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## Artrocious Academic Activity for Amusement and Abstraction

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# Atrocious Academic Activity for Amusement and Abstraction

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*Humor is everywhere, even in libraries, and especially in academic libraries. Everywhere from students' chronicles of lost books to a staff member finding books in their office that were checked out in 1984, humor exists. Stephen Colbert on Comedy Central demonstrates this in his satirical style. However, not everyone takes a liking to satire, especially when the intention is to make fun of something that one highly values. One is not often sure how to take it. Do they laugh with the comedian? Become offended and be silent? Leave the library profession and become a door-to-door salesman? Or perhaps they should laugh with Stephen Colbert and at him in one foul swoop. If you are ready for some Colbert style comedy, read on.*

—GARRETT TROTT

As none of you are probably aware, this is National Comedy Week. What a better place to celebrate this than the local university library.

Comedy is always happening at the library. Just look around.

Books are funny and a library is full of books. While it may not be that much fun to actually read books, there are several things that can be done with them that provoke humor. Anyone using a book as a hat provokes laughter. Particularly in the moist Willamette Valley, where rain oftentimes permeates the academic scenario, using a book as a rain deflector provokes humor.

There are even educational benefits for using a book to deflect rain: osmosis. It is oftentimes believed that education can occur by placing information on one's head. This information simply seeps into one's brain and the material is learned. Osmosis is a learning endeavor which, many argue, should not be taken lightly.

However, new research reports are showing that there are more useful tools

that can be used for keeping one dry, even in the Willamette Valley, than a book.

Research reports also suggest that while osmosis is a wonderful tool, its overall rightness has come into serious debate in academic circles.

There are also practical benefits for having books in a library. Books are a wonderful resource for teething. Young children love to teethe and salivate on books. The hard, yet gentle, surfaces of most hard cover books give infants exactly what they need for developing their first teeth. This feature grants those who work in academic libraries an exceptional benefit. They can bring their infants to work with them and simply let them loose in the stacks. The multiple books in an academic library provide the child with hours upon hours of teething opportunities.

Even though books may serve as wonderful teething tools for infants, they are rather expensive ones, as the teething process tends to destroy at least part of the book. Not to mention the fact that when the ink on the pages gets wet, it bleeds. There are more useful tools for teething that are less expensive, last longer, and don't have the potential health hazards that bleeding ink can cause.

These few examples point out the versatility of printed material in the academic scenario. And most academic libraries have lots of books.

But, wait, just a second. We are referring to an academic library. How does any of this relate to the purpose of education, other than osmosis and perhaps alleviating some of the concerns of faculty, staff, and students by providing free child care? Put simply, it doesn't.

Books, especially since so few people are fans of them, have become useless for academia. Since a library is only about



books and academia has always had the intention of pleasing its clientele, the library is on the verge of vanishing.

Academia's intention of pleasing its clientele is obvious. When tuition gets too expensive, academia joyfully chops its tuition to an affordable rate. When its faculty and staff raise concerns about their income, academia gleefully responds by raising their rate of pay. When students complain about their grades, academia responds happily by giving the consumer (the student) the grade they want. After all, they paid for it.

Since books are no longer useful, why have them?

Long, long ago in the age of BI, before the Internet, books were necessary. In order to track down information, books and other printed media were indispensable.

Things have changed. The age of the Internet (AI) is here. Everyone knows that books really aren't useful anymore, with the few exceptions listed above. The Internet has replaced them. Books are no longer necessary.

Libraries, particularly academic libraries and thus librarians are about books. This tradition continues. If you wanted some instruction on how to use a database or a catalog, you'd better look in other places. If you wanted instruction on how to find good resources on the Internet, don't look to a librarian. Between keeping the academic library quiet and making sure that books were shelved correctly, there was no time for these other trivial tasks.

Academic librarians are passionate about the fact that libraries are only about books. Their sense of overall rightness is truly exposed in the wrath of the academic librarians. Beware of the wrath of the academic librarian!

The academic librarians will come to an academic library that has committed the

atrociousness of purchasing non-printed media and the wrath will begin. The wrath is simple, yet effective: mis-shelving. These items will be lost in library land forever!

But wait! Is the library, even the academic library, really just about books? True, there are a lot of books in any academic library. The library though, is more than just books. The library is about information and making that information available to patrons. Information comes in a variety of formats, not just books.

With this new revelation, the wrath of the academic librarians has been appeased. Other material may now enter the academic library realm without fret that the wrath will come to pass.

With the ease of the wrath, the academic library has become the home for databases, videos and DVDs both for personal entertainment and instruction-use. The once trivial tasks of assistance with research, instruction, tutorials, and reference service have moved to the forefront of the academic library.

While it may be true that many people are not fans of books, this does not suggest the frivolousness of the academic library. To equate the modern library, yes even the modern academic library, as an Eiffel Tower full of books is wrong. It has become much more than that.

Academic librarians and academic libraries are places of humor and thus, an appropriate setting for National Comedy Week. Being members of a service-based profession, librarians are no longer people who just love books, sit in their comfortable little chairs and go around shhhh'ing people all the time. No. Librarians, even academic librarians, are people, real people. They serve, they instruct, and in response to atrocious actions, they deliberately mis-shelve. 🌿

