



# BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google

By John Palfrey

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**BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google** By John Palfrey

Libraries today are more important than ever. More than just book repositories, libraries can become bulwarks against some of the most crucial challenges of our age: unequal access to education, jobs, and information.

In *BiblioTech*, educator and technology expert John Palfrey argues that anyone seeking to participate in the 21st century needs to understand how to find and use the vast stores of information available online. And libraries, which play a crucial role in making these skills and information available, are at risk. In order to survive our rapidly modernizing world and dwindling government funding, libraries must make the transition to a digital future as soon as possible—by digitizing print material and ensuring that born-digital material is publicly available online.

Not all of these changes will be easy for libraries to implement. But as Palfrey boldly argues, these modifications are vital if we hope to save libraries and, through them, the American democratic ideal.

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

Review

**John Willinsky, Khosla Family Professor of Education at Stanford University**

“In this engaging shout-out to public libraries as bastions of info-age equality and opportunity, John Palfrey presents a compelling vision of a ‘network-scale’ revitalization of their contributions to learning and community.”

**Jonathan Zittrain, Vice Dean for Library and Information Resources at the Harvard Law School Library, and co-founder of the Berkman Center for Internet & Society**

“John Palfrey’s *BiblioTech* is a sparkling call to action for libraries everywhere—urging them to collaborate and adapt to survive in the ever-expanding, increasingly digital information landscape. Libraries that heed Palfrey’s call will find themselves poised to rise to the occasion of the twenty-first century and continue to fulfill their core societal functions: building communities, democratizing access to information, and educating the next generation.”

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*’s Book Patrol blog

“[A] lucid, passionate account of the state of American libraries... a handy guide for how to begin to right the ship.”

*LibraryCity.org*

“A must-read.... *BiblioTech* reminds us that libraries are and should be about much more than books.”

*VOYA Magazine*

“Thought-provoking and well-researched, this book takes a long view of the role of libraries in communities and society with careful attention to the shifts required to retain relevance in the digital age.”

*Library Journal*, starred review

“A celebration of libraries as well as a dose of tough love.... [T]his work should be required reading for librarians, particularly those who are looking to lead their libraries into the future.”

*Publishers Weekly*

“Carves out a strong and exciting vision for libraries in the 21st century.”

*Kirkus*

“Palfrey provides insight into local efforts in schools and libraries around the country.... A significant wake-up call.”

**Tony Marx, President and CEO of the New York Public Library**

“John Palfrey insightfully charts the information revolution’s path through the world of libraries, where he has been an innovator. We are indeed at an exciting moment.”

**Susan Hildreth, former Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services**

“*BiblioTech* is a must read for anyone who cares about the future of libraries. John Palfrey has eloquently identified the essential role libraries play in keeping our democracy strong and has clearly articulated the challenges facing libraries today. This is a true wake-up call. We may very well fail our communities and

society if we do not invest in library innovation that supports access and preservation of knowledge at scale.”

**Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor of History and University Librarian, Harvard University**

“John Palfrey makes a convincing case for the ever-increasing importance of libraries in ‘the age of Google.’ With wit and wisdom, he shows how they can help create a democratic digital future—provided that we overcome a nostalgic view of their past and an inadequate understanding of their place in the current information environment.”

**Brian Bannon, Commissioner, Chicago Public Library**

“*BiblioTech* offers a historical account of libraries' iconic past and chronicles the environmental shifts and dangers we may face if we fail to support and lead their next evolution. As libraries experience unprecedented instability, John Palfrey's *BiblioTech* offers unique insight into the complex challenges and opportunities in the digital and physical world while giving hope for a successful future. This is essential reading for librarians, educators, policy makers, and all who care about the public institutions that support the citizens who are the basis of a vibrant democracy.”

**Maureen Sullivan, former President of the American Libraries Association**

“John Palfrey, a true visionary who deeply understands the enduring importance of libraries, makes an urgent and compelling case for the transformation and sustainability of this critical education institution. This is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand why it is so critical to make a renewed investment in this essential democratic institution. His brilliant and lucid analysis offers a path, and describes how policy makers, community leaders, librarians, and technologists can work to ensure that libraries will enable everyone to be successful in a networked world.”

**Luis Herrera, City Librarian of the San Francisco Public Library**

“In *BiblioTech*, John Palfrey offers fresh perspectives and keen insights on the importance of libraries in the digital age. He reaffirms the value of libraries as purveyors of knowledge and information in democracies around the world. Yet, he reminds us that we must leverage our core values and skills as collaborators, networkers, and community builders for libraries to remain relevant. *BiblioTech* is a call to action for libraries to claim their role as key innovators in learning, addressing digital literacy, and bridging the technology divide in order to thrive in the Age of Google.”

**Deborah L Jacobs, former City Librarian of the Seattle Public Library**

“John Palfrey has crafted a bold new vision and compelling argument for the power and value of public libraries. Perhaps more importantly he warns us of the unfortunate future for free societies if we simply stay the course and don't ‘create a new nostalgia’ for the digital age. Many speeches have been given and books written on the topic of the ‘future library,’ but this is the finest and most inspiring call to true action I've read. *BiblioTech* should be required reading for not only every librarian, but every library supporter and policymaker.”

**Jim Leach, former Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities**

“In *BiblioTech*, John Palfrey sums up the seminal function libraries have played in inspiring and preserving creative thought over the ages. Then, with confident optimism, Palfrey makes it—counter intuitively—clear that the digital age has expanded the function and energy level of libraries. In a splintered world, these book-centric institutions have also become singularly safe and welcoming tech havens where the public can seek knowledge and gain access to wide-ranging perspectives about events and circumstances, real and fictional. It is the library where the imagination is un-shackled, where the past and present can be civilly probed and the future contemplated, alone or together in community. As a society we short-change these civilizing

institutions at our peril.”

**Doron Weber, Vice President of Programs and Program Director at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**

“One of America's top educators and library leaders makes a passionate argument for why libraries in the digital age are more important than ever to our democracy. In a lucid, conversational style that draws on his unique knowledge and experience, digital library pioneer John Palfrey offers a penetrating analysis of how libraries must transition to a digital, collaborative, and networked future while preserving the best of their traditional physical advantages. An urgent, eloquent call for the public option—indeed, the public obligation!—to step up and manage this historic shift to the digital future so that every member of society has equal access to knowledge and information that is responsibly presented and preserved for the benefit of all.”

**Lawrence Lessig, author of *Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress—and a Plan to Stop It***

“A powerful and beautifully crafted argument for extending the reach of one our culture's most important common resources: the library. But John Palfrey's unique perspective—as an educator, an academic administrator, former law professor, and former law librarian—makes this a book not just about libraries, but also about culture in the digital age, and how much common culture depends upon the commitment to shared and public resources.”

***New York Review of Books***

“In his new book, *BiblioTech*, a wise and passionate manifesto, John Palfrey reminds us that the library is the last free space for the gathering and sharing of knowledge.”

***Washington Post***

“Palfrey is adept at explaining the struggles libraries face with technologies that constrain as much as they liberate...[and] is particularly good at explaining new legal challenges to preserving information.”

***Nature***

“Anyone interested in the future of libraries — and whether there is one at all — will find much to mull over in this book.”

***Miami Herald***

“The persuasive argument Palfrey makes in *BiblioTech* is simple: The conventional wisdom that suggests libraries aren't important anymore — and thus require less funding — isn't true, no matter how many Google searches we can perform on our phones.”

***Roanoke Times***

“*BiblioTech* is an exciting adventure — the exercise of imagining how we can provide a library model that will ensure the continued education and enjoyment of future generations no matter how they create and receive the information they will share.”

About the Author

**John Palfrey** is Head of School at Phillips Andover Academy. Palfrey led the effort to reorganize the Harvard Law School Library, and is the founding chairman of the Digital Public Library of America. The author of several books including *Born Digital*, Palfrey lives in Andover, Massachusetts.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Brenda Gregg:**

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#### **Hyacinth Mills:**

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open as well as read a book entitled BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have some other opinion?

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#### **Justin Mireles:**

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