analysis, charts, tables, visualizations and other ways of displaying information for faster digesting and understanding and to help derive insights from seeing information in multiple different ways beyond text.

Indeed one of my major learnings from trend watching in the past few years is it’s not just the fact that new technologies evolve or appear on our radar screens to create new opportunities but that the other side of the coin is that user expectations are being driven by a plethora of their own insights and behavioral change. User experiences with the consumer web (largely driven by their personal (and only partially business-oriented activities) on such services as Google, Facebook, Amazon, and eBay have fired their imaginations about how these might apply to their workplace setting needs. However, many corporate end-users often have a very low understanding of the quality, licensing, costs, usage rights, copyright, legal, security and privacy issues associated with applying these services for the business without professional advice from librarians and information professionals in corporate and institutional environments. This is where professional librarians allied with information technology professionals fit in.

The consumer trends in technology, content and data, publishing, payment models, and learning are challenging corporate libraries to adapt and up their game with respect to meeting end-user expectations all the while simultaneously managing costs around implementation and development. As the intranet becomes more usable within the workflow context and not just a huge digital storage barn for external and internal information, many corporate librarians are seeking to influence and contribute
leadership to more scalable research workflow initiatives in their companies and institutions. Here are eleven strategies I’ve collected:

**Experience Portals**
The creation of scalable and sustainable ‘products’, that serve as stations on the research train is one trend. These range from competitive intelligence tracking, portals of content for news, industries, companies, and topics that align with the strategic needs of the organization. Creating a suite of dashboards or webpage portals that tie these content sets to the business professional’s real goal – learning, analysis or decision-making requires a deeper understanding of the real decision-making needs in the business environment of end-users and teams and not just the view of effectively serving their transactional needs for specific identified information. The user experience has become a real priority for virtual libraries. After moving so much content to the intranet it often became a morass in a world of too-many-files and too-many-interfaces. Some libraries are now focusing on the user experience in the context of their needs and environment and the key decisions they need to make and the key things they need to learn. Understanding the principles of knowledge management and user experience (UX) can move intranet initiatives beyond just information and data transaction storehouses to focus on end-user transformations where greater impact can be measured.

**Dashboards**
What we used to call alerting services have evolved from traditional print, table-of-contents and e-mail services of the last century to malleable personal dashboards that are iteratively tunable by both the business user and the librarian combining diverse and targeted sources to address the common complaint from end-users about e-mail fatigue, and the fire hose. The real challenge of librarians serving large user populations is scalability. Hand crafting each and every research request can become expensive and reduce timeliness within the reduced staffing we find today. Justifying larger staff numbers to hand craft may prove impossible without the promise of sustainable technologically-based initiatives. Tools that can build repeatable but up-to-date briefing PDFs or create dynamic, timely, and current dashboards provide valid and timely first steps in serving the top questions of end-users.

**Streaming Media**
Streaming media is a huge thing in the consumer space with Netflix and TiVo and this creates a challenge for all types of libraries, but those libraries where non-fiction video of podcasts and videoconferences of stock market players or company meetings, there are opportunities here to time shift the use of these current awareness resources. The challenge is finding the new tools to index, archive, and search the spoken word. I can also see issues for some enterprises around bandwidth blocking and mobile usage.
**Mobile Devices**
Smartphones and tablets are now commonplace, ubiquitous and dominate as the primary end-user access point for business users. This challenges corporate library intranet operations if they have a closed framework or overly restrict access and usability (e.g. PDF delivery can often be difficult since the format isn’t fluid and usability is varies radically between tablets and phones). Corporate intranet testing procedures are being challenged to adapt old content conversions to new end-user form factors.

**Cloud computing**
The cloud is boundary breaking. The boundaries of service, the boundaries of geography are changing due to cloud computing. No longer do corporations need to house server farms. But, while software in the cloud is reducing cost of ownership for organizations, it is simultaneously raising concerns about privacy. The cloud has three aspects of corporate interest to information professionals – the cloud of content, the cloud of metadata, and cloud-based software applications that remove the difficulties of updating the software and offering a uniform and up-to-date platform to users. Again there is a risk that corporate end-users will migrate behaviours to free commercial cloud providers and create maverick parallel systems, with the attendant confidentiality, security, and privacy issues, if the internal intranet doesn’t adapt.

**Discovery Systems**
Discovery, knowing where to search, versus native database search is a big trend in academic information systems. Historically, to successfully research a topic, you had to first know where to look. Discovery systems can be used as a way to navigate through the myriad of information resources available – as selected by information professionals – and find, serendipitously and by design, more content than they were previously successful on their own. Tie this to such key technological innovations as OpenURL resolvers we can see that the graying of the boundaries between database silos and vendor silos is starting. This holds the potential to deal with the corporate Holy Grail of better integration between internal and external information.

**New Search Tools**
Search is changing and traditional algorithmic and Boolean search protocols are being joined by a group of innovations around such things as facial and image recognition for image search; spoken word searching; semantic search (adding context to remove ambiguity from search results); sentiment search (displaying and detecting bias and point of view in search results); tiled search (displaying results across multiple contexts in tiles), and taxonomic search (offering additional search improvements based on the internal architecture of the database or from the taxonomy). Visualization has taken display of results to a new level – beyond just word clouds and into tools that provide auto-summarization and mind mapping to derive insights in large sets of data and information. Encouraging user-generated tagging, originally known as folksonomies, to
support team work and manage content can create a major wealth of targeted content aligned with specific project or research needs. All of these tools can be applied in the workflow oriented intranet.

**Social Media as a Content Source**

Searching and developing skills to interpret and add value to social media monitoring are becoming part of the skill set of some corporate libraries. Folding free social networking/collaboration tools into services (RSS, Twitter, Wikis, blogs, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.) or using librarian competencies to separate the signal from the noise can be a high value-add for those who monitor news, competitors, industries, trademarks, and more.

**Expertise Databases**

Corporate libraries with large user populations and multiple staff find that the building of expertise databases can assist in sustainably serving these populations. By collecting information (sometimes in collaboration with internal HR systems (HRIS) and metadata such as demographic data like location, role and hierarchy, and tying this to information to specific projects, questions, and alerts, the library can amass enough data to start to track and predict trends as well as to scalably position the right staff resource on the file and target the user training and needs. Closely tied to and built on expertise databases is the adoption of software whereby the traditional reference question tracking systems are upgraded to model the sales relationship models of vendors of all types. Trends and relationships can be identified and services targeted to the team and not just the individual requestor. Purchasing and developing “behind the firewall” social networking community sites can be enhanced by leadership or involvement from the library. Monitoring team discussions or pushing content to teams as a recommendation through internal, private social networks can adding value and position corporate information professionals as a valued member of the team.

**Archival Digitization and Born-Digital Internal Documents**

In the corporate library space digitizing specialized content and information, especially internal reports and archives that are tied to strategic priorities or competitive advantage is a key intranet product. Enabling perpetual and global access to digital content using cloud technology helps to resolve the limitations of print and photo archives of critical content. Some corporate libraries also do digital scrapping of the Web to archive time sensitive content that may play a role in their decision-making such as elections, news, foreign content, etc.

**E-learning**

Organizations continue to grapple with how best to develop employee competencies, particularly regarding technologies, applications and changes in workflow. E-learning is the major force in professional and continuing education that allows for scalable,
repeatable training. MOOC’s (Massive Open Online Courses) are disrupting the market for e-learning and information vendors. The future of MOOCs is uncertain, but at present they exist for nearly any organizational goal – from consumer investment skills, technology training, through management competencies. Corporate libraries have always licensed digital resources on the necessary subjects, and are now licensing or purchasing online courses. E-learning is also emerging as an opportunity for corporate libraries as a manager of the requisite licensing and copyright, and access management and monitoring, persistent links and other technical solutions. Some are developing information literacy courses tied to corporate goals for training, orientation and more.

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