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2004

Vision of the Communal Roles of Libraries

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Recommended Citation

Paul D. Callister, *Vision of the Communal Roles of Libraries*, (2004).

Available at: https://irlaw.umkc.edu/faculty_works/901

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Vision of the Communal Roles of Libraries

The library is a place where knowledge and information freely dwell to define, empower, preserve, challenge, connect, entertain and transform individuals, cultures and communities. The dwelling place, whether physical or virtual, is the product of collective reflection, aspiration, commitment, expertise and organization. It is both a byproduct of civil communities and a catalyst for cultural progress, inspiration, expression and exchange. Its absence in this new century would not only deprive many individuals of important resources, but also, more significantly, such loss would deny humanity an essential portion of its shared identity and entitled liberties. The library can never be fully replaced by information technologies. For the essence of its communal role is not the technological mastery over knowledge and information, but rather the provision of sanctuary for human thought and expression in any medium.

Endorsed the 31st day March, 2005 by Faculty, Fellows and Observers of the Salzburg Seminar, *Libraries in the 21st Century*, hosted Oct. 23-30, 2004, Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg, Austria:

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