In the Belly of the Whale: What Reference Collections Look Like in the 21st Century
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Call to Adventure

• The hero (the librarian) is called to adventure by some external event or messenger (publishers, societies, a new generation of students).
The hero’s journey

From www.monomyth.org
An Ordeal or an Adventure?

How we react and tell the story may make the difference.
The Traditional Story

- Reference is in person, face to face
- Classroom instruction on how to evaluate sources
- Print only resources
Crossing the threshold

• To develop a new story we need to know the tradition and think about the future.
Who am I?

- What are the qualities I possess as a reference librarian?
- What kind of positive story can I think of that reflects these qualities?
Who are we?

- What are our beliefs about reference and instruction?
- How can we demonstrate these beliefs through specific examples?
Where are we going?

• What do we see in the future for reference collections?
The New Story

• Balancing print and electronic resources
  – What is available?
  – How does it compare?
  – Who are our patrons and what do they use?
What is available?

• More reference sources are converting to online.
How does it compare?

• How do we measure?
• What is lost and gained?
• How do we weigh these given the generation we are serving?
Who are the Millennials?

- Born after 1984
- Entered college beginning in 2000
- Have always had computers
- Consumers of education
- Visual learners and multitaskers
A 2002 OCLC survey revealed that 80% of undergraduates use a Web search engine for all or most assignments, while only half used the library’s subscription databases.
How Millennials find information

• The same survey revealed that 50% use Web portals such as Yahoo, Google and MSN.
How the Millennials find information

• 2003 NSSE Survey found that 83% of students use the Web to find resources.
• 2002 Pew “Internet goes to college” found 73% of students do so.
How do we...

• Relieve the stress of change for the hero?
• Deliver the story of what the Internet can and can not provide?
Old truths still hold

• Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information on it.
  – Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)
Continuing the journey

• Will the hero accept the call willingly or reluctantly?
• Who are the helpers?
• How will the journey proceed?
Discussion & Questions?