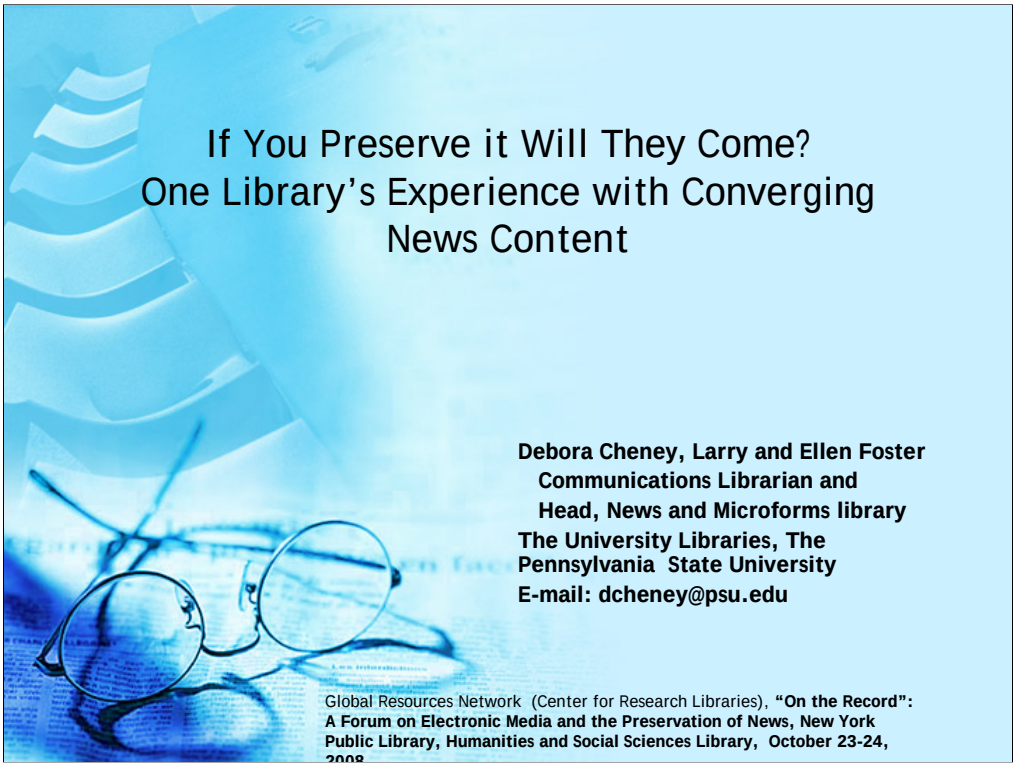

If You Preserve it Will They Come? One Library's Experience with Converging News Content

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The University Libraries, The Pennsylvania State University
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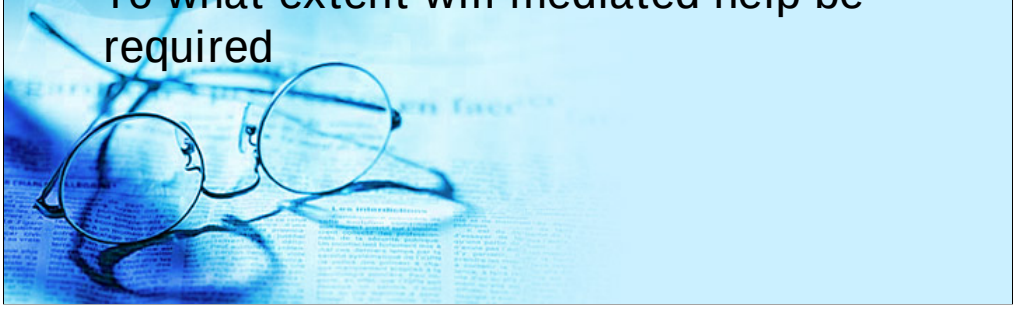
Global Resources Network (Center for Research Libraries), **"On the Record": A Forum on Electronic Media and the Preservation of News, New York Public Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library, October 23-24, 2008**

What's happening in Academic Libraries

- How successfully are Libraries providing access to news content
- Will researchers be able to rely on libraries for news content in the future
- To what extent will mediated help be required



Library news collections

Have converged from physical to digital format "collections"—reflects trend within the news industry—Libraries have followed each of these changes and have traditionally had a role in the news "food chain"--our *role is changing (and may be disappearing) unless we begin to think about news content differently.*

Trend 1: Trend #: Library Investment in news content is now unsustainable as currently

Libraries provided Browsing, Archival and Digitial formats

Transition from physical to digital formats [convergence from physical to digital formats]

Have begun to cut physical formats to retain digital formats

Trend 2: Heavily invested in aggregator databases [Just-in-case collections no longer sustainable]—licensing/cost issues

Trend 3: Decline in library visibility in news content [market share--libraries may no longer be associated with news content]

What changed along the way…

- Libraries
  - more user focused; more electronic distributed access; budgets
- Research/teaching needs
  - More overlap between casual/teaching/research user
  - More research uses news content—visibility
  - History timeline is shorter
- User expectations
  - Additional search functionality
  - Content, titles and year expectations
- News industry, news formats, and news content
  - Paper/web formats; visual formats; informal news sources

I. “Most” academic libraries believe they have little role to play in providing physical news formats and are relying almost entirely on electronic products

Newspaper collections are disappearing--libraries are no longer associated with newspapers.

Will that soon extend to news content, generally?

First to go…

- Cancel print newspapers because:
  - No one reads newspapers anymore
  - Its all on the Web anyway
  - All content in LexisNexis when I need it

- Cancel microfilm because:
  - No one uses microfilm
  - I can get it in LexisNexis when I need it
  - I can get it from someone else when I need it if its not in LexisNexis
    - CRL
    - Library of Congress
    - State Library
    - Other universities with more money who still have it

A Case Study

- La Nacion, Pagina 12, Clarin
- Need issues between: July 19-Oct. 29, 2007
- No online source with page image—study of visual images associated with women presidents

Who could supply:

- La Nacion—Center for Research Libraries (microfilm)
  - » Maybe/Visit: Library of Congress, Harvard or Princeton

II. Investment in news content is now unsustainable

- Many libraries are expressing concerns about how much budget is devoted to news sources
- Our ability to provide access to news content in the future is being compromised by what we are and are not "collecting" or preserving today
- With microfilm cancelled, what are our options?
- How complete is the content we've paid for—serious gaps in news content—"I didn't realize how extensive it was…"

Money, Money, Money

- **$** The technology turn-over problem
- **$** The duplicate title problem

example: *New York Times*

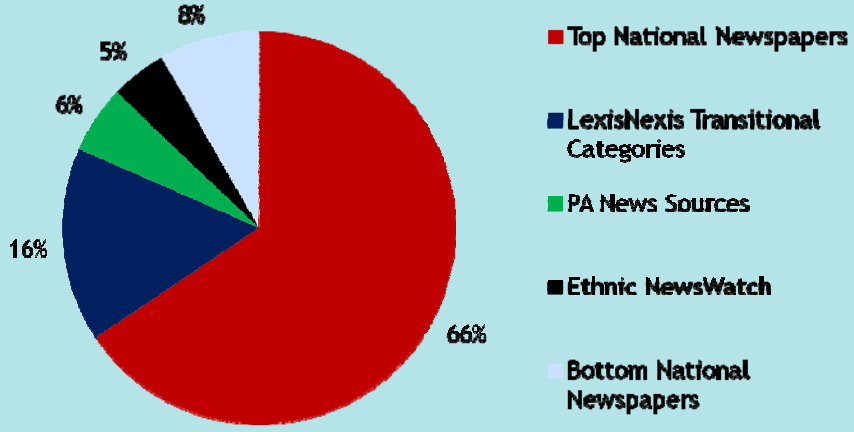
- **$** Purchasing more electronic formats
  - Aggregator databases
  - Historical digital archives
  - Page display vendors
- **$** Initiating local digital projects
  - PSU Campus newspapers
  - Pennsylvania Civil War Newspapers
  - Lancaster Farming

Collections: Just-in-Case Model

- Attempt to “collect” [provide access] comprehensively or at least broadly to meet a wide range of research needs and interests—a security blanket
- Collect “core/key sources” in multiple formats to ensure
  - » Completeness
  - » Search-ability

What do our users really use from all this content we're providing "just-in-case"?
LET'S LOOK AT SOME DATA SNAPSHOTS

Documents Viewed
Top 20 U.S. Newspapers [Aggregator databases]
["current" content]



Does not include:
Business, Law, Medical/Health, Undefined, Transcripts, Newswires, Magazines & Journals

The Top National Titles

- New York Times
- Washington Post
- Los Angeles Times
- Boston Globe
- Chicago Tribune
- USA Today
- Houston Chronicle
- San Francisco Chronicle
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- St. Louis Post Dispatch

The Bottom National Titles:

- Denver Post
- Christian Science Monitor
- Times-Picayune
- Wall Street Journal
- Seattle Times
- Miami Herald
- Orlando Sentinel
- Star Ledger, (Newark, NJ)
- Rocky Mountain News
- Courier Post (Cherry Hill, NJ)

What Content do we really have: A Case Study: An American soldier

Where could I find: "online commentary"

About: Lori Piestawa--first women soldier killed in Iraq (also Native American)

Example: *Arizona Republic* readers's blog—300 postings

Want to: analyze using critical race/feminist theory

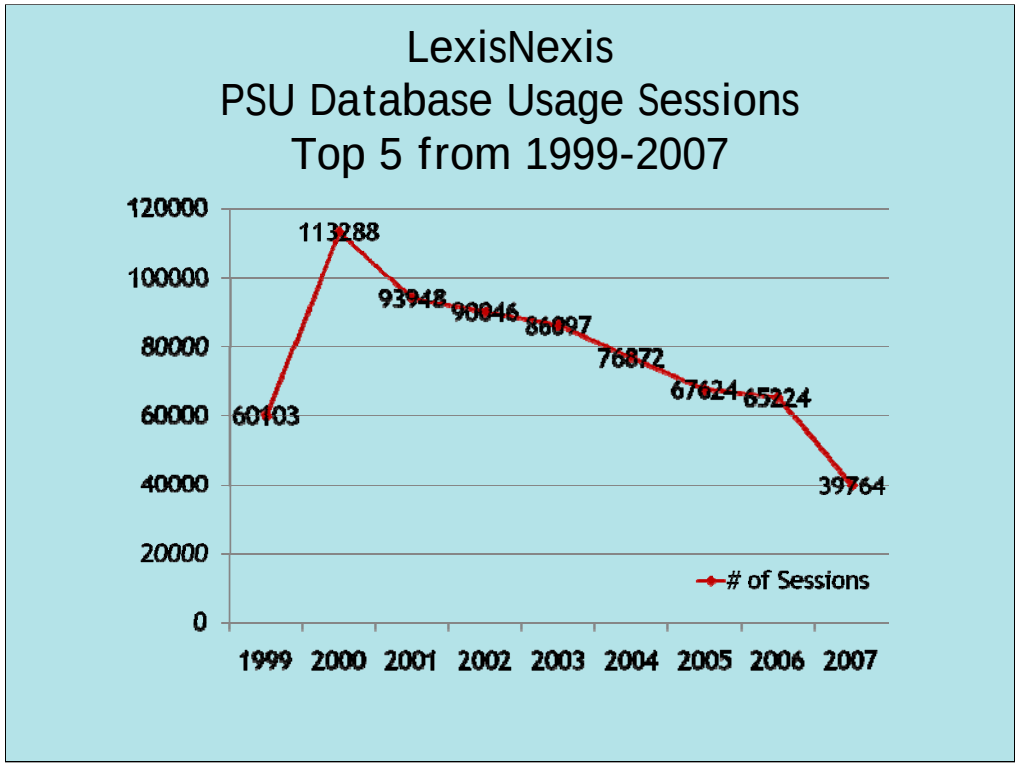
Use a Little, License a Lot, Missing More

- Heavily invested in products that limit the Library's ability to move one direction or the other.
- Missing a great deal of news content
  - » Content incomplete
  - » Doesn't preserve original form and function
  - » Doesn't reflect current news forms
  - » Focuses too much on paper/print
  - » No official source—editions, web vs. print content

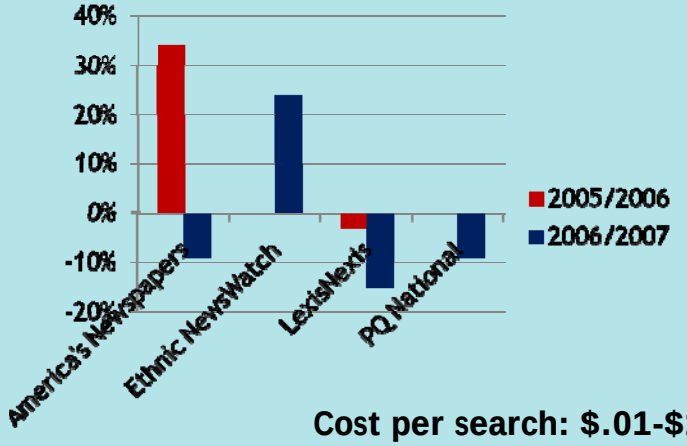
III. Libraries Role is Eroding and Less Visible

- How much are these aggregator databases and digital archives being used?

LexisNexis has been one Penn State's top 5 databases since 1999

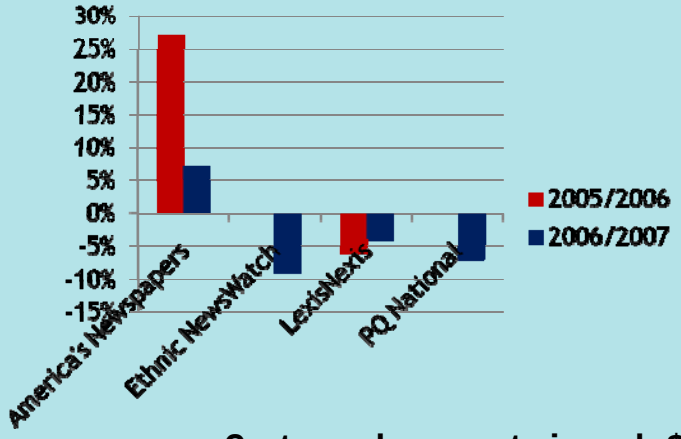

LexisNexis
PSU Database Usage Sessions
Top 5 from 1999-2007
120000
100000
80000
60000
40000
20000
0
60103
113288
93948
90046
86097
76872
67624
65224
39764
# of Sessions
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007

% Change in Documents Viewed



Cost per search: $.01-$1.23

% Change in Total Searches



Cost per document viewed: $.07-$.93

Does the Library come to mind when they need news content?

- How many users would come to the Library for content from the NYT website?
- How many faculty are sending students to library databases for NYT content or just sending them to the website?
- How is the Library related to the content on your Iphone/Blackberry?

Anyway: How much of that content could we supply?

Eroding role for libraries in news content

Previous data seem to force us to ask:

- Do today's news readers associate libraries with news content?

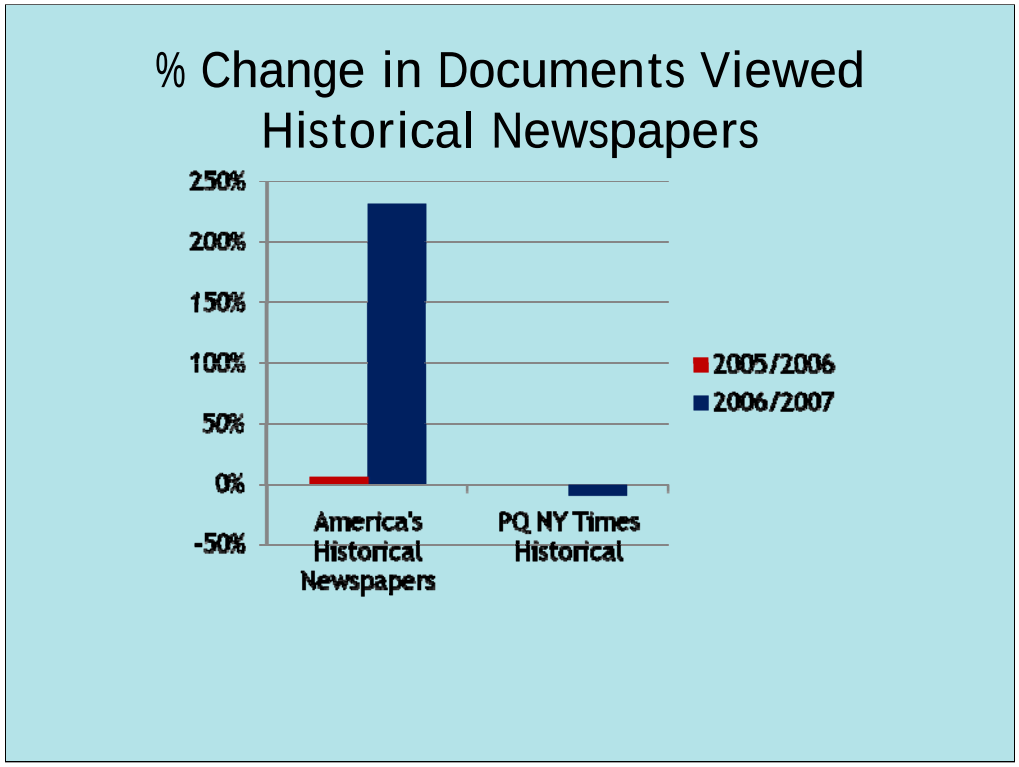
- Has our position as **one-stop-shop** for news content begun to erode away?
- Are we still a player in this market?
- We've given up newsprint are we also giving up news content?

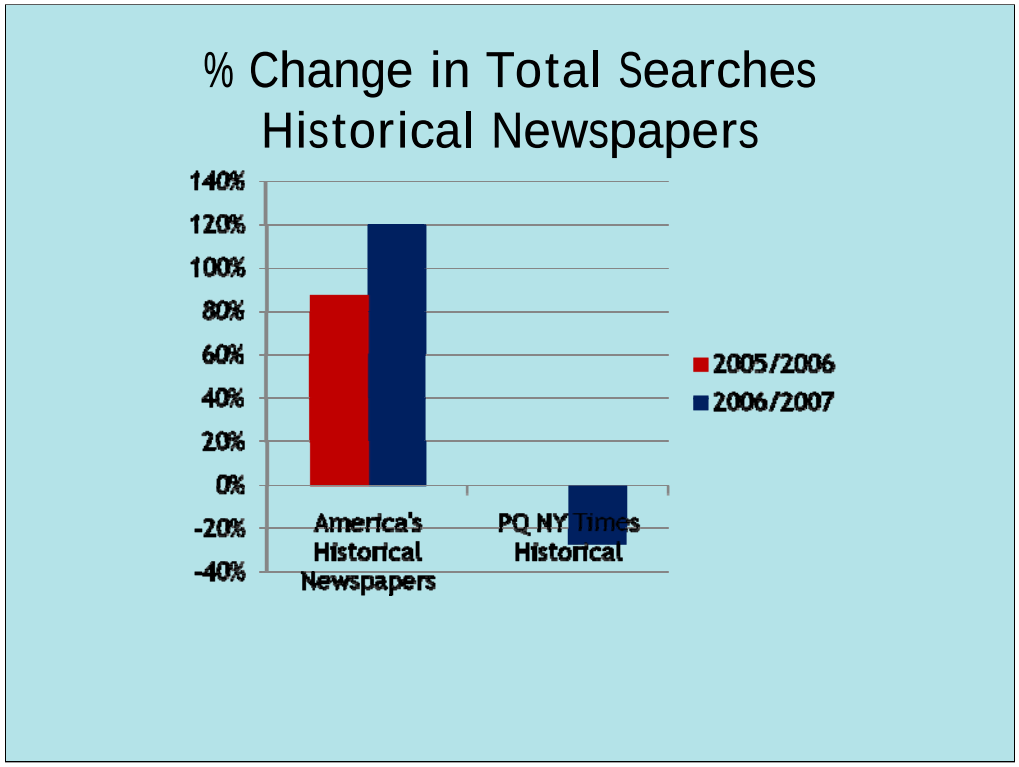
This Data Suggests

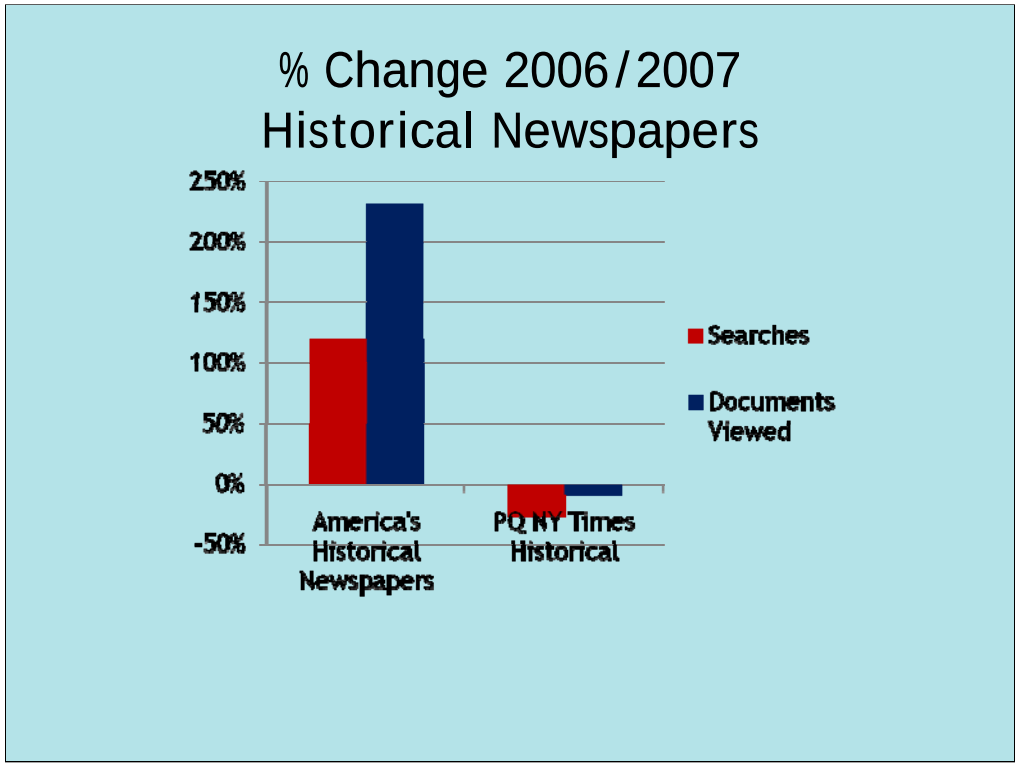
- Libraries may no longer be "players" in the news marketplace
- Probably can't buy/license/digitize enough content to meet all needs—even if we could afford it— gaps beginning to show
  - We may not be collecting/licensing/preserving the "right" things for tomorrow's researchers

A Case Study: Historical News

- Factors that increased use of historical news content
  - Instruction—Librarian and faculty
  - NewsCat—local database allowing students to locate newspapers by geography, time period, and format
  - Reference assistance—at point of need
    - Able to meet the needs of the teaching assignment—Students were able to find what was required


% Change in Documents Viewed
Historical Newspapers
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
-50%
America's Historical Newspapers
PQ NY Times Historical
2005/2006
2006/2007


% Change in Total Searches
Historical Newspapers
140%
120%
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
-20%
-40%
America's Historical Newspapers
PQ NY Times Historical
2005/2006
2006/2007


% Change 2006/2007
Historical Newspapers
250%
200%
150%
100%
50%
0%
-50%
America's Historical Newspapers
PQ NY Times Historical
Searches
Documents Viewed

Create News Rooms—Read, Watch, Research—Leisure reading areas

Focus on television, newspapers, news magazines

Create news events—Watch the debates

Attempt to partner with campus readership programs

Create high quality Niche reference services

Provide a mix of formats in one area

Teach a lot—your colleagues and students/faculty

Print newspapers to ensure they are current and vital!

We need to contain costs for news content—need to be able to purchase content once and meet all needs

Establish the "official source"—

Full functionality of searching and format preservation—today its newsprint, tomorrow its websites

Need to establish our niche within the Market—services

Need to compete in yesterday's news—but not all of yesterday's news is used equally

Can't compete with Iphone or websites for today's news

Need to establish what Libraries do best

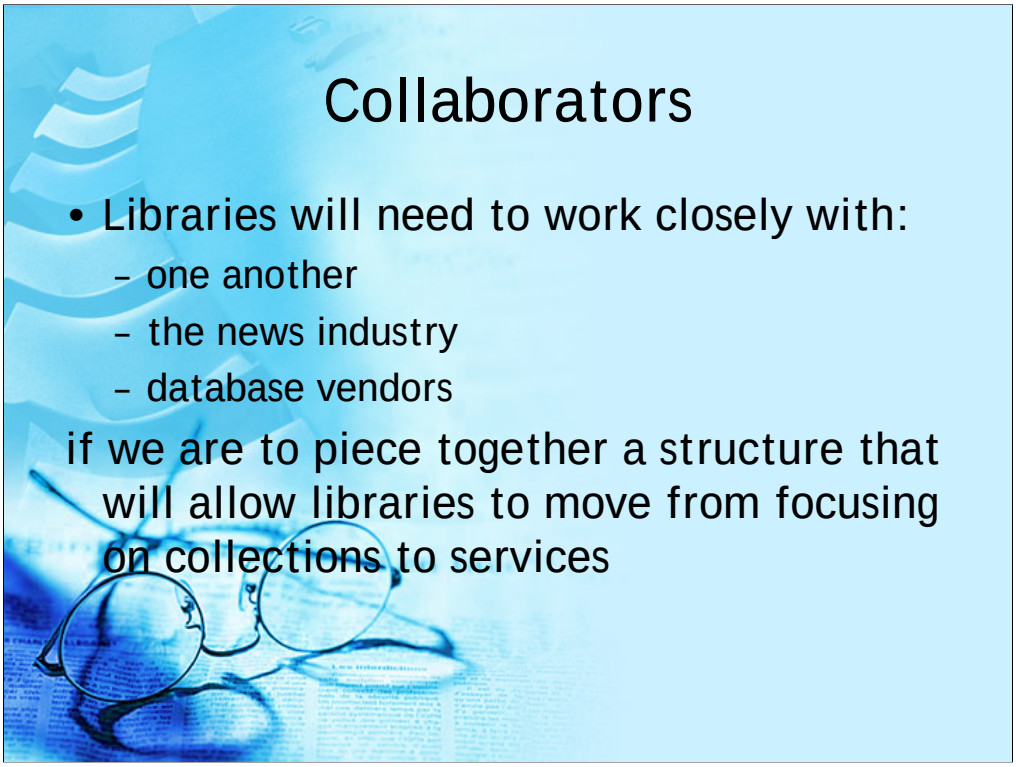
Provide services to support information; provide what others don't provide—After its no longer free who keeps it

Unique collections

Re-define collections as "access"

Become less text and paper oriented—more visual/audio visual oriented

Failure to recognize opportunities on campuses where news content is vital



News Industry creates content but is only interested in preserving content for its own uses

Database vendors provide content but don't see themselves as providing preservation

Libraries preserve, provide access and services to assist in locating and using news content for education/research—but aren't part of the production and distribution cycle.

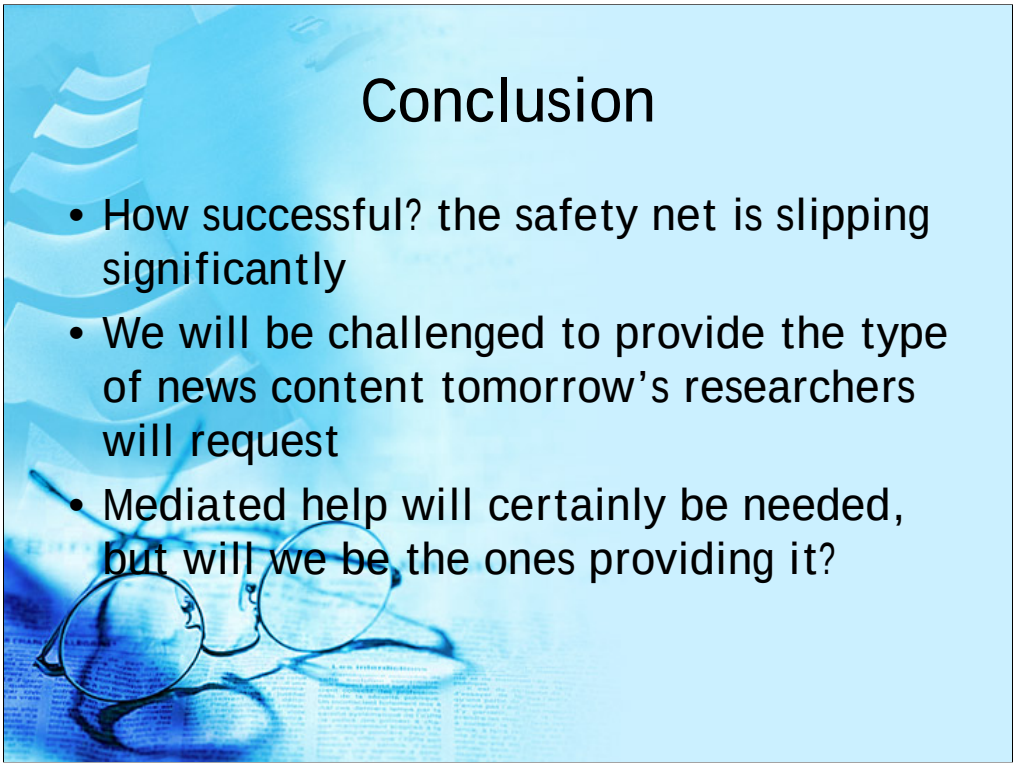
What is our role in preservation?—should newspapers or aggregators be providing that role?

In this type of environment we will need more services, as collections become more decentralized and libraries collect/own less but their users seek a wider range of sources and formats

May need to move toward a just in time delivery for non-core titles [service implications]

Need to reduce duplicate content

Need to begin with an archival format which preserves both form and content



We cannot assume:

If we preserve it, they will come.

However, my own experience in reference and instruction services indicates