

**TITLE:**

The knowledge community

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**ABSTRACT**

They were once storing houses for books, scraps, rolls, parchments and so on. Disconnected, known by word of mouth, students and researchers would travel far to reach them and to read a particular document, to check a unique reference. They would take notes. They would then return, bringing home the new knowledge.

There is but one library. The reader reaches out for the keyboard or the touchscreen. With a couple of finger strokes the reader is inside the library. The reader shuffles keywords, publications, authors' names. References are sorted by the hundreds – by the millions, if the reader is sloppy in the retrieving process. Around the globe, scattered by the innumerable institutions that make up the library, documentalists busy themselves in the seemingly eternal task of adding more titles to the bottomless data banks.

There is a coffee table at the institution coffee shop. The main researcher, the assistant and a couple of visiting practitioners listen to the librarian while sipping their drinks. They are discussing their latest results and how to cross-reference them with the available published data. The librarian has been working with this and other teams for quite some time now. The librarian has two separate, though interconnected, professional lives: with fellow librarians; and with working colleagues. The boundaries between these two lives are fuzzy.

The reader's phonepad chimes in its cradle/pocket. The librarian's face happily informs from across the planet: "The references are in your mailbox. I knew we would get them!" The reader smiles.