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## **IN DEFENCE OF TRADITION: THE LIBRARY AS A MEANS TO AND AN END IN**

The title presents a paradox, whereby the paper addresses a rather contentious issue about the place of libraries in the 21st Century. South African librarianship is in a state of flux. Despite the opportunities and challenges that new technologies present to libraries, the question remains whether the library in a sense is not abdicating its social responsibility. Should the library have a social responsibility? The paper examines the current trends in librarianship and the role of libraries / librarians with the applications or embrace of new technologies against the thinking of traditionalists like Pierce Butler, Jesse Shera, Ranganathan, to name but a few. It furthermore draws on the views of others like John M Budd (2008), who in his book *Self – Examination* posts a number of questions on values, norms, democracy. This paper does not defy the great opportunities that new technologies can present but argues for a revisit of the fundamentals of librarianship and the necessity of traditionalism especially in a South African context. The paper furthermore draws on current research on the role of the library in socio – economic issues.

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