

## Question 1

Interviewer: So we'll start out with No. 1. And No. 1 is just an opportunity for you to, if you will, kind of freewheel, if you will, on your background, your experience, your management philosophy.

Interviewee: Okay. Well, you know that I have been at DA for a whole month, maybe five weeks, one of which was spent back in DB packing my house. But I had the gift of overlap with Person1, which is a frivolous one. And I have never overlapped with anybody in a job before. So that was incredibly helpful in terms of meeting people at DA. And I also went back and forth a few times this summer to be here for certain meetings.

And of course, I have arrived in time for a budget cut. That's kind of the story of my life. But – and that, in itself, is a whole other topic.

The five years before this, I was the dean at the library at DB. For four years before that, I was an associate university librarian for Public Services and Innovative Technology [job title]. That was my job title at DC. And before that, I was at DD for something like 22 years in about eight different positions. It's the longest time I was an associate university librarian. And we didn't have tour after our titles. But I mostly did technology projects, and public services, and anything else anybody wanted me to do. I managed a lot of projects of various kinds.

Interviewer: This was at DD?

Interviewee: And I worked in special libraries before that, worked at [inaudible] in DE because I have a degree from the DE for my library degree. Long story there. And so in terms of experience, you can tell from the job titles I have spent a lot of time doing project management, trying to bring new services [varied experience]. I wouldn't say that they're particularly innovative. I have mostly recognized that this is a really good thing to do, go sell it, and then get the – make sure that it happens, which I suppose is the story of my career.

In terms of a management philosophy, the one that I use now is a very open and collegial one [management philosophy]. I have worked in some extremely hierarchical institutions and some less hierarchical ones. And I think that works best – and I think it's partly a consequence of spending so much time in project

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management – that the more open, and honest, and participatory one can be in terms of management, I think, the better people do. It is almost a foreign concept [**open, collegial – foreign**] in libraries, I have discovered. And it took a long time at DB to get people to participate.

We did find with – we want the rights. But when we got to the point of, well, you have responsibilities as well for speaking up, for articulating what it is you think is important, people had more trouble with that [**people don't speak up**]. And I have discovered here in the past couple weeks that it's going to be a chance for them to participate in decision-making. That's not to say that it's not worth doing. It's just going to be a big change.

Interviewer: Along this line, I picked out a quote that is attributed to you, okay, on the DB announcement of your position – of you accepting the position. And the quote goes – and I'll read it. You were referring to academic research libraries as institutions that are still largely entrenched in 19th century roots. Does this sound familiar?

Interviewee: It does sound familiar.

Interviewer: Could you just comment a little bit more on that?

Interviewee: Well, I think that we really do – that sounds more dire than – the rest of that speech goes on to be a little more positive about what was done. But I think that we do, in terms of management structures and the way we relate to each other in terms of work and to the public, it is still very hierarchical [**hierarchical structures**].

It's still too much based inside the library talking to each other [**insular culture**] and making assumptions about what it is that people need in the real world. And it doesn't have enough anticipation in it about what's coming next [**future view**], which I think we would get – we would do better anticipating the future if we spent more time outside of our own profession and our own physical buildings and actually interacted better with the academic community or the public community, whatever kind of library that we're in. I think we have a tendency to be, as a profession, a bit smug about what we know about people's information needs.

Interviewer: Just a quick point on methodology here. I will be tossing in a few follow-up questions. So you see the main questions. And I just – one other – I'm very interested in your title at DC.

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Interviewee: Do you know Person2?

Interviewer: No, I don't.

Interviewee: My boss.

Interviewer: Okay. In particular, the reference to innovation, did that have a – I mean, how was that realized, other than in a title?

Interviewee: Well, we had – most of what I did was fairly straightforward, you know, go find a new service, try to improve what – the services that we had. We were DC. So [inaudible] customer and part of the [inaudible] Project1 at that time, [inaudible] Project1. So that created limitations on what we could do in the catalog arena. But we did some fairly extensive work on a digital library project on natural resources in concert with some research folks from the DF as well as DC, the Forestry Research Institute.

And we did some needs assessment work, trying to find out what it is that people who are trying to make policy decisions needed in terms of information and how to deliver it to them in a way that was respectful of [inaudible] issues, but at the same time was relevant to what they were trying to do. And it – I wouldn't say it was particularly innovative depending on what your definition of that term is. But certainly within the context in which we were working, which was trying to – which was a fairly traditional and extremely poorly funded library, it was pretty impressive.

We also had a fund, basically a gift fund, an endowment for innovative technology [innovation budget – R&D] which was given by a family related to the institution. And so some of the work that I did, trying to bring speakers in to talk about issues of digital preservation, and [inaudible] sound recording and print, all of those things were actually funded by that particular grant. And I think that they have gone on to do some very interesting things in terms of providing services to users. They have a couple really very strong tech people on the staff who had some great ideas and have gone on to do some great things.

Interviewer: I think I did pull one of your papers out on assessing needs with Person3.

Interviewee: Yes.

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## Question 2

Interviewer: Okay. Let's move on to No. 2. Here – and I appreciate that you are free to obviously address your experiences at DB. I mean, what I'm really interested is in your experiences. So the question is –

Interviewee: I don't know a whole lot about DA at this point. So I know some things, but not a whole lot.

Interviewer: Well, please feel free to if there are points you want to make about DA as well.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: No. 2, how would you describe the management culture in your library, and in this case, primarily referring to DB, I think?

Interviewee: Right. Because I knew that with having been there for five years. Well, I wish I could say that I had a happy ending to this story. But I don't. I spent – I started a year after Person4 left. And Person4 resigned in protest, which you may or may not know, over the way that the administration at DB handled the Event1 insurance after the Event1. And the issue was that she felt that the university had taken funds [coercive force] that were, in fact, based on the value of the library collection and put them into a general grant – competitive grant program for the university, which, in fact, is absolutely true.

And the library staff will never – the ones who were there at the time, will never forgive the university for that. I was perhaps naïve when I went there to think that because the president and one of the other major people involved in this situation were finishing up that things would change. And in fact, I was hired by a fellow who was a Person5 who is very much a library supporter, not only of the traditional library, but a more innovative library. And as it turned out, he stayed only two years.

But we took – they were – when I first got to DB, they – we still had a very large amount of event1 dollars, many of them committed to core collection replacement and that kind of thing. The staff were – they had spent six years putting the library back together. And in the speeches I gave, I would say the biggest loss was not the 200,000 volumes that we wrote off at the end of the

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day, the biggest loss was six years of people's time doing things like putting the library back together instead of being part of the digital library movement, of being much more involved in services development, creation of new kinds of catalogs, those kinds of things.

The loss was all this energy and talent got spent doing something that unfortunately had to be done, but wasn't the most wonderful thing from a user perspective. So it took a couple of years, two or three years, to actually sort of change – try to change the culture from these people who were run ragged trying to put the place back together to something a little more forward looking. And the university decided to have a strategic planning process. And we were involved in it. We actually managed to stay in the main plan, which took a whole lot of effort and a little political maneuvering.

And then we wrote our own plan and then action agendas from there. And what I tried to do was create a group of people who had significant functional responsibility [**organizational structure**] in the library for programs and create a planning group out of that. And this group actually discussed everything [**empowerment**] including position allocation, and funding, and what values and goals we were going to have for the future, what kinds of innovations we were going to try to do, what was really important. And I think we got somewhere. It took a lot of time. There was certainly a lot of pushback from the more traditional people, particularly the ones in public services.

At one point I used to tell people that I was going to have to buy myself a [**inaudible – bullet proof?**] vest to go to [**inaudible**]. And then I made the chronicle of higher education for having taken the librarians off the reference desk [**risk taking**]. They weren't too happy with me. But some people were perfectly happy about that. I don't think that they have ever – some of them will ever forgive me for that. But the point of doing that was that their time is very valuable. These are highly skilled people. And DB has one of the smallest staffs of any ARL library.

And so it seemed to me, and to some of the assistant deans, an incredible waste of time to have them sitting there waiting for a question worthy of the skill that they have when we could, in fact, provide a lot of that service with other folks and then have work – spend our time and energy working on a referral system that made sense and training for people to do the basic undergraduate kinds

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of questions. And so I don't know the end of the story. But we were certainly – they were certainly working hard on making sure that the handoff to a librarian was working correctly, we weren't losing people in the process.

Interviewer: Okay another follow-up. It relates to, again, maybe your quote, “entrenched in 19th century.” How would you characterize, in this case, librarians’ views of the requirement to have an MLS, I know DA has faculty librarians. Does DB also?

Interviewee: DB actually has a tenure base.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: And that was a big deal. I mean, I spent a huge amount of time trying to make sure that my people got through the process that they were mentored, that they knew exactly what was going on and what was expected of them. And one of the things I did was twice a year I would have lunch with all the tenure-track faculty and we would actually talk about what was expected in terms of the paperwork and the last review process, what kinds of things came up, obviously confidentiality understood. And then they also talked to each other about the research projects that they were going in. And I have to say that in the five years I was there all of my people got through, for which I was truly grateful.

And DA has faculty status for librarians. But they are considered to be general faculty, not tenure-track faculty. So there is a promotion system that's pretty rigorous. It's very similar to DD's, which is – there is a rigorous promotion system for ranks for it. But it doesn't result in tenure.

Interviewer: It's – I'm familiar with DG's approach, which it sounds familiar to there too. Specifically what do you think a librarian's perception about requiring the MLS in this process would be?

Interviewee: Most of the people that I have worked with in all these various institutions would probably say that they think an MLS is a sort of a basic credential **[normative force]** for a librarian in an academic institution. Though we have – and I read about this years and years ago. The growth in the last few years has been in the sort of skilled professional ranks, the technology people, and the HR, and finance, and development. All of those folks have many – most

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libraries now don't have librarians doing those jobs, at least the big research libraries don't.

And it used to be the case that you'd get these sort of gifted amateurs who were a development office, but really a librarian. And I think most people have said, no, no, no, we really – we need to hire – we can teach somebody about libraries who is a skilled development officer, we don't – and we have librarians who have skills that we don't want to make them into a development officer. And I – so I think most people consider the MLS pretty basic. The arguments that I've heard have to do with second masters degrees and PhD's, and whether a PhD without an MLS is a reasonable qualification for somebody to have. And most of the places I've been, there isn't a whole lot of support for that.

Interviewer: An editorial comment on this. There is a fair amount of management literature that basically says if you want to innovate you really need to get people in from the outside that have very different views.

Interviewee: Right. Exactly.

Interviewer: And I think what I heard – and it sounds like the ratio, if you will, of professional to – staff people to librarians is changing.

Interviewee: Oh, I think it has changed a lot in the last few years. For example, two of the positions that I created and we hired into at DB, one was a person who did half-time development communications and then half-time general marketing for the library. She was wonderful. She had great web skills, and tech skills, and graphic design skills, incredibly enthusiastic, annoyed the librarians half to death, at least at the beginning, until she got their respect, which took awhile. It got – well, there were two problems. One is that she wasn't like them because she was much bouncier than they were. But also, she was younger. She was young. And it was – there is this kind of, wow, you're as young as our kids, I don't know if I can deal with this **[age of profession]**.

And then the other position which was probably more in line with what you're interested in was in the big reorganization when we were filling lines in very different ways, we created a research and development department **[R&D department]**. And I talked to somebody who had reported to me at DD who had worked for Person6 and other people in their big digital library project outside

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of the library. She had an undergraduate degree in music. Well, and she had two computer science degrees, but also was a musician.

In any case, we – she came – I talked her into coming. We only kept her for a year before DH stole her away from us. But in that year, she did the most incredible amount of really getting people, not only improving the skills of the tech people that we had, but getting them to think in a very different way [**different perspective**] about what users wanted. And so when I left and she had gone a few months before, they were still talking about trying to deal with, for example, the catalog, changing the catalog. And she had gotten people in DB in the Project2 to start thinking about the same things that we were thinking about. And it was a huge breath of fresh air [**attitude for change**].

She was the first person that we appointed who did not have an MLS into a faculty position. It was tenure track. So what happened in her case is she didn't like the administration part of it. She said if I'm going to be a faculty member, I want to be a faculty member.

Interviewer: This is fascinating. I have to follow up on this. First of all, what title did she take as a faculty member?

Interviewee: She actually was an assistant – she was an assistant professor, which was her title. But she was considered the coordinator – she was the coordinator of research and development [**new position, new title**].

Interviewer: And you used the phrase research and development?

Interviewee: That's correct.

Interviewer: Because as I mentioned earlier, I spent a good part of my life in an R&D organization. And I have found that the phrase research and development is not used very much in academic libraries.

Interviewee: That's correct. And people – I got interesting phone calls. People would make faces at me like what does that mean.

Interviewer: Yes. And so this person's interactions were mostly with technical staff as opposed to librarians?

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Interviewee: With both actually. She served as part of the management team. She spent a lot of time trying to talk to the librarians about what it is that she was trying to do and trying to figure out what it is they wanted. She had worked – I knew her because she had been an assembler programmer for Project3 in the Systems Office at DD when I was responsible for the Systems Office indirectly. And she had great programming skills. And she had gone on from there to work with Person6 in all the Project4.

So she had a really good perspective, not only on libraries and what libraries and people seeking information are trying to do, sort of information seeking, discovery, that kind of thing, but at the same time the technical skills to be able to figure out to make it happen and some astonishing connections with people who were not in libraries, but were in the digital library world, [inaudible] of digital libraries. So she made some connections that I think DB, with any luck, will be able to continue, at least I hope they're going to be able to continue.

Interviewer: Now this is exactly the kind of things I'm looking for.

Interviewee: But let me say there was a lot of skepticism [normative force] among the librarians about, what, you're spending money on this. So I was a little upset when – concerned when she left very apologetically, I might say. But the DH job was – we couldn't compete with DH. We just – they were offering her the earth. And it was a great job. And she – when we – I thought that there was a lot of support, at least among the assistant deans and some of the other unit coordinators. And there is such a strong tradition of poverty at DB that as soon as she left it was like we can't really afford this, this is the kind of thing that big libraries can do.

And I would give my speech about, no, no, no, smaller libraries are more agile [smaller organization], we can fit everybody in the same room, we can talk about what it is we're going to do, we can pick out a few things that are really important and just do the best we can with the rest, we have agility, and we have the spirit to do this. And they would look at me like, no, but we're too poor.

Interviewer: How did you deal with the skepticism in the sort of traditional ranks?

Interviewee: Well, it's probably an open question whether or not it was successful. What I think – what I finally did was – Person7 was

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good enough to be able to be her own PR person. She had an enormous amount of personality. And she just – was – she is unbelievably enthusiastic. So in a sense, she did her own PR. She won over some of these people. It's a little like the marketing person I hired who, because she was so good and so enthusiastic, that – and it took awhile. And I have to sort of pat them on the head a little bit occasionally to say go out there and try again. But essentially they did – they made progress for themselves.

We also worked with the department heads to try to get them to communicate with their people that there was a purpose to this, that it was really important. And we tried – Person7 taught a series of seminars on digital library work outside of – like Project4 kind of things and kind of programming. So she did an education process when she first came that she really, really wanted to do. And then she also organized a whole series of vendors to come in to talk about open doors like [inaudible] and other software packages that are in place of a catalog. And she organized that over a period of walks and then talked the Project2 and Research Libraries into having a one-day meeting where they did exactly the same thing for a much wider audience.

And so it really got people to see that their world was – the world is much bigger and more interesting than they thought.

### Question 3

Interviewer: Let's move on. No. 3 is kind of an institutional question. Most libraries are – may have peer institutions that they look to and, if you will, compare against. With DB how would you characterize the unique aspects of that university library as opposed to others that were in your peer group?

Interviewee: Well, I would say that DB – the Event1 had just a huge impact on the institution. And that and the fact that the library at DB has never been particularly well supported. So there is this kind of almost eeyore, oh, we're so poor aspect to it which was a little daunting. It has some strengths in terms of agriculture. And we tried when I was there to build the archivolt, the water resources archive, because water is, of course, astonishingly important to DB and in that part of the country.

We were a very strong participant in the Project5, which is something I had worked on at DC and then did more on at DB.

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And so we had some collections that are interesting, and unique, and valuable. I think DB is an institution that has a reputation for survival, for a real commitment to preservation, and for being tough enough to actually sustain probably – I think it's considered to be the third largest loss in terms of academic library –

Interviewer: Really?

Interviewee: So that's its claim to fame. And the people there still consult for major disasters in terms of water. If there is a Event1 anywhere, they call them up and talk to them and give them advice and work with them about insurance settlements and – you name it, they know how to do it. It was interesting. I have a friend and a colleague who is – and you may know her. She is a deputy at – Person8, who is a deputy at DI. And she was working on a PhD, recently, in fact, was awarded it not so long ago on disasters, response to disasters in terms of organizations. And so she came to DB at my invitation to talk to people about the Event1. And so her dissertation is actually written about the DB Event1 experience.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And it's fascinating.

Interviewer: Just another follow-up here. Again, some of the innovation literature suggests that an innovation can happen outside of the institution and the adoption can occur, if you will, through a pulling or sometimes called a technology transfer. I'm wondering if you saw this kind of activity, let's say, between peer institution libraries where either you were pulling or somebody else was transferring technology from you?

Interviewee: I have seen it to some degree. I don't know how out there some of the technology is. But there is a lot of sharing of information and techniques. It is certainly in the research library community. They can be little things. For example, I know DJ has had a system where you could tell on a screen that was in their information commons which computers were free and which ones were busy when you walked in the door. We have the same thing. It was installed two weeks ago where you walk in the door and it has green on the chairs that are full – empty and red on the ones that are full.

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And I know that Person9 has offered that piece of software to anybody who wants it. There is that kind of thing that happens where people say, wow, this is a really nice solution to the problem. Certainly my experience in the storage community is that there is a huge amount of sharing of information among a group of people who have worked on high-density storage projects. And so people adapt. Somebody will write a piece of code to solve a problem and they will just give it away to another institution who thinks – and sometimes the next institution will write some more code, and fix it, give it back to the original one.

So there is a lot of that kind of stuff that goes on in many, many ways in terms of building projects, ways of aligning space, computer code, service development, a huge amount of it.

Interviewer: There is quite a bit of activity in the, if you will, open-source community in terms of code sharing. But what you're suggesting is maybe a more informal, in other words –

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. There is a lot of really informal stuff that goes on in libraries, little pieces of code that people share **[informal sharing]**. Sometimes they don't use it. Sometimes they just look at it and say, well, this is a kind of cool thing. Well, let's talk about probably DB is known for one of the – besides the Event1 and the handling of disasters, it's known for Project6. And Project6 was some software that was created at DB in response to the Event1. The idea was that they had to do something to get their users access to materials to keep on going. So they – Person10 and several other people wrote some fairly simple code that would automate essentially journal articles. It doesn't do books yet, though they have talked about it.

And when I went to DB, I was asked if I would go to bat with the university to redirect some Event1 dollars to rearchitecture the system and make it much more sophisticated and make it into a consortium, if you will. So I cashed some chips **[collaboration]** with all the eastern libraries like DK, and DL, and got them to participate, and DD. And they rewrote the system. And it's very sophisticated. Apart from DOCLINE it is probably the best interlibrary loan system in the world. They have Asian partners now. And it grew out of some code that was written locally. And it's still heavily subsidized by the DB Libraries.

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Interviewer: Who actually wrote the code or initiated this?

Interviewee: It was Person11, assistant dean for public services. And she came out of interlibrary loan. And she now is one of – she is – she has some interim responsibilities as dean. And she had a fellow named Person10 who was the head of interlibrary loan working for her who – and he does some code writing. And then there were two – there are two other people who are actually computer science people – they're not library people. They have learned enough about libraries – Person12 and Person13. And Person12 and Person13 are – and Person14, none of them have library degrees. But they understand interlibrary loan backwards, forwards, and upside down. And they are very – it runs almost like a little company now **[entrepreneurial]** .

And we hired contract programmers from a company in City1 called Corp1. And we got permission from the university to suspend the purchasing rules so that we didn't have to bid it out because these were particular people that we wanted. And that's a whole other story. If you know about public institutions, you know about bidding wars.

Interviewer: Actually this is a wonderful example. I may come back to it.

Interviewee: Project6 is marvelous. It is absolutely incredible.

#### Question 4

Interviewer: Let's move on to – we're moving now into a little more specifics. Question 4, people have lots of different views of what innovation is. If you want to take a – can you take a crack at describing it in your own terms?

Interviewee: I think that innovation in my view of the universe is anticipating new service and ways of adding value, in our case, to the academic enterprise **[innovation defined]**, if you will. So you're trying to, in a sense, synthesize the best that you can find from this and that and create something new that serves a purpose for people who are library users. And I think the hardest point, in my view, is recognizing the bits and pieces that you can put together or create that are going to make a big difference and sort of radically change approaches to information discovery and learning.

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Interviewer: Another editorial comment here. There is a phrase in some of the literature that – it's heterogeneous engineer. And it's a little – and I think it's basically what you were talking about here when you say recognize different pieces. The more you can pull in from different areas, the more you have to work with in terms of innovating. And so –

Interviewee: Right. Exactly. And – but I also think that the people who are really, really good at engineering and science are the people who can really synthesize information [**engineering process**]. They can – they manage to make the connection of why these things can fit together in new ways and make different applications out of something that was invented, for example, for a very, very different purpose.

Interviewer: Where does this leave the, if you will, traditional librarian with respect to innovation? In other words, given that – well, a lot of this is technology based –

Interviewee: A lot of it is. It's technology, not just computer technologies, but it's building system technologies and all of those things, so any kinds of technology.

Interviewer: So, can we expect innovation from the traditional librarian, I guess is more bluntly how to put it?

Interviewee: That's something I spend a lot of time worry about, as odd as that sounds. I think that some of the best librarians – if I think about the best people I have worked with in terms of the most skilled and passionate about their work, people that I've worked with over the years, I think that they're not necessarily innovative people in that they don't have that sort of ability to synthesize [**librarians as innovators**], but they have an ability to recognize that they need something that's going to serve people better. And they find the people and the money often to actually make that happen. And many of them are outstanding implementers of something once somebody else helps them solve the problem.

I was thinking about this in terms of Project6. Person11 is a fairly traditional librarian. She – but she is very forward-looking. But she understands libraries. And she has an incredible commitment [**inaudible**]. But she was desperate enough probably after the Event1, but also smart enough, to be able to say we need to do something to create – to help the people here be able to do the

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work that they do, so how are we going to solve that problem, we can write some code internally, we know how to do this, we can create a system, and now we need to find the people who can actually make this little kernel of an idea something real and then support it and nurture it and all of those things.

So it's a little like the difference between a project engineer, for example, and a project manager.

### Question 5

Interviewer: We'll move on to No. 5. I think you have already – you have actually partially answered it. But as you look around at libraries that you have been involved with or other academic libraries can you cite projects that you consider innovative? And this interlibrary loan project sounds like one of them.

Interviewee: Yeah. Absolutely. But I think – I don't think I'm the first person to say this because I think Person15 at some point has written about this. But the history of libraries is a history of innovation. And I mean, librarians invented things like card catalogs and the public reading room, all of these things that are self-serviced, but in many ways designed to get people in contact with information in ways that other people haven't done before. So I think if you look, you will see a huge amount of innovation over time.

In recent years I think some of the most creative ones have been things like – well, some of the work being done at the moment on alternatives to the traditional card catalog are pretty creative. I think SFX is a system that – but that didn't come out of libraries. That came out of Herbert Van de Sompel's work at Los Alamos.

Interviewer: What was that again?

Interviewee: It's SFX, which was sold to Ex Libris, which is the company which is now –

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: **[Inaudible]** software actually came out of Los Alamos, out of a research lab, not from libraries. But I think there are some projects. There are not a huge number of them. But there are some innovative projects. I think the high-density storage facility

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design that Harvard started and is now in 35 places was a very innovative project.

Interviewer: The – one of the things that I’m trying to understand is – there is sort of two parts of this. One is – you can be innovative by pulling technology from somewhere else and applying it within the library or you can be innovative, if you will, by doing the creation within the library. And –

Interviewee: Correct. And I think that there are examples of both. But I don’t know – it’s hard to see how many of them are coming from within the library originally [**innovation from outside the library**].

### Question 6

Interviewer: Question No. 6. I’ve been doing a lot of reading. And one of the things you notice is there is not very much literature on innovation failures. And –

Interviewee: I have to laugh. I have given speeches more than once on the subject of the way libraries deal with failure in general, innovation failure or other failure. And that is that we have an astonishing ability to bury our dead and move on and not mention one word about why something didn’t work. [**don’t examine failures**]

And for somebody – I mean, I come from a whole family of engineers and have worked on – every campus I have worked on has had really strong engineering schools. And this one is probably the most extreme example. And I just – it is amazing to me how we learn anything from the fact that we don’t review the kinds of things that we do and analyze why they didn’t work. It’s a really curious thing about the library profession.

Interviewer: What do you think the barrier is or is it – maybe it’s just human nature.

Interviewee: Partly it’s human nature. It’s denial at its finest. But I also think that it has to do with – and this is going to sound probably extraordinarily unfair. The library profession has a lot of values that I would describe as female values. And admission of a mistake and fear of punishment, I think, widespread, even though there is no good reason for it – I mean, I have worked with people in several libraries who behave as if they’re going to be screamed at if they admit that they made a mistake, and there is no historical

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basis for them to believe that at work because it has never happened. Nobody ever did that to them.

But there is this tremendous reluctance to admit that, okay, this didn't work – well, why didn't it work, and don't we want to prevent it from not working the next time we try it, just a great reluctance to admit that something wasn't positive [**normative force**]. We just sort of go on.

There is a really, really interesting piece of work. I have been really interested in the history of library cooperation in real ways like the sharing of library collections, a particular passion of mine. And I have more than once in public said it is astonishing to me how people can cooperate over high-stakes natural resources like water and create stakeholder partnerships and at the same time we cannot figure out how to share a library book. And we have been working on this for 150 years, and we still haven't figured out how to do it properly [**collaboration**].

So what is it that prevents us from doing that? And there is a guy named Ralph Wagner who wrote the only study that I have ever been able to find on the Farmington Plan. It was published as his doctoral research, published as a book. It's a fascinating book if you're interested in library history. But he actually tries in there to talk about what happened to the Farmington Plan that made it unsuccessful. And he is very critical of organizations like ARL.

But it was refreshing to read somebody who says, well, this didn't work, and it didn't work because of these – his analysis is, I think these things happened. But if you look at people who do international development, they always review their projects just to say this was – this didn't work, that was a bad idea, why did we do that. Anyway, I'm sorry. That's a soapbox of mine.

Interviewer: No, no, no. This is – I want – it's Ralph Wagner?

Interviewee: Wagner. Right. And I can't – it's on the Farmington Plan. I have a copy of it. But it's packed in a box somewhere.

Interviewer: Okay. I'll check it out. This is just, I guess, another editorial comment. I'm relatively late coming to this profession. I –

Interviewee: I was going to ask you why. But that's –

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Interviewer: Well, I claim I have a library gene. But I spent 30 years in an R&D organization. And one of the things that I think we actually got to do quite well was have a – basically a public design review of failures. And it took awhile. But these were fascinating discussions with all vertical management represented. And one of the things that was – when I – so I have been a librarian for ten years. And this was – the whole culture just – it was cultural shock for me. And what you just said about people fearing admission of some problem is, in my experience, really pervasive.

Interviewee: Yes. It is very, very pervasive. And I have been a librarian for a long time. And I just can't – it's just – it is very, very destructive actually.

Interviewer: Yeah. This is, I think, one of the major barriers. But it's interesting. There was – after World War II there was quite a bit of work using operations research to actually get quantitative measures in place for libraries. And for 20 years that seemed to have a lot of momentum. And in the early 80's, it just disappeared. And I haven't seen a resurgence of using quantitative metrics to actually manage. I mean, ARL has a lot of numbers. But –

Interviewee: Well, and there is such an incredible amount of fighting over those that – I mean, we really want to be loved for what we do, not what we have. But we haven't gotten there yet.

### **Question 7**

Interviewer: Yeah. Now, No. 7, can you describe some of the policies or practices that you have actually used that you believe facilitated innovation?

Interviewee: A few. I think trying to be as inclusive as possible with people of all sorts of different levels to engage them, particularly some of the younger people coming in, trying to keep them from being – from losing that sparkle that they have, which is so incredibly important. I think our doing small-scale experiments **[prototyping]** so that people don't think that – calling them an experiment to see if you can get them to work is extremely helpful. Partnering with people from outside of the library on campus, students or otherwise, often makes things fly when there is resistance to them.

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And nurturing the most progressive people on the staff **[empowerment]**, and not necessarily by punishing the others, but just encouraging them. And I particularly have tried. It's going to be tough to do in the budget environment we have at the moment. I am a travel liberal. It's just – it's the more I can get people out of the building, out in the library community, out going to conferences for leadership positions and organizations, the more likely it is they are going to come back with great ideas or at least a different perspective on what it is we're doing.

So – because I think that the more they interact with the rest of the world **[external focus]**, the better they are at helping people meet their information needs.

Interviewer: Yeah. You actually mentioned something earlier that is, again, one of the things in the literature. There is an interesting curve related to innovation and resources. You'll find universities or university libraries that have lots of resources innovating. And then on the other end where there are scarce resources it frequently stimulates innovation. And I relate to the comment you made earlier about DB and, for example, the interlibrary loan as sort of innovating based on need –

Interviewee: Desperation.

Interviewer: Desperation. I guess –

Interviewee: Desperation. Yeah. Well, I think that makes a whole lot of sense to me because I have worked in a very well funded institution at DD and we did some things that were pretty fun, and interesting, and very different. We were the first library that looked at the Harvard model of high-density storage – outside of – there was a lot of resistance to it – and said this is what we want, this will work for us, and then figured out how to get somebody to sell us the system to make it work and things. So there were some – there were lots of others as well. And they have gone on to do astonishing things.

So there is a lot of money that goes into it at DD. And then DB has no money, and they manage. And I think DA – one of the reasons I came here is because this is not a desperately well-funded library in the big scheme of things. But they have done a lot of incredible library place innovation, creative spaces for students, design studios and things where the lights move. And they are

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astonishingly popular. So – and that was done under Person16's leadership. He is now at ARL as a program officer. And they did it as they got little bits of money [**scarce resources**]. And they're doing it sort of room by room. And they have been very, very successful.

### Question 8

Interviewer: I might come back to this. Let's move on to No. 8. And here, again, there is quite a bit of literature about innovation behaviors. When you see people innovating what do you think? What stands out about their behaviors that you believe are important?

Interviewee: That's a really interesting question. The people I think are the most innovative are the people who don't really think like academics [**unorthodox thinking**]. They don't think like traditional librarians. They are more – they have some engineering genes in them or they have just an incredible curiosity about how to make things better [**innovative behavior – curiosity**]. And they're people who are not satisfied with the way we do things. And they don't let themselves get comfortable with the way we do things [**perception of librarian behavior**], which is very much the opposite personality type to most people who become librarians.

Interviewer: That's interesting. There is another phrase related to this that I picked out called the creative deviant.

Interviewee: Right. And if you're one of these people, and I think that I am, you are never quite comfortable with anybody.

Interviewer: The – part of the issue here is these types of people being accepted – or let me say it a little bit differently – their ideas being accepted. And frequently – and this is where I think you get opportunities for technology transfer in the sense that an idea is created in one institution, it may not actually go anywhere there, and can be pulled into another institution.

Interviewee: Some of the best – well, yeah – did – the Brits invented all sorts of incredibly wonderful things like television and stuff. Did they capitalize on any of their investments? No. Did the Library of Congress do very much with MARC? No. OCLC did something with MARC. There are lots of those kinds of examples. Well, just not recognizing what they had and what they had created and what it could be used for, and somebody else saying, wow, I could –

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Person17 saying, umm, I could use that and do something really interesting with it **[not recognizing innovation]**.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you seen innovation in groups?

Interviewee: Yes, actually. Not sort of big scale total wow innovations. But I have seen it in groups. One of the things that we did, which is – also this is a project management kind of thing. When we did a high-density storage facility at DD and we were trying to sell this idea rather than expanding libraries and doing this, that, and the other, and that was fairly early on in the high-density storage business, we – I used to do –

I did a lot of open forums with people and explained what we were trying to do and tried to make it interesting **[leadership – open discussion]**. And it was amazing to me the number of great ideas **[brainstorming]** for how to solve problems and take the next step that came from public meetings. The people would say, wow, hmm, why don't you do it this way, or if we had this, wouldn't that work better. And so we had all sorts of – they were kind of minor innovations.

But, for example, we found – we were looking for book trucks that would **[inaudible]** could make with six wheels that would go on the back of a forklift. And the Library of Congress had a design. And we didn't like that design. So we took it to one of these open meetings. And we had these people who do highsmith and stuff. And they looked at it. And they said, well, if you changed this and you got a highsmith to do that, and then we put a cover like an air conditioner has on the outside of a house, and we had those custom made and put over the top, that would work. And we'd go, oh yeah, okay, that will work.

I mean, there were lots of those kinds of – you take the people who know something about how to do a particular job and you say to them, okay, we've got to build something that's going to solve this problem, so – and it was amazing to me the number of ideas that came out of just open meetings **[brainstorming]**, making me a great believer in open meetings **[innovative process]**. It hasn't always been as successful as that.

## Question 9

Interviewer: Let's move on to No. 9. And this is kind of coming back to the institution here. There are these classic groups in the university.

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There is faculty, staff, students. There is the major disciplinary areas of humanities, science, social science. How – are these changing? Are there new groups coming in place? And how would this – how does this relate, or might relate, to the university library?

Interviewee: I have two thoughts on that. One is that we have an increasing distance between the undergraduate library user [**losing the undergraduates**], the people for whom place still matters. You're trying to create a student learning center, something that really speaks to undergraduates and is open long hours and helps them work the way – to do the kind of creative work that they're trying to do. And in –

But we also have faculty and graduate students who rarely ever show up in the building [**use of library**], don't really want us to force them through all of our systems. They would like for it to be as transparent as possible and with our influence as little loaded as possible. I mean, it's not that they don't recognize that the resources come from the library and they are part of the library. It's just that they don't want us to be anywhere in the middle of their information-seeking behavior.

And we have always had that dicotomy. But I think that the distance between the two groups has gotten bigger [**disparity between undergraduates and graduates/faculty**]. And it's getting tougher and tougher to fund both of these things simultaneously at the level that each user group expects to have service. And it is also really, really pushing the skills of the people who work in libraries to be able to meet all of these needs [**diverse needs**].

In addition, I think what we're seeing is in the academic community which we serve there is a lot of change in terms of disciplines and relationships among the disciplines. There is a lot more multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural work that is going on, and a lot more work that involves partners overseas. And that creates a whole issue with how our resources are licensed, what kind of service we can provide for people.

DA has five campuses. Four of them are not in the United States. One of them is in Country1. And one of them is in [**inaudible**] in Country2. That – and one is in Country3. And one – there is another one in Country4.

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Interviewer: How does that relate to the library organization? Do you have people working for –

Interviewee: We do not. I mean, they are – we don't really have – we're talking about this because that's one of the questions I asked is, okay, how responsible am I for library services to the people who are there or are we. And we are responsible to some degree. But we don't have library sites in those. Thank God.

Interviewer: I want to just follow up a little bit on the undergraduate. I did some interviews here with librarians. And one of the comments a chemistry/physics librarian made was – it sent something like this, we have lost the undergraduates, meaning that we have less and less contact with them, they don't come to the reference desk. And so I was wondering – and it sounds like you were sort of getting – your phrase is distance – at something similar. How is this affecting what librarians do, or is it?

Interviewee: No. I think it should be. Let's put it that way. What I fear is it's not impacting what they do. I think they're sitting there wringing their hands, complaining **[not responding to problems]** that they don't talk to these kids when, in fact, the only way they're going to talk to them is to get out from behind the desk **[get outside the library]**, go out to the chemistry department and work with the faculty or provide such compelling services in the building that these students show up.

And my experience both at DB and here at DA suggests that if we sit behind a desk and expect them to talk to us when they have Google and all sorts of other things available to them and they don't know what they're missing, we're losing this battle **[traditional roles won't work]**. The person you talked to was absolutely right. What I – my response to that is, is that's not acceptable, that we know that, like DA, if you create a physical space that meets their needs and the kind of people who can help them create multimedia projects and work in groups, that they will come to the library, and they will ask questions, and they will interact with the chemistry people who is in their department base.

Same was true at DB. We had a chemistry librarian. And after a fairly high-ranking department and a difficult group of folks to deal with at times, she was able to be part of a research project funded by NSF to post the results of undergraduate student

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research online with help from tech people within the library, which put us on the map in terms of chemistry in a very different way than we had before [**new liaison roles**].

So we – I feel incredibly strongly that we – yeah, we’re going to lose them because they don’t work the way that we did or even students ten years ago do. And just – but just to give up and say that’s okay is a dereliction of duty [**responsive to change**] in my opinion.

Interviewer: It’s interesting. I no longer do public reference. I used to be the social science data librarian here.

Interviewee: I did that once in my career a long time ago.

Interviewer: It’s an interesting job. I like it actually.

Interviewee: It’s more interesting now than it used to be.

Interviewer: Yes. But the – one evening during finals, I had a student come to me and say – so we have these big tables with six or eight students studying. And they are – and they all have their laptops. And they have access to one outlet. And the –

Interviewee: That sounds like every library I’ve – you know what we did at DB just to help solve that problem?

Interviewer: What?

Interviewee: We – at the minimum, we put power strips on every table.

Interviewer: Well, I actually – in the center where I work, I knew we had some extra power strips. So one of my reference responses, if you will, was to go get a power strip and –

Interviewee: Exactly. And you have to worry about the total electrical service for the building. But at the minimum, you can make it easier so they don’t drag the cords across the floor and trip people, et cetera [**scope of responsibility and service**].

## Question 10

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Well, let’s move on. We’re kind of moving back to the more general aspects. And I have highlighted some quotes

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here in question 10. And the first one from Jessie Shera kind of relates to roles. And the second one from Carla Stoffel who is the university librarian at Arizona –

Interviewee: She is an old friend of mine.

Interviewer: It kind of relates –

Interviewee: We are partners in crime. **[Inaudible]** for Project6 is actually at DM.

Interviewer: And the third one there kind of relates to services. But I thought maybe you could just comment on each one of them starting out with Jessie Shera's whose says, we have failed to see the deeper meaning.

Interviewee: I don't know that I agree with this. It's not that we failed to see the deeper meaning of what we do. I think that sometimes people – that some people in the profession don't really like what they do. It turns out that it's not what they thought. And in terms of – and they don't take a huge amount of pride in what they do accomplish. And so I think it's not so much the deeper meaning of what they do, but they don't have enthusiasm or passion for what they do.

In the level of a true professional – I have real trouble with the notion of what is a true profession and has librarianship ever been a true profession. This implies that there is something wonderful about being a profession. And I think we have a profession. I'm not sure I get too worried about whether it's a true one or not.

The second quote, which is the Martel one on my list, I think that's right, that we have to create a new range of services. And I feel very strongly about value added, that the real issue for us at this moment is how to add value to the academic programs of the institution and the work that individuals do and getting them to understand that we are capable of delivering added value **[library can add value]** and are willing to do it is also the other issue.

Interviewer: By the way, one of your other papers, interviewing presidents and provosts –

Interviewee: That was fun to do.

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Interviewer: Towards the end there is a comment by one of the presidents or provosts sort of thinking out loud about why libraries don't enter the publishing business. And the gist of the comment, at least as I took it, was that this might be a good area for libraries to undertake. And yet, I don't know – well, I know some libraries are. It seems to me that DD has done quite a bit of this. But –

Interviewee: And DN, Project7. DH, of course, is way out there. And then there are a number of smaller institutions that have been doing – have been taking responsibility for managing of open-access journals for organizations on campus. In fact, DA, we just made an agreement to do – to be a host site for one. So there is – DJ has done a lot with that. DO has done a lot with that.

Interviewer: I have read some literature about commenting on librarians from technical people. There is a researcher from HP who states very bluntly that if we don't come up with new services we will, in fact, be marginalized.

Interviewee: I think we are being marginalized [**risk of being marginalized**]. I don't know that it's services that's going to be the – well, I think we have to figure out ways of adding value, of reaching the people that we are supposed to be reaching, and not just so that we stay alive as an organization [**inaudible**]. But I think we really have to do something much more significant [**need innovation**] than we've been doing to redefine the value that we add to the campus.

I think public libraries have a different challenge. They have a challenge. But it's a different challenge because for most of their people the book is still probably really important. And certainly the sales and use of children's literature in this country is actually increasing enormously.

But on a campus like this where most people are in science and most of them want electronic only, trying to figure out how to be part of their grants, and their research works, and things is really the name of the game. I think we have been marginalized. We're running behind in this. And I also think that's why marketing and promotion of library services [**marketing – an important process**] is so incredibly important at this point. I know a lot of people think it's frivolous. But I think it's extraordinarily important.

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Interviewer: There is another – I picked out one other phrase from your post of your job acceptance. You used the term, “meta librarian.”

Interviewee: That’s right.

Interviewer: Can you say –

Interviewee: That was from – I have actually used that phrase before. And I was sort of thinking about extension agents. What does an extension agent do? An extension agent, a good one, **[inaudible]**, really, really tries to take applied science and make it relevant to the here and now. You know, my peach tree is dying, how the heck am I going to keep it alive, or not, as the case may be? And in a sense, librarians do that. But we have – we seem to have lost the ability to get beyond the things that have worked in the past, to actually get out there in the orchard, the peach farm or somewhere else, and figure out what works in the here and now **[not addressing current needs]**.

And I was thinking of it in terms – the meta librarian phrase **[meta – a broader perspective]** just came to me because I was thinking of it as it’s sort of a – a sort of broader concept than we traditionally use for librarians who take a particular collection at a particular time and make it available for people, somebody with a broader perspective, if you will, which is probably an abuse of the term meta. But in any case –

Interviewer: Well, this – I connected with it. John Budd has written a lot on the academic library. And he makes a claim that basically we need more introspection about what we’re doing. And –

Interviewee: I think we – I’m worried about that.

Interviewer: Yeah. I guess that’s sort of what I thought was coming out to me about meta librarians. In other words, sort of getting above what you’ve been doing, and examining it, and looking – Budd says that we really do not spend much time examining what we’re doing.

Interviewee: Well, we do. I mean, I think that the comment you got on here from Carla, that’s what – they literally took apart every process. They did process engineering on it.

Interviewer: Did they? Okay.

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Interviewee: And when I worked for Project8 at DD, that's what we did with graduate school admissions and things like that. We took apart every process just like an engineering firm would do and tried to figure out how to streamline it and change it. It seems to me that self-examination is really, really important. But the problem that I've seen most often in libraries is it leads to complete blinders about the bigger picture in the world **[not able to see the big picture]**. There is a certain amount of comfort in being focused just on your little piece of the universe.

And especially in times of very, very rapid change, I think you miss the big windstorm that's coming. You miss the big things because you're so concentrating on how can I make this circulation process work better. In fact, I actually – I think I might disagree that we don't look carefully at things. I think we miss the big picture sometimes for the little picture.

I will say that my experience has been that the thing that happens in libraries that is just so destroying in terms of innovation, to mix a metaphor, is that if you say to somebody, okay, we really need to talk about what's the most important thing for us to do in this fiscal year, and then you have a list of things or you have a bunch of categories of things, and some of them turn out to be the traditional things, the next thing that you hear is we don't need to do that anymore. So are you saying that I just spent 20 years of my life doing something that's not important?

And they can't hear – many people have great difficulty hearing the response to that which is, no, I didn't say you wasted 20 years of your life, what I said was that was then and this is now, and that thing that you've done beautifully for 20 years, cataloging original whatever's or answering reference questions in a traditional way, it doesn't work anymore, so we have to change it, and I haven't just invalidated your life. But so often people – because they tend to take things personally **[normative force – can't get beyond the traditional]** –

Interviewer: The – what I found actually in my – here in the library in my previous experience, that one of the hardest things to do is to actually stop a project.

Interviewee: Oh, God. Yes. Cost? The whole notion of sunk cost? We'll die before we're going to do that. We're not going to admit that this didn't work and that we just – well, human – I think that, to some

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degree, is human nature. The whole notion of costs are sunk is really difficult for people.

Interviewer: The last question here. I could probably make a case looking at the types of libraries, school, public, special, academic, that academic is most at risk. You may not agree with that. But I'll throw it out anyway. But – so No. 11 here, what do you see as a major threat or threats to the success of the academic library?

Interviewee: I think the biggest threat is our response to what's happening. To some degree I think we are our own worst enemy [**biggest threat – our own worst enemy**]. As long as we want to keep things the way they are and be defined by whatever comes into people's heads as library, which often turns out to be a very traditional place, we're going the way of newspapers, paper [**inaudible**]. I think that if we're willing to be much more aggressive – and even though that's a professionally sort of strange thing to think about – in terms of marketing and promotion, in terms of partnering with anybody in the universe who is willing to partner with us to provide better service, I believe that we have a role to play and that academic libraries matter.

But what I fear is that we're so immersed in our own situation and so unwilling or comfortable not changing, that we're going to lose this. We're going to fail to serve the people we're supposed to serve because we can't get past our own problems. I know that sounds like pop psychology. But –

Interviewer: Okay. Look, I have – we have gone over. But these comments were really very interesting.

Interviewee: You got my soapbox several times, the subject matter of your research.

Interviewer: Yeah. If you're interested, I can send you a copy of the transcript.

Interviewee: Sure. It will keep me honest.

Interviewer: I would be glad to send you a copy.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 90 minutes

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