Abstract
Since their founding in ancient times, libraries have been a cornerstone of society, playing a key role in creating informed citizens that participate in and uphold societal values. In Kentucky, libraries serve to increase literacy rates, strengthen community ties, and provide resources to the public. However the traditional library is facing difficulties staying relevant in the modern, technological age. In order to survive, libraries in the future need to evolve and return to their beginnings as centers of learning and innovation.

Introduction
From the founding of the library of Alexandria to the first American public library in Philadelphia, libraries have provided a sense of community and knowledge to the public. The impact of libraries benefits citizens across the state by providing resources they otherwise find unattainable. Computer labs, meeting spaces, community outreach, and literacy programs have played an important role in the education and unification of Kentucky’s diverse population. With the advent of the modern technological age, libraries struggle to meet the growing needs and demands of the public. Adaptability, funding cuts, and a lack of political support to affect change restrict libraries in their ability to fulfill public need. Based on these challenges, we have created recommendations for libraries to implement within the next twenty years.

Research
In recent years, Kentucky public libraries have received over two million dollars in grants and loans; however, this funding has been distributed unequally across the state (Funding Report). Not only is library funding uneven, but many are severely underfunded as well. (John William Templeton, web)

Some libraries are now including “maker spaces” that allow interaction with technology and hands-on skills (“What Will Become Of The Library”, web). Many libraries now also include the ability to check out e-reading devices (“How Innovation and Technology Are Shaping Libraries Of Today”, web). Kentucky libraries also serve to help even out the imbalance of internet access across the state, with 20% of the population underserved (“Broadband Internet In Kentucky”, web).

Most libraries also offer a wide variety of programs for people young and old in the community. Some of these programs include summer reading rewards, photoshop literacy programs, and “teen nights” (Lexington Public Library Calendar, web).

Trends Impacting Library Development
- Technology
  - E-Books
  - Computer Labs
  - Internet Access
- Economic Effects
  - Brings in small businesses
  - Return investments (B.A. Paris, web)
- Public Usage and Support
  - Education Level
  - Approval Ratings (Martin Gomez, web)
  - Programs offered
  - Literacy Rates

Conclusion
Over the years, libraries have proved to be beneficial aspects of society. They have improved literacy rates, provided community involvement and outreach, increased numerous economic sectors, and preserved the centers of learning culture. These institutions are vital to the survival of our cities, states, and our nation. Libraries are beginning to struggle with new advancements in technology and a drop off in funding resources. In order to help these organizations survive, communities need to help them adapt. Providing differing, focused sections and equalizing and returning to their beginnings as centers of learning and innovation.

Works Cited


