

DREAM BIG

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Last October, the Cambridge Public Library Foundation hosted its first public event, DREAM BIG: THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES. This symposium featured thought leaders Sarah Goldhagen, Maria McCauley, Nicholas Negroponete, John Palfrey and Jeffrey Schnapp. They were joined by an overflowing crowd in the Lecture Hall of the Main Library. Five key themes emerged:

1. Public Libraries are the cornerstone of our democracy
2. They are a place for all to experiment and test new ideas
3. The best libraries are increasingly connected, networked and digitized
4. They need to be adaptable to meet changing, diverse community needs
5. Their future lies in emerging technologies and changing platforms

We want to share with you some of the key takeaways from that evening's lively discussion.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM AN EVENING SYMPOSIUM

PRESENTED BY THE CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION



"When I think about the future of libraries, I like to think of what is it that market forces will not address? That's what we should do: make the library of the future a place where we experiment and test new ideas."

NICHOLAS NEGROPONTE, founder of the MIT Media Lab and One Laptop per Child and the author of *Being Digital*



"Libraries must evolve to reflect the hybridity of media. People now access rich information via both books and screens. Hybridity and multi-modality are the rootstock of libraries. Everyone gravitates toward where plugs are located. Why can't furnishings become part of the electrical system of a structure to make them more flexible and useful for communities of users?"

JEFFREY SCHNAPP, faculty co-director of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University, co-author of *The Library Beyond the Book*, and professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design





"We are committed to childhood education and lifelong learning, to social justice and to providing free, unfettered access to information and ideas. The public library, both digital and physical, is a cornerstone of our democracy."

MARIA MCCAULEY, Cambridge's Director of Libraries

"In the past, libraries were for shelving books, creating a place for people to sit and read those books. Today's libraries have a new identity as community centers, where uses range from offering immigrants English-language classes to providing shared work spaces to serving as a destination for children's programs, fitness classes, community events and social services."

SARAH GOLDHAGEN, the former architectural critic of *The New Republic* and author of the forthcoming book, *Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives*



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"We can do amazing things from a democratic perspective if we see these institutions as connected, networked and digitized; and librarians as the key to entering these very public digital collections."

JOHN PALFREY, head of Phillips Academy, founding chairman of the Digital Public Library of America, author of *Biblio TECH: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google and Born Digital*



The Cambridge Public Library Foundation supports Library programs that EDUCATE, INSPIRE and RESPOND to the needs of our diverse community – programs like DREAM BIG.

To join our efforts, visit us at www.cplfound.org.



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