Libraries for Sustainability

a presentation by
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Jan Visser's idea . . .

In 2000, in a draft concept paper describing the intent and rationale of the BtSM colloquia, Jan Visser asked

How does what we think . . . **about the scientific mind**, **intersect with what we know about** such domains as **learning**; cognitive development; **creativity** and **critical thinking**; **pedagogy/andragogy**; instructional design; the workings of the brain; the processes involved in experiencing and appreciating **beauty**; our senseof **belonging and solidarity**; the social **role of the media**; the nature of the **public debate** in different parts of the world involving questions about the **meaning of science** and the **meaning of learning?**

and he further asked

What implications can be derived from answers to the above questions for

** the place and role of libraries/media centers in the community

and

** the role of the producers of scientific knowledge, such as major laboratories, and their responsibility to open themselves up to the community

?

at BtSM 2005

Gilles Lavigne, working at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, commented on the fact that students there had to travel to the U.S. to do their research.

In December, 2010, Robert Darnton, director of Harvard University Library, wrote an editorial for the New York Times called

[The Library: Three Jeremiads](#).

In it, he explains how the academic publishing system works.

. . . we academics devote ourselves to research; we write up the results as articles for journals; we referee the articles in the process of peer reviewing; we serve on the editorial boards of the journals; we also serve as editors (all of this unpaid, of course); and then we buy back our own work at ruinous prices in the form of journal subscriptions . . . .

Darnton asks

How many professors in chemistry can give you even a ballpark estimate of the cost of a year's subscription to Tetrahedron (currently $39,082)? Who in medical schools has the foggiest notion of the price of The Journal of Comparative Neurology ($27,465)? What physicist can come up with a reasonable guess about the average price of a journal in physics ($3,368) . . .?

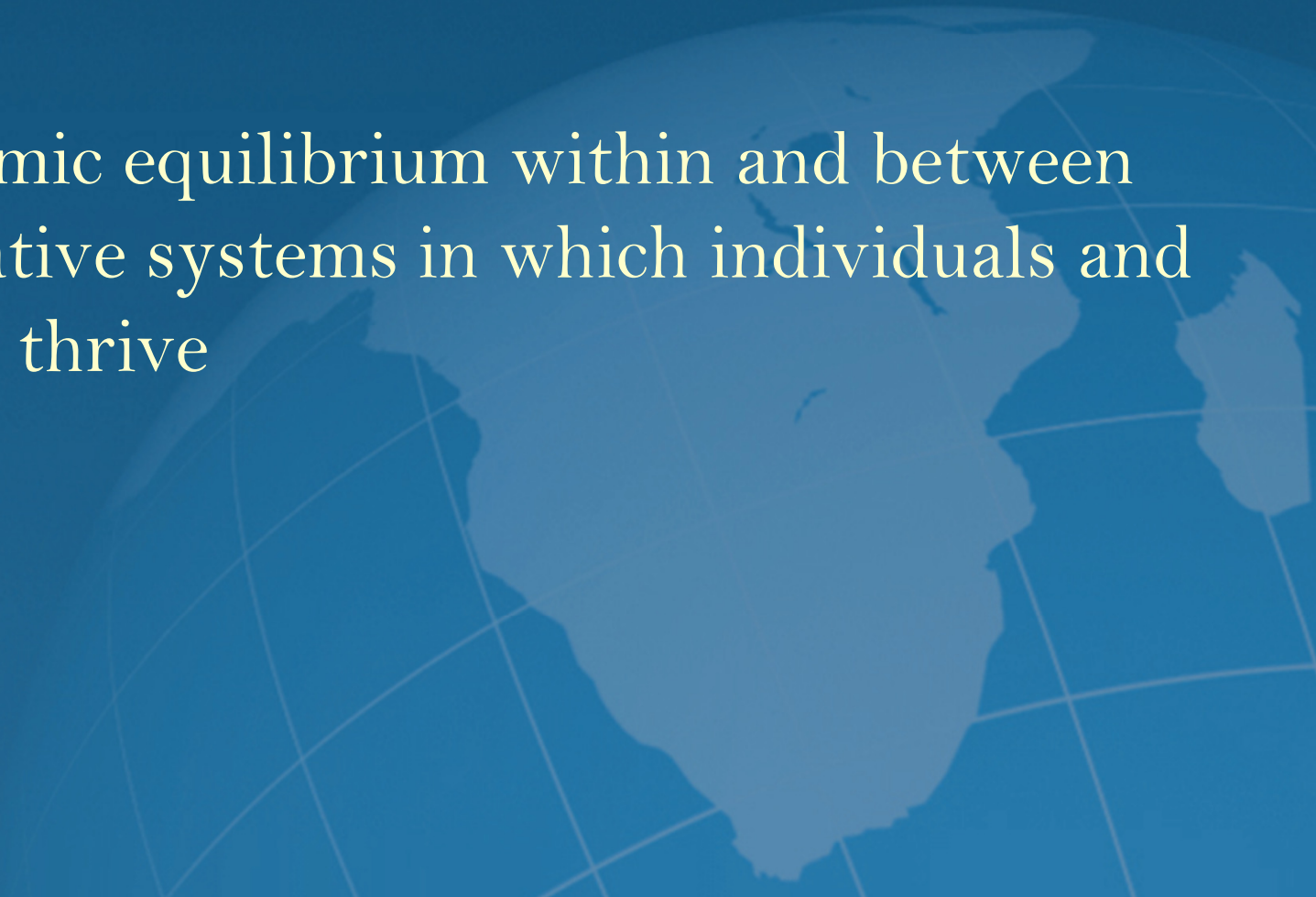# That's why.

So, what does this have to do with
SUSTAINABILITY?

(And what do we mean by *sustainability*?)

And what does it have to do with

BUILDING THE SCIENTIFIC MIND?

If this definition of SUSTAINABILITY works:

a state of dynamic equilibrium within and between self-regenerative systems in which individuals and communities thrive

and if we want the community of scientific thinkers (both within and outside of academia) to be

SUSTAINABLE . . .

then we need to address issues of

self-regeneration

dynamic equilibrium

and

thriving

within the context of the scientific mind.

How can the scientific mind, and by extension, the scientific community **thrive** in a state of **dynamic equilibrium** . . .

how can it regenerate itself . . .

without the FREE exchange of

ideas?

That's what we, in libraries,

are *talking* about.

FUNDAMENTAL to the library

concept

are

community support (by and of)

shared resources

access for all

How can we contribute to the building of the scientific mind?

How can we share valuable research, resources and ideas?

How can we enable everyone to participate?

One way is to submit research results to open access journals.

These are FREE for everyone.

Find out more about open access journals at the

[Directory of Open Access Journals](#).

We can encourage organizations with which we are affiliated to sign the

Berlin Declaration

on

Open Access

to

Scientific Knowledge

Stellenbosch University

has already

signed.

What else can we do?

It's worth thinking about.

Thank you.

Resources

Darnton, R. (2010, December 23). The library: Three jeremiads. *New York Review of Books*
   http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/dec/23/library-three-jeremiads/

Directory of Open Access Journals http://www.doaj.org

Stellenbosch University Sun Scholar Research Repository http://scholar.sun.ac.za/

Visser, J. (2000). The scientific mind in context. (Draft concept paper). Available from http://learndev.org

Proposed definition of *sustainability* by Diana Stirling.