The subject of information commons is a hot topic in the library science world. With the new advances in technology and the changing way that students learn, librarians and their staff have had to rethink and redesign the concept of a library and its place in the community. The old quiet, solitary studying in an ‘information warehouse’ has gone by the wayside and in its place has come a new concept involving multimedia, recent technology, collaborative learning and in some instances, even a coffee shop! Everyone learns differently and there needs to a space that accommodates all those deferring needs and the ever changing technology world.

Most of my findings were pro information commons, claiming the old ways are out of date and learning institutions need to keep up with the changes in patrons so they can remain relevant to the community. The lifeblood of a library is the patrons, if their needs aren’t taken into consideration there will be less of a need for a library. Students are accustomed to socializing in all aspects of life, including studying and a place like a learning commons is a great way to provide resources for all different patrons to relax, create, work and even socialize.

I did find some cons, two articles, Locke, Intellectual Property Rights, and the Information Commons and The Tragedy of the Digital Commons were not so much against the concept, but rather the copyright infringement and information sharing implications. There is still much debate on copyright laws and how they apply to digital information and it makes for a difficult task to try to iron it out. These articles are concerned with what might happen when the digital divide, or the information disparity between those who have the means to be online and those who don’t, is bridged. The internet is a commons space but it is not infinite, like waters that are overfished, the internet may become overloaded and difficult for the community to use. There is also the added scariness of possible copyright infringement which has led to jail time in the past, even without commercial gain.

The very last article, Virtual communities and society: Toward an Integrative Three Phase Model is also a cautionary tale on the factors that virtual environments have on society, namely that people have complete anonymity in some of the communities making it a complete “unreality” in which users can say and do as they please to whomever they please. The increasing speed in which we communicate electronically is breaking down barriers, the worker bees can now email the top guns directly without going through the chain of command. There are some good aspects of these as well though, that the article does mention like the fact that it has opened up international communications making it less of and “us/them” situation.
Entry 1:

Abstract: N/A

Annotation: There is a great divide between ideologies of creating information and making it available. Larger companies and corporations that “own” creative works are likening dissemination without going through the proper copyright procedure, is piracy and shouldn't be tolerated. On the other hand, the public wants free use of information without all the hoopla of copyright law and without the added expenses. Libraries are caught in the middle of this war because it is their duty to offer a free service in which information is shared, making their position, especially in this new technological age, rather controversial. The internet is making the situation even more complicated as it evolves, “The Internet functions as if information should be freely available and shareable. But as the Internet matures and becomes more commercialized, this is increasingly not the case. Content industries are determined to strictly control the distribution and use of their products.” The more industries gain the control they are after, the less creative information is distributed to those who want it.

Authority: The author, David Bollier, “is the author of Silent Theft: The Private Plunder of Our Common Wealth (Routledge, 2002; <www.silenttheft.com>). He is also Senior Fellow at the Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and the cofounder of Public Knowledge, a public-interest advocacy group that defends the commons of science, culture, and the Internet.”

Scholarly/Refereed Status: I selected that I wanted my results to only include scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and I also searched for the publication, Knowledge Quest, on Ulrich’s and it came back as a refereed publication of the American Library Association.

Search Strategy: I did a basic search for information commons in ProQuest, as a starting point in my searching, and selected that I wanted full-text, peer reviewed and scholarly journals.

Search String: Information commons
Abstract: “Purpose - The article aims to provide a historical context for the information commons model in college and university libraries, reviewing trends in reference services, user expectations, technology and facilities planning. It suggests future directions for expansion of the information commons model and provides URLs for academic libraries with information commons of note. Design/methodology/approach - The article serves as a frame for three other articles in this issue on information commons. Findings - In the 1990s, the move to "rethink reference" services intersected with the "library as place" movement. This collision, combined with changes in technology and users' expectations, resulted in the information commons model. Research limitations/implications - The literature review is not exhaustive. Practical implications - The article provides a succinct review of recent historical trends in academic libraries as well as an overview of recent technological changes that have affected our users. Originality/value - The article is not a case study and does not focus on any one academic library. The value of the piece is its historical perspective and identification of future challenges and trends.”

Annotation: As technology evolves over time, the roles of libraries and librarians have changed drastically. Instead of users coming to the library to ask reference questions or check out a book or magazine for information, patrons are increasingly taking the research process into their own hands and using end-user search strategies like online searches, eBook searches and various other technologies that cut out the middle man. While these trends are new and exciting, librarians had to rethink their roles and accommodate these changes. Thus start offering tiered services (different staff for different informational needs), reference interview appointments roving or roaming reference librarians, and involving users in designing new plans. Throughout the 90s many libraries decided to rearrange their spaces to project the, “library as a place” movement by adding coffee shops, longer hours, and updates in technology to offer services like Wi-Fi, which pushed the movement even further to the birth of the
information commons. This change in library attitude, abandoning no food and drink rules and the notion that a library is a quiet place for independent study, gave way to a new concept in which students are encouraged to learn together and interact with each other and to have all types of recent technology available to them to meet their need for technological advancement and multitasking. The future is sure to bring new advancements in technology and more emphasis on an information commons in all libraries.

Authority: The author, Mary Ellen Spencer is affiliated with the James Branch Cabell Library, VCU Libraries, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA and has published a number of different articles on the subject of information commons since 1993.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: According to Ulrich's, this publication, Reference Services Review, is a refereed publication. The publication's website also states that all their articles are peer-reviewed before publication.

Search Strategy: This was one of my first searches so I put in a basic keyword search for information commons. This article is a little old (2006) but I still think it has some good information.

Database(s): ProQuest Illustrata: Technology Collection, ProQuest Library Science and ProQuest Research Library (ProQuest)

Method of Searching: Basic Keyword

Search String: Information commons

Entry 3:

Abstract: “This paper examines the question whether, and to what extent, John Locke's classic theory of property can be applied to the current debate involving intellectual property rights (IPRs) and the information commons. Organized into four main sections, Section 1 includes a brief exposition of
Locke's arguments for the just appropriation of physical objects and tangible property. In Section 2, some challenges involved in extending Locke's labor theory of property are considered to the debate about IPRs and digital information. In Section 3, it is argued that even if the labor analogy breaks down, people should not necessarily infer that Locke's theory has no relevance for the contemporary debate involving IPRs and the information commons. In Section 4, the author applies Locke's proviso in his analysis of two recent copyright laws: the Copyright Term Extension Act (CTEA), and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA).

**Annotation:** There is much controversy surrounding the use of intellectual property in the information commons. The question this paper strives to answer is, “whether, and to what extent, intellectual property rights (IPRs) should apply to digital information. Is John Locke’s classic theory of property applicable in situation involving cooperative learning with digitized information? “Locke claims that property rights are justified because humans have a “right to their preservations and thus have a right to “meat and drink and such things that Nature affords for their subsistence.” His thought was if a person “removes something from the state of Nature” and made it into something else, it is considered one’s “own” because they have “mixed...labor” with it. This doesn’t mean Locke’s philosophy is without stipulations as far as excluding the common; he believes there is a need to only take what one can use, and the most important constraint, called Locke’s proviso, “one can remove objects from the commons only to the extent that there is enough and as good left for others to enclose.” It would seem that this theory would extend to intellectual property due to the fact that any work is typically something mixed with the author’s labor, but problems arise when trying to define “something in Nature” and “labor.” Locke had such provisions in his philosophy as he worried about “possible greed and waste” and he does not necessarily believe in the entitlement of one’s ownership of absolutely everything that they have mixed their labor with. The Copyright Term Extension Act and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act were put in place to protect the “owner’s” of digitized copies of their works so they are not freely available digitally even after the author’s death! These acts seem to be in opposition of the fair-use provision of the American copyright law and violates Locke’s proviso that no other individuals are to be made “worse off” by enclosing one’s property. While the debate is still ongoing, it’s important to note that Lock’s principles are relevant to the current issues around the information commons.

**Authority:** Herman T. Tavani is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Rivier University, where he previously served as Chair of the Philosophy Department and Director of the Liberal Studies
Program. He is a visiting scholar at the Harvard School of Public Health, where his research has centered on ethical issues dealing with environmental health and computational genomics. He has written, edited, or co-edited five books on social and ethical He has had numerous scholarly papers published as research articles in journals and periodicals; as chapters in books of readings and proceedings; and as entries in encyclopedias and handbooks.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** According to Ulrich’s this publication, *Ethics and Information Technology*, is a refereed publication. It is also noted on the publication’s website at [springer.com](http://springer.com) that all the articles that appear within the journal are peer-reviewed.

**Search Strategy:** I was still in the beginning stages of my research and trying to get myself started in ProQuest with basic keyword searches. I did narrow it down to full-text, scholarly and peer reviewed on every search but still had a ton of results. I wanted to included information on intellectual property and the information commons, as technology progresses and we move more and more towards cooperative learning, there is bound to be some ethic boundaries that we are crossing.

**Database(s):** ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest Illustrata: Technology Collection, ProQuest Library Science, ProQuest Research Library (all from ProQuest)

**Method of Searching:** Basic keyword

**Search String:** Information commons

**Entry 4:**

**Abstract:** “[...]a teacher who is willing to share responsibility with students, learn from students’ technical proficiency, and facilitate the learning process is more likely to be comfortable with networked learning tools. The task is to build a collaborative team that can discover the best and discard the rest. To meet the challenge, schools must focus on pedagogy and provide training and
support to help teachers incorporate technologies into all elements of the curriculum in ways that facilitate individualized learning and teach students how to collaborate with learners within and outside the school community.”

**Annotation:** Even with the vast array of technological devices available to students these days there is still a lack of understanding of how to use such devices effectively and efficiently. While the students enjoy using all of these devices, research shows that access to them alone, is not making students better learners. The other big issue is the lack of evaluating resources, “there is…a real propensity on the part of students to take what they find online as “given.” Five factors are identified that may limit students’ “proficiency with digital content” and possible solutions. The “Teaching Tech vs. using Tech to Teach” method; the goal is to try to incorporate technology into teaching not to just teach students how to use the technology. There is also the “drill and kill” teaching method that the teacher is the expert and stands in front of the class dictating lectures and mandating specific homework assignments. A better strategy might be to have the teacher “share the responsibility with the students,” learn from them and use technology as a way to incorporate many different learning styles into the classroom. “Many teachers are cautious about tech because it can be disruptive.” There are teachers out there who prefer quiet, active listeners who only speak with a hand up, but there are benefits to hands-on group work especially through the use of technology. The teachers must have excellent classroom managers to make this work, but the benefit to students being actively engaged in a virtual environment may be worth the “chaos.” Finally, online filters put into place by many educational facilities can make it difficult to teach in an environment where networked devices are blocked or restricted. Students need to develop skills using their good judgment and act accordingly when something inappropriate comes up. Adding technological access to the learning process gives students a “wealth of learning resources,” a way to communicate with other learners outside the classroom, new collaborative learning environments, a way to work effectively with students with all different learning styles and many other skills to manage technology and enhance digital literacy.

**Authority:** David Loertscher is Coeditor of *Teacher Librarian*, a professor of the School of Library and Information Science at San Jose State University in San Jose, California, president of Hi Willow Research and Publishing and the past president of the American Association of School Librarians. Carol Koechlin has worked as a classroom teacher, teacher-librarian, educational consultant, staff development leader, and instructor and she has led staff development sessions for teachers in both
Canada and the United States. She has coauthored a number of books and articles for professional journals nationally and internationally.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** According to Ulrich’s this publication, *Teacher Librarian*, is a refereed publication and it is mentioned on their website, under “author guidelines,” that each article submission is reviewed by, “at least two members of our advisory board, all of whom are either scholars or recognized professionals.”

**Search Strategy:** There are many different ways to express the idea of the information commons, so while still exploring the basic keyword search I decided to try different keywords so I could make sure I was including articles on each of the different and seemingly interchangeable phrases that describe the information commons.

**Database(s):** CBCA Complete, ProQuest Library Science, ProQuest Research Library (all from ProQuest).

**Method of Searching:** Basic Keyword

**Search String:** Learning commons

**Entry 5:**

**Abstract:** “In the paper it is argued that bridging the digital divide may cause a new ethical and social dilemma. Using Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons, we show that an improper opening and enlargement of the digital environment (Infosphere) is likely to produce a Tragedy of the Digital Commons (TDC). In the course of the analysis, we explain why Adar and Huberman's previous use of Hardin's Tragedy to interpret certain recent phenomena in the Infosphere (especially peer-to-peer communication) may not be entirely satisfactory. We then seek to provide an improved version of the
TDC that avoids the possible shortcomings of their model. Next, we analyse some problems encountered by the application of classical ethics in the resolution of the TDC. In the conclusion, we outline the kind of work that will be required to develop an ethical approach that may bridge the digital divide but avoid the TDC.”

**Annotation:** Hugo Grotius believed that the ocean’s resources were “inexhaustible” meaning that rules and regulations to control the usage were unnecessary. He viewed the ocean as a common space for all to use, which is correct in a way, but he failed to realize that the resources of the ocean were not only exhaustible, but could be depleted to the point of no return. The tragedy of the commons is a “thought experiment” used by Garrett Hardin that shoes how the “single-minded pursuit of the individual good may cause the destruction of the common good.” This can apply to the digital environment or the Infosphere not in that individual resources (files) are necessarily being destroyed but rather, the Infosphere is. The digital divide offers “enormous possibilities for development and improvements” but it also creates more “social disparities” in the process. The effect being, those who don’t have access to the Infosphere cannot find digital information or use digital services, and become outsiders. This problem isn’t simply a worldwide gap; it has widened generational, socio-economic and cultural divides as well. The tragedy of the digital commons can be thought of in a similar way as Hardin’s theory, if the Infosphere is an environment and a public good, the average user may take advantage of the resources excessively, and cause an information overload and slowing down the internet for others that are using it at the same time. If every user does this, the internet’s performance will drastically worsen making other users “worse off.” The internet can also be “polluted” with way too much information especially redundant information and can lead to corruptive communications like “spam.” Spam costs American organizations an estimated 10 billion dollars in loss of productivity and extra funds to try to fight it. Great care needs to be taken to bridge the digital divide, because depending on the solution, the possibility of bringing the tragedy of the digital divide is very real.

**Authority:** Gian Maria Greco works in the Department of Classical Philology and Philosophy of Science and the University of Lecce, Italy and Luciano Floridi works at the Department of Philosophical Sciences and the University degli Studi di Bari, Italy. Both authors are part of the Information Ethics Research Group Computing Laboratory at Oxford University in Great Britain and have other published philosophical and ethical papers on information usage.
Scholarly/Refereed Status: According to Ulrich’s this publication, *Ethics and Information Technology*, is a refereed publication. It is also noted on the publication’s website at springer.com that all the articles that appear within the journal are peer-reviewed.

Search Strategy: I wanted to make sure I included all phrases that encompass the cooperative learning which includes the key phrase “digital commons” as well as information commons. I want to search all the different ways this phrase could be expressed to make sure I am getting information on all derivatives and on all sides of this debate.

Database(s): ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest Illustrata: Technology Collection, ProQuest Library Science, ProQuest Research Library (all from ProQuest).

Method of Searching: Basic keyword

Search string: Digital commons

Entry 6:

Abstract: “Two recent and related social developments of note for libraries are an upsurge in cultural participation enabled by Web 2.0 media and calls in government policy for enhanced innovation through education. Ironically, these have occurred at the same time that increasingly stringent copyright laws have restricted access to cultural content. Concepts of governmentality are used here to examine these tensions and contradictions. In particular, Foucault's critique of the author figure and freedom as part of the will to govern within liberal democratic societies is used to argue for better quality copyright education programs in school libraries and library information science education programs. For purposes of teaching and research, copyrights are defined as agglomerations of legal, economic, and educational discourses that enable and constrain what can and cannot be done with text in homes, schools, and library media centers. This article presents some possibilities for renewal of school libraries around copyright education and Creative Commons licensing.”
Annotation: With new technology comes new responsibility of librarians, staff and users alike. The new and ever evolving “web 2.0 world” it has become increasingly difficult to draw the line between the encouragement of users to be creative and innovative but avoiding the consequences of ‘plagiarism and piracy.” There are two opposing sides to this one coin, “the U.S. government is calling for young people to be "creative" and "enterprising" in order to be globally competitive, recent changes to copyright law have created a context of constraint through fear of litigation around the flow of ideas and information.” There are many instances meant to strike fear into the hearts of users and consumers, of litigations in which “unauthorized” users of movies or music were punished with large fines and jail time even if there was no commercial gain. Librarians and library staff have to tread carefully around this subject in order to allow users to be free to access any and all information available to them while still adhering to copyright laws. Thomas Jefferson’s philosophical idea is that, “ideas are non-rivalrous like fire…” Jefferson says, “He who receives an idea from me receives instruction without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine receives light without darkening me” and this idea was accepted in many areas of government in early US history, “widespread intellectual piracy occurred with the full knowledge of government officials.” Now the government is after making the copyright and piracy laws stricter with greater punishments. We have more access on more devices to more information including sites that are edited by the community of users, thus rendering many current copyright laws essentially meaningless in this use of “collective creativity.”

Authority: The author, “Cushla Kapitzke, is an associate professor in the School of Cultural and Language Studies in Education, Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Her current research is focused on understanding what social and economic problems policy solutions such as creativity and intellectual property are designed to solve within economies driven by global capital.” She has written a number of books on the subject including, Libraries: Changing Information Space and Practice and Global Knowledge Cultures.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: I indicated in my original search that I wanted my results to be peer-reviewed, scholarly articles to narrow it down. I checked the website of the publisher of Library Trends, Johns Hopkins Press, and in their “author guidelines” section, it is mentioned that all articles are set up to be peer-reviewed before publishing. Just to double check, I ran Library Trends through Ulrich’s and it did come back as a refereed publication.
Search Strategy: For my final keyword search I did a basic search for “creative commons,” the last phrase I could think of that might not come up with just “information commons” and selected that I wanted my search to only include results that were full text, peer reviewed and scholarly. I also narrowed it down further with the date range; I only wanted more recent research done.

Database(s): ProQuest Library Science and ProQuest Research Library (ProQuest)

Method of Searching: Basic keyword

Search String: Creative commons

Entry 7:

Abstract: “Integrating cooperative learning techniques with information technology and applying it to the field of Production and Operations Management (PIOM) will help to investigate how Computer-Supported Cooperative Learning (CSCL) can enhance learning performance of students. Research in CSCL provides evidence that collaborative communication technology can be a better mechanism to add value to education. Most studies, however, have examined learning performance only during the middle and end of the learning process. Thus, it is not clear how information technology can continuously facilitate and improve student performance and learning experience over time. The purpose of this research is to examine how information technology, when applied to communication medium, can facilitate the learning process in the field of production and operations management. This study compared traditional, face-to-face cooperative learning environments to computer-supported cooperative learning environments for differences in students' learning performance and group member satisfaction.”

Annotation: There are benefits of using information technology in the form of “Computer-Supported Cooperative Learning (CSCL)” to enhance the learning performance of students. In order to
keep up with the business world today, students have to be very flexible, versatile and have a wide range of subject knowledge. “In order to integrate and apply knowledge, it is necessary for them to retain knowledge from different disciplines.” This issue could be assuaged if students are “exposed to an environment where they can learn from themselves” and in cooperation with each other. Many different industries require workers to be able to collaborate as a team to make decision, work on projects or troubleshoot. Cooperative learning in the classroom as well as in the work force is an “instructional method that creates an environment to challenge students and develop better decision-making skills.” This learning style is in opposition of the traditional teacher leading student model, or face to face cooperative learning (FTFCL) and research has shown many positive outcomes in various studies that, “may include improvements in academic achievement, the generation of more ideas and solutions, higher self-esteem, more positive attitudes toward school, as well as promoting the ability to work cooperatively.” It does reduce time constraints like having a live class at a certain time, in a certain place and allows for students to work at their own pace throughout the semester. The goal was to study three variables in the students; performance, perceived performance, and satisfaction and the results were a little surprising. There was not a significant, consistent difference in performance or in satisfaction; however, the FTF group did have a higher level of perceived performance than there CSC counterparts. Overall, the subject does warrant some further research to see if, over time and with the advent of new technology, there is a more substantial difference in distance learning versus face to face interactions.

**Authority:** Brian D. Fitzpatrick is a professor of finance for the Heizberg School of Management at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri. He earned his Ph.D. in Finance with a concentration in Investments from Saint Louis University. Dr. Fitzpatrick spent ten years in the Investment field including positions with two major Wall Street wire houses, as well as serving as senior vice president for both Financial Corporation of America and Commerce Bancshares. Brian has won the Rockhurst University’s Teaching Excellence Award, and he has published in nine different fields.

Shahid I. Ali is an Associate Professor of Operations Management for the Helzberg School of Management at Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri. He received his Ph.D. in operations management from Texas Tech University. Dr. Ali’s primary research interests are in the areas of petroleum pipeline operations, information systems, and collaborative technology. He is a member of various professional societies and has published in Southern Business and Economic Journal, International Journal of Operations and Quantitative Management, Journal of International Technology
Entry 8:


**Abstract:** “Increasing use of technology as a means of accessing information and the recent shift towards cooperative learning and group study have brought changes in the way students use academic libraries and library resources. Academic libraries have experimented with new ways to combine [and Information Management, Journal of Diversity Management and proceedings of Decision Sciences Institute.](#)

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** I did search for scholarly, peer reviewed articles, but to double check I looked on the publication, *International Journal of Management and Information Systems*, website at [http://journals.cluteonline.com](http://journals.cluteonline.com), and in their peer-review process section they mention that for each article they use double-blind, peer review process. I also cross checked the publication in Ulrich’s and it did come back a ‘refereed’ journal.

**Search Strategy:** This was at the beginning of my searching when I had moved from basic keyword searches and was playing around with advanced keyword searches. I wanted to include articles that involved cooperative learning in a few different forms and not limit myself to ‘information commons.’ With the keyword search, I had to search each phrase separately so I wanted to see if I could combine them and get better results. This article takes a more business oriented approach, but I like that it takes the information approach and applies it to a real life possibility for students to use the learning habits they acquired using a cooperative learning environment like an information commons at a library.

**Database(s):** ABI/INFORM Complete

**Method of Searching:** Advanced keyword

**Search string:** (information commons) AND cooperative AND learning
information resources, technology, and research assistance. Some have reconfigured their physical space and redesigned services to meet the new challenges by adopting the idea of the information commons or a central location that provides computers, information resources in various formats, and staff assistance. Although they may share similar goals and some common features, academic institutions have taken a variety of approaches in designing, funding, and staffing their information commons. This article is an overview of several information commons in the United States and Canada and explores some of their missions, features, and strengths and weaknesses.”

**Annotation:** Libraries have needed to keep in touch with recent technologies and maintain a stronghold on those technologies to be able to offer services within the library that will appeal to students and faculty of today. According to the author, the “use of technology as a means of accessing information and the recent shift towards cooperative learning and group study have brought changes in the way students use academic libraries and library resources.” There have been many different approaches from various libraries to try to accommodate this new way of learning and trying to incorporate group learning and online resources into everyday library services. Thankfully, academic libraries are not “doomed by technology” as there is still a need of a physical presence to offer many reference services, study areas and a quiet place for students and faculty. There has been a lot of emphasis on cooperative group learning and many libraries have switched gears and made spaces for group work and collaboration. There are a lot of new demands on academic libraries that are leading to new skills needed by the librarians and staff members, longer hours for added convenience and in some places 24 hour access to online resources. Which leads into many libraries making changes to their whole library setting to incorporate a new ‘learning commons’ that range from a simple, “redesigned section of an existing library” or more complex changes like, “a new addition, or a merged library/technology organization in a new building.” It’s really a great integration of self-service use of technology and the assistance of library staff to merge into one super-learning center. Of course, this process still has its challenges, there needs to be adequate funding, use by students and faculty as well as excellent staffing and rigorous training. It is an evolving concept and librarians and staff alike will have to remain flexible as their job descriptions change with advancing technology.

**Authority:** “Laurie A. MacWhinnie is Head of Reference Services, Mantor Library, University of Maine at Farmington.”
**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** I selected that I wanted my results to only include scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and I also searched for the publication, *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, on Ulrich’s and it came back as a refereed publication of the Johns Hopkins Press. Also, on the Johns Hopkins website, it mentions this publication is peer reviewed before articles are published.

**Search Strategy:** I wanted to include academic libraries in my search because they seem to be the ones that are moving the fastest technology wise, so I did an advanced search for information commons AND academic or libraries. As with all my searches, I also made sure I selected that my results come back full text, peer reviewed and scholarly. This article is a little old but I thought it still had some interesting information on the evolution of information commons.

**Search String:** (information commons) AND (academic OR libraries)

**Method of Searching:** Advanced Keyword

**Database(s):** ProQuest Library Science and ProQuest Research Library (ProQuest)

**Entry 9:**

**Abstract:** “Purpose – Using the HKUST Learning Commons as a case study, this paper seeks to reveal a number of insights on how to effectively engage different user groups within the university.

Design/methodology/approach – The case study focuses on the user-group engagement process, highlighting the promotion plan and factors that enhance the user-group engagement. Findings – Two positive outcomes of the engagement were identified: the diversity of learning activities in the Learning Commons, and the elevated image of the library and librarians. Practical implications – The experience at HKUST reported in this paper highlights the need for libraries moving to the new "commons" service model to actively promote the facilities by engaging different user groups. The process itself is a necessary component to the success of the new service and facilities.

Originality/value – The case study uses the user engagement framework to steer the promotion effort.
The outcomes of the process have long-term implications for the image and identity of libraries, and subsequently enhance the library's potential in fund raising and resource allocation.”

**Annotation:** Educators in Hong Kong have launched a new campaign to get more students to use academic libraries in the course of their studies. Most libraries are trying to “re-purpose” their existing space however, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) Library has taken it a few steps further and actually built an addition to include a separate Learning Commons study space. The purpose of this paper was to study the students using the new Commons and to see what could be done to reach out to different demographics and engage students to try to, “transform the Library into a more effective user platform.” They found that separating the Commons from the rest of the library and making it a 24 hour, user-friendly, easily accessible establishment, made it one of the favored study spots on campus. Since the boom of the digital age libraries have had to combat the less frequent patronage, out of date technology and circulation items and try their best to accommodate the change in the way people are learning and this case study was trying to figure out if a place like the Learning Commons might be helpful in attaining these goals. At this stage of user ability, patrons need a place to feel comfortable, to have access to the information they seek through the medium they seek along with a flexible work space that allows for collaboration and some socializing.

**Authority:** The authors are both librarians at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology that have a hand in collection development, library instruction and coordinating the library's information commons. Diana L.H. Chan is the Associate Librarian and Gabrielle K.W. Wong is the Learning Commons Manager, both authors have published papers on library instruction, management, information literacy and information commons.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** The journal, *New Library World*, is a refereed publication according to Ulrich's and the publication brochure that is listed on their website states that all the articles they publish are peer reviewed first.

**Search Strategy:** Since it was my first search in LLIS, I started with an advanced keyword search because information and creative commons seem to be interchangeable phrases in this discipline and I also wanted it to pertain to libraries specifically. I browsed through the results, but ended up liking the first result as it was a case study on implementing a learning commons (yet another phrase) and
studying the results written by authors that work in the field and use information commons in their library.

**Database:** Library Literature & Information Science Full Text

**Method of Searching:** Advanced Keyword

**Search String:** Information commons or creative commons and libraries.

**Entry 10:**

**Abstract:** “Purpose - Libraries are exploring the meaning of the "information commons" and have responded to the technological needs of the diversity of digital access trends. The purpose of this conceptual article is to explore the possibilities of the next step of developing dynamic "learning commons" using examples of projects and ideas presented by librarians in the field.

Design/methodology/approach - The "learning commons" model has the potential to be a laboratory for students, librarians and faculty. It is a collaboration space and requires partnerships and cooperation across disciplines. Ideas about user behavior and types of projects to be explored are included. Findings - Funding for learning commons is linked to measured outcomes. The role of the librarian changes to include advocacy and project planning. Practical implications - This paper demonstrates that the change in library service via the learning commons concept requires planning, interdisciplinary collaboration and a certain amount of risk taking. Originality/value - This paper is useful for librarians who are designing and/or implementing "learning commons" spaces and concepts into their libraries and library services.”

**Annotation:** The change in technology over the past few years has catapulted libraries and their staff into a new wave of library services. “The trend in academic libraries to combine digital library services along with traditional library services is evolving…” and it’s due partly to the advances in technology but mostly due “changes in perception about information use and knowledge creation.” The learning commons concept is beyond just making technology available to students or offering library services
online, it has become an entity of cooperative learning and creating the library as a community center. Everybody has a different and unique learning style, it’s important in any educational institute to be mindful of this and make sure there is room for creativity and there are enough resources for a vast range of personalities. Many people use information commons and learning commons interchangeably, but they are actually quite different. Libraries all over already have an information commons in the form of an online presence where students and faculty have remote access to library information and services. A learning commons actually brings the information commons to life making it an epicenter of student learning, group work and technology. The learning commons, or any information commons, are subject to change as technology advances, which means the commons have to be designed in a way that maintains flexibility and allows for easy upgrades. Staff must also actively engage in the learning processes in order to maintain the continuing success of the learning commons.

Authority: Regina Lee Roberts is the Assistant Curator of the African Collection at Stanford University Libraries and Academic Information Resources (SULAIR). She has her MLIS from San José State University in San José, California. She has also worked in libraries at the University of California Santa Cruz and Harvard University in a number of different positions.

Scholarly/Refereed Status: According to Ulrich’s the publication, Library Review, is considered a refereed publication.

Search Strategy: I wanted to make sure I was including the learning commons aspect, some researchers think all the terms (information, learning and creative commons) are interchangeable and others think they are completely different. I also wanted to make sure I had some information on academic libraries because I wanted some variety and I think this is where the trend is growing fastest. So I did an advanced keyword search so I could get more refined results than basic.

Database(s): ProQuest Illustrata: Technology Collection, ProQuest Library Science, ProQuest Research Library (all from ProQuest)

Method of Searching: Advanced Keyword

Search String: (learning commons) AND academic AND libraries
Entry 11:

Abstract: “The purpose of this paper is to examine the integration of digital library (DL) technologies with ontology-based knowledge representation in providing semantic rich information access (IA) in e-learning. DL technologies have powerful and flexible content management and access functionalities, whereas ontology helps teachers and students to link content materials to their learning objectives. This paper demonstrates that the integration provides a powerful and meaningful e-learning environment. DiLight is designed as an interactive e-learning system that integrates DL and ontology technologies. By conducting comparative experiments involving DiLight in students' actual learning process, the authors examined the advantages and limitations of DiLight in e-learning. Compared to a widely used e-learning environment, DiLight can provide significantly better support for students' complex IA tasks because DiLight is more useful for relationship discovery and problem solving. DiLight is also effective even when students were either less familiar with tasks or felt that they were more difficult. There is no single best access method for all learning situations. Therefore, multiple IA methods should be built into e-learning systems. Although most of time the search was the first choice of the students, ontology-based methods were useful in supporting them to complete their tasks too. This is a comparative empirical study using an interactive e-learning system called DiLight to explore the usage of integrated DL and ontology in e-learning. The experiment results demonstrate the value of the multiple IA methods provided by DL, and the usefulness of integrating DL with ontology.”

Annotation: E-learning is a fast growing, alternative learning platform that allows students who previously may have been unable to take classes to do so via the computer. There are three main challenges E-learning faces; e-learning systems usually contain mixed-media materials which can be complex, ever changing and hard for some students to grasp, there is a lack of face-to-face contact, the teacher-student interaction as well as interaction with the students among themselves, and finally, students in e-learning programs can choose their own learning and information access strategies which requires the systems to accommodate the varying needs of each student. A digital library (DL), “refers to a collection of digital objects (such as digital text, images, and videos) and a set of associated
techniques and services that help to collect, organise, retrieve, and preserve those digital objects for a community of users.” The DiLight system was designed to try to alleviate some of the challenges that come along with e-learning. It is an open source program that focuses on flexibility of managing content, a good knowledge base, and strong information access (IA) capabilities within e-learning systems. To test the DiLight system, a course for library and information science (LIS) students at the University of Pittsburgh was chosen to test it, it made sense to use this system to teach budding information specialists. Overall the findings were positive, students performed better using the DiLight program over the program, CourseWeb, which is a local Blackboard program, and it was a high functioning, user-friendly system that included all of the multi-media course materials that the students would need for the class including different ways to access the information. There are still some challenges to the DiLight system but, with the favorable impact these types of programs are having on students, it may be a useful direction to take e-learning.

**Authority:** Daqing He is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate Program of library and information science at the University of Pittsburgh. His main research interests focus on information retrieval, digital libraries, and intelligent information systems. Yefei Peng is a PhD student in the School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, and a scientist at Yahoo! Labs. His main research interests include neural networks, information retrieval, data mining and machine learning. Ming Mao is a Senior Research Scientist at SAP Labs. Her main research interests include ontology mapping, semantic search and text analysis in business environments. Dan Wu is an Assistant Professor at the School of Information Management, Wuhan University. Her main research interests focus on information retrieval, information organization, multilingual information processing, metadata, and digital libraries.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** According to Ulrich's and the publication's website, *Online Information Review* is a peer-reviewed, refereed publication.

**Search Strategy:** I did a command line search to see if I could include all of the different phrasings on my subject and the different tenses of some of the words all in one search as opposed to my many separate keyword searches. I narrowed down the publication years to the last three years; I also narrowed my search down to full text, peer-reviewed, scholarly articles.

**Database:** ABI/INFORM Complete (ProQuest)
Method of Searching: Command Line

Search String: SU(Information or learning common* and librar*)

Entry 12:

Abstract: “The purpose of this paper is to investigate which skills library managers think their staff should possess as their organisational culture alters to meet the demands of a changing internal and external TAFE environment and user needs. A survey is used to ascertain what library managers believe needs to be included as a recognisable competency for their staff to perform their work. The survey contains 20 broad categories of skills listed under five main areas. A total of 18 TAFF Libraries are used in the survey. Data are entered into Excel. Tabulation consolidates the list of 200 skills and/or competencies. Comments are also collected at part of the investigation. The perception that having as many competencies as possible is highly indicative of a well-rounded, service focused and broadly informed library staff member. Of the library managers, 64 per cent strongly agreed that finding and using print and online resources was an important skill to possess; 93 per cent agree that library staff should maintain a healthy work-life balance; and 79 per cent agreed that staff should understand the performance standards relating to their position. The paper illustrates that the team is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Annotation: Since the hugely popular wave of information commons and learning commons has made its way across many libraries, librarians and staff have needed to adjust their job descriptions accordingly. This new “learning commons model with its emphasis on social and facilitated learning... comes the need for a different type of library staff development.” Library managers do want their staff to have a certain set of skills to be able to adequately work in a learning commons environment. Over the last five years libraries have seen tremendous changes and the staff has had to accommodate these changes according to the changing needs of the patrons. A voluntary, anonymous survey was developed to find out which skills library managers thought were essential for their learning commons
staff, and over 200 skills were mentioned! Those 200 were broken down and placed under 20 categories and “respondents were asked to rank each response.” The 20 categories were listed under five main areas; traditional library skills, workplace skills, personal/interpersonal skills, technology skills, and leadership/management/supervisory skills. The top four essential skills for all staff that each manager agreed 100% on were traditional library skills, workplace skills, personal and interpersonal skills and technology skills. Traditional library skills are obviously a must for any library job, likewise workplace skills are necessary for any job at all; it’s the last two that are imperative to the learning commons environment specifically. There has always been a need for librarians to have at least some good personal and interpersonal skills, but with this new way of collaborative learning where the staff is actively participating in the learning process, it becomes even more important. Technology skills are in similar demand; librarians did not always need to be as tech savvy as they need to be now.

**Authority:** Paul Kloppenborg is the manager of the Learning Resource Centre of William Angliss Institute. In the past, he has worked both as library operations manager of the Thai Nguyen LRC in Vietnam as well as staff development librarian at RMIT University Library. He is currently an adjunct lecturer for the Department of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University. Damian Lodge is a lecturer at Charles Sturt University. In the past he has been Director of the Centre for Information Studies and the manager of Client & Information Services at Wagga Campus Library of Charles Sturt University. Damian is the co-director of Librarians Bookstore and a former director of ALIA. He regularly publishes papers locally and internationally on research related to library management and technology.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** According to Ulrich’s, this publication, *Library Management*, is considered a refereed publication. Upon further research on their website at emeraldinsight.com, they do require their articles to be peer reviewed prior to publication.

**Search Strategy:** I had seen Paul Kloppenborg cited in another article that I read in the realm of how library staff is adapting to the changing roles of librarians due to the introduction of the information commons, but not about the commons itself. I decided to do a command line author search to find works by him and I also narrowed down the publication date, I wanted some more recent works than some of my search terms have been coming up with, especially with the rapid changes in technology.
over the last decade, so I put in 2009-2013 as well. I also wanted to experiment with some command line searching to see if it could give me more defined results than keyword searching.

**Database(s):** ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest Illustrata: Technology Collection, ProQuest Library Science (all from ProQuest).

**Method of Searching:** Command line

**Search String:** AU(Kloppenborg)PY(2009-2013)

**Entry 13:**

**Abstract:** “The dropout rates are too high, but the new hire is running into roadblocks at every turn in her attempts to get needy students released from class. * The guidance counselor is compiling yet another memo to the Literacy Committee requesting time on the agenda to discuss recent demographic statistics, but the committee has a packed agenda of mandates from administration. *The arts coordinator sits outside the vice principal's door in panic because she needs an administrator's signature on her grant proposal, and it is due in one hour. Perhaps something along these lines: * Environment—a part of their classroom, an extension of both work and learning activities. * Access—the 24/7 source of materials, information, and advice they trust; a place to send individuals or small groups or schedule the entire class there as needed. * Assistance—a place where they obtain help from both adults and students who are sharing their expertise. * Personal Contribution—a place to voice opinions and give advice to assist in decisions about construction of the learning commons; a place to make contributions and feel a sense of ownership. * Experimentation—a place to learn, test, and share new strategies, test technology or software, and develop special projects; the center of professional development. * Technology—the recognition that the learning commons is the source of their connection to the digital world that extends into their classrooms. * Activities and Exhibitions—a place for a variety of activities
they have seen happening and knowledge that their students’ work and productions are a part of the digital museum of the school. *a place where they do not feel they are alone in the challenge of elevating every learner toward excellence; a place to be part of a teaching and learning team that merges classroom teachers and specialists in a mutual quest.”

**Annotation:** Learning has changed drastically with the advent of new technology that is advancing at a rate too rapid for many schools and libraries to fully keep up. We know students learn differently now and we know that technology can be an “effective and efficient” tool to make work “easier, more accurate and more fun.” Many schools with understaffing and under budgeting have yet to bridge this gap and take into account the needs of 21st century learners. Instead of having the library as a “warehouse of information and technologies” having a “client-centered,” collaborative work environment that can enhance student learning with group work and technology. This opens many doors for students because they can come to the center to learn interactively with library staff and online resources to guide them and they can access a virtual learning center 24 hours a day all year round. Learning and information literacy has been an ongoing problem for many educational institutes and the learning commons is a great way to get students and educators together and appeal to the minds of the learners and give them tools for continuous learning throughout their lives. Students want a comfortable environment where they can relax and learn with convenient resource access like many libraries are offering 24/7, friendly staff for assistance, sound technology and a variety of activities they can participate in. Teachers want much the same but they also want to hear their voices heard and make a personal contribution to the lives of the learners and teach as a team with the students as well as other educators. “The learning commons is long overdue” and it doesn’t have to be a new building or a new wing, it can be a reinvention of the current space, get the learners as well as the teachers involved and build a new community for your library.

**Authority:** “Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan have worked as classroom teachers, teacher-librarians, educational consultants, staff development leaders, and instructors for Educational Librarianship courses for York University and University of Toronto. In their quest to provide teachers with strategies to make learning opportunities more meaningful, more reflective, and more successful, they have led staff development sessions for teachers in both Canada and the United States. They continue to contribute to the field of information literacy and school librarianship by coauthoring a number of
books and articles for professional journals. Their work has been recognized both nationally and internationally and translated into French, German, Italian, and Chinese.”

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** According to Ulrich’s this publication, *Teacher Librarian*, is a refereed publication and it is mentioned on their website, under “author guidelines,” that each article submission is reviewed by, “at least two members of our advisory board, all of whom are either scholars or recognized professionals.”

**Search Strategy:** Carol Koechlin was a coauthor of another article I found and liked, and as a teacher and a librarian, I wanted to see if she had authored anything else on the subject of information commons. I did a command line search for her and gave a wide range of dates; I found that narrowing down by date too much can lead to omitting some good articles. I found a number of articles she had authored or coauthored but I liked that his one gave information on actually building a learning commons.

**Database(s):** CBCA Complete, ProQuest Library Science, ProQuest Research Library (all from ProQuest)

**Method of Searching:** Command line

**Search String:** AU(Koechlin)PY(2005-2013)

**Entry 14:**

**Abstract:** “Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the benefits of information and learning commons to students and faculty. Design/methodology/approach – Based on the experiences of its author, this paper considers two cases in which Georgia Tech faculty worked with the Georgia Tech Library’s East and West Commons to expand their teaching practices and their students’ learning and research opportunities. It then discusses the benefits of these activities to students and faculty.
Findings – This paper argues that, although information and learning commons are designed primarily to benefit college and university students, these spaces can, with little modification, benefit faculty as well.

Originality/value – The idea that information and learning commons benefit students is nothing new. They are explicitly designed for that purpose. But, the idea that information and learning commons might also support college and university faculty teaching and research interests is one that has received little attention in the library literature to date. This paper explores this idea.

Keywords – Academic libraries, Library buildings, Information centres, United States of America

Paper type – Viewpoint”

Annotation: The internet is an integral part of learning today; students and faculty use it almost exclusively. Circulation for research is not what it used to be with all the information available at our fingertips via the internet, which has changed the roles of the librarian. Now with the wide use of networking sites and 24/7 connectivity with smart phones and other devices, today’s youth are accustomed to learning and studying in a more social atmosphere. While making resources available for individual use is still important, the commons is a way to compound that thought by making accommodations for all learning styles including collaborative efforts. Many colleges and university faculty still criticize this method saying “that they make the library into more of a social playground than a place for genuine academic work” but research is showing that as long as many types of learners are included in the plans, individual, quiet studiers to the social, group workers, there is very little change of a playground forming. Instead many doors are being opened up to encourage students to use tools and be themselves for more effective learning. Two professors at Georgia Tech made use of the learning commons featured on the campus throughout their semester. The assignments for both courses were largely collaborative and allowed the students to work creatively to get the most out of their classes. The professors were able to, “expand their teaching beyond their classrooms” by using the commons to interact with their students, work together with other faculty to keep abreast of the campus goings-on, and much of their students work was captured digitally and archived for future classes.

Authority: Jon Bodnar is a Reference and Subject Librarian at the Georgia Tech Library and Information Center at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia.
Scholarly/Refereed Status: I checked the peer-reviewed box at the beginning of my search and this particular article said “REFEREED ARTICLE” at the top of the page in big, bold letters. Just to be safe, I plugged the publication, *New Library World*, into Ulrich’s and it did come back as a refereed publication.

Search Strategy: I was playing around with different command line searches to see if I could get articles that used either information or learning commons, as they seem to be interchangeable. I felt like I was only getting some of the pertinent results by just searching for one term. Again, I narrowed down the year so I could get some recent results as well. As always, I noted that I wanted full text, scholarly, peer-reviewed articles. I have learned the hard way that many great sounding articles are not available in full-text, so I want that parameter set before I start my search.

Database(s): ABI/INFORM Complete, ProQuest Illustrata: Technology Collection, ProQuest Library Science, ProQuest Research Library (all from ProQuest).

Method of Searching: Command line

Search String: SU(information or learning and commons) PD(2009-2013)

Entry 15:
(http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0268401297000042)

Abstract: “Virtual communities are groups of people who communicate with each other via electronic media and are a relatively new phenomenon. Despite the short time that virtual communities have been in existence, they have been attracting much attention by researchers. The purpose of this paper is to review the theoretical and empirical work that has been conducted in relation to virtual communities in society, using it as a basis for an integrative three phase Virtual Communities in Society model. Following a short introduction which deals with some issues of categorization and definition, the paper
proceeds to discuss the three building blocks of the proposed model, including: (1) variables that affect individuals' decision to join virtual communities; (2) variables that explain how members of virtual communities affect their immediate environment; and (3) variables that describe how virtual communities are transforming society. The paper is concluded with suggestions for possible future extensions and empirical testing of the model. (C) 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd.”

**Annotation:** Virtual communities are a fairly new concept that has taken the web by storm and have attracted researcher from all different disciplines to study this phenomenon. Users join online communities for many reasons including networking, political or environmental causes, cultural issues and even for recreation. There are three variables that researchers are exploring; “variables that affect individuals' decision to join virtual communities, variables that explain how members of virtual communities affect their immediate environment and variables that describe how virtual communities are transforming society.” There have been many theories on why people join virtual communities, the earlier studies were actually based on why people didn’t join these communities, individual factors like technophobia, conservatism, metathesiophobia, and lack of involvement in general. These fears apply especially in work environments where a new technology, like email, could change the communication structure for everyone. The effect on the virtual community’s environment has only been researched recently showing that there are certain variable that do affect the virtual environment. Things like, linguistics, performance, and political variables. Lastly, there are variables that describe how virtual communities are actually transforming society, the most prominent being the breaking down of international barriers. These communities can be utilized by governments or other political parties that have global policies like weapon control, overpopulation, climate changes etc. These virtual communities are also breaking down personal barriers. There has been a “boundaries collapse” in which members can feel free to discuss themselves in great personal detail thus creating a “virtual identity” that can give them a break from reality with total anonymity and contact anyone they choose electronically. There is still much research that can be done especially with the widespread use of Facebook and other networking sites and even the wide spread of online gaming communities that seem to have some adverse effects on that of the persons involved and the communities they are involved in.

**Authority:** Celia Romm has a Ph.D. and works the Department of Management and Business at the University of Wollongong in Australia. Nava Pliskin, also a Ph.D. is works in the Department of
Industrial Engineering and Management at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. Rodney Clarke works with at the Department of Management and Business Systems at the University of Wollogong in Israel.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** I had another, earlier work from this publication, *International Journal of Management and Information Systems*, so I had already checked the website at [http://journals.cluteonline.com](http://journals.cluteonline.com), and in their peer-review process section they mention that for each article they use double-blind, peer review process. I also had already cross checked the publication in Ulrich’s and it did come back a ‘refereed’ journal.

**Search Strategy:** I had seen an article cited by Roger Clarke called *Information Wants to be free* and wanted to see if I could find either this particular article or other works by him. So I first did a cited reference search and came up empty, but then tried and author search. I was able to narrow it down by subject, first 'technology' then 'information science library science.' And while I didn’t find the exact article I wanted, I did find another work by him that sounded interesting.

**Database(s):** Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** Author search

**Search String:** AU=(Clarke R*) AND (SU=(INFORMATION SCIENCE LIBRARY SCIENCE) OR WC=(Multidisciplinary Sciences))

I had heard the phrases “information commons,” “learning commons” and “creative commons,” but I never realized there was going to be so much debate and so many different opinions on the matter. There are already a lot of schools who have moved into this concept and away from a lot of the traditional library methods from the past. People are changing the way they conduct business, the way they communicate and most importantly, the way they learn. In order to keep giving patrons what they want, libraries need to get on board with some type of information commons or else it just doesn’t appeal to the masses. There are some people who need a quiet, still place to study and prefer to work individually, but researchers are finding the vast majority like to learn and work socially, in groups
with multi-media. The library should still remain largely quite to respect those who need that type of environment, but a learning commons could combine all these aspects into one place that can accommodate all types of users. There could be quiet areas, group areas, technology areas; some even include sound recording or art studios! It is going to depend on the demographic of the institution which isn’t different than what many libraries have to do today. These learning commons allow builders and users to work as a team to figure out what would benefit the community most, it changes the way we look at libraries.

These changes also mean changing job roles for staff and faculty. It is a collaboration environment with up to date technology and can be an area of social contact. This new staff must be people-oriented and tech savvy in ways they might not have experienced before. Faculty are finding ways to engage their students beyond the scope of regular classroom learning, they have had to allow digital sources into projects and papers and everyone has had to keep a close eye on copyright laws. So in addition to the regular skills, this new environment is requiring whole new breed of librarians that are outgoing, tech savvy and flexible as well as having the traditional library and work skills. Students and users are also involved in building these commons because, after all, they will be the everyday users. It’s important to get everyone’s input to make sure the new space is conducive to the community it serves.

The other side of the coin cautions us that while these new spaces are innovative and fun, we still need to be mindful of the possible side effects of making vast amounts of digital information available to the public. There are still copyright laws in place and the punishments can be grave if not followed properly. This is tough because there are still such murky areas in the realm of digital copies of works and how to classify them. There may be unintentional consequences to our actions of trying to digitize everything and make it public. It is the duty of the librarians and the educators to bear this in mind and keep a close watch on their patrons and students. All these new developments are exciting and ground breaking and they really are a must for today’s learners, but great care needs to be given to implementation and execution.