

INSPIRATIONAL MESSAGE

on the occasion of the 32nd Annual General Assembly, Induction & Awards Ceremonies
of the Philippine Association of Academic and Research Librarians (PAARL)

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We have entered the information age. Information and communications technology is advancing at a dramatic pace. For libraries and information centers, these dynamic developments in networking technologies and the rapid use of the Internet and worldwide web (WWW) mean that information databases from any part of the world can be generated and accessed within a matter of seconds. In response, both the image and reality of libraries are changing--from a mere collection of books to a dynamic information center. It follows that the role of librarians also has to change from custodians of collections of books to information managers. With all these developments, information literacy has become a must for every person who wants to successfully cope with today's world.

"To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (American Library Association, 1989).

Effective school librarians are expected to serve as models in information literacy skills. In collaboration with the faculty, academic librarians will be assisting students gain information literacy through any or all of the following ways:

- Create webpages to promote and provide access to the information resources in their schools.
- Provide guidance in video production so that students can write, create, and broadcast morning news programs and instructional projects.
- Write and create video orientations for their media centers.
- Create virtual pathfinders to facilitate access to Internet resources.
- Locate helpful Internet sites
- Create curriculum-based webpages to support research in subject areas.
- Promote reading through varied technology-based incentive programs.
- Create slide presentations to promote participation in book award programs.
- Manage integrated automation systems so that resources are easily located.
- Generate subject bibliographies.
- Provide instruction and examples of how to correctly cite references, often in the form of citation guides that are posted on the school's intranet.
- Use online databases to review books.
- Help students develop multimedia projects for classroom use and media festivals.
- Provide staff development in many areas that promote and enhance information literacy skills.
- Collaborate with teachers in planning resource-based instruction.

I am sure you can add to this already long list of amazing tasks that the librarians perform as information managers. And, according to the internet source of the above list, the librarians

"accomplish all this along with ordering books and non-print resources, managing the organization of the media center, helping students and teachers find needed information, and supporting a resource-based instructional system."

Do school librarians help students to develop the ability to identify, access and evaluate information resources for problem solving? The answer is yes. School librarians not only help students become information literate, they also help administrators and teachers enhance their information literacy skills. School librarians model what a truly information literate person can accomplish.

(The Role of School Librarians in Promoting and Sustaining Information Literacy by Mary Ann Hindes, Chair of the Information and Communications Technology SIG for the International Association of School Librarianship.)

Therefore, what new roles for academic and research librarians does the information age or the information society require?

*“Librarians will need to be seen by the members of the faculty and administration as **education leaders and innovators**, and not just as custodians of the institution’s present media.”* (Ralph A. Wolff, Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges)

These new roles go along with the emerging roles of the Library of the Future, namely:

- Librarians have the opportunity to redefine how information and instruction are communicated to students and faculty.
 - Partnering with discipline faculty and other specialists for delivery of information and instruction
 - Designing instructional programs for information access
 - Teaching students and faculty how to access information, whatever its format or location, and how to evaluate what they find
- Information professionals will teach, consult, create, select, organize, and preserve.
 - Serving as consultants on information resources, issues, and problems
 - Developing and implementing information policy
 - Creating information access tools
 - Selecting, organizing, and preserving information in all formats
 - Serving as leaders and facilitators in introducing information technologies and ensuring their effective use

As media specialists, librarians will contribute to instructional design and program development for distance education, playing the roles of instructional consultant, information specialist, teacher, and technological coordinator.

These enhanced roles will of course have implications for the upgrading of skills and competencies. In addition to the traditional subject specialties, the librarians of today will need to learn interdisciplinary approaches as well as instructional skills. Thus, they will require both formal and informal learning opportunities for such skills as: accessing and manipulating information that exists in digital form; and keeping current with trends and issues in the rapidly changing information technology environment.

I would like to invite the PAARL to partner with the Philippine Women’s University in meeting the challenges facing academic and research librarians in this information age. Together we can offer short-term and certificate courses to PAARL members. Let us find time to sit down and discuss how we can work together to keep Philippine librarians up to par in “information power”.