

# What's the Big Idea?

Perceptions and expectations  
of the **public library brand**:  
an international perspective

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03-02-07

# American, UK & Canadian public library brand concepts

**Case studies: cautionary tales of brand decline in American public library systems**

**Case study: United Kingdom 'Idea Stores' and the impact on the public library brand**

**The Canadian experience: delivering the brand promise of community builder**

# Provocative questions...

**What does the public library brand promise its customers?**

**Does the public library brand deliver on that promise?**

**What happens when the promise and the perception no longer match?**

...and final thoughts.

**The 7 signs of healthy brands...and  
7 signs of brands in decline**

**Beyond books: implications of the  
OCLC report *Perceptions of Libraries  
and Information Resources***

**Take it from us (significant 'ah ha'  
moments at the Hamilton Public  
Library)**

# The Branding Primer

**Why invest in expensive marketing courses?**

**Here's what you really need to know...**

# Branding: an executive summary

**A brand is:**

**A tattoo commonly shaped like an 'X' that ranchers apply to the backside of COWS...**



# Branding revisited

**According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is:**

- a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.***

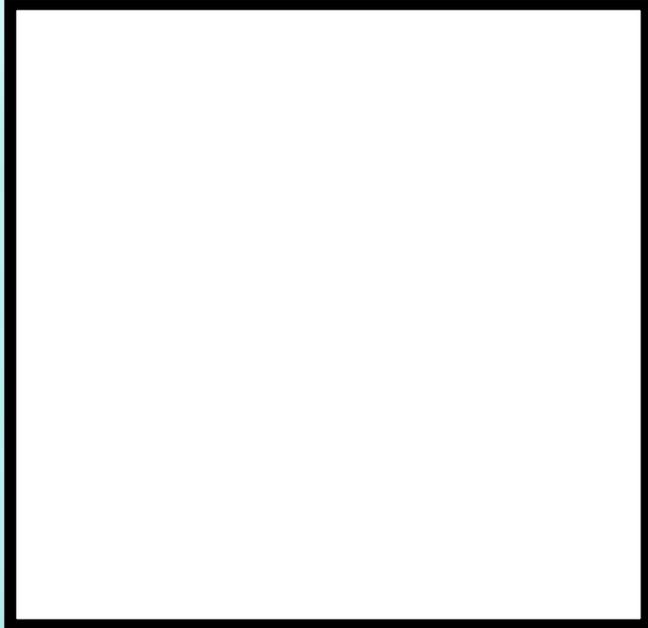
In the simplest possible terms, a brand is a **promise** and an **expectation**.

# The Value Equation

$$\text{Value} = \frac{\text{Benefits}}{\text{Costs}}$$

$$= \frac{\text{Functional + emotional benefits}}{\text{Monetary costs + time costs + energy costs + psychic costs}}$$

The choice is yours



# When the brand is over-extended



# Spot the fake

1. **Ben-Gay Aspirin: Pain Relief That Comes with a Warm Glow**
2. **Burberry Baby Stroller: For Discriminating Newborns**
3. **Smith & Wesson Mountain Bikes: Ride without Fear**
4. **Pond's Toothpaste: Reduces the Appearance of Fine Wines**
5. **Frito-Lay Lemonade: A Tangy, Crunchy Thirst Quencher**

# Beyond the bean



“...the company's brand name, which has long been centered around the **Third Place** concept favored by Schultz, sees Starbucks stores as a space away from home and work where people can be comfortable.”

Now playing at a Starbucks near you:

– Movies, music, WiFi, comfortable seating, quality coffee...

**and now books.**

# Buildings, Books and Bytes

(November, 1996)

**“If you plopped a library down, 30 years from now, there would be cobwebs growing everywhere because people would look at it and wouldn't think of it as a legitimate institution because it would be so far behind.”**

**- Experienced library user**

# Buildings, Books and Bytes

(November, 1996)

**“Americans continue to have a love affair with their libraries, but they have difficulty figuring out where libraries fit in the new digital world...”**

**“...and many Americans would just as soon turn their local libraries into museums and recruit retirees to staff them...”**

**- Executive Summary**

What can happen when a brand is not protected?



# Catalog closed - see staff for assistance



# Budget news

**“ ...circulation reached record-breaking highs in 2003. Year-to-date circulation is up 7%, in-library computer usage is up 24% and materials shipped among libraries is up almost 12%...”**

**Brand perception does not match brand reality.**

## **Buffalo To Close Only 16 Branches**

**System will cut hours and staff and start charging for holds**

Thanks to the willingness of four rural towns to contribute local money for support, the board of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, NY, has announced the closure of 16, not 20, branches of the cash-strapped system (see News, *LJ* 9/1/05, p. 16ff.). Still, the board has announced other cuts to save money.

Officials in Alden, Boston, Eden, and Marilla agreed to supplement county funds with local funds. Previously, two communities, Cheektowaga and Tonawanda, had announced they would close a total of four branch libraries, anticipating budget cuts.

At its meeting September 1, the board acknowledged that the library was requesting \$21.7 million in county support, some \$7 million less than in 2004—stated that 100 employees, nearly one-third of the full-time work force, would be laid off. “Every library that survives this unfortunate process must do much more with far less next year,” said library director Michael Mahaney.

Certain subject departments of the central library will be closed one day during the week. As of October 1, the library will institute new fees for holds: \$1 for DVDs or VHS tapes and 25¢ for print or audio materials; juvenile items are excluded. The library hopes to gain \$100,000 from these new measures.—

**Norman Oder**

## What happened?

- **What happens when more than 50% don't support a**

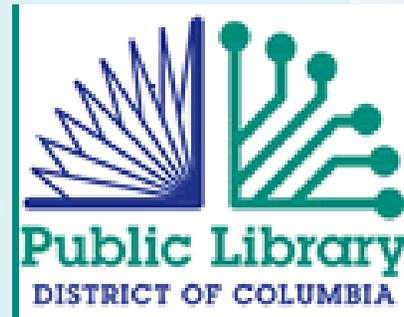
**public library ?**

- **The critical group between 50% of library card holders and 80% of library supporters tip the balance.**

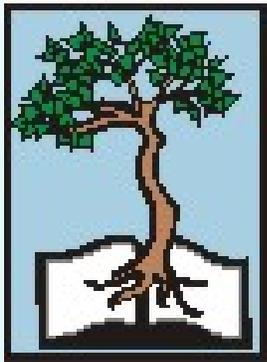
# District of Columbia Public Library: a cautionary tale

**“Due to years of delayed maintenance, the physical condition of many city facilities now prevents them from hosting the full range of traditional and new technologically oriented services that all residents demand...”**

**2002 - 2004 Strategic Plan**



# Public concern continues



## DC Library Renaissance Project

**Four branches are closed...**

**Ralph Nader founds the *DC Library Renaissance Project* in 2003.**

# Still...

May, 2005

**All four branches are still closed and no renovation have started.**

**There is no promised bookmobile service.**

**Benning residents rally.**

October, 2005

**Benning residents receive bookmobile service**

Fall, 2006

**DCPL announces that bookmobile services will soon start in the other former branch locations.**

**DCPL starts to build an Interim location for one branch.**

## Good news...?

October 2006

**“The good news from the Board of Library Trustees meeting last night is that all the burned out light bulbs in the lobby of Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library have been replaced. Granted, that may be just the minimum performance we expect, but it is still good news.**

**“For one thing, minimum standards for maintenance at MLK have not been met in decades...”**

# A Blueprint for Cynicism

**“Maintenance, as has been widely reported, was the first concern of citizens across the city who attended the library *listening sessions* last winter. They wondered how DCPL's buildings could have been allowed to fall into such dire disrepair. **And they wondered** why they should expect things to be any different with the new buildings Mayor Williams and the Trustees are proposing as the basis for library system *transformation*.”**

The citizens produce a counter report called **“A Blueprint for Cynicism.”**

# So, what's the Big Idea?

**Mayor's Task Force on the Future of the DC Public Library System suggests Idea Stores may be the way forward.**

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Ideastore website. At the top, there is a banner with the 'idea' logo and the URL 'IDEASTORE.CO.UK'. Below the banner is a navigation menu with links: 'Welcome | The Idea Story | Your Idea Store services | Learning | Libraries | Idea Magazine | Whats On | Working for Idea | Contact Us'. The main content area features a large 'idea' logo with the tagline 'Library Learning Information'. To the right of the logo is a search bar with a 'Search' button and a link to 'Advanced search'. Below the search bar are links for 'Add to favourites', 'Email this page', and 'Printer-friendly version'. On the left side, there is a section titled 'What's the great idea?' with a photo of a library interior. Below that is a photo of two women looking at a book. At the bottom right, there is a 'Latest News' section with a headline: 'Idea Store Canary Wharf opened on 16 March!'. The background of the banner and the main content area features a collage of images and text related to library activities, including words like 'read', 'shop', 'chat', 'surf', 'learn', and 'relax'.

**idea**  
IDEASTORE.CO.UK

Welcome | The Idea Story | Your Idea Store services | Learning | Libraries | Idea Magazine | Whats On  
Working for Idea | Contact Us

What's the great idea?

**Welcome to Ideastore.co.uk**

**idea**  
Library Learning Information

Find out all you need to know about Idea Stores and the latest on libraries and learning in Tower Hamlets.

28th April 2006  
Search Web Site:  
  
**Search**  
Advanced search

★ Add to favourites  
✉ Email this page  
🖨 Printer-friendly version

Latest News  
**Idea Store Canary Wharf opened on 16 March!**

Idea recommended links

## Lessons learned

**The term “library” cannot extended to include services other than the circulation of books when there is little public trust in the brand.**

## Faint praise indeed

**“Overall, the survey showed that libraries are a highly valued local service. Despite recognising the excellent effort of staff on behalf of residents, customers were dissatisfied with the quality, location and nature of the service they were getting.”**

# More in store than ever before



Sorry for the wait! In the meantime, use your public library...



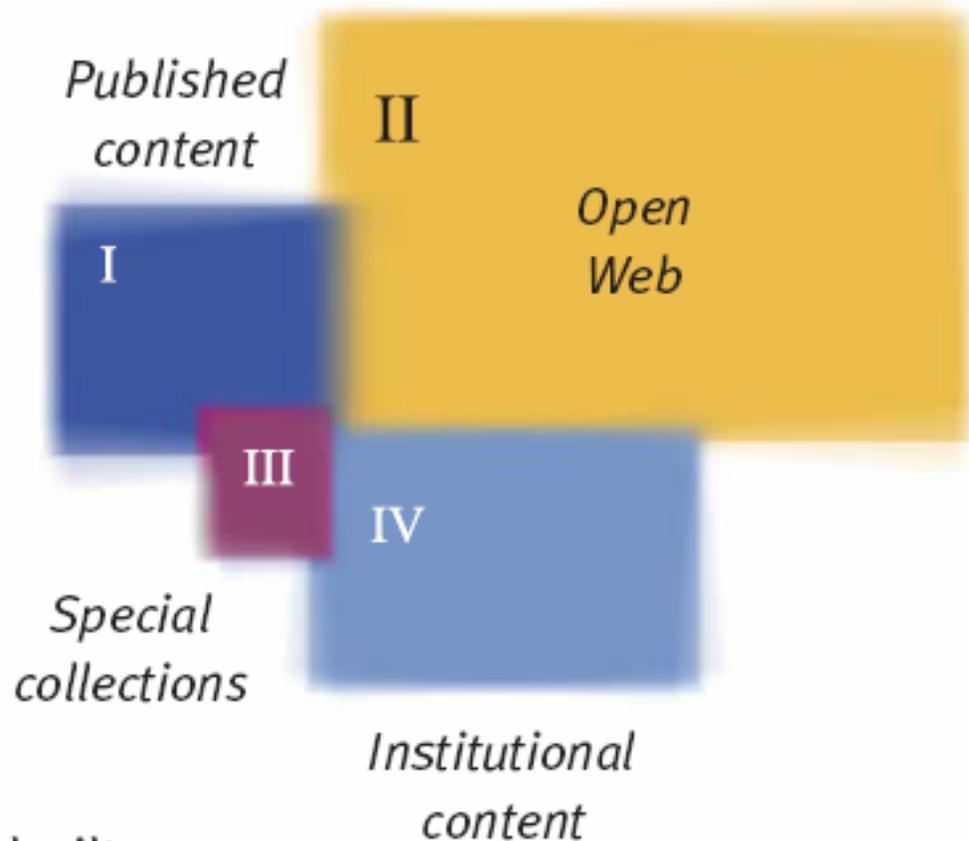
## Lessons learned

**Successful brands endure and extend their reach to meet changing customer needs.**

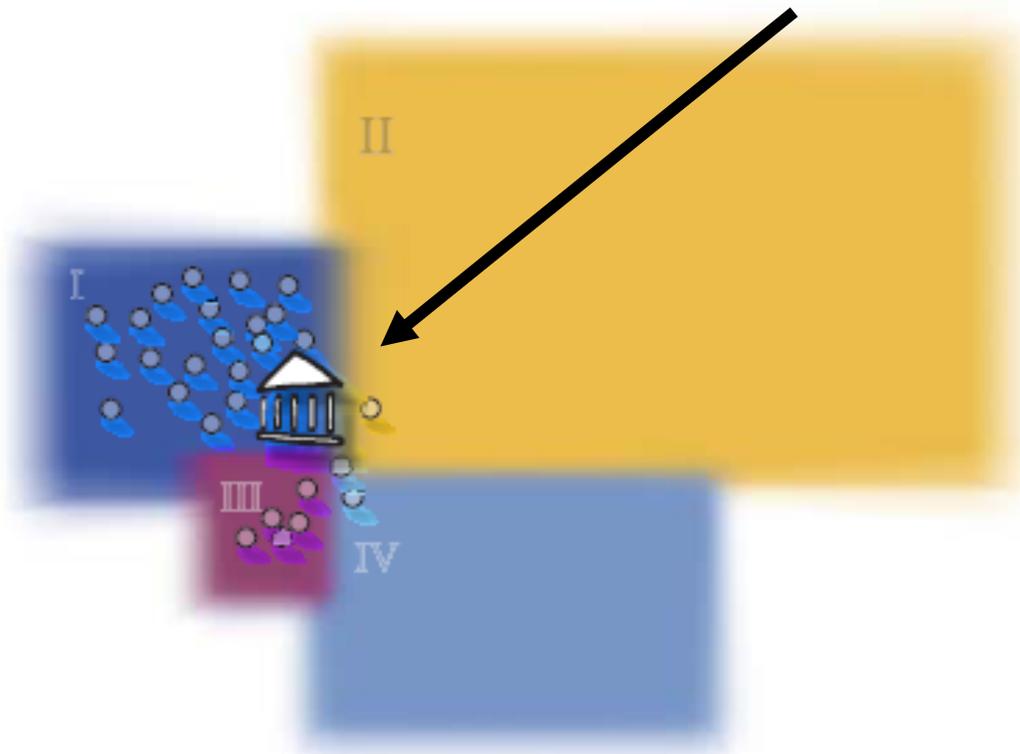
**UK libraries were defined, in legislation, as *book repositories*.**

# 2003 OCLC Environmental Scan: Pattern Recognition

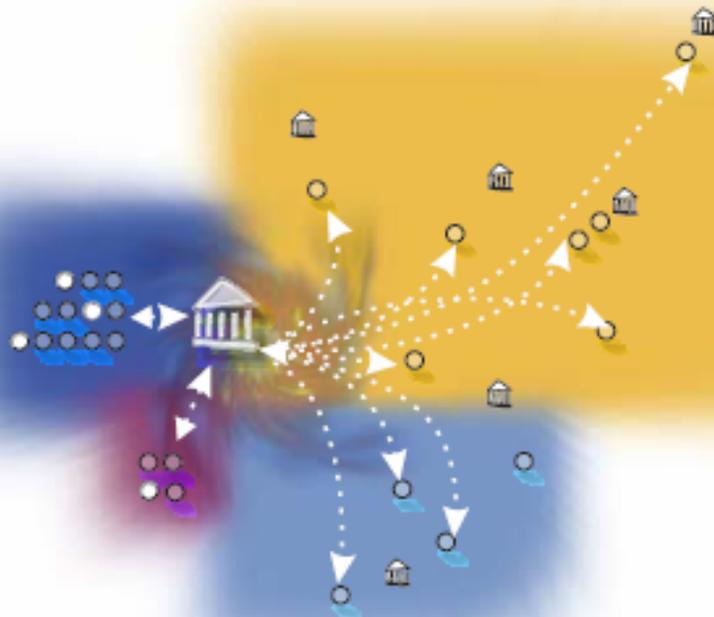
## A user's view of the "infosphere"



## Libraries' space within the user's "infosphere"



## Potential role of libraries in the “infosphere”



# The 7 deadly signs of a public library brand in decline

- **Low public support**
- **Disenfranchised staff, volunteers and Board**
- **Poor use of existing resources**
- **Disengaged stakeholders**
- **Narrow mandate**
- **Isolation**
- **Ineffective advocacy**

# The 7 brand attributes of successful public libraries

- **High public support**
- **Energetic staff, volunteers and Board**
- **Creative use of existing resources**
- **Engaged stakeholders**
- **Integrated services**
- **Broad community mandate**
- **Effective advocacy**

# 'Google' for Hamilton

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myhamilton.ca  
life made easy

Arts, Sports & Recreation Business & Industry City & Government Communities & Organizations Education & Careers Health & Environment Library Services Tourism & Visitor Info

Search >>

## Search Results for 'ancaster library'

These are the results of your search

Filter Results Show All Results

10 Results Previous Next

More than 10 results returned, showing items 1 - 10 , sorted by Relevance.

-  [Ancaster Municipal Building and Public Library moving Friday, February 3, 2006](#)  
In preparation of planned renovations to the Ancaster <http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/cityandgovernment/hottopics/06-02-01iv.htm> - 32 KB
-  [Ancaster Branch](#)  
Information on the Ancaster Branch including directions, hours and location. <http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/libraryservices/aboutthelibrary/locationsand...> - 32 KB
-  [Temporary Ancaster Branch at 306 Woodworth Drive](#)  
The renovation and expansion of the Ancaster Branch, Hamilton Public Library, the Municipal Service Centre and other services at 300 Wilson Street East began the weekend of... <http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/libraryservices/hottopics/ancasterrenovation...> - 31 KB
-  [HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, Ancaster Branch](#)  
This resource is maintained by the Ancaster Branch [ | ] Record #: HAM0547 Last Modified: 01 Aug 2006 Last Full Update: 08 Feb 2006 Loc... <http://www.inform.hamilton.ca/details.asp?userid=47&rsn=29462> - 7 KB

 **Hamilton Public Library**

Find It Here!

...Search your topic in [Advanced Library Search](#) for additional facts on your topic.

...And for [something on our shelves](#):

-Select Search Method

Go

# The brand in action



# Perception = Reality



# Extending the brand beyond bricks and mortar

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Hamilton Public Library

Library Catalogue  
Readers' Cafe  
Look and Listen  
Help Me Find It  
Work From Home  
Kids  
Teens  
Local History  
Genealogy  
Services For

Search All for Enter Search Terms Go >> Advanced Search

**HOT TOPICS** Monday, February 20, 2006

**E-audiobooks now available**  
Hamilton Public Library's virtual bookshelf now holds 500 e-audiobook titles, free to borrow and easy to download. The new products are offered in partnership with Digital Library Reserve, Inc., an Ohio-based technology vendor and use Windows Media Player® to play files. Following the success of the products in large American library systems like New York City, Hamilton is leading the way in Ontario as the first public library system to launch an e-audiobook collection. More...

**Temporary Ancaster Branch at 306 Woodworth Drive**  
The renovation and expansion of the Ancaster Branch, Hamilton Public Library, the Municipal Service Centre and other services at 300 Wilson Street East began the weekend of February 3, 2006. A temporary library branch is located at the former Grange Public School, 306 Woodworth Drive. More...

**"Dr. Phil" on Wheels ~ Lemon-Aid author visits Hamilton on February 28**  
Automotive consumer expert Phil Edmonston returns to Hamilton Public Library on Tuesday, February 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the Central Library, Hamilton-Wentworth Room. Reserve free seats (maximum four per person) by calling 905-546-3280. More...

**How do I?**

- Find a Book
- Find a Magazine or Encyclopedia Article
- Log into my Library Account
- Ask a Reference Question
- Register for a Program
- Request an Item
- Get a Library Card
- Research my Family History
- Volunteer at HPL
- Find my Branch
- Donate to the Library

**Featured Sites**

- Hamilton Gallery of Distinction
- Whitehern

View More Hot Topics >>

# The name game



# With apologies to Woody Guthrie

**This brand is your brand,  
This brand is my brand,  
From Caledonia to the Thousand Islands  
From the Northern Forests to the  
Toronto Islands,  
This brand was made for you and me**



## The final word

**We each have an important role to play as public library ambassadors – the brand extends far beyond our books, our buildings and our borders.**

# For more information

[www.hpl.ca](http://www.hpl.ca)

[www.myhamilton.ca](http://www.myhamilton.ca)

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