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**PRESENTATION AT ANNUAL LIBRARY  
SYMPOSIUM,  
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH,  
27 OCTOBER 2005**





# THE QUEST FOR VIRTUALITY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INVISIBILITY

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## JULIAN SMITH

**“ If we were establishing a new university, or new campus today, would we establish a library service ? Would we construct a library building ? This seems most unlikely. Any building now constructed should be a ‘collaborative facility’ with co-location of a range of information, learning support and other student services.” (Wainwright)**

**“ (The) Information Consumer is hanging out at the Information Mall with Google. “ (Wainwright)**



# STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

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1. The Olympics as Metaphor
2. The case of the Black Elephant at RUU
3. Enter the Dragon : the Library as Executive Responsibility
4. Julianor: The poor man's Markinor
5. Star of David
6. Om 'n sinkende skip blou te verf (To paint a sinking ship blue)
7. Die ysterkoei moet sweet (The iron cow must sweat)
8. Concluding remarks



# I. OLYMPICS AS METAPHOR

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- Can lopsided Olympics be equated with libraries gone wrong?
  - Noble ideals
  - Objectives not met
  - Resultant frustration and embarrassment
  - What can the individual (“athlete”) do to ensure success?
  - Role of powerful individuals, structures, systems, sponsors
  - No medals

**PLAY**



AT  
RUU



## 2. THE CASE OF THE BLACK ELEPHANT

# AT RUU (cont.)





## 2. THE CASE OF THE BLACK ELEPHANT AT RUU (cont.)

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- Costs: E45m (excluding equipment, furniture, etc.)
- Specifications:
  - 24,000m<sup>2</sup> for library and 500m<sup>2</sup> for shops
  - Includes parking, office space, cafeteria, reading rooms
  - Emphasizes library as meeting place
  - Emphasizes integration of functions
  - Considerations for new library



## 2. THE CASE OF THE BLACK ELEPHANT AT RUU (cont.)

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- ❖ Solution to problems of library dispersion; lack of space; fire-risk; inferior climatological quality; insufficient security
  
- ❖ Anticipation of future developments
  
- ❖ Improvement of public facilities
- ❖ “Decision made before the digitation-wave”
- ❖ “Old building too small”
- ❖ “Strengthen main campus”
- ❖ “Question was asked by top of university”





### 3. ENTER THE DRAGON : ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

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- Models of management : collegial vs corporate
- Institutional priorities
- Executive portfolios
- Executive priorities
- Matrix approach
- Indicators of due attention to the library
  - Defined in general institutional view on library
  - Reporting line and Executive portfolio
  - Articulation/promotion of institutional view



### 3. ENTER THE DRAGON: ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE (cont.)

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- Incidence of featuring on agenda of Executive meetings
- Reference in key documents and speeches
- Attention received during strategic planning processes (at faculty and institutional level)
- Attention during budgeting process
- Incidence of library usage for “other” purposes



## 4. JULIANOR: THE POOR MAN'S MARKINOR

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- Trends anticipated from survey of Executive approaches to library:
  - Libraries do not feature adequately in critical institutional debates
  - Nor in faculty discourses
  - Nor in budget discussions
  - “Invisibility” result of lack of attention?
  - “Management” has become accustomed to the periferal position of the library
  - Symbolism of centrality is lost in substance
  - Cause of library not adequately championed?



## 4. JULIANOR: THE POOR MAN'S MARKINOR (cont.)

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- Trends identified from survey of Executive approaches to library:
  - Does a general view on libraries exist?
  - If yes, what is this view?
  - How is this view articulated/promoted?
  - Does the library feature on the agenda of Executive meetings?
  - How often?



## 4. JULIANOR: THE POOR MAN'S MARKINOR (cont.)

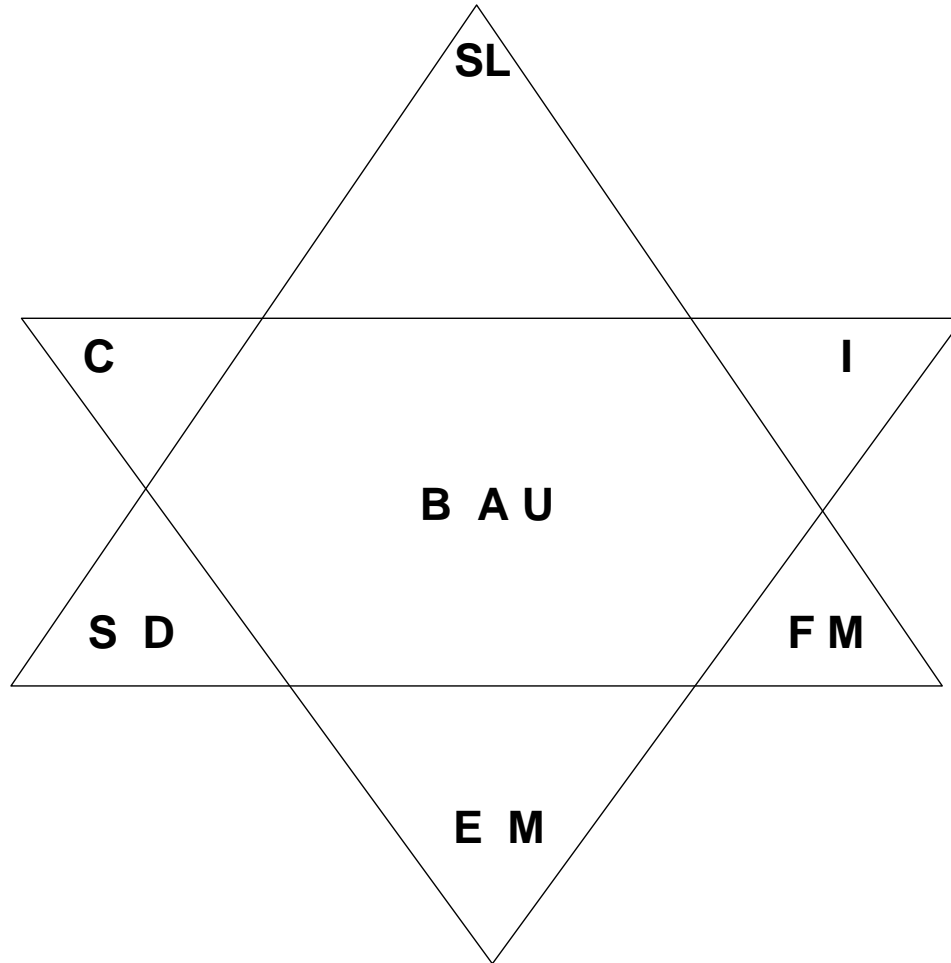
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- In which ways?
- Is special attention given to the library in strategic planning processes in the faculty and centrally in the university?
- Is special attention given to library in budgeting process?



# 5. STAR OF DAVID: EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT EXPANSION THEORY





## 5. STAR OF DAVID: EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT EXPANSION THEORY (cont.)

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BAU	Business As Usual
SL	Strategic Leverage
C	Communication
I	Innovation
SD	Staff Development
FM	Financial Management
EM	Entrepreneurial Management



## 6. OM 'N SINKENDE SKIP BLOU TE VERF

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- Reasons for a chronic state of unease
  - Lack of integration of “information support” into core functions
  - Lack of institutional attention
    - [“Academic libraries have traditionally marched to their own drummer”. (Buck & Douglas)]
  - Inability of libraries to promote their cause
  - Inability to add value
    - [“How close are libraries to being perceived as a minor, and possibly largely irrelevant service? ” (Wainwright)]
  - Lack of timeous strategic interventions





## 6. OM 'N SINKENDE SKIP BLOU TE VERF (cont.)

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- Rigidity : preference for BAU
- Lack of “radical” thinking  
[One suggestion coming out of a series of workshops aimed at how change concerning libraries could be stimulated proposed:
  - “Start with an upheaval – give no money for materials new campus information infrastructure “  
**[Sapp & Gilmour]**
- Unsatisfactory service levels
- Absence of high impact partnerships
- Lack of innovation and entrepreneurship



## 6. OM 'N SINKENDE SKIP BLOU TE VERF (cont.)

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- Negative impact of human response to change  
[“Change and thrive or live in the past and fail.  
”[Stoffle et al]
- Competition is becoming stronger  
[“Libraries are not immune to competition in this new  
environment”, which represent commercial venture  
competing for “educational dollars“  
(Stoffle et al)]



## 7. DIE YSTERKOEI MOET SWEET

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- **Why roleplayers have to succeed:**
  - **Importance of information is undisputed**
  - **Core functions in university need proper resource base**
  - **“Dehumanisation of library and deprofessionalisation of the librarian’s role” may ensue [Sapp & Gilmour]**
  - **Libraries may become redundant**
  - **Attraction, retention, success**



## 8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

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- Justifiable concerns
- Importance and centrality of library eroded
- University Executives are only paying lipservice (if that) to importance of library
- Powerful allies are needed
- Increased ability to respond to change needed
- Selfevaluation i.t.o. service levels and relevance of services?
- “ It would be folly to imagine that the academic library will develop over the next decade as a purely natural progression from the library of today. “ (Billings, quoted in Wainwright)
- “ No longer a room with a host, the library of 2012 will be experienced as a virtual reality ...” (Marcum)



## 8. CONCLUDING REMARKS (cont.)

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“(It) is interesting to speculate why university libraries have been allowed by senior university managements to remain so little changed, given the clear evidence that very few academic staff now use library buildings for research and teaching support ...

But libraries also remain as tangible symbols demonstrating a university’s belief in the value of learning for its own sake. This should not be underestimated, and it has the danger of influencing libraries not to respond fast enough to the changing needs of their institutions.” (Wainwright)



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**Baie dankie**  
**Thank you very much**

