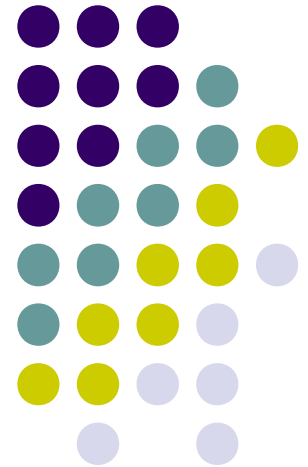


Library / information prospects: three views of the future

David Bawden
City University London

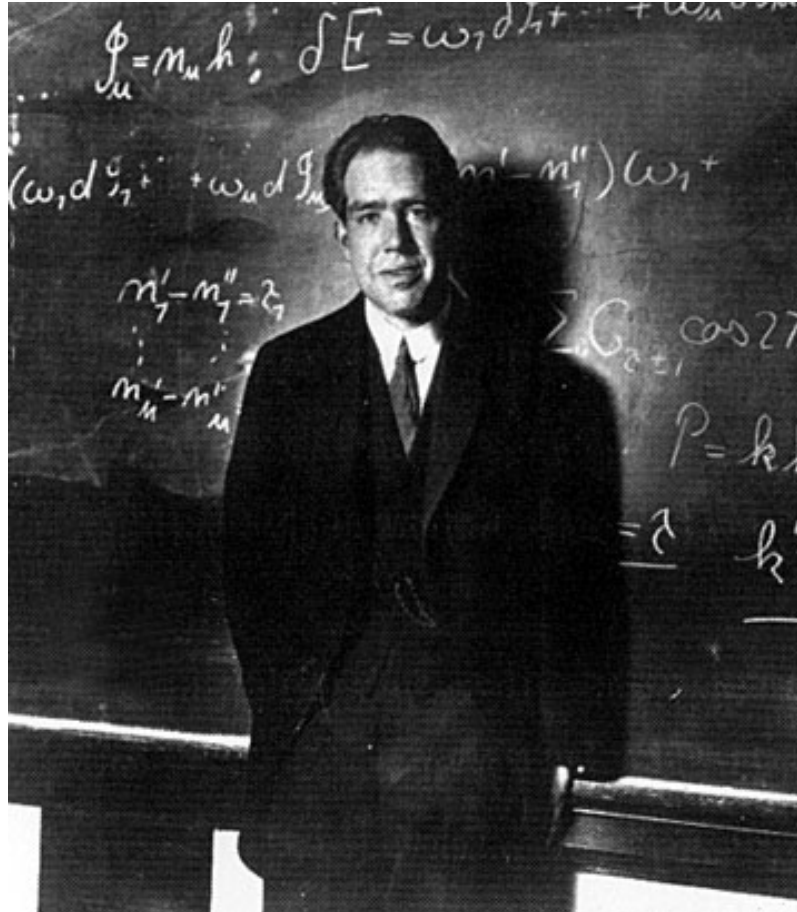


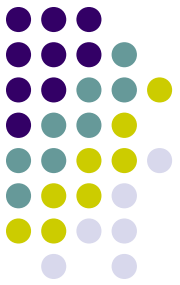
A view over the next 20 years



- based on
 - reality - current trends

- with some
 - prediction - futurology
 - imagination - science fiction



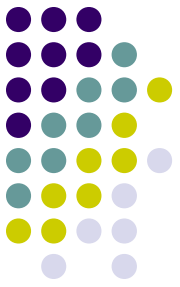


Prediction is very difficult, especially about
the future

(Niels Bohr)

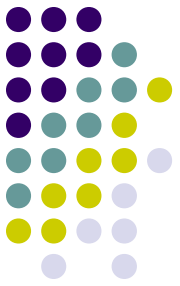


Dangers of prediction



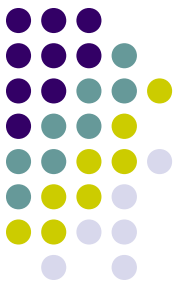
- failure of imagination
- failure of nerve

(Arthur C Clarke)



Current trends

- economic situation
- a digital world
- web 2
- new generations
- the 'cloud'



Economic situation

- generally bad for information services

but

- some sectors do well (law, health ..)
- 'library brand' flourishes
- renewed enthusiasm for the 'real'

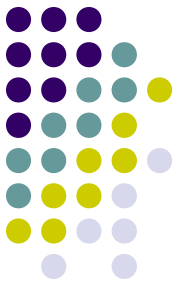


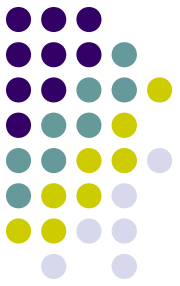
A digital world

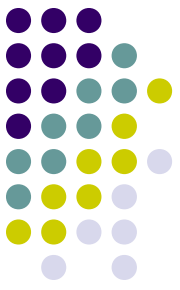
- digital is now the normal form of information
- most information is born digital, and lives and dies digital

But

- the real book and the physical 'library place' do not go away







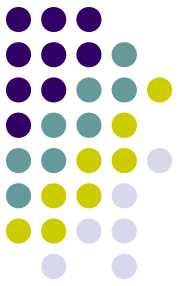
Web 2.0

- ‘to Google’ is a verb in the English language
- Amazon.com is ‘the bookshop’
- Wikipedia is ‘the encyclopedia’
- Facebook, Twitter and blogs are the natural way of communicating information
- Will all books soon be e-books ?

Libraries and Web 2

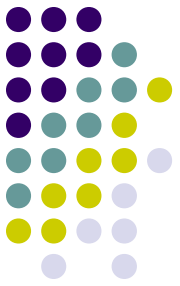


- Fight ?
- Collaborate ?
- Copy ?
- Ignore ?



New generations

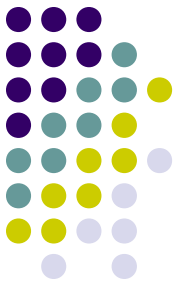
- Gen X, Gen Y, Google generation
- young people's information behaviour is totally different
- or is it ?



The 'cloud'

- Information resources and software held on networks, with wireless access from any place
- Where then is
 - The collection
 - The 'information place'
 - 'my' information

Summary of trends

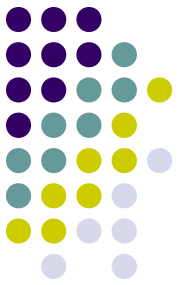


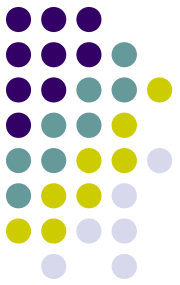
- a mixed picture
- some clear trends
- but also counter-movements

- the future is not as clear as some commentators tell us

Three scenarios

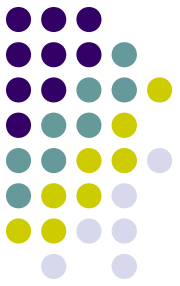
- Business as usual
- Changing landscapes
- Into the clouds





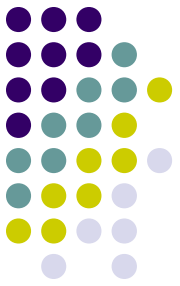
Business as usual

- rely on library ‘brand image’
- build on continuing desire for the collection and the ‘information place’
- establish consensus (truce ?) with newer forms of information communication



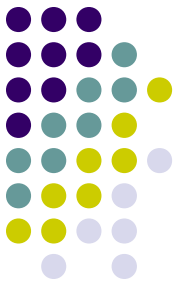
Changing landscapes

- changing image and name
 - Information Commons, Discovery Centre, Idea Store
- some services close, others expand
- greater integration with wider institution
 - Business, education, culture
- creative balance physical / digital



Into the clouds

- new concept of ‘collection’
- no physical ‘information place’
- information specialists become
 - consultants / advisers / educators
 - researchers / ‘publishers’



Conclusions

- the future is not certain
- it will not be as we expect
- library / information services will survive and thrive (but not as they are now)
- we can influence our future