

Wild Literary Choices in Ranganathan's *Five Laws*; or, Forget APA and Change the World



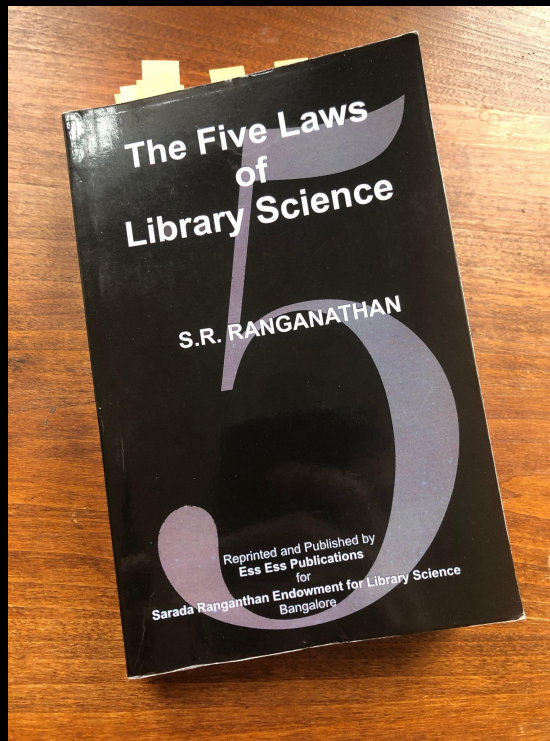
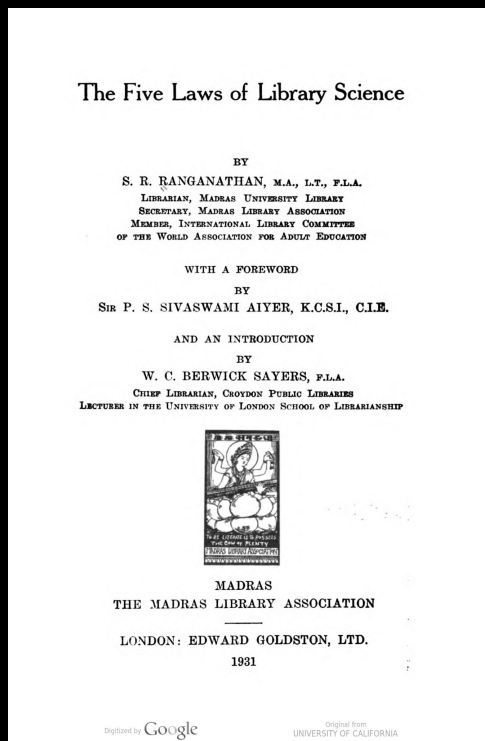
College of Information, Data & Society Conference 2025
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Background

Ranganathan



The Book



Current print edition
from Ess Ess Publications

Full text on Internet Archive: archive.org/details/fivelawsofibrar00srra

Gorman's *Five New Laws* (1995)

WALT CRAWFORD
MICHAEL GORMAN

FUTURE
LIBRARIES
DREAMS
MADNESS
& REALITY

784 | Feature

Five New Laws of Librarianship

By Michael Gorman

OUR PRINCIPLES FOR PROVIDING AND PROTECTING ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE NEED A 1990S SPIN, SAYS THE EDITOR OF AACR2

More than 60 years ago, the great Indian librarian S.R. Ranganathan published his *Five Laws of Library Science*. These brief statements remain as valid—in substance if not in expression—today as when they were promulgated. Ranganathan's Five Laws are:

- Books are for use.
- Books are for all, or, Every reader his book.
- Every book its reader.
- Save the time of the reader.
- A library is a growing organism.

Looking beyond the language of 1931, one can see truths in these laws that are as applicable to the practice of librarianship today as they will be to the librarianship of tomorrow. In the process of coauthoring a just-published book and thinking about the issues it addresses, I have had the temerity to formulate *Five New Laws of Librarianship*—a reinterpretation of Ranganathan's truths in the context of the library of today and its likely futures. I offer these laws in all humility, standing on the shoulders of this giant of our profession.



Libraries Serve Humanity

The dominant ethic of librarianship is service to the individual, community, and society as a whole. By "service,"

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mean both individual acts of help and the furtherance of the higher aspirations of humankind. Beyond that, service in librarianship implies an attention to quality, a desire to live up to and to surpass the expectations of library users. The question "How will this change make the service that this library gives better?" is an analytical tool of great effectiveness.

The psychological urge to serve is at the root of successful careers in librarianship and its psychic rewards are many. In the words of library educator Lee Finks: "It is, we should admit, a noble urge, this altruism of ours, one that seems both morally and psychologically good" (*AL*, Apr. 1989, p. 392-396). Another aspect of this law is its emphasis on humanity—our mission is both to the individual seeker of truth and to the wider goals and aspirations of the culture.



Respect All Forms by which Knowledge is Communicated

Many myths have arisen from the use of electronic technology—the "death of the book," the "paperless society," and other dreams and nightmares. The truth lies in respecting all forms of communication for the strengths that each brings to the conquest of space and time, in acknowledging that the library of the future will use all kinds of carriers of knowledge and information, and in studying the realities of each means of communication in the light of the history of innovation in communication.

Each new means of communication enhances and supplements the strengths of all previous means. This appears to be an ineluctable process despite the fact that each new means is greeted with predictions that it will eliminate previous forms of communication. There is no reason to cling to print on paper, images on film, or grooves on discs in cases when it can be demonstrated clearly that technology offers a cost-effective alternative. What is the point, however, in replacing print on paper, etc., when new technology is less effective, more costly, or has other disadvantages? The best approach to the future of libraries lies in this utilitarianism.

American Libraries • September 1995



Use Technology Intelligently to Enhance Service

Technology has created a false dichotomy in the minds of many librarians. It is almost as though one has to pick between two sides, each of which is violently opposed to the other. In reality, one does not have to choose between being a Luddite or a soulless technocrat.

The history of progress in librarianship has been a story of the successful integration of new technologies and new means of communication into existing programs and services. Librarians have, if anything, been sometimes overzealous in the embrace of the new. The intelligent use of technology involves seeking answers to problems rather than seeking applications of interesting new technology, weighing the cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and, above all, impact on service of any proposed innovation, and rethinking the program, service, or workflow that is being automated rather than assuming what one has.

Online catalogs are demonstrably superior to card and microform catalogs. Networked indexing and abstracting services are demonstrably superior to their print forerunners. It goes without saying that modern libraries should have electronic circulation and acquisition/serial control systems and should provide access, by one means or another, to the world of digitized data and faces of all kinds (numeric, bibliographic, image-based, and textual).

Looked at objectively, the relative roles of electronic communication and non-electronic communication (print, sound recordings, film, video, etc.) become clear. Electronic methods are best for "housekeeping" and for giving access to data and small, discrete packets of factual, numeric, and visual information (such as those found in many reference works). Each of the other media has areas in which it is the best. In particular, print on paper remains and will be the preeminent medium for the communication of cumulative knowledge by means of sustained reading.



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Protect Free Access to Knowledge

Two of the professional values advanced by Lee Finks are stewardship and democratic values. The former calls upon us to "take responsibility for the library as an institution." People of the future will only know that which we preserve. This is a weighty responsibility and one that should be in the minds of all librarians. Our parsimonious pursuit of the preservation of intellectual freedom for today's materials should, of course, be continued. It should be noted, however, that allowing the records of the past to disappear is a kind of censorship. Libraries are the collective archive of human achievement and the knowledge of the ages. This important role must be at the forefront of any consideration of technological change.

Libraries are central to freedom—social, political, and intellectual. A truly free society without libraries freely available to all is an oxymoron. A society without uncensored libraries is a society open to tyranny. For this reason, libraries must preserve all records of all societies and communities and make those records available to all. Putting an emphasis on the speedy delivery of empirical "information" to the detriment of knowledge would be a betrayal of that trust.



Honor the Past and Create the Future

We live in a historical age. The title that is known about the past is not used to inform the actions of the present. Anyone can see the bad effects on society, politics, and daily life of ignoring George Santayana's famous dictum, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." No one should cling to old things just because they are old, nor should anyone discard old things just because they are old.

The library of tomorrow must be one that retains not only the best of the past but also a sense of the history of libraries and of human communication. Without those, the library will be purely reactive, a thing.

With a sense of history and a knowledge of enduring values and the continuity of our mission, the library can never be destroyed. Along with this sense of time, future being contained in time past there must be the acceptance of the challenge of innovation. It is neither the easiest of prescriptions nor the most fashionable, but libraries need to combine the past and the future in a rational, clear-headed, unemotional manner. ♦

(The article is adapted from the book.)

Narrow Framing in Post-Gorman *Five Laws* work

Ranganathan Reformatted

by Friday Valentine
Cataloging & Metadata
Librarian, Oregon Health
& Science University

I am uncomfortably in the middle of "The Formas Wars." There are folks on either side of me saying "Print Forever!" or "Digital Only!" The more I consider the print vs. electronic wars the more I come back to our library science foundations, in particular, the theories of S.R. Ranganathan. Ranganathan proposed his Five Laws of Library Science in 1931.



First Law: Books are for use
Second Law: Every reader his or her book
Third Law: Every book its reader
Fourth Law: Save the time of the reader
Fifth Law: The library is a *responsive organism*

ISSN 1522-0222

Relevance of Ranganathan's Laws of Library Science in Library Marketing

"Print free
illustration"

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ISSN 1522-0222

The Library is a Growing Organism: Ranganathan's Fifth Law of Library Science and the Academic Library in the Digital Era

Five laws of library science in MOOCs environment

Anna Kaushik

1. Introduction

Ranganathan (1931) introduced the five laws of library science namely books are for use, every reader his/her book, every book its reader, save the time of reader and library is a growing organism. These are the most established fundamental laws in the library and information science domain and are pivotal in developing value-added services and providing these services to users in the most effective manner. Even today, these five laws can also be used in different contexts and redefine library research and services (McMenamy, 2007). Sen (2008) performed a study that revealed that these five laws can also be used in diverse context and format and similarly by others (Gama, 2016; Niveda,

2.1 Massive open online courses are for

all. MOOCs are not only for creation as an online course but must be used by learners online. This law emphasizes the need to develop quality MOOCs with a specific purpose that attract learners and can be used to achieve their needs. MOOC developers should assess why and when a MOOC is being developed and what their objectives. Critical thinking is required prior to developing a MOOC. Rainald (2007) said that the five laws of library science provide guidance to achieve these goals. A MOOC should be used at a maximum level so that its purpose can be achieved. If a MOOC does not reach intended learners and is not able to fulfil their demands, what is the need of

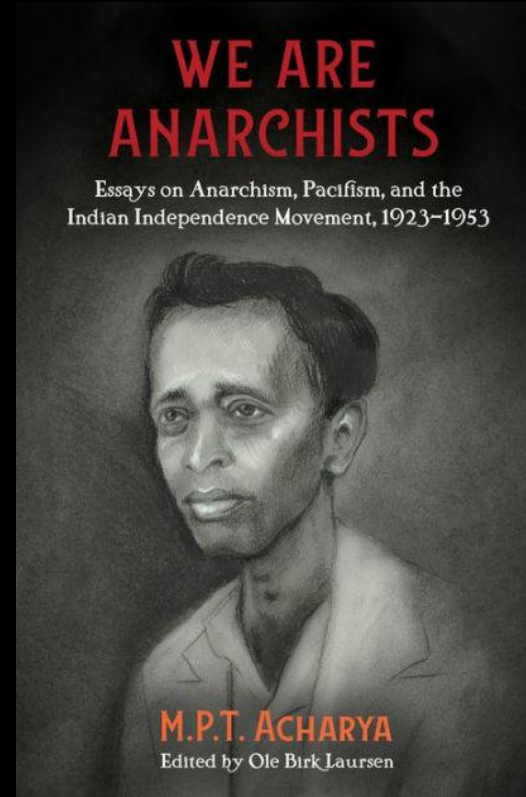
Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPPT) is the best example in this context.

2.2 Every learner his/her massive open online course
The selection of a MOOC topic should be made by considering the target audience, current demand, learners' choices, etc. A strategic plan needs to be formulated to connect every learner to his/her interested massive open online courses and reducing drop rates of the learners. This law seeks to identify the target learners and to make direct interaction with users. Comarway and Faniel (2014) also emphasized to first identify the targeted users and develop the library collection development policy, which can beal-

“Western interest in Ranganathan has not tended to recognize the importance of the epic political struggles that were taking place in India during his lifetime...” [And that] “identification with the Indian independence movement was central to his library theory. Ranganathan’s pioneering work of the 1930s challenged the ideological structures of colonial rule, advocating libraries and librarians as agents of a national political awakening”

(Broughton, 2024; Roe, 2010)

Reach the Target Audience... and Tread Lightly



Discussion

General Writing Style: GET PSYCHED!!!

Statistics show that during the first year there were no less than 25,000 readers using this Library. May the shadow of the ancient cedar in the public garden of the city of the Seven Hills never grow less! May it long provide shelter for this patriotic enterprise, in the service of the gospel, 'BOOKS ARE FOR USE'!

General Writing Style: *Get Romantic*

AMERICA

The Second Law of Library Science dropped the seeds of the Library Movement all through the world. Some fell on stony places, some among thorns, and some into good ground. But the seeds, that fell on the fields of the New World, appear to have been the first to sprout. They seem to have already reached the fruiting-stage and appear to have even commenced to scatter fresh seeds, far and wide. As the first gardeners of this new

Anecdotes

In another place, when the authorities of a library were solemnly discussing ways and means to meet a great increase in the issue of books, a veritable Daniel came “to judgment”.

“When do you have the greatest rush in the day?” asked the Daniel.

“In the evening, between 4 and 6”, somebody said.

“There you are,” came forth the solution, “Close the library at four instead of at six. That will end the bother”.

Anecdotes

Another interesting example of the extraordinary power of subject cross-reference in finding for EVERY BOOK ITS READER is the case of the ponderous composite volumes constituting the *Complete Works* of Count Rumford. A cross-reference card with the heading "Coffee" to pages 615-660 of the fifth volume containing an essay entitled *Of the excellent qualities of Coffee and the art of making it in the highest perfection* made all the difference in the career of that volume. Instead of being an inert victim to the piercing ravages of silverfish, it began its unending series of triumphant marches to the residence of one reader after another.

Drama

I]

HEIGHT OF BOOK-RACKS

25

First Law: Take your book-racks first. How do you expect the top of these sky-scrappers to be reached?

Rule of Least Space: Use a ladder!

First Law: That is more easily said. It is all-right with the trained nimble library attendants. Perhaps you do not know, that I am going to allow every reader to pick out any book he wants directly from the shelf.

Rule of Least Space: It is news to me. I have never heard of that.

First Law: Oh! I see, . . . Is it so? Yes, any reader will go to the shelf. Now imagine a corpulent reader climbing a ladder, for the first time in his life, in his enthusiasm for a book. Imagine his fiddling at the top, falling down and breaking his neck. Who is to pay the damages? What will your sister, the Rule of Least Cost, say to that?

Rule of Least Cost: No doubt, it is a matter for serious thought.

Rule of Least Space: What do you suggest then?

First Law: No rack should be higher than what can be comfortably reached by a person of average height, while standing on the bare floor.

Rule of Least Space: A height of 6½ or 7 feet?

The Finance Minister.—Its creation is due to the Royal Commission,¹ you quoted from.

The Director of Agriculture.—If you swear by one recommendation of that Commission it is difficult to see why another—perhaps a more vital—recommendation should be quietly passed over.

The Finance Minister.—What are you referring to?

The Director of Agriculture.—I shall read from the Report. I think, it is at page—

The Second Law.—Page 672, please.

The Director of Agriculture.—Thank you. Right you are. Here is what they say.

Drama

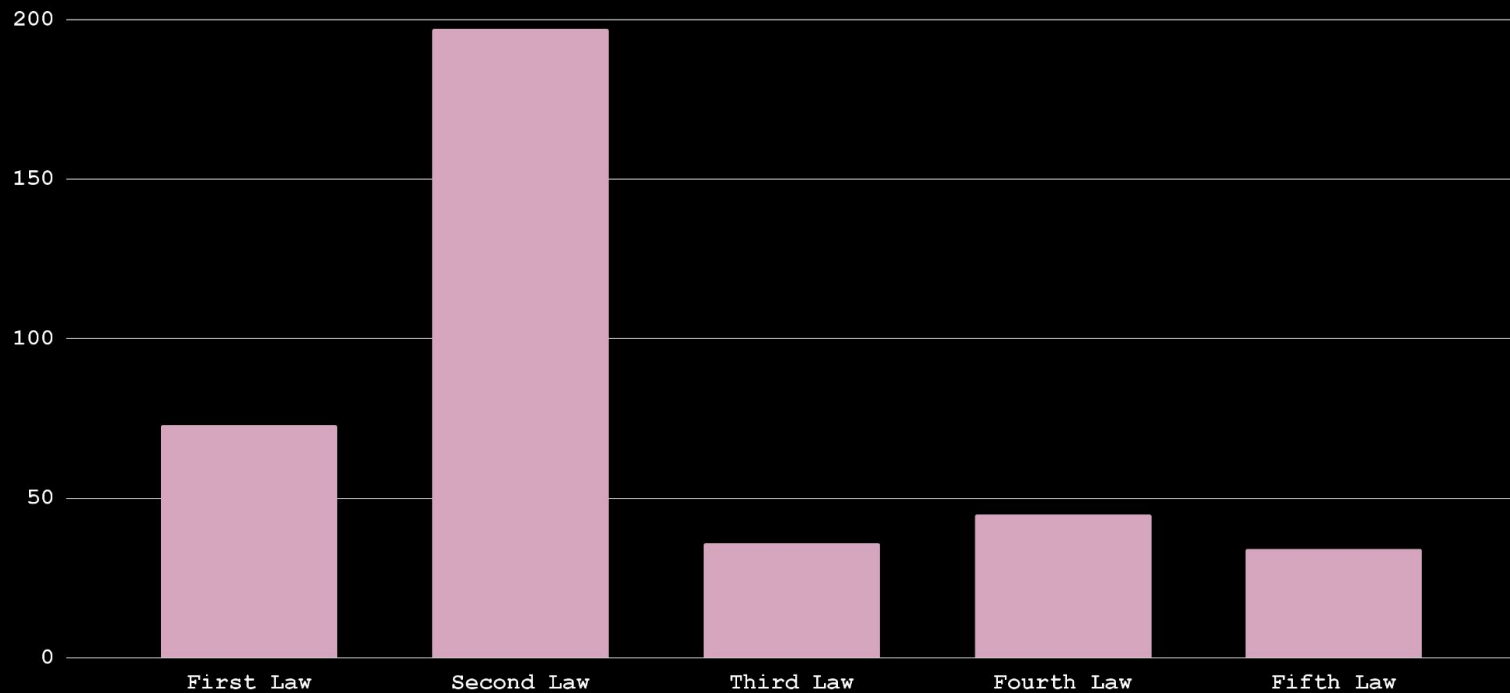
1. Compromise demonstrated
2. Freer political expression

Rule of Least Space: Costie! You remind me of the revolutionary words of Lord Lytton at the inauguration of the Public Library at Manchester in 1851. You remember his words,¹ “A Library is not only a school, it is an arsenal and an armoury. Books are weapons; either for war or for self-defence.”

Rule of Least Cost: Yes, I do. But they are the words of a pre-League of Nations-man. Our friend wants us to conceive the library as a regular peaceful workshop, which will prove to be a panacea for the ills of humanity and—what I am more concerned with—eliminate all wastage both in local administration and in the State.

The Second Law: Where the Rubber Hits the Road

Page Count



The Second Law: Where the Rubber Hits the Road

CHAPTER II

THE SECOND LAW AND ITS STRUGGLE

Equitable library service

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND LAW AND ITS DIGVIJAYA

Literature review:
Library systems worldwide

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND LAW AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Political admin for a robust
Indian library system

A Play (& Song!) About Equitable Library Service

II] BOOKS FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB 139

are readers specially appointed for the purpose—

The Psychologist.—And, in the meantime you can learn to read and write.

The Illiterate.—I should love to. But can I?

The Psychologist.—The library has a club for the liquidation of illiteracy. Have yourself enrolled in it and in six months you can yourself read without help.

The Illiterate.—May I bring my wife with me? She too would like to learn.

The Sailor.—Yes. Your granny too!

The mother of the dumb.—Now, what about my child. He is deaf and dumb.

The Second Law.—He is no special problem for me, provided he can read and write.

The mother of the dumb.—He cannot, that is my trouble.

The Second Law.—Then send him first to my sister, "EDUCATION FOR ALL". She will readily equip him with the power to read and write. Perhaps our friend the Psychologist may be able to give you more information.

The Psychologist.—It is now quite easy to teach the deaf and dumb. I shall arrange for it.

The mother of the dumb.—After he learns, can you give him books?

All sing in a chorus:

There's room for all

Let not the mean

Or learned dean

Restrict the books

T' a favoured few.

We've Books for all.

Books for the rich

And Books for the poor

Books for the man

And Books for the dame.

Books for the sick

And Books for the fit

Books for the blind

And Books for the dumb.

Books for the bungler

And Books for the wrangler

Books for the burgher

And Books for the cotter.

Books for the lettered

And Books for the fettered

We've Books for all

For one and all.

A stranger slips in singing:

Books for all; yes, Books for all

If and only if you add

Books for the land

And Books for the sea.

Reference to Political Prisoners



They would like to have more serious books—Economics, Politics, Metaphysics, Sociology and so on.

The Second Law.—Will they allow such books inside the prison?

The Psychologist.—Certainly, why not?

After all, it is with the greatest reluctance that the Government consigns these men of culture to prison. It is more to vindicate the Majesty of Law, than to deprive them of their liberty. Sunday-players and Salt-law-breakers are usually the tallest intellectuals of a community. They go to prison only for technical offences, and the Government also is anxious that such men should be allowed a good supply of books and periodicals, lest their forced inaction should end in morbid melancholy.

The Jailer.—Yes. That is the correct policy. I shall post you this night a list of their requirements.

The Second Law.—I shall take it on hand immediately it arrives and see that the books reach you by noon, to-morrow.

The Second Law and Its Digvijaya (tr. world-conquering journey)

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Negative Effects of the Colonial Academic Environment

The activities of the Publication Department of the Soviet Union illustrate the part that the State should play in the regeneration of a country like ours where more than half a century's divorce between the intelligentsia and the mother tongue has crippled the latter and has hence left the masses in utter ignorance of the recent transformation of the scientific, economic, political and cultural world.

Spicy Passages

The Universities may excuse themselves saying that the extension, rather than the dissemination, of knowledge was their primary duty and that, as they had not yet fulfilled even that primary duty owing to their absorption in the constant turning of the examination wheel, there was no near prospect of their developing an extension side. The Finance Minister of the Government, who seems to have been scared by the probable year-to-year profit and loss account of such an adventure, was unwilling to be convinced and pronounced that “The connection between the responsibility of the State for the general welfare of its citizens and the fostering of the publication of suitable books for their use is more rhetorical than convincing”.²

Spicy Passages

This tragic triumph of India in her fight against the intrusion of the Second Law of Library Science, nay, even of its precursor 'EDUCATION FOR ALL', is not a little due to the almost criminal apathy and neglect of duty on the part of her better placed "English-educated" sons. They have developed an abnormal short-sight which disables them from seeing beyond their nose, at any rate beyond their privileged circle. They glibly speak of India, and her millions, when they mean only the two per cent. of her millions who can lisp in English.



Takeaways

Some Questions to Roll Around

- What changes do I hope to see my research make out in the world?
 - What groups can facilitate those changes?
 - And in what style do they normally communicate?
- Are there goals a less formal writing style will allow me to achieve?
- Is what I'm writing fun to read?
 - If not, what techniques can you adapt from the type of material you read for pleasure?

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