

“Flat” Scholarship and Research

- University web projects
- Open access journals
- Large scale book digitizing
- More research databases
- Google books
- Large academic portals
- Informational primaries
- Open access repositories
- Source collections
- Digital reference collections
- Competing ebook collections



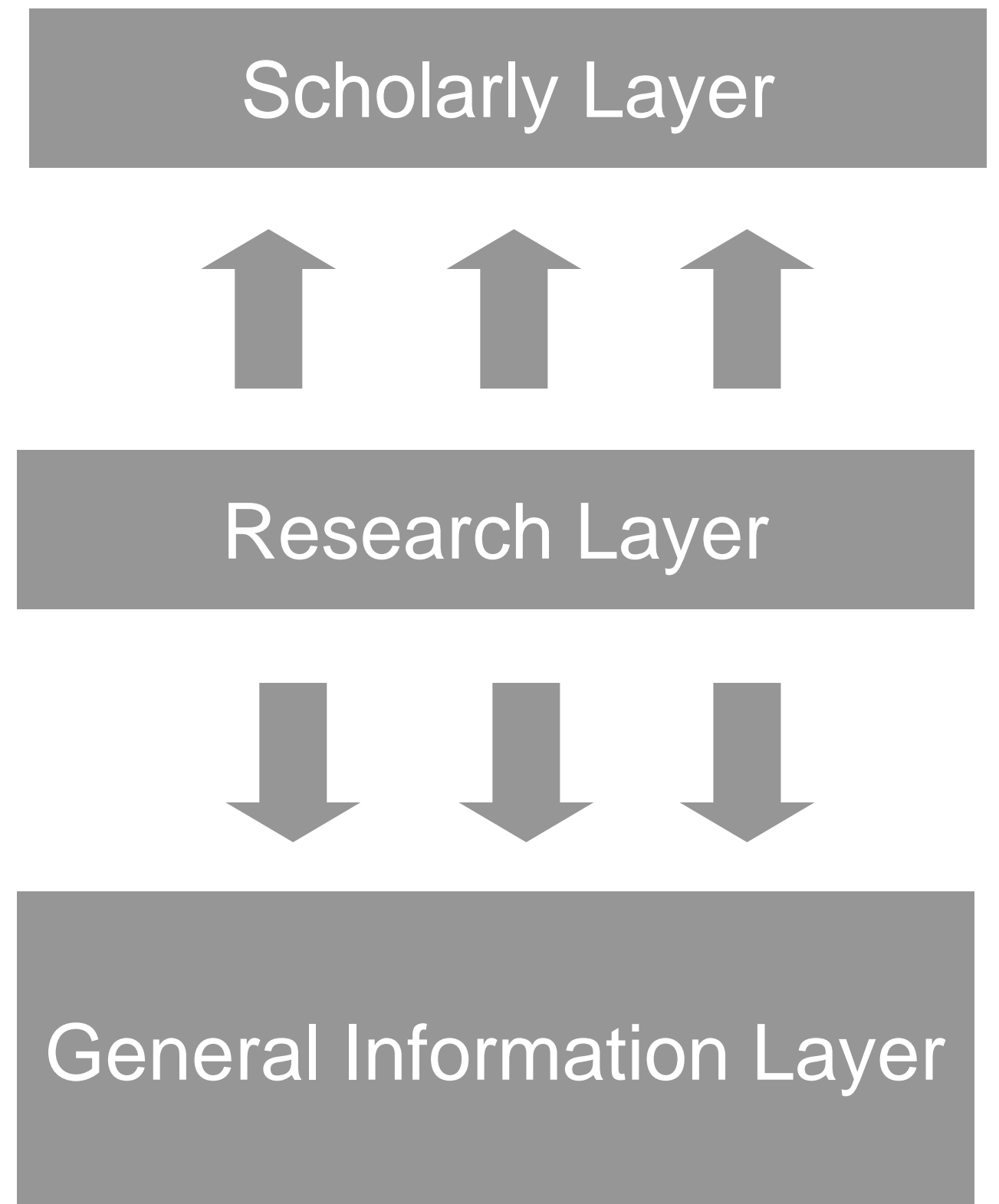
- Info overload culture
- Bypassing of libraries
- Rejection of experts
- Weakening of the traditional gatekeepers
- Hard to know what to trust

**“Like others,
I am drowning
in scholarly
research.”**

--David Forsythe, University of
Nebraska-Lincoln

Layers of Authority

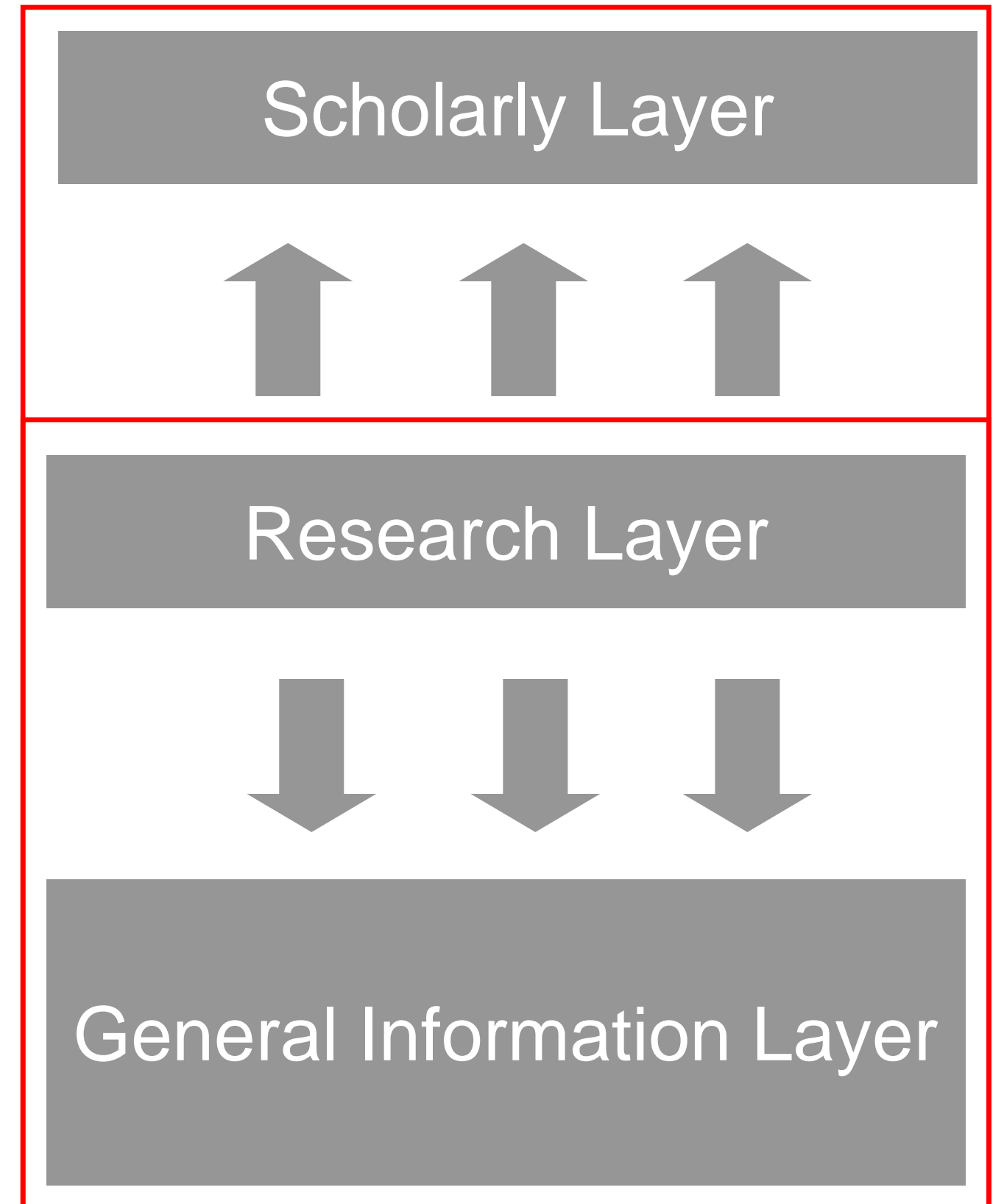
- Scholarly research layer: academic databases, publisher repositories, etc. (google books)
- Government databases
- Experts
- Reports: selective
- Large bodies of content
- Friends reviewed and updated
- Little scholarly validation
- Parents "library skills" as it did in the past
- Equivalent to the stacks
 - Co-workers
 - General reference books



Who's using what layer?

- General users
- Students doing research
- Scholars doing research

Research is done on all three layers



The General Info Layer

Students and the General Info Layer

Which resources do students turn to for obtaining background about a topic?

1. Course readings (97%)
2. Google (96%)
3. Scholarly research databases (93%)
4. Online card catalog (90%)
5. Instructors (87%)
6. Wikipedia (85%)
7. Government Websites (74%)
8. Classmates (71%)
9. Friends (57%)
10. Librarians (45%)

Students and Wikipedia

- Far more students, than not, used *Wikipedia*.
- Called *Wikipedia* “my presearch tool.”
- As one student put it, *Wikipedia* is ideal for big–picture background “in good English” and “putting me in my comfort zone” before moving on to more serious research
- Most students also said they do not tell their professors they use *Wikipedia*; they simply avoid citing it in their reports.

Conclusions about layer one

- Used mostly for orientation
- Organization tool
- Students understand the layers
- Low level gatekeeper to address content overload
- Not cited = no confusion
- Not overly efficient, but improved general info layer from what researches had before

The Scholarly Layer

Academics and the Scholarly Layer

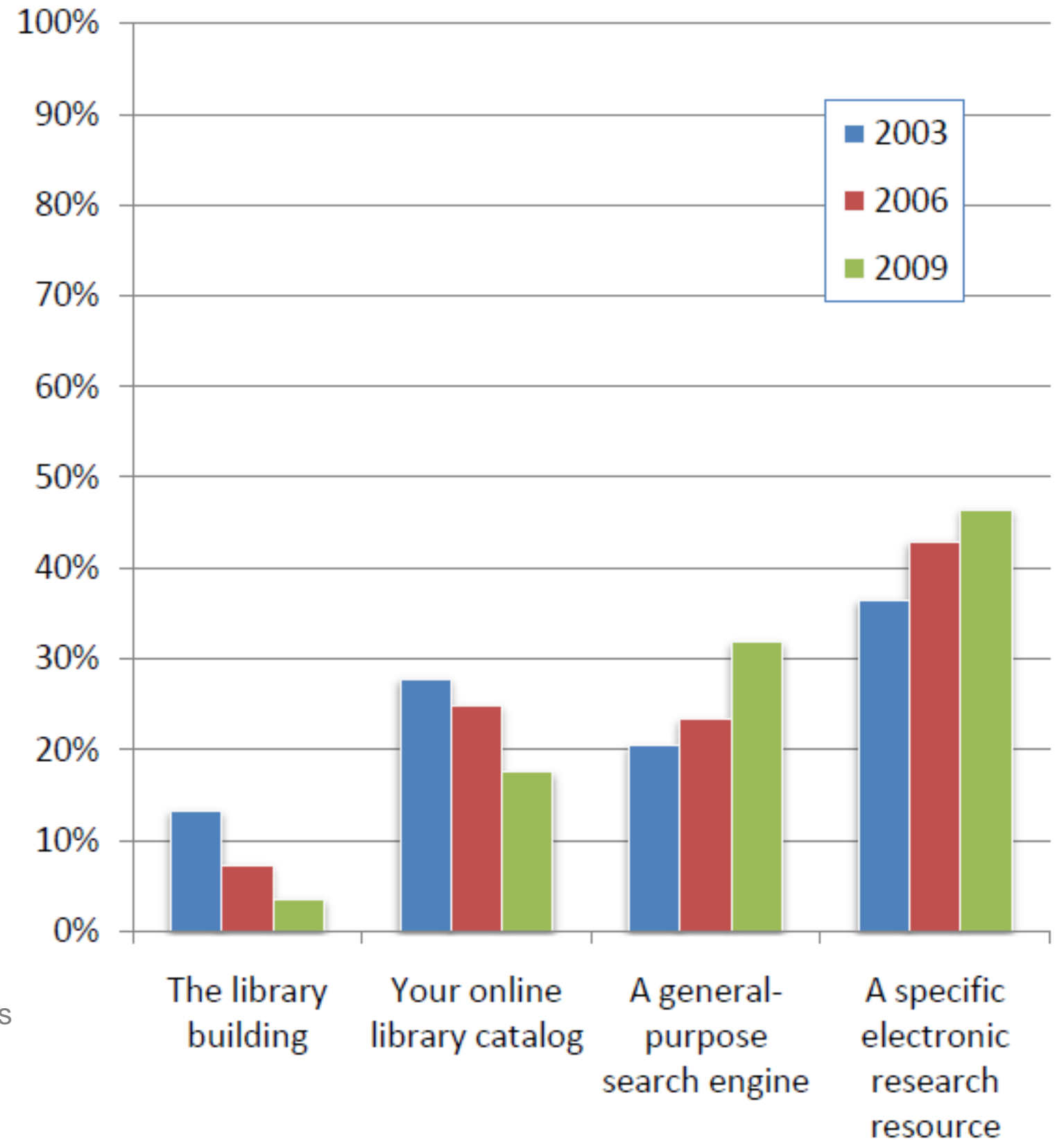
“Researchers are drowning in a deluge of raw data and published information and face a bewildering array of options for disseminating and sharing their work.”

--Chris Bourg, et al. *Support for the Research Process: An Academic Library Manifesto*. OCLC Research. Nov, 2009.

Scholars

- Sciences are leading the way in digital adoption, but all other disciplines are following
- Library is being separated from academic content in the discovery process
- “publishing” books tied to faculty evaluation slows down change

Figure 1: Starting point for research identified by faculty, in 2003, 2006, and 2009



Conclusions about scholarly layer

- Tends to be validated and appropriate for formal research
- Doesn't have mature organizational tools (often difficult to navigate)
- Restricted access (generally)
- Not easily discoverable
- Often provides some sort of scholarly context
- More focused and selective but can still be overwhelming for deep academic research

The Research Layer (the in-between)

What is the research layer?

- Free material, unqualified databases
- Historical and current materials blended in repositories
- Highly discoverable
- Prime example: Google books
 - ✓ Initially digitized complete holdings of 5 research libraries
 - ✓ Today contains more than 10 million titles
 - ✓ Non-copyright material goes in without question

But is a resource like Google Books bad for research?

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Magazine - Sep 25, 1939 - v. 7, no. 13 - 104 pages

This one new fact automatically throws the person of **Adolf Hitler** into unimaginably high relief. In retrospect, it eliminates many carefully reasoned

...

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Magazine - Oct 30, 1939 - v. 7, no. 18 - 92 pages

Adolf Hitler has a deeper personal interest in art. He himself was a painter whose struggles with art brought him no success and little satisfaction. ...

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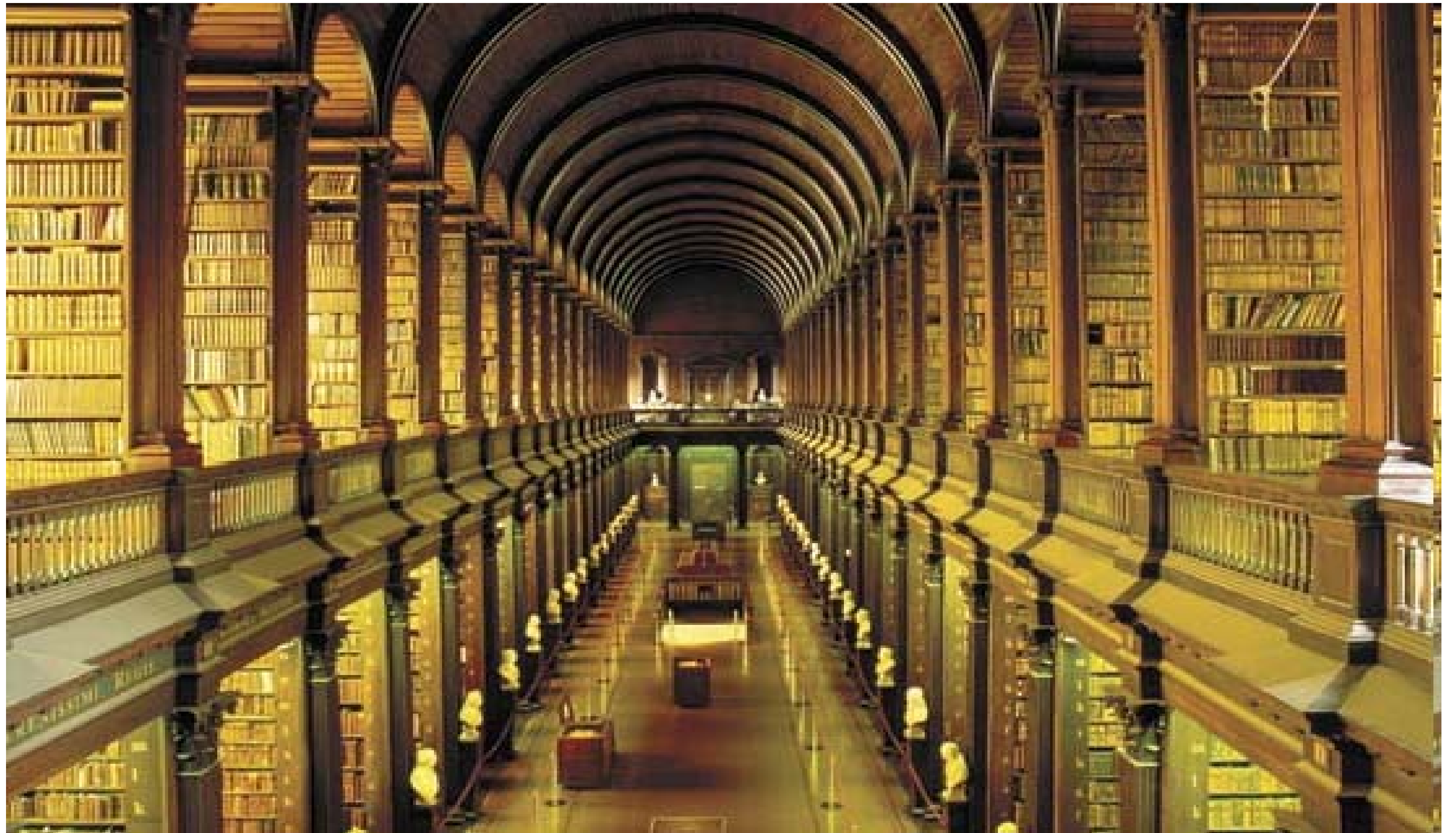
Magazine - Feb 24, 1941 - v. 10, no. 8 - 108

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Conclusions about research layer

- Will inevitably become the dominant research pool
- Call for Google to make it more responsible
- Publishers and academics must also build tools to make it more responsible
- If we can do this in a timely way, Google books will be the most significant game changer for scholarship in a generation

So what are publishers doing?

Oxford Bibliographies Online represents a new type of resource



- It is **selective**, rather than exhaustive
- It provides **expert recommendations** with critical supportive text and annotation
- Offers **structurally consistent** entries for clean intuitive flow between entries and modules
- Includes cataloging of **non-print material**, especially online resources
- Linking on multiple levels facilitates **movement to other resources**, whether online or available through a library's catalog

Overall conclusions

- General info layer working as it's supposed to
- Wikipedia not really bad in how it's used
- Scholarly databases need discoverability
- Research later needs signposts and context to become responsible
- Publishers and technology specialists need to focus on it