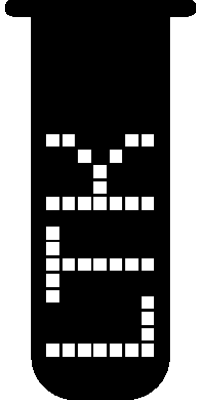


LIBRARY
TEST
KITCHEN

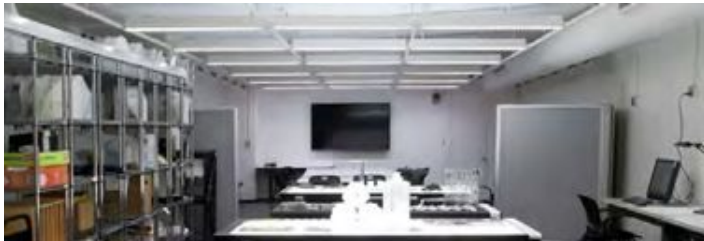


GSD 09125 Library Test Kitchen III Library Machines Fall 2013

Ann Whiteside
Jeff Goldenson
Jessica Yurkofsky

Proposal Narrative

The Library Test Kitchen is a continuing research and development project charting new directions for libraries. Over the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 semesters, GSD 09125 Library Test Kitchen has been exploring the future of libraries through research and hands-on prototyping on a 1:1 scale. It's been a unique opportunity, and the Harvard Library's repeated \$10K/semester grants have situated Library Test Kitchen as the de facto student research & development arm of the Harvard Library.



Ann Whiteside, Jeffrey Schnapp and Jeff Goldenson have co-run the seminar, but this year, Jeffrey will be shifting to an advisory role. We propose continuing the seminar with Ann Whiteside, Jeff Goldenson of the Harvard Library Innovation Lab, and Jessica Yurkofsky MUP '13, LTK Graduate and Research Associate at metaLAB Harvard.

Opportunity

We believe Library Test Kitchen is uniquely positioned to make a real difference in libraries, both academic and public.

I. Students have done some of the most

creative thinking in libraries, anywhere

From the WiFi Cold Spot by Ben Brady, to the crowdsourced calendaring app Time/Slice by Jessica Yurkofsky, to the class-wide collaboration that was LABRARY: A Platform for Library Innovation, the work of Library Test Kitchen Students has been inspiring.

II. Harvard Library Support

Beyond the financial investment, Library Test Kitchen has earned the respect and interest of the Harvard Library community. From reference librarians, to catalogers and technologists, to supply chain managers and the Head of the Harvard Library itself -- library folks have attended our workshops, helped our students, granted us tours and privileged access creating a unique learning opportunity.

III. Press attention has afforded us a larger stage to share our work

We've been fortunate to receive press coverage (attached) for our previous efforts, particularly this past semester with the creation of LABRARY in Harvard Square. In short, we've earned the ear and curious eye of the library community. With Library Test Kitchen III, we will be uniquely positioned to share our creations with a broader public.

Selected Press Coverage

[The Harvard Gazette](#)

[The Harvard Year in Pictures](#)

The Harvard Crimson 1, Harvard Crimson 2
Library Journal 1, (*Library Journal 2*, *Library Journal 3 attached*, *print edition*)
The Boston Globe (*attached*, *print edition*)
Time Magazine Tech Blog

Course Outline

GSD 09125 Library Test Kitchen III Library Machines

Library Machine - Def. a mechanically or electronically operated device for performing library functions. Library functions are broadly defined."

Library Machines traverse scales, from product to furniture to installation-scale. They may be built, coded or some other way *realized*.

Library machines do a job. They may create new experiences, workflows, efficiencies — nearly anything that would be of relevance to a library or library user.

What the Library Machines will have in common by the end of the semester is they will be built. They will be operational prototypes we can experience for ourselves.

Library Test Kitchen Objectives

1. To build and test Library Machines that suggest new directions for libraries
2. To invigorate the broader discussion of libraries

Process: Researching & Making

LTK interweaves research and hands-on making. Seminar is primarily a research and discussion period.

We will fluidly traverse:

- the history of libraries
- contemporary case studies
- the mechanics of the Harvard Library
- presentations by visiting experts
- environmental psychology

- visions of the future of the library

These discussions will guide the making that occurs outside of class. After a few design exercises, students will begin building their final projects.

Experiences Acquired

- ethnographic research
- rapid idea creation (daily 6 minute design sprints)
- applied problem-solving
- framing and pitching projects
- moving from paper sketch to operable prototype
- effective documentation for media outlets and publication

Field Trips

- *Harvard Book Depository*
Southborough, MA
- *Mathematica*, by Charles and Ray Eames,
Museum of Science, Cambridge MA

Visitors

- *Shannon Mattern*, Associate Professor, The New School, Department of Media Studies and Film
- *Michael Young*, Faculty, Princeton School of Architecture, Cooper Union, Principal, Young Ayata, NYC
- *Stephen Cassell*, Partner, Architecture Research Office
- *Peter Chermayeff*, Peter Chermayeff LLC, '76 Expo Pavillion Designer with Buckminster Fuller

Working Bibliography

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II. *Spaces of Making*: labs, workshops, studios, makerspaces, etc.

III. *Machines & Technology*

IV. *Space, Perception, Attention*

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Biographies

Ann Whiteside

Lecturer in Architecture and Librarian

Librarian/Assistant Dean for Information Resources

Jeff Goldenson

Designer, Harvard Library Innovation Lab

Masters of Science, MIT Media Lab

B.A. in Architecture, Princeton University

Jessica Yurkofsky

Researcher, metaLAB, Harvard

Masters of Urban Planning, GSD '12

B.A. in Sociology, Stanford University

Library Test Kitchen Student '12

Library Test Kitchen Teaching Fellow '13

“The Library Test Kitchen has probably been the most instrumental course I have taken/been a part of in terms of understanding real issues and opportunities in design.”

*Ben Brady, M.Arch.'13,
Thesis prize winner*

Selected Student Work and
Press Follows



LABRARY identity. BRI Patawaran, Arielle Assouline-Lichten



92 Mt. Auburn St., Oct. 28th



92 Mt. Auburn St., Dec. 5th



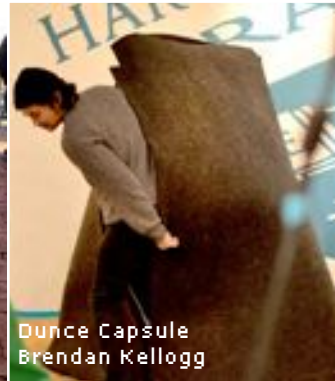
Digita. Arielle Assouline-Lichten



Topical Tables. Hattie Stroud



Boom Bench. Nicolas Rivard



Dunce Capsule. Brendan Kellogg



Inflatable Reading Room. Ben Brady



GREEN NOISE. Tony Cho



RECON-TEXTS. Bri Patawaran



RECON-TEXTS. Bri Patawaran



graham grams. Rola Idris, Pablo Roquero



Wi-Fi Cold Spot. Ben Brady



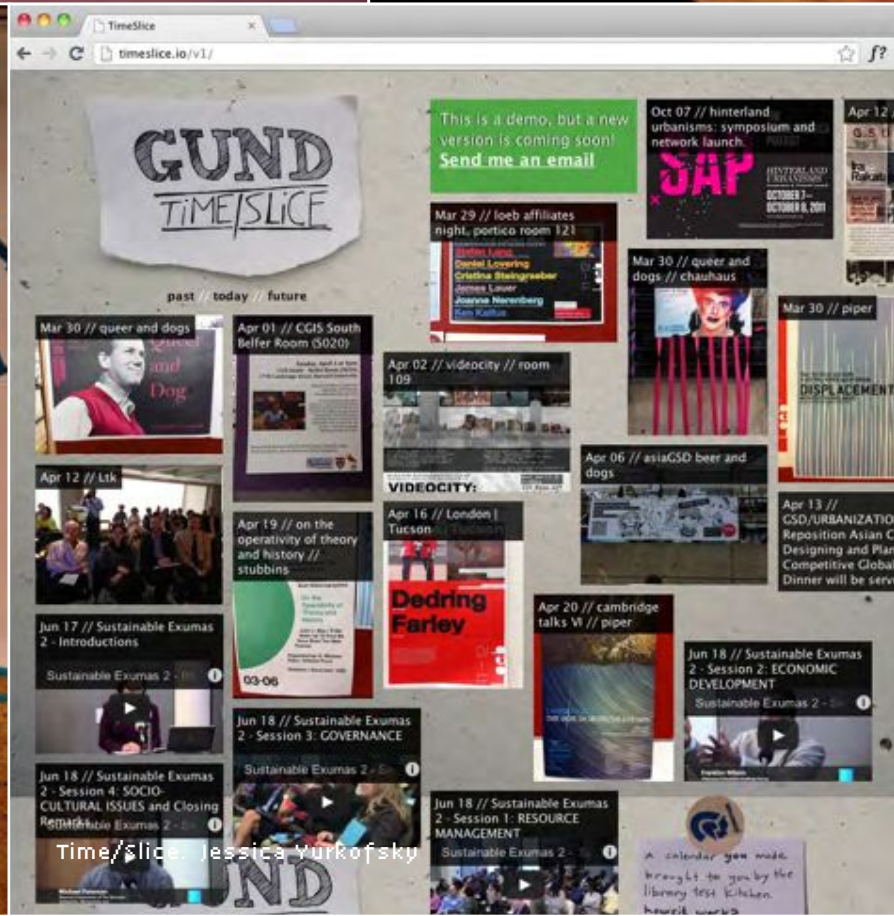
Idris, Pablo Roquero



Wi-Fi Cold Spot. Ben Brady



BOOKFACE. Nicolas Rivard

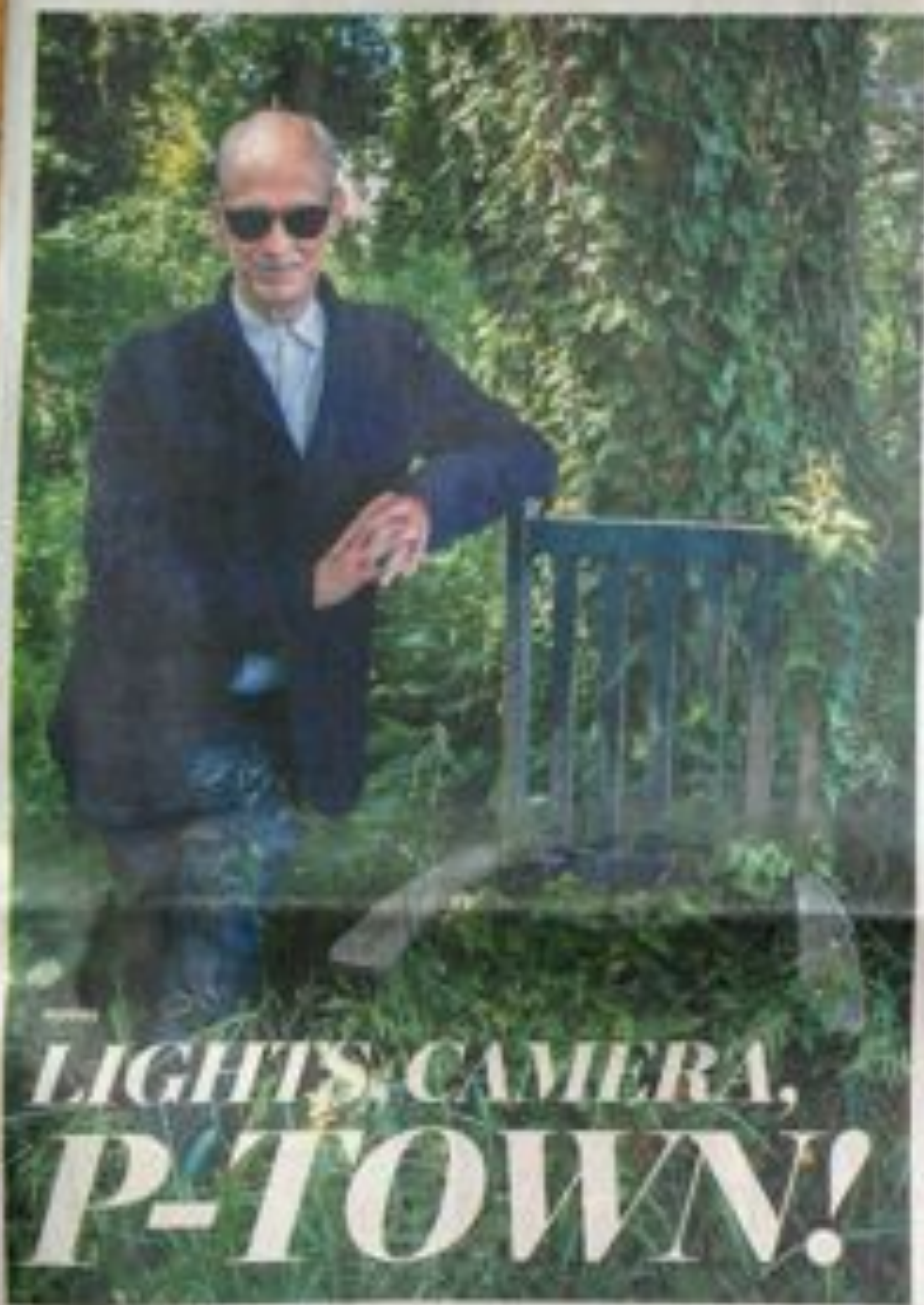


Time/slice. Jessica Yurkofsky



WITH MYRA'S BOOKS, STYLE, FOOD

SEEKING ADVICE FROM THE U.S. GOVT. BYRONIA LUNA (L) BYRONIA LUNA (L) BYRONIA LUNA (L)



LIGHTS, CAMERA, P-TOWN!

Film festival celebrates 15th anniversary in style

By [Name]

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the [Festival Name] is back with a bang. This year's lineup is the most diverse and exciting yet, featuring a mix of international and local talent. The festival will run from [Date] to [Date] at the [Venue].

With a stellar lineup for the week-long festival, the organizers are excited to welcome back the film community. The festival will feature a variety of films, including documentaries, shorts, and feature films.

The festival is a great opportunity for film lovers to enjoy a variety of films in a beautiful setting. The organizers are excited to welcome back the film community and to celebrate 15 years of the festival.

For more information, visit [Website].

WHO'S WATCHING WHO?

NSA has nothing on Jack Bauer



There has been a lot of speculation about the NSA's capabilities. Jack Bauer is a fictional character who is often portrayed as being able to outsmart the NSA. In reality, the NSA has a vast network of spies and surveillance equipment.



The NSA is a powerful agency that has the ability to monitor and intercept communications. Jack Bauer is a fictional character who is often portrayed as being able to outsmart the NSA. In reality, the NSA has a vast network of spies and surveillance equipment.

Inside

TRAY COOL
Get your tray cool and refreshingly strong

HAZLENS
Bursts with flavor in a cup of coffee

Harvard puts a new kind of library to the test

By [Name]

Harvard University is testing a new kind of library. The library is designed to be more user-friendly and to provide a better experience for students and faculty.

The new library is a multi-story building that is designed to be a hub for learning and research. It features a variety of study spaces, including quiet study areas and collaborative workspaces. The library is also equipped with state-of-the-art technology, including high-speed internet and digital resources.

Friend of Eleanor and reporter on the Depression

By [Name]

A friend of Eleanor Roosevelt and a reporter on the Depression...



LIBRARY
The [Name] Library...
[Address]
[Phone Number]

...the Depression... Eleanor Roosevelt... the struggle...

...the struggle... the Depression... the fight...

...the struggle... the Depression... the fight...

...the struggle... the Depression... the fight...

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Harvard course looks to reinvent the library

...the struggle... the Depression... the fight...

...the struggle... the Depression... the fight...



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...the struggle... the Depression... the fight...

WITH THIS ISSUE: LIBRARY BY DESIGN

Respecting Space in St. Louis

LIBRARY JOURNAL

May 15, 2013 | Volume 138 No. 5 | ISSN 0363-0277 | \$8.00

Massive Open Opportunity

MOOCs and Libraries



Making Room
for Innovation
Early Praise for DPLA
BEA for All

IN THE BOOK REVIEW
SF/Fantasy, Graphic
Novels, Parenting,
Summer Thrillers,
Gettysburg, plus *LJ* Talks
to Josh Hanagarne
and Armchair Audies'
Jennifer Conner

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By Jeff Guiberson & Nate Hill *The Harvard University Library and the Chattanooga Public Library could not be much further apart, but their experiments with library space share some essential similarities.*

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By Matt Ross *The Digital Public Library of America launched in April, and IJ solicited comments about the interface and various functionalities. The buzz was mostly positive.*

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By Margaret Hollman & Hannelie Thomsen *Some Book Expo America 2012 will have a wide variety of programs to interest librarians, including IJ's Day of Design event on May 29.*

COVER STORY: LIBRARY BY DESIGN BY MICHAEL STEPHENS
PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

WITH THIS ISSUE

design

Former big box stores with lots of parking and high-traffic locations make prime spots for library conversions. The Spring

2012 Library by Design equipment, mailed with this issue, explores such renovated uses, along with St. Louis's grand Central renovation, the takeaways on facility and community

engagement from IJ's Design Institute in Caryleaga County, OH, and the recent call of renovations in Washington, DC, that are anything but cookie-cutter. Plus Librarian's Pick, What's Hot product findings, and what the Harvard Library got back as about other such innovative library spaces.



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MAKING ROOM FOR

Two library service prototyping spaces, in two very different places, have a remarkable amount in common. Nate Hill runs and operates the **4th Floor** in Chattanooga, a large public library left space operating as a flexible community makerspace and event space. Jeff Goldenson co-ran and operated **Library**, a 37-day design experiment occupying a vacant storefront in Cambridge

INNOVATION

By Jeff Goldenson & Nate Hill

In size, community, mission, and mission, the Harvard University Library and the Chattanooga Public Library (CPL) could not be much further apart. While a reader might anticipate our library experiments would be similarly divergent, we found essential similarities emerged from beneath these differences.

The 4th Floor grew from within the Chattanooga Public Library itself, the transformation of an overcrowded storage space into a vibrant community Maker space and event room that's now a hot spot in town. Library propped up under the scrutiny of the public eye in a vacant, commercial storefront, outside the Harvard Library altogether. Passers-by watched through the glass facade as it morphed from an empty retail space into a library environment for hosting talks, exhibiting student coursework, encouraging collaborations and creativity, and gathering data from visitors about their thoughts on libraries. (See sidebar for background on the two experiment spaces and see also "Through the Library Lens," p. 28, in the accompanying Library by Design supplement for examples of other experimental spaces.)

The evolution of these spaces followed different experiences and time frames, but our shared observations about the uses



of libraries, information, and culture beyond traditional guiding principles. We believe the library of the last century is the library of tomorrow, an institution that reflects the broadest use of media, the place where you watch, read, and learn passively from an attachment. The library of this century is the place where new social relationships are forged and knowledge is created, explored, and shared.

Jeff Goldenson (jeffgoldenson.org) is the director of the Harvard Library Innovation Lab, Cambridge, MA. Nate Hill (natehill.org) is the director of the Chattanooga Public Library.

Beginnings

4

The **4TH FLOOR** of the Chattanooga Public Library is a 14,000 square foot open space in a historic brick building constructed in 1976. As of July 2012, the space was filled from floor to ceiling with books, discarded furniture, books, craft projects, and more—

the space was an arena of refuge. The reason to create this great room as a creative space began with Director Eugene and his Assistant Director Kate Hill (see sidebar), but to succeed meant the space had to first become the laboratory and playground for the library's entire staff. Eugene's full team. The full team includes Meg Buckner as the U.S. administrator and chief writer, Mary Barnett as the social media strategist and narrative operations, and Dan Everett as the web developer and programmer. As a group, this team gave the 4th Floor direction, so that it can operate smoothly as the community creative space it has become.

LABRARY

The **LABRARY** was a design experiment fully created, designed, and built by the 21 students and staff from

Library Test Kitchen (LTK), an advanced seminar in Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD). The seminar was co-run by professor Jeffrey LePore, faculty director of MIT-LAB and assistant of technical languages and literature, Ben Whittle, head-inventor/mentor for information resources at GSD, and Jeff Eisenstein, designer in the Harvard Library Innovation Lab. Working out the teaching staff were two LTK alumni and recent graduates, Ben Brady and Jessica Tenkhalby.

Occupying a 1,000 square foot storefront in Harvard Square, Labrary was first open to the public from November 29 through December 21, 2012, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. daily, Monday through Saturday. It was hosted by the Harvard Library Laboratory on behalf of the Widener Foundation.



ATTENTION ABUNDANT In left, the 4th Floor Maker space with its 3-D printing lab was a highlight of the night at the 2012 Tennessee Library Association annual conference held in the library space; the Labrary storefront (above) likewise attracted guests for into its experimental area to see how future library design might look

The library of this century has “beta space” like the 4th Floor and Labrary—environments within a larger library ecosystem created to prototype and deploy new systems. At CPL, the 4th Floor is not meant to transform just library space and services; it is also intended to transform the library’s organizational culture. The plan is to develop new services on the 4th Floor and implement them in other library departments. One struggle would be our experiment with 3-D printing technology. We anticipate they will be a lot to watch services, but we are refining our service delivery model on the 4th Floor first so we can roll out change with less disruption and a lower rate of failure.

Meanwhile, the goal of the Library Test Kitchen (LTK), the team driving the Labrary, is to research, imagine, and build new

library products, experiences, and services. Labrary was our beta space in which to display student innovations in public so determine which warranted further development. Also, by virtue of being a beta space and outside any formal library building, progress could be made truly exploratory, often generating more questions than answers. Some students work around libraries perfectly, others around museum or business information guides.

Keep our shared belief in the importance of a culture open to experimentation. Once common libraries emerged within our beta space, donors that bridge the academic and public library divide:

1. Real-time knowledge creation
2. Design for experimentation
3. Community-driven innovation

These themes correspond closely to both David Weinberger’s “Library is Platform” and David Lanier’s “Library as Conversation” concepts as they position the library not as

merely providing resources, full stop. Rather, they prize social creating environments that leverage those resources to enable the local, networked, conversational development of knowledge.

Real-time knowledge creation

CPL’s 4th Floor has hosted a number of events and experiments that have spurred impressive ongoing effects. For example, partnering with groups like ARFA, the professional organization for design, and a business incubator called CO2LAB has allowed the 4th Floor to bring to the library incredible events that have had people in who had forgotten the building was even there. Two highlights stand out in particular:

MAKERDAY On March 30, we partnered with business incubator CO2LAB, ChemPark, and quite a few other sponsors and exhibitors for Makerday. 3D Therapeutics, an expo introducing 3-D printing technology to the city of Chattanooga. Over the course of the day, a record-setting 1,200 people, ranging from babies to senior citizens, visited the 4th Floor to see everything

from hobbyist machines to large-scale industrial models, 3D printers, and an experimental 3-D videoconferencing system using MS Kinect cameras from Engage 3D. The event established the 4th Floor as the gateway Maker space to the existing Chatham Square Maker ecosystem. It offers MakerBox access to anyone with a library card and a place to come together to build, make, design, and test.

CREATIVE CITIZENSHIP Months before local elections, a group of politically engaged Chathamians came together to start a programming series around the topic of creative citizenship. The immediate goal was to get Chatham's creative community of artists, designers, developers, and others to feel like empowered stakeholders in the future of the community. Creative citizenship held two noteworthy events on the 4th floor: a collaboration with NEA that featured Daniel Ryan and Josh Higgins, the lead developer and the lead designer on the Obama 2012 presidential campaign, and a city council candidate forum, which brought Chatham's issues leadership into the library and onto the 4th floor.

In the academic context, Library carried out its own take on citizen programming. As the public face to a major university library, Library had the Harvard and surrounding scholarly community from which to draw. Researchers and professors from around the Harvard and MIT campuses spoke to our casual, open setting to both students and Cambridge community members alike. Strapped outside the common gaze, Library's street-level, open-air, wrap-out atmosphere provided a uniquely intimate setting.

Design for experimentation

Visitors often remarked that though Library didn't feel like a library, they liked the vibe. There were several reasons for this, but there is particular on Library apart from a traditional library in the service of our experimental mission. Library was a branded, non- and widely experiential space.

BRANDED Libraries often lack resources to get around a visual identity. This includes dated signage and communications, a lack of "visual" and "design" literacy, ECR models, Analle Souleiro-Lafont and Gabriella Pavesoni designed Library's visual identity: they gave Library a voice. It was assertive, friendly, and playful, and, most important, it was recognizable.

While nobody really knew what we were, there was a sense of who—we were Library. The tightness of the brand contained the looseness of our exploration. (Download our brand kit online for free at library.makerlab.org.)

RAW Libraries tend to be high-polish, monumental environments designed to impress. They're not spaces that say, "we change." Library, on the other hand, was raw-polish. The plywood tables were left unfinished, giving them a workbench look; the walls needed a new coat of paint. These unfinished details granted visitors permission to get their hands—and the gear around them—dirty.

WIDELY EXPERIENTIAL A sign on a table at the entrance to the Library requested that visitors describe the future of "the library." Responses were pinned on Post-it notes and stuck to the

table, if there was a theme, it was no like the all. One Post-it read, "years of silence," another, "years of chaos."

Libraries pride themselves on the flexibility of their collections, perhaps the same principle should be applied to the environment as well. The library could look at its space as exhibitions on their own: a library with as many designers as authors.

The 4th floor is a similarly branded, raw environment that maintains an extremely flexible and responsive nature. In many ways the 4th floor can be treated as a stage, a dynamically reprogrammable space to accommodate the needs and wants of the community. Likewise, our design and fabrication practices follow the language of an design, populating the space with movable elements, partitions, and powerful, high-impact digital projection tools.

Community-driven innovation

The success and development of the 4th floor is linked directly to strong ongoing partnerships with other entities operating in Chatham's ecosystem of design, technology, art, and education institutions. A top-down service design process directed solely by the library would fall; it has been clear from the beginning that to be successful the 4th floor must harness the expertise and commitment of the community to design its own services.



INTERACTIVE SPACE In art, 4th floor's Creative Citizenship event was a big success in terms of political engagement. The Library featured Evan Evans (right) by Rob Hines and Pablo Picasso's *A Great Worker* on wing primer, part of a larger exploration into informative permanence.

The LTR service was founded on a similarly bottom-up belief. CCR was established to grant a scholar credit to show Harvard students engaged to help service their library's future. The Library popped up as a beta space to see their connection with the general public.

Looking ahead

The library for consumption was redesigned to create access to information in different formats and containers. Looking ahead, the library for experimentation, curiosity, and production must provide access to raw tools, experiences, and opportunities for knowledge creation and exploration. We want what these tools and services look like in the near ahead, our interaction with them will happen in physical space—in public, site by site, and perhaps in conversation.

Beyond that, we don't need to know much more, we just need to take the leap and allocate the real estate where it can happen. As we've learned from our beta spaces, the risk of creating unprogrammed space has been rewarded with new programming and new uses of the environment that we could never have expected when we began.

LIBRARY BY design

SPRING 2013

a media source publication

Repurposing Retail

Design Institute Ohio:
Change Is Coming

Looking Through the Library Lens

The Hottest Furniture, Lighting,
Shelving, Carpeting, and More



CEILING & LIGHTING: SLPLC Great Hall
restored to grandeur with the aid of
the library's grand history.

Growing Room

St. Louis Public Library completes
a major renovation that respects
a 101-year-old design
By Marta Murvosh

There was never a doubt that the St. Louis Central Library building would remain a library and be restored. St. Louis Public Library (SLPL) executive director Walter McGuire tells 22 Patrons how to tell McGuire of their first experience at the library when they were children and a parent or grandparent led them up the granite steps and into the majestic Grand Hall. "The St. Louis community and beyond has a real attachment to the Central Library building," McGuire says. "The St. Louis community loves Central."

However, what was in doubt was the footprint. The original plan called for a proposed expansion outside the building's original granite walls. But a local architectural firm

took the risk of trying to convince library leaders that was the wrong way to go.

Two years and \$55 million later, the risk appears to have paid off. The restored and renovated 101-year-old Central Library reopened on December 5, 2012. Together, architects and librarians had almost doubled the square footage open to the public without expanding the original walls an inch.

Inside, SLPL patrons are discovering new spaces that were dedicated to study, serious research, teens and children, and people exploring technology or recording their own music.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

librarians' picks

GREAT PRODUCTS AND
FURNISHINGS FOR YOUR LIBRARY



DURABLE AND
FUNCTIONAL, THE
OPEN JOURNAL CHAIR
IS GREAT FOR READING.
P. 16



THE REBEL CHAIR IS
FUNNY AND FUN FOR TEENS.
P. 17



MAN, OH, MAN, THE
SNOOPY BOULDER MAN CHAIR
WAS DESIGNED IN 1960.
P. 18

SUPPLEMENT TO
LIBRARYJOURNAL



SPACES POPPING UP (from L-R): Library's Bookface installation; Maker unit in design at the Bubble program at Madison Public Library; Boulder Public Library's Info Commons recording and video space

Looking Through the Library Lens

Lessons from the Harvard Labrary inform how we see transformative library spaces

By Jennifer Koerber

In fall 2012, the Harvard Library—a temporary “pop-up” space in an empty storefront on Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA—was opened as a public gallery for design student projects from the semester-long Library Test Kitchen (LTK) seminar at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design.

Describing the Library, LTK instructor Jeff Goldstein said that it’s “a place where librarians can embrace risk and innovation,” a “pop-up R&D department” that explores ideas too disruptive for a traditional library location. For more, see the companion feature by Goldstein and Chaitanya (V.) Nair Hill, “Making Room for Innovation,” in this issue of LJ, p. 26. By bringing student projects to the public and inviting interaction and response, the Library became an exploration of what it means to be a library space. Though it was only open briefly, the Library suggested new ways of looking at nontraditional library space design.

Unfinished or use raw space

To create the Library, seminar students and instructors painted walls, built a rough-hewn ergonomic stage in one corner, and added track lighting. This blank canvas allowed students to adapt their work to the space and vice versa.

If your library is undergoing a renovation or building a new space, don’t plan every square foot right away. With an unstructured area to grow into, you can take advantage of new needs. Or plan to leave the space raw, with the expectation that its use will change over time.

For instance, the unfinished basement of the new Tusculum Public Library, TN, was reserved for loans, unspecified use. After two years of surveys and analysis, the library built Studio 300, a digital media creation space for the

general public. Six audio recording studios, two video recording studios, and three group collaboration rooms take advantage of the lightless, temperature-controlled, and sound-isolated basement space. Studio 300 opened on March 26.

Before the Madison Public Library, WI, shut down the main library to move to a new building, it held a one-day, one-night art show and fundraiser called DOORLESS in the empty structure. More than 5,000 guests and visitors grappled the walls, danced and played music, and otherwise took the place apart. The vibrant event inspired library planners to rethink the new media center as the touchstone of a creative and collaborative series of spacewide programs, the Bubble (see below).

It's not just about the gadgets

At the Library, Harvard students and members of the public alike came to work on projects. One class meeting was even held in the very inflatable reading room—a tent-like inflatable Mylar room with bean bag and cushions on its carpeted floor.

In public libraries, something like this might be a library-based coworking space. Coworking areas allow for noisy noise that a traditional library and offer a more work-focused environment than a coffee shop, without the expense of a commercial space. As Emily Badger writes in *The Atlantic Cities*, “[Librarians] offer a more familiar entry-point for potential entrepreneurs less likely to walk into a traditional start-up incubator.

Public libraries long ago democratized access to knowledge; now they could do the same in a start-up economy.”

What that coworking space might look like varies widely. The Orlando Public Library, FL, has a single coworking room that the public can reserve for \$10 for two hours, with table, chairs, whiteboard, TV, and phone.

Taking it to the next level, Arizona State University (ASU) and the Phoenix Public Library have partnered to develop the Alexandria Network, “support for the innovation economy through EUREKA spaces, which combine elements of coworking space with expert library fact-finding services and ASU start-up resources.”

Let visitors make their own fun

As a student showcase, the Library let the public engage with student projects on the theme of the “future of libraries,” ranging from Bookface—an installation that photographed visitors lying with their faces obscured by a laptop, then published those images on Tumblr—to tables that requested audience noise to keep the space from getting “too” quiet. Ben Brady, a cotrainer of the seminar, said that at the beginning, “a lot of people were asking ‘What is this place?’ and with the student projects in place, people were more engaged with exploring the space themselves.”

Engagement with the space can encourage a feeling of temporary ownership, which in turn encourages things like

informal class meetings, displays of work by local artists, a wide variety of collaborations, and even dance parties.

One way to encourage informal engagement is through library Maker spaces, from a created space in the middle of the library stacks (Westport, FL, CT) to a new dedicated wing (Fayetteville Free Library, NY). Maker spaces can offer both formal programs and unstructured access to the tools of the Maker’s arsenal—3-D printers, large-format printers and scanners, small electronics kits, and more.

In addition to more curriculum-oriented tech, the Taylor Family Digital Library at University of Calgary, Alta., has a computer-based 3-D station for students to record their own recorded tracks.

Some aren't permanent

The Library was a temporary effort from the start, with few of the construction choices of a permanent space. If libraries build with impermanence in mind, they can benefit from the lightweight infrastructure of a movable space.

When the call to the lobby of the Oak Park Public Library, IL, closed, the library chose to use the room for monthly interactive library-focused installations. The idea here is small and focused with glass installations have ranged from a public-created and -curated, magnetic poetry “collection” to presentations from live artists and folk musicians and interactive night sky exhibits.

Back at the Madison, TN, each Bubble program may last an hour or two, or be a week- or month-long gallery of work or interactive experience. It can be anywhere, include any topic, and even be brought off-site as needed. ■

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