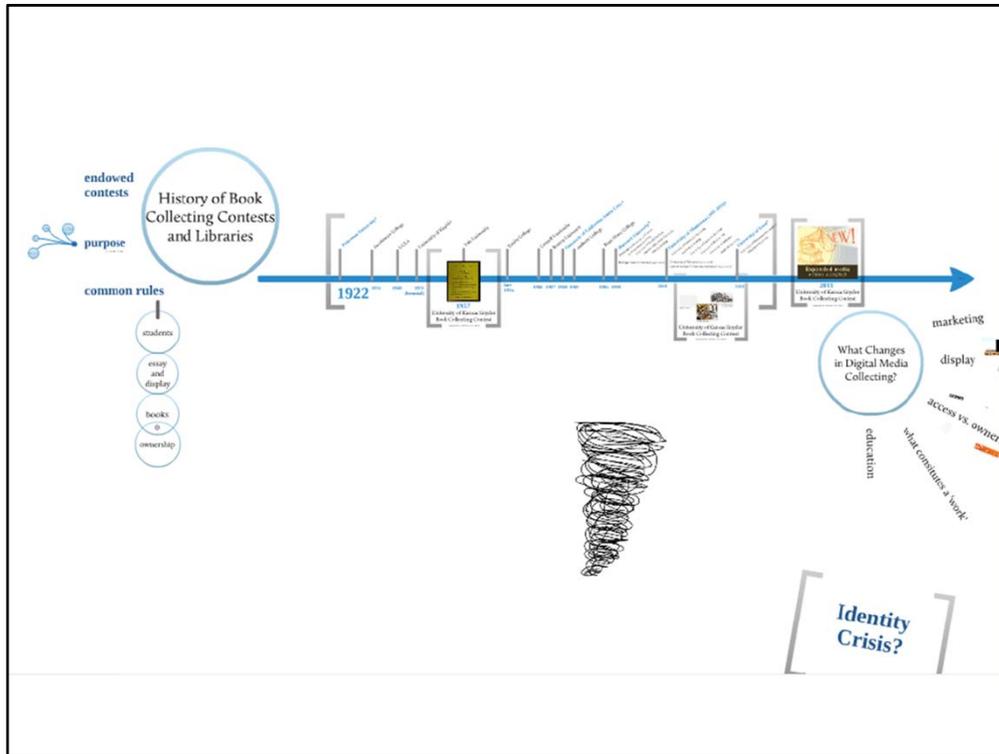


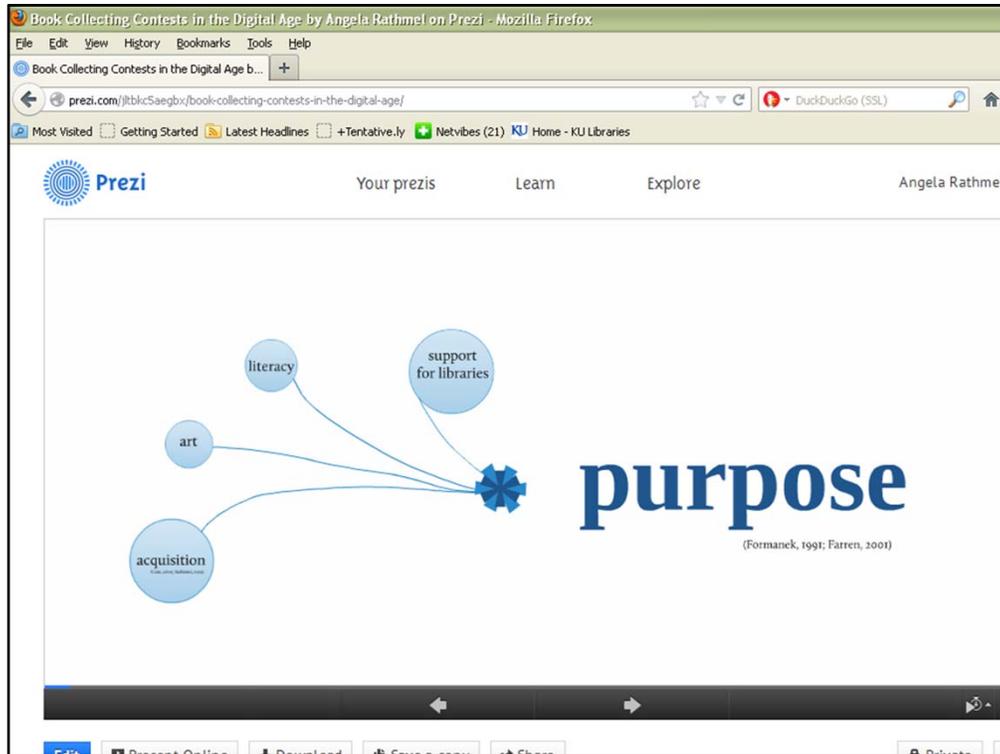
# Book Collecting Contests In the Digital Age: Relevance and Impact of New Media

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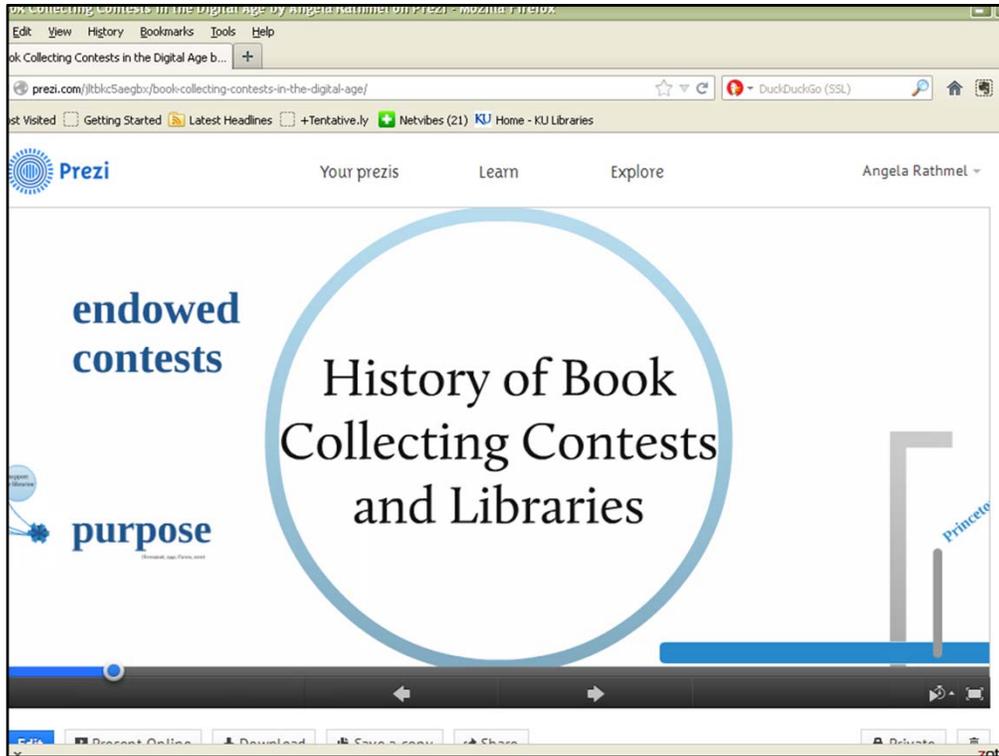
Good afternoon! Our topic is book collecting contests and the impact that the digital age may or may not be having on them. [did a bit of explaining what a book collecting contest is, since as I was explaining my topic to someone earlier in the day, their initial assumption was that it was like a book scavenger hunt]. To narrow the focus a bit, I'm just talking about student contests sponsored by colleges and universities. the case study that spurred our research is the Snyder Book Collecting Contest at the University of Kansas. I'll be sharing more history as we go, but first a bit more about how this all started.



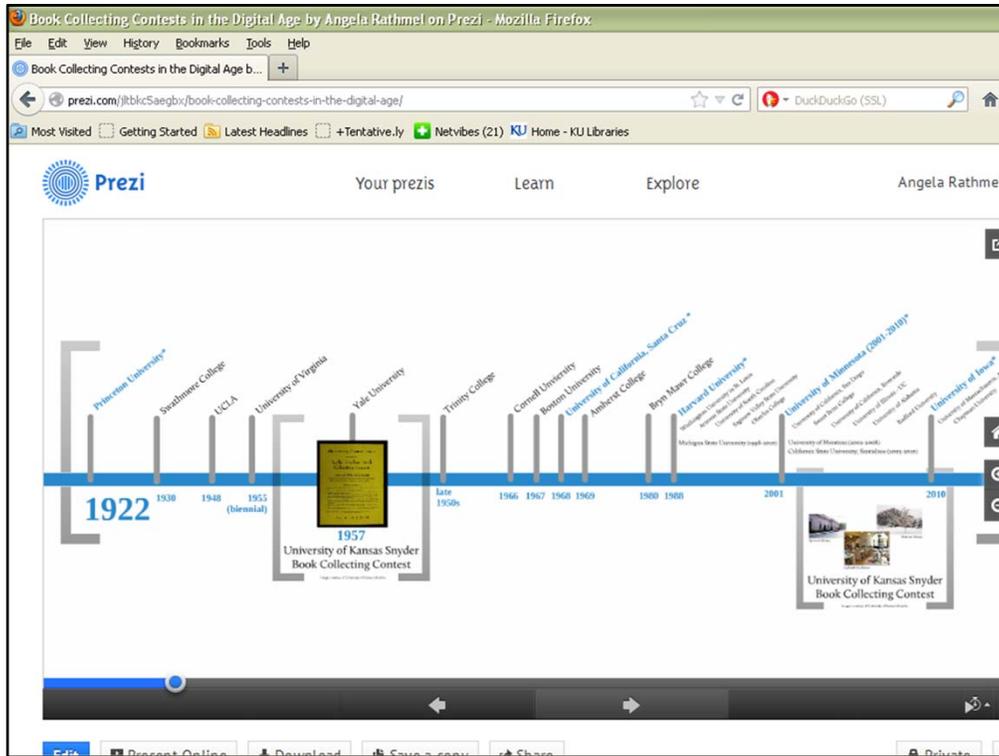
When the Snyder book collecting contest committee, of which I'm a member, decided this past year to add new media as a component of collections that could be submitted, we weren't sure what the response would be. Participation had been slowly dwindling and this change was seen as a way to bring in new people, who may not collect books, but who would still fall into the category of collector. The results were both dismal and disappointing. Angie and I decided to examine both these results and the possible underlying causes, along the way looking at a history of college and university's book collecting contest approaches and seeking to understand better how these contests can be used as tools to educate our users about the evolving world of collecting, what ownership means in the digital age, and how we are more than just warehouses for books, but also partners in information literacy.



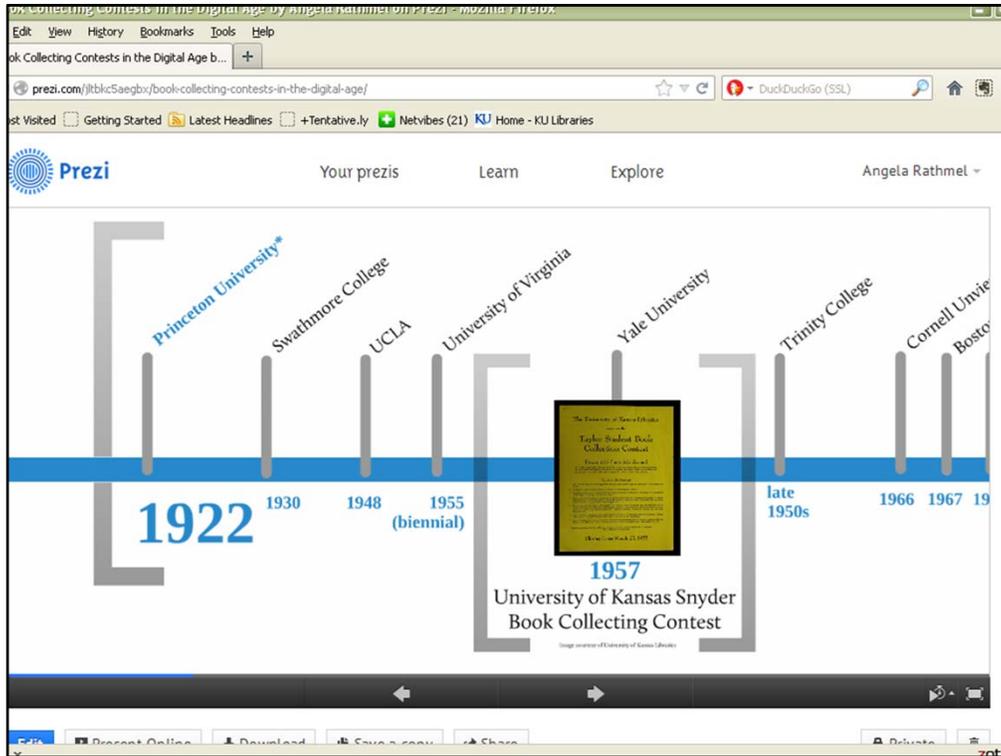
The first documented book collecting contest began in 1922 at Princeton University, and from the start they were seen as useful tools for promoting a love of books and reading, and as a way to cultivate future library donors. In some cases, a secondary focus of the contest is on the artistic quality of the book as an object or artifact, but they primarily try to draw out the connection between the art of collecting, the motivation to acquire, and the meaning to the collector of the comprehensive whole. All of these are areas in which libraries have traditionally served their users, and so they provide a natural fit for libraries to use the contests as a way to connect to users, including future donors.



Those connections have often resulted in partnerships between libraries and donors in the creation of endowed book collecting contests, where the benefactors understand the library's mission and support the contest as a way to connect with future donors of like mind.



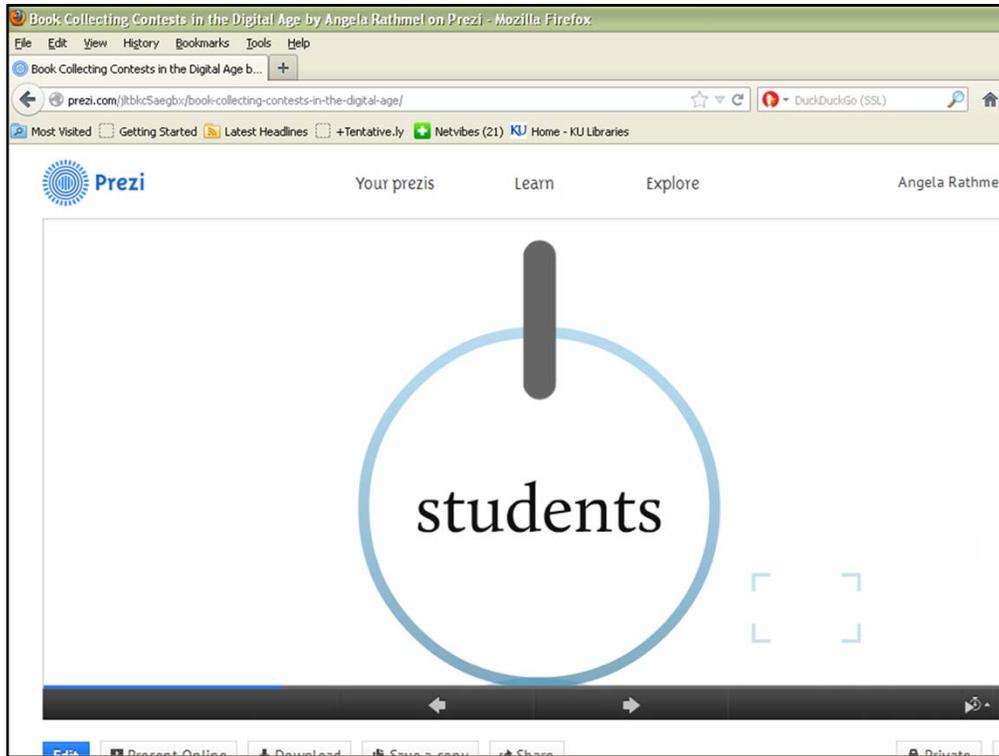
For a better idea of the number of contests across the US, we gathered data from the ABAA, FABS, the Center for the Book, and the Rare Books and Special Collections division of the Library of Congress. We found 37 documented student book collecting contests held at universities and colleges. You can see Princeton as the pioneer on the left in 1922, and a majority of contests starting up between 1980 and the present.



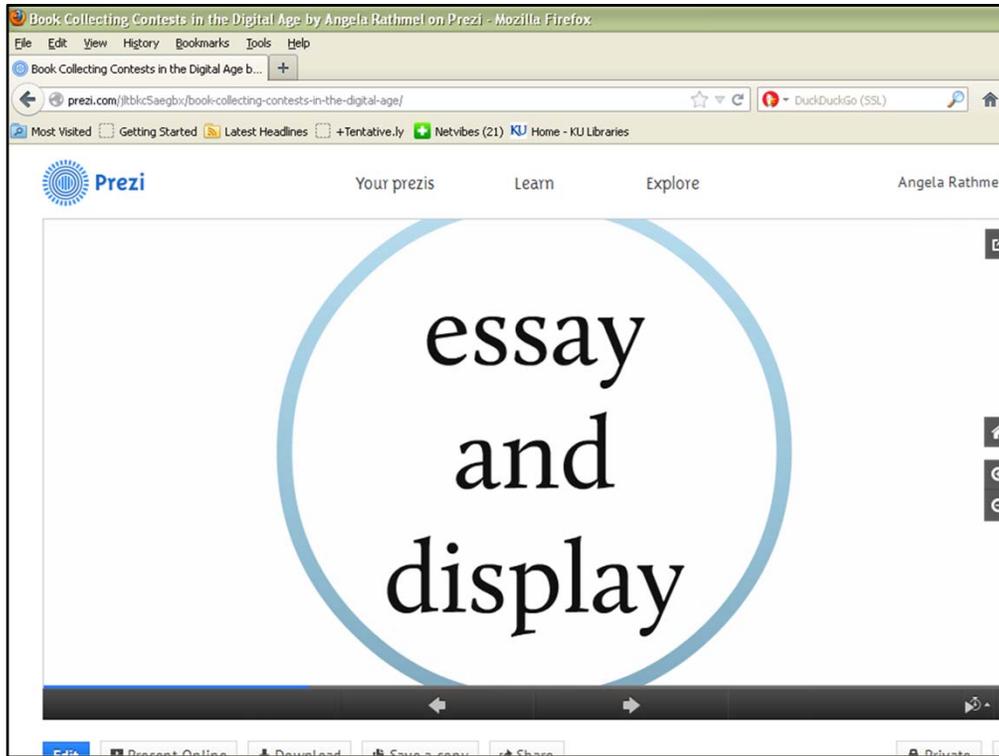
KU's Snyder Book Collecting Contest was started in 1957 with an endowment from Elizabeth Snyder, and it's among the oldest and longest-running of these contests.



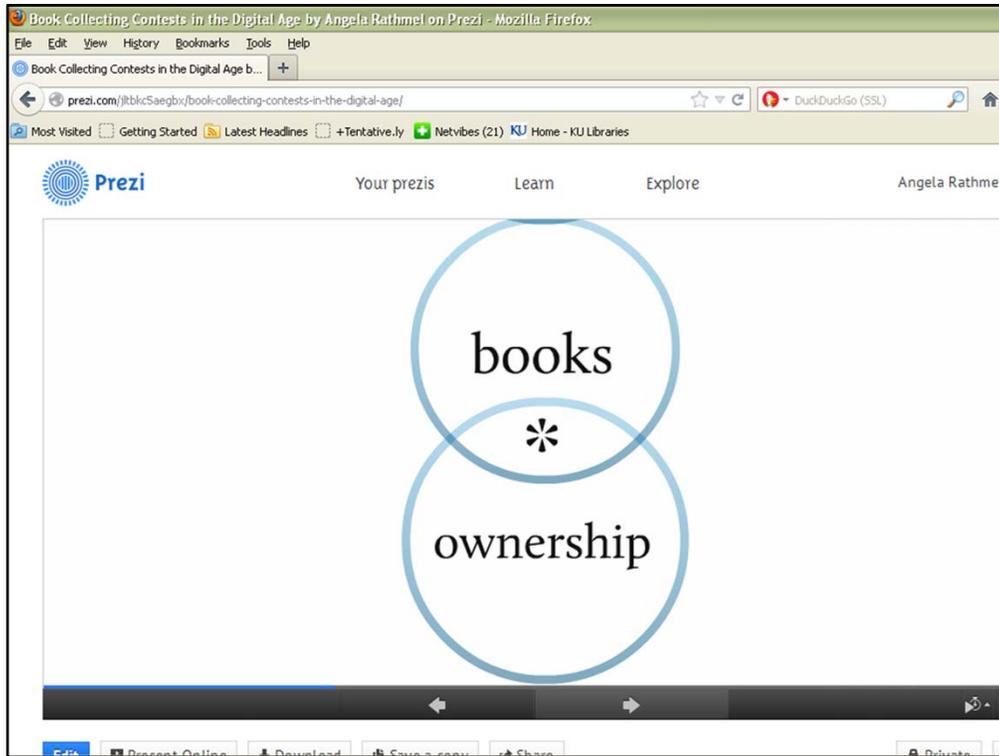
So first we considered what all of the contests have in common. Generally, the majority of the contests mirror the rules of the National Collegiate Book Collecting Contest, which have 4 common factors:



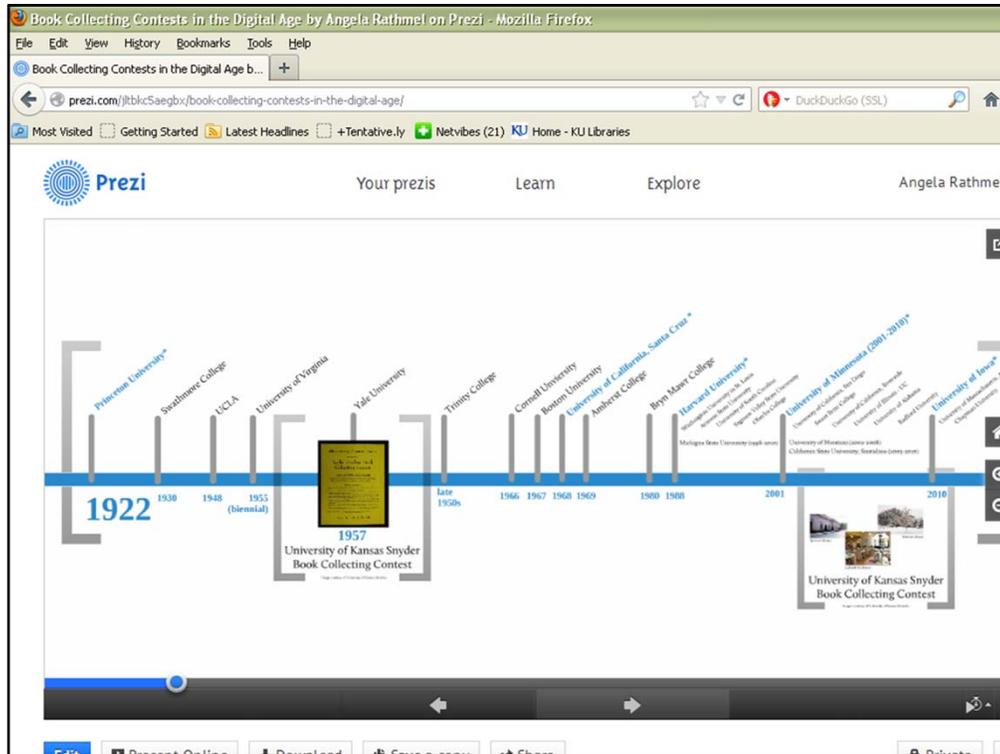
First is eligibility - contests are open to enrolled graduate and undergraduate students, and there are usually separate divisions for graduate and undergraduate. A few contests are strictly undergraduate, while Yale awards senior and sophomore prizes.



Next is the essay requirement, where contestants are asked to write an essay about their collection: how they chose their focus, acquired the pieces, and the overarching meaning of their collection, along with an annotated bibliography that highlights the items that form the core of the collection. The contests usually culminate in an event at which the students display their collections, and are sometimes interviewed about their collections by a panel of judges.



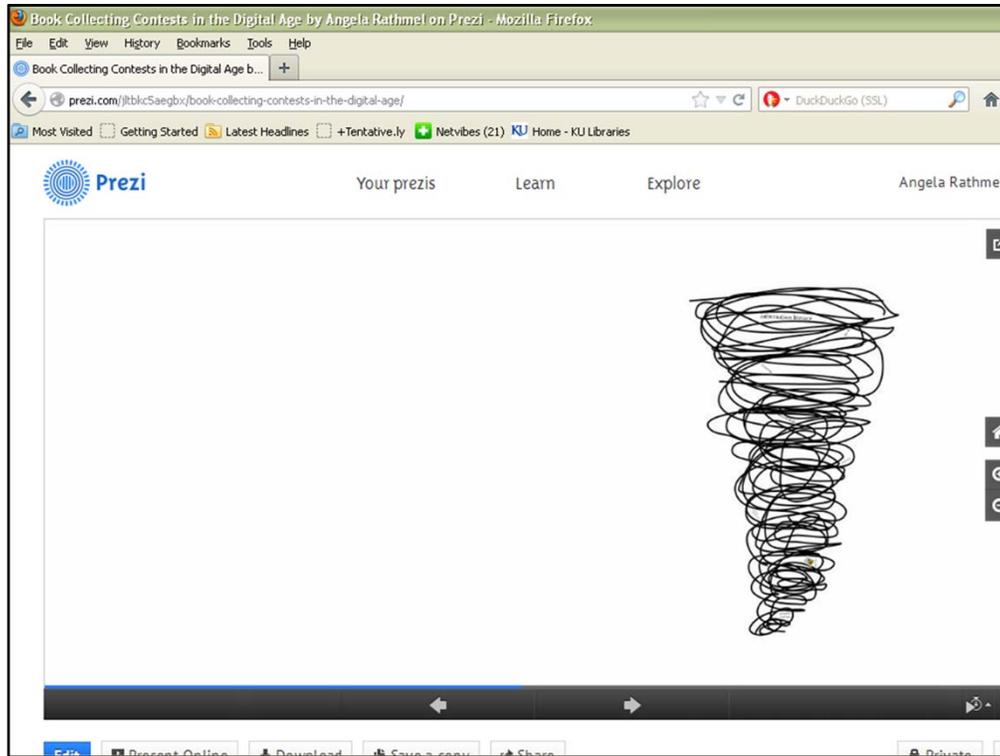
Finally, there is a strong focus on the books, and an emphasis on ownership of the books in the collection. This is the place where we begin to see challenges when digital content is allowed for inclusion in the definition of a collection.



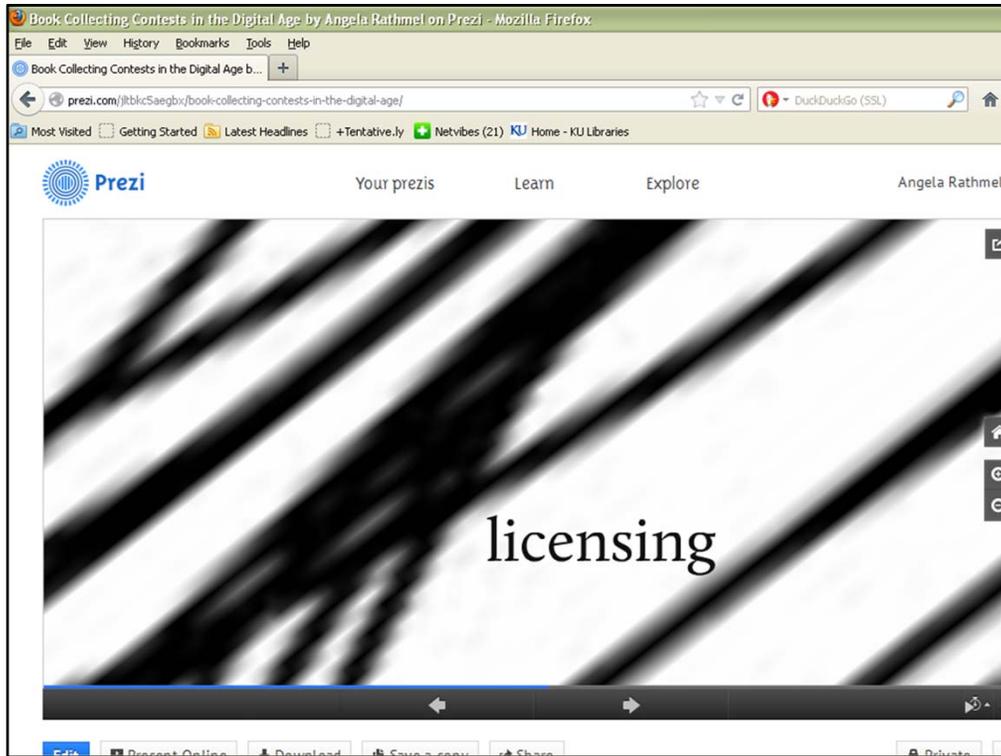
I'd like to highlight some notable exceptions to the book-only and ownership-required rules:

- The UC Santa Cruz and one of three University of Iowa contests are unique exceptions in that participants create their own collection from scratch, and ownership of the items is not a requirement.
  - Univ of Iowa also has a "other than book" prize but interestingly, the rules still specify these as physical objects (not digital)
  - Harvard is an example where competitive collections can be something other than books, in that it also accepts art work.
  - Univ of Minnesota, a contest which began in 2001, includes digital content of all sorts and represent a first concrete example of a test to both the question of books and ownership.
  - Many others have either kept silent on the digital content issue, or only include non-book or digital content as a portion of the collection. Others firmly reserve the contest for books to adhere to the integrity of the endowment.
  - Princeton, while reportedly not accepting digital content, did edit the language of their rules recently to include content 'like what libraries might contain'. In this way, opening itself up to questions of exception to both books and ownership requirements as these other contests have perhaps unintentionally also done.
- So what we think these exceptions illustrate is the fluid nature of our understanding of 'ownership' in the context of library collection-building, especially when we

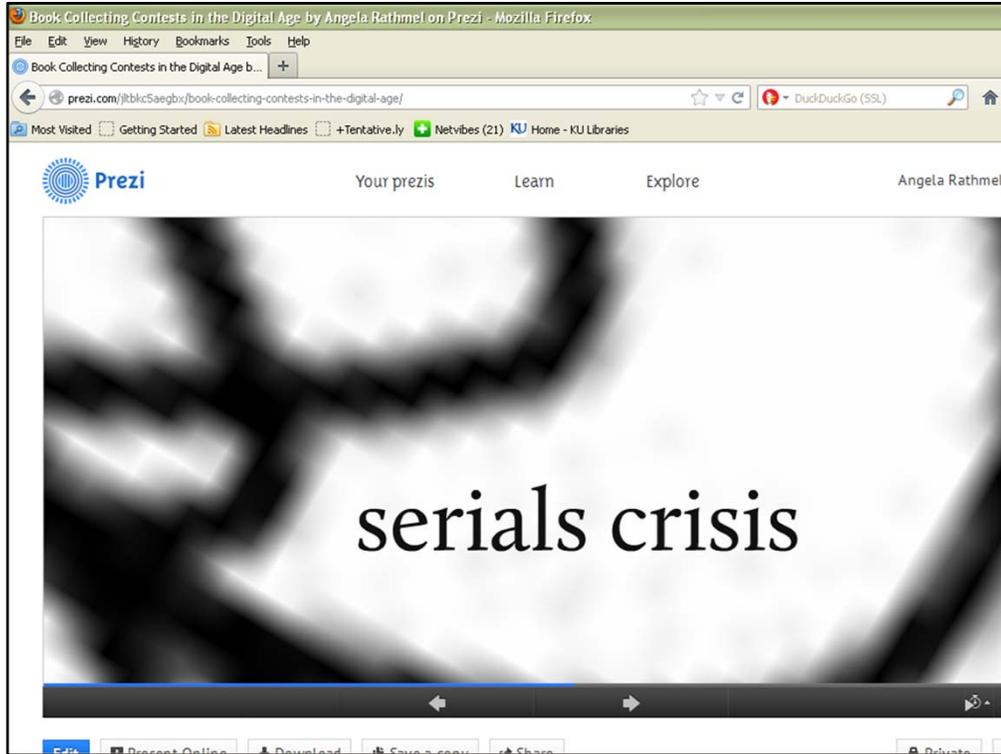
consider digital content that is accessed more than it is owned.



A review of collection management literature from 1997 to 2003 by Phillips and Williams shows that libraries were beginning to focus on the question of access versus ownership as early as 1997, when libraries first began to add digital objects to their collections. But this concern was never fully addressed as it was pushed aside by other issues of professional practice that dominated the discourse. We've envisioned this as a tornado of issues that have made it a challenge to fully address access versus ownership, including...



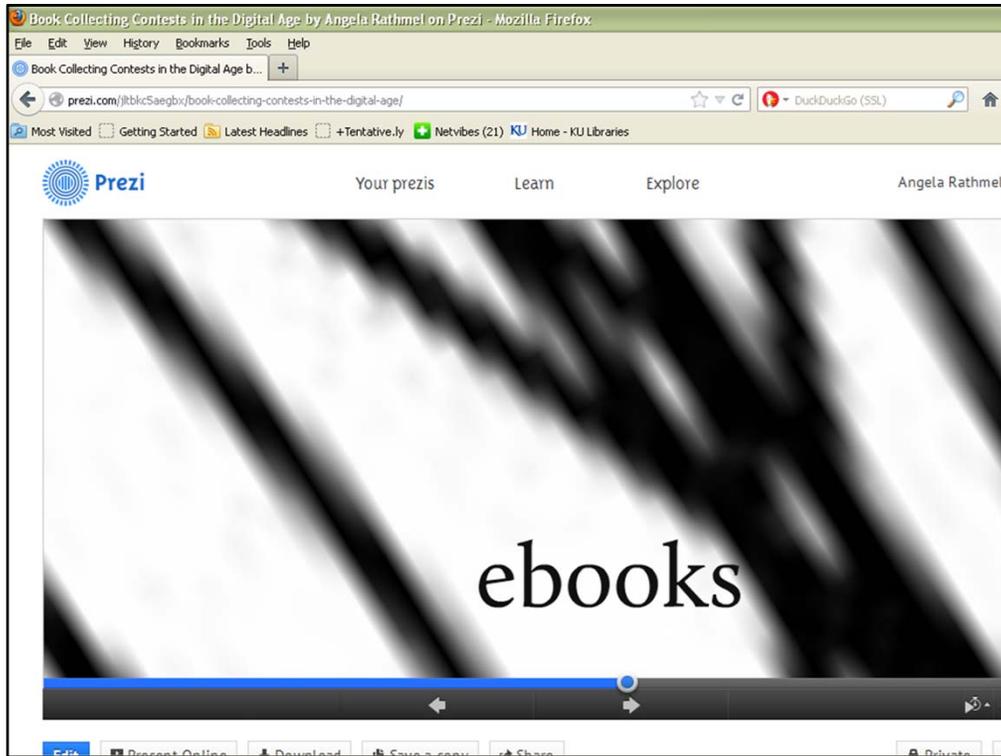
licensing,



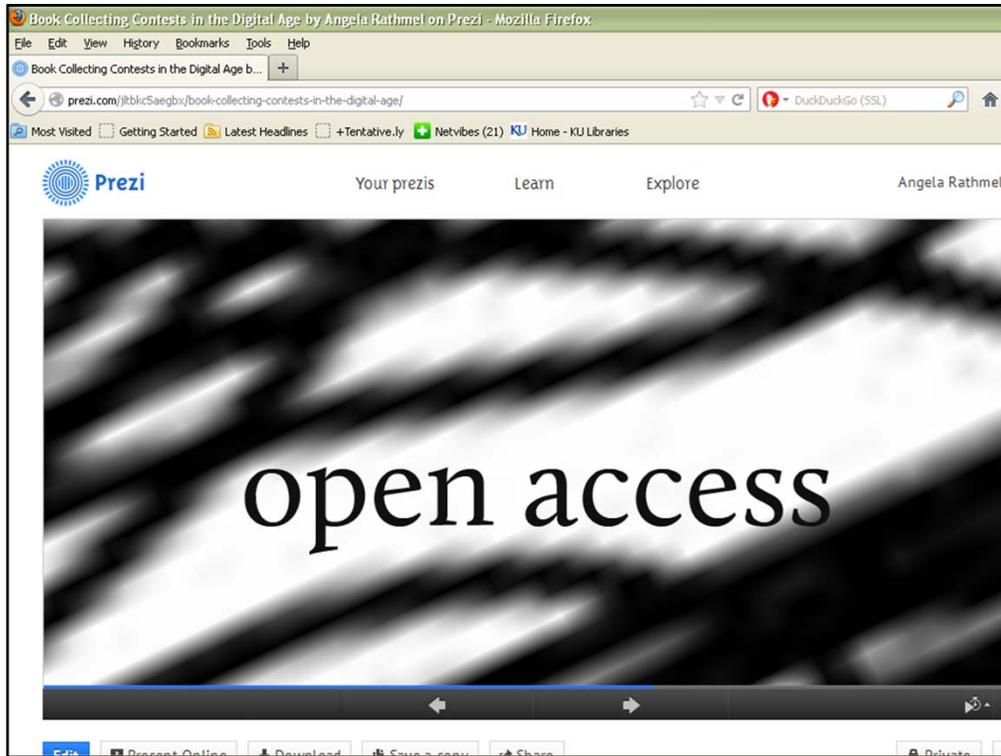
the serials crisis and other budget cuts,



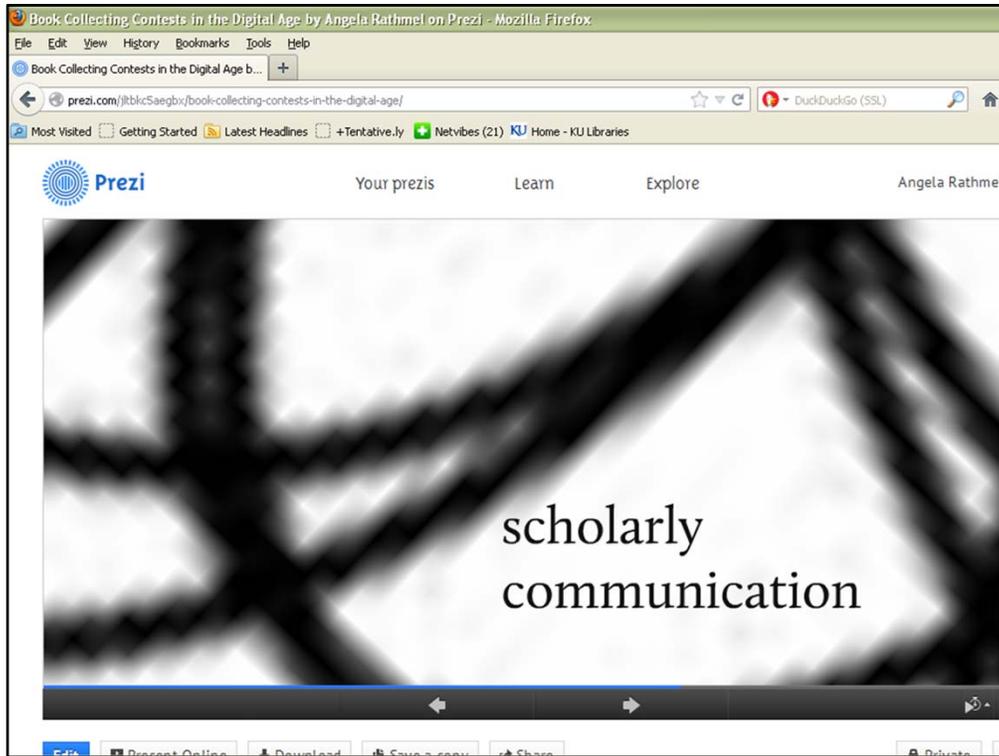
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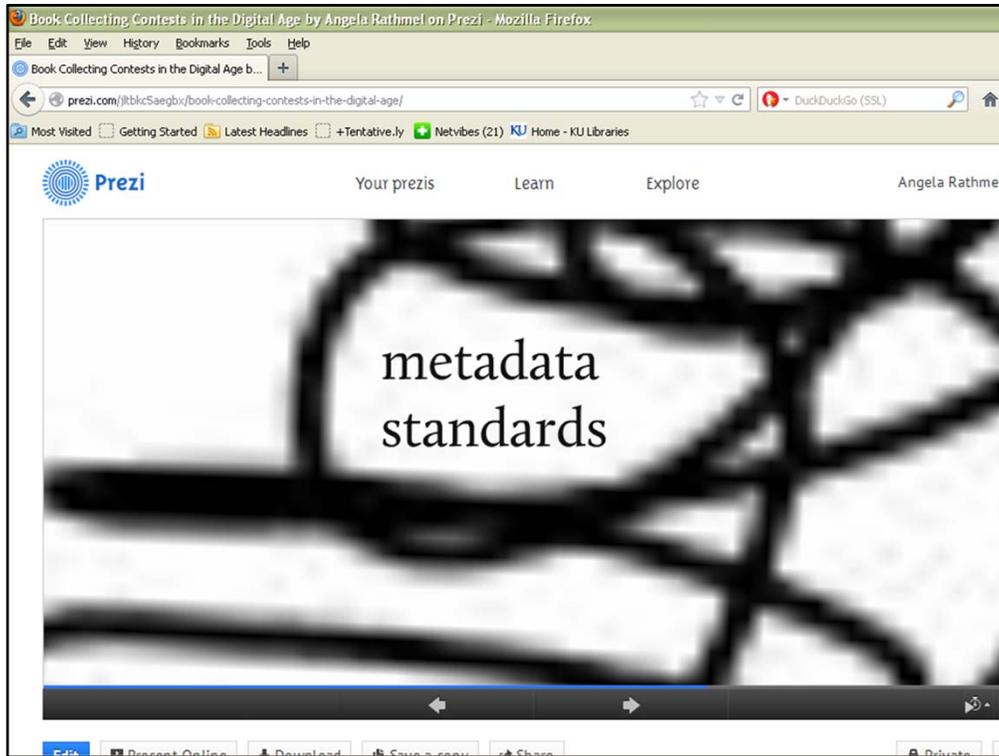
ebooks,



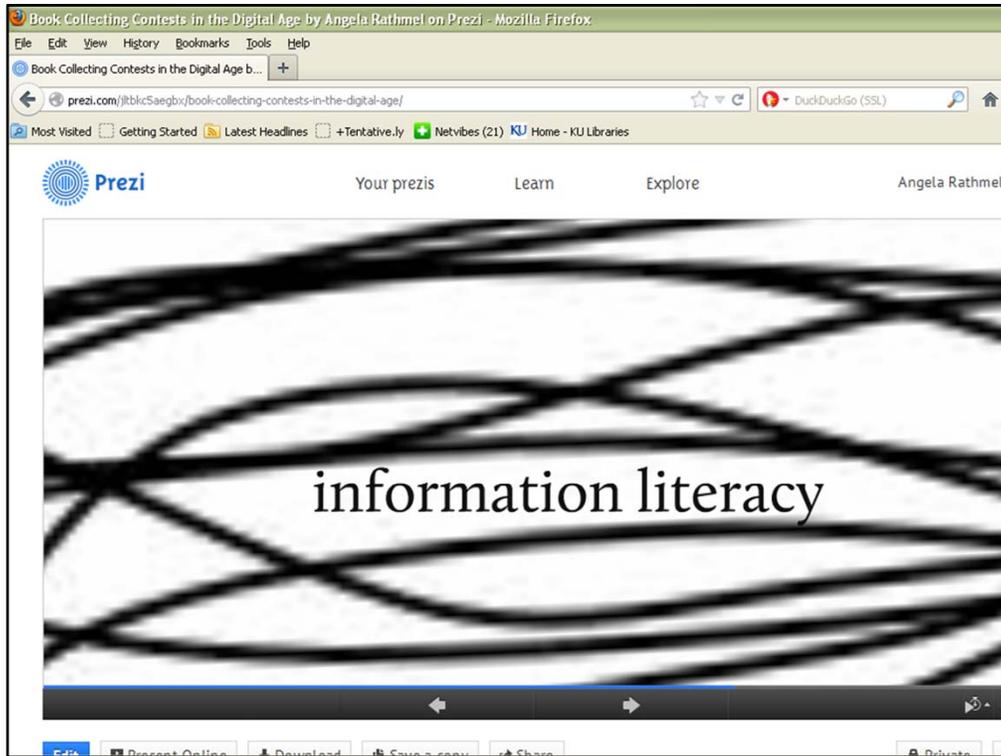
open access



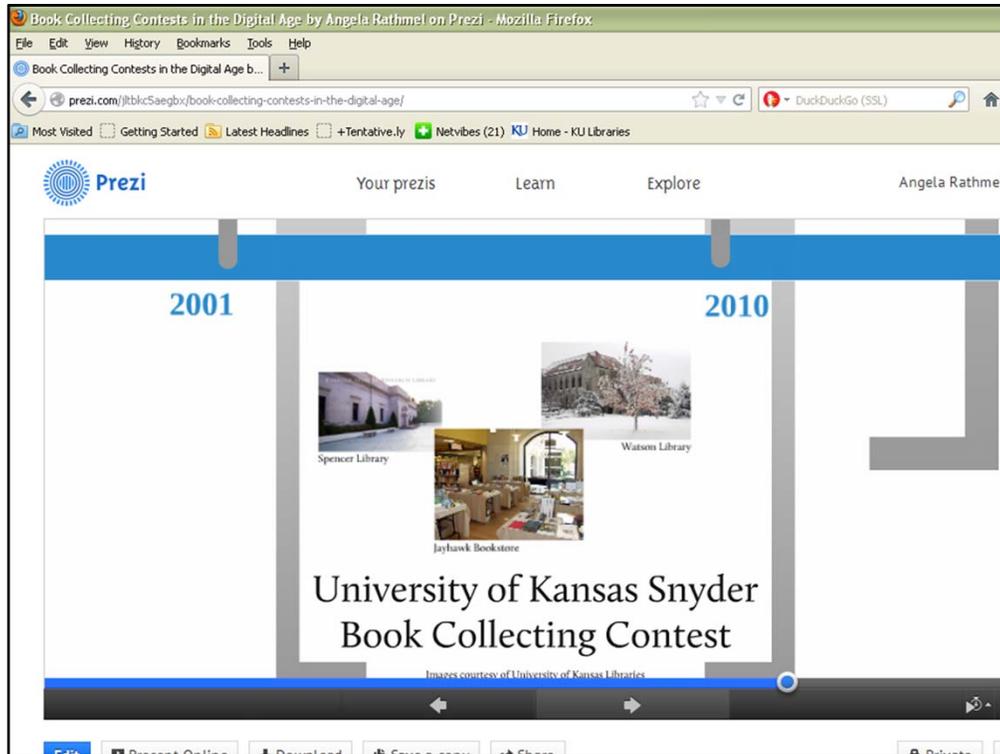
, and scholarly communication. A later review of the literature finally showed digital content being more solidly embraced in practice, but just in the past few years.



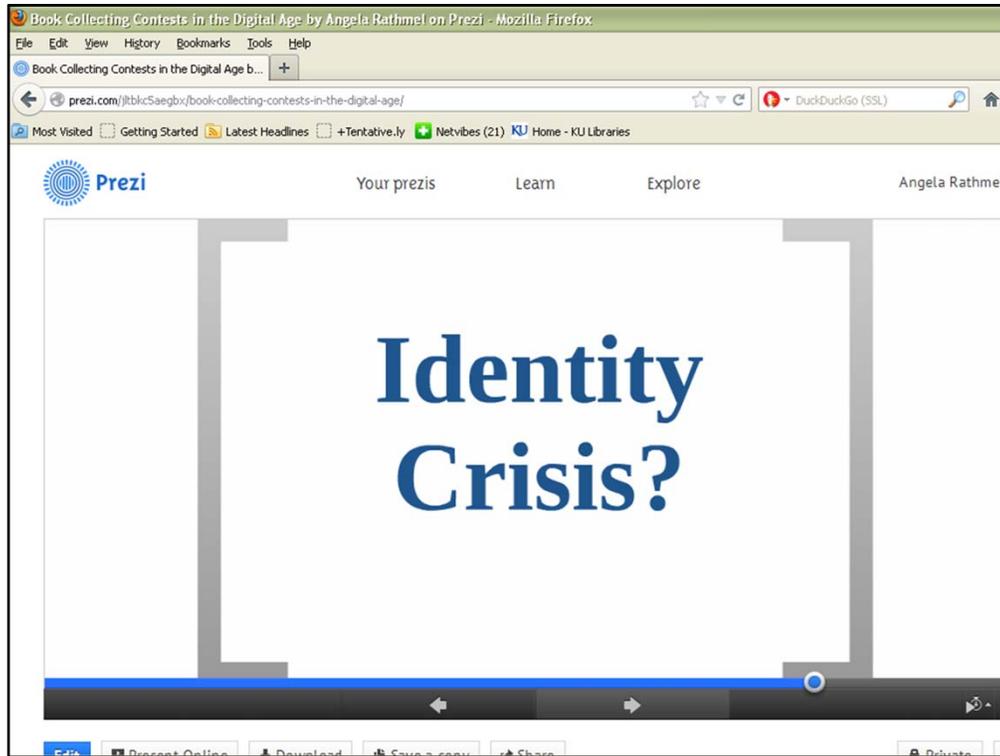
Embracing digital content in practice includes things like addressing metadata standards,



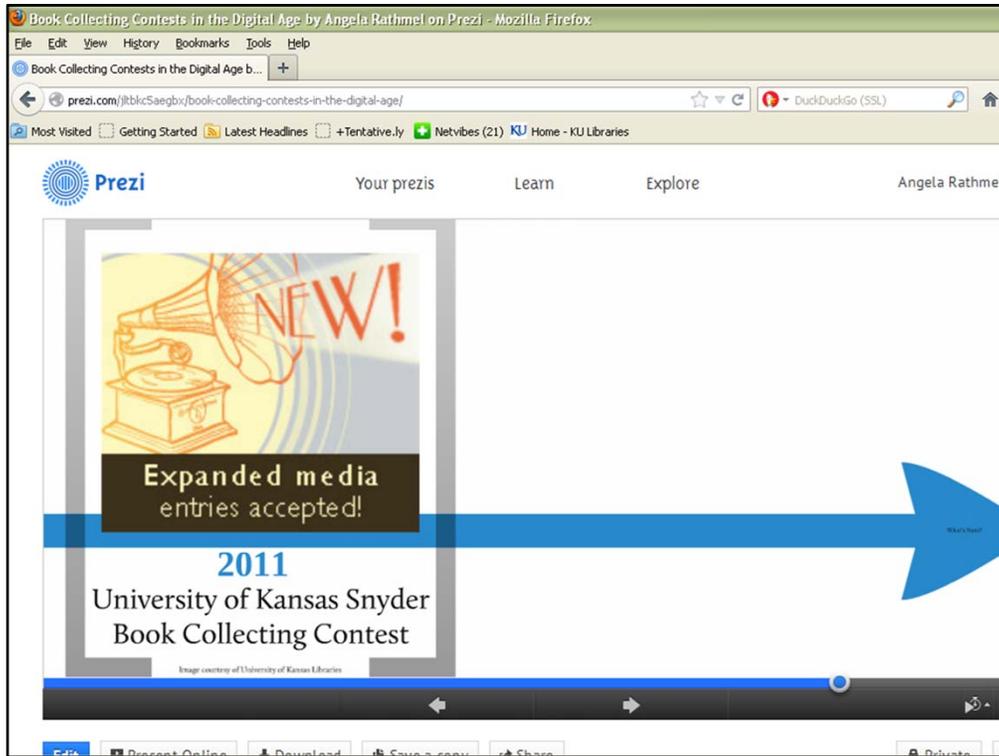
and building digital information literacy, connecting with users of our digital collections at their immediate point of need.



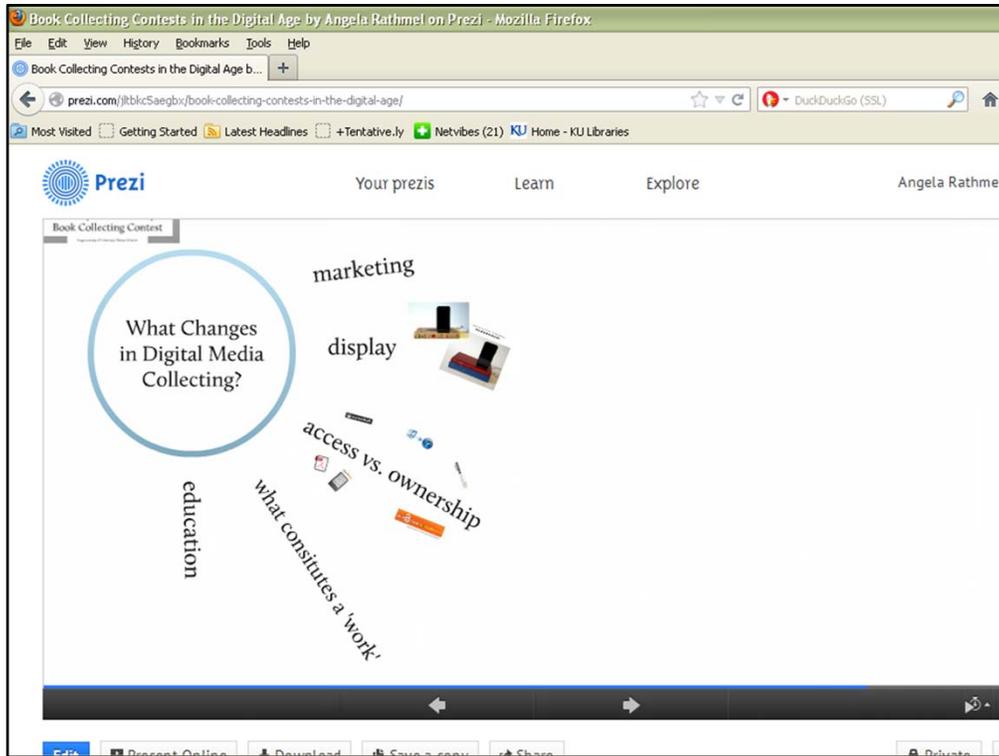
What this then points to is a shift in libraries from being collections-centered to services-centered, having a more intense focus on users and on service assessment. So what does this shift have to do with book collecting contests? Up until 2002, the Snyder contest was held in Spencer Research Library, which is essentially a big climate controlled warehouse for KU's special collections and archives. In 2003, the library administration decided to move the contest to the newly renovated Jayhawk Bookstore, both to increase visibility and participation, and to help communicate the message about the changing focus in libraries from collections to services.



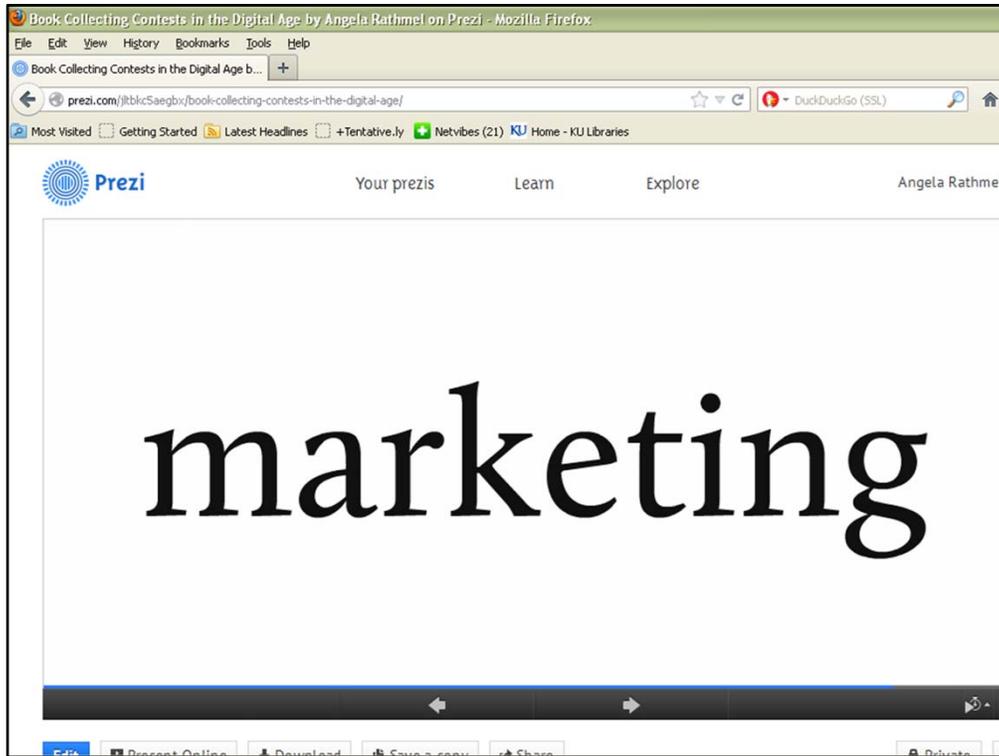
But perhaps this part of the message gets lost when libraries themselves are still struggling to make sure their internal staff have a clear understanding of what's changed, and to also market themselves to an external audience that is at times convinced that a library's only relevance exists in its collections.



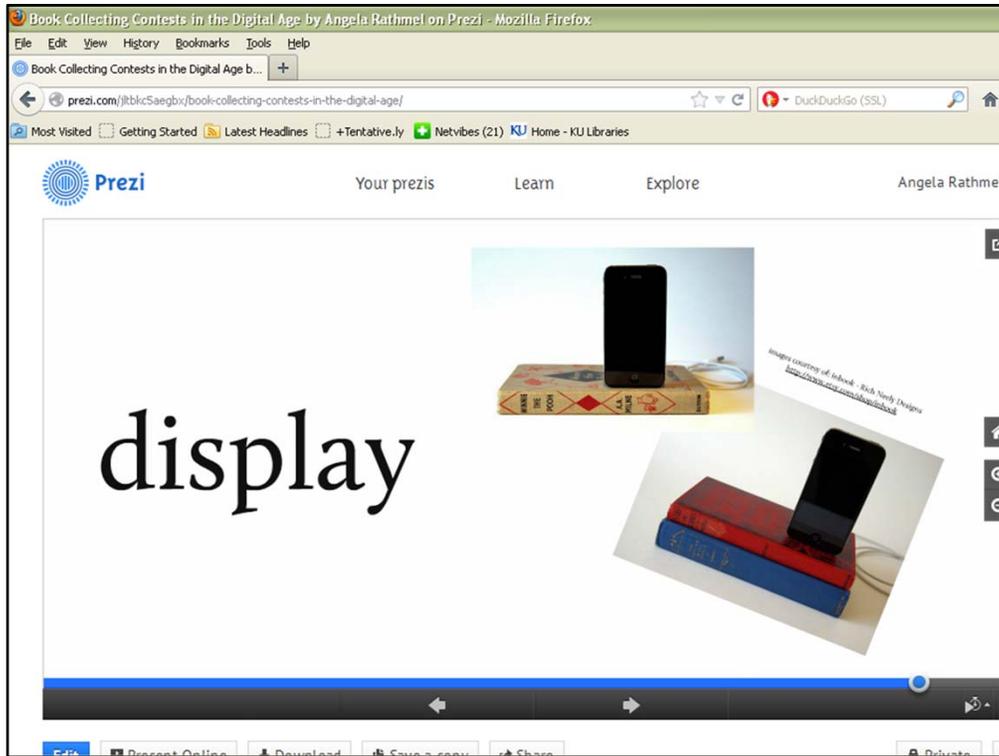
This year, in an attempt to address that knowledge gap, the Snyder contest committee decided to include digital media as an eligible component of collections. The hope was that we could both bring in more participants, and provide a public venue to discuss, learn, and pursue the educational impulse of collecting.



So what changed with the inclusion of digital media? If we think of the contest as an educational tool, here are the top priorities the committee needs to address going forward:



Marketing: the marketing budget is substantial, but hasn't brought an increase in participation. This year we placed flyers in the traditional places - libraries and bookstores, but expanded to video game and record stores. Our marketing director admitted to feeling a bit out of her depth this year, so we will be regrouping and planning a better communication strategy next year.

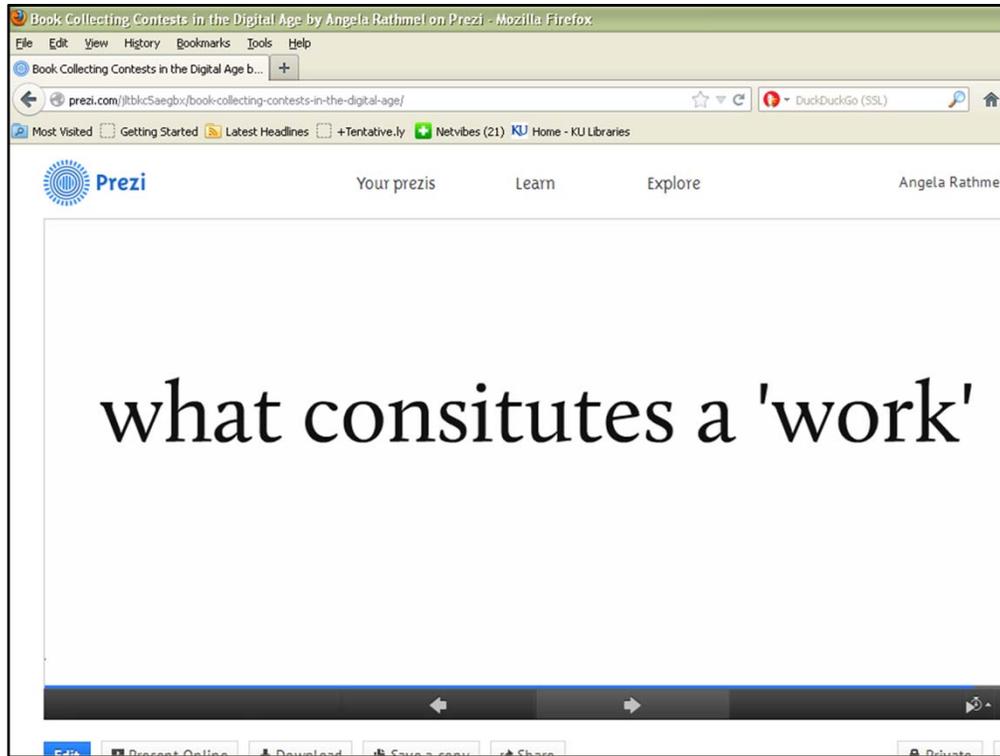


Display: we need to spend a lot more time considering how digital and media components of a collection are displayed, because the risers and book stands on tables are no longer sufficient. This year we made one laptop available per collection, but that limits both how many items can be displayed and how many people can interact with them.

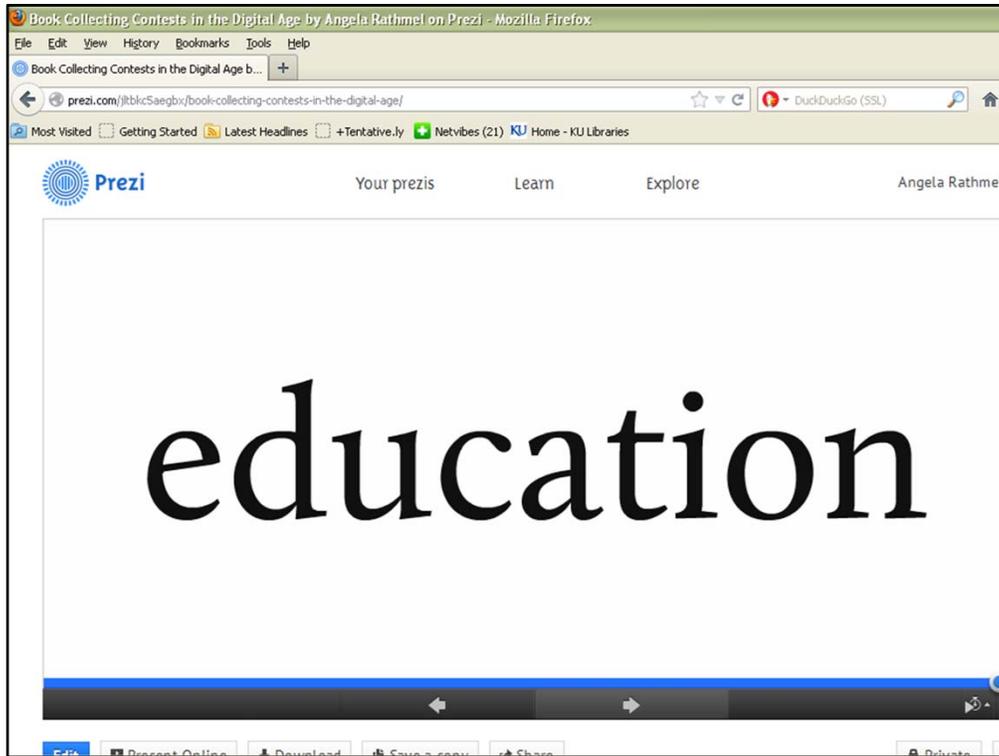


Then there is the issue of access vs. ownership that I've touched on already. We faced significant questions in this year's contest with pdf versions of articles and government publications entered as collection items. It appears that easy and quick access to digital content coupled with changes in the content 'containers' have an impact on how users perceive their ownership of the content.

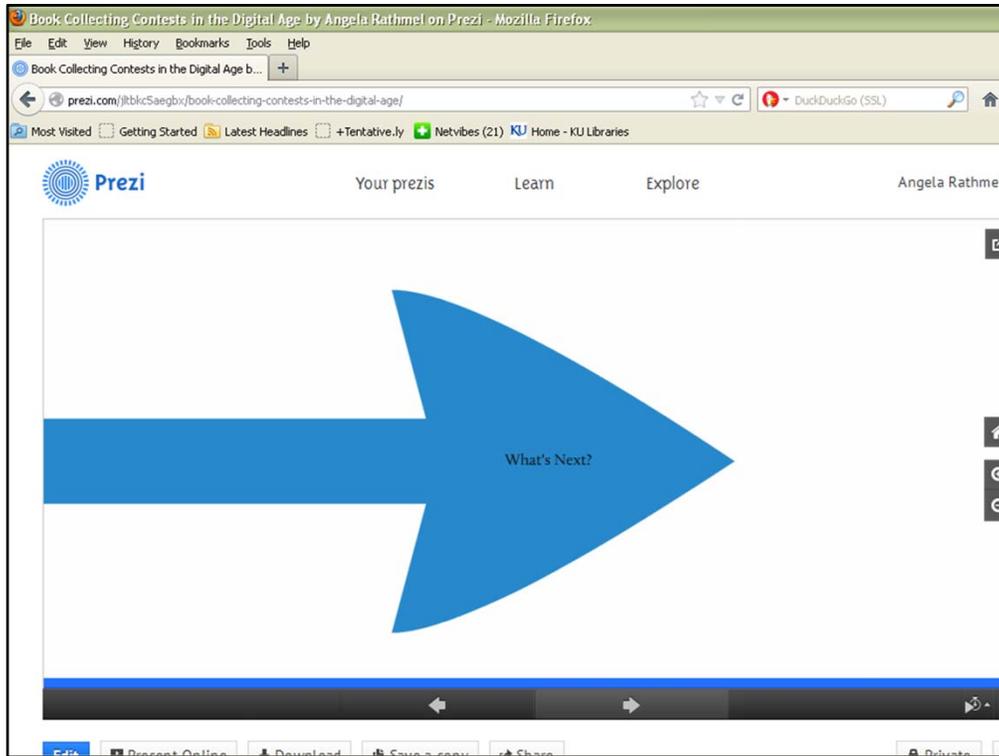
a. Another recent and relevant example of ownership vs. access as a question for libraries is a contract dispute between the Kansas Digital Library Consortium and OverDrive, a company that provides access to ebook and audiobook content. The consortium paid nearly \$570,000 over 5 years to OverDrive, and decided this year to migrate to another platform. They claim that they paid for the content and should be able to migrate all of the content to the new platform. OverDrive disagrees, claiming that the consortium only paid for access.



What constitutes a 'work'? This is essentially a question about how electronic publishing, online databases, institutional repositories, and purchasing platforms like iTunes and Amazon are changing how people view a work. For example, chapters and articles, which have traditionally been part of larger works, can now be discovered on their own in institutional repositories and some databases.



Education: this area represents a huge opportunity for us - we can build it into our current instruction and make information more prominent on the website. Our research showed that only 13 of the 37 contests include some kind of visible education reference materials to guide collectors. This is usually a bibliography of resources on collecting or writing or sample essays from previous winners. Princeton offers an information session for collectors prior to its contest.



So considering this framework, where do we go from here? As I am serving again on the Snyder book collecting contest committee this year, I'm expecting to take what we've learned back to the group to talk about how we educate ourselves and our users. I think there is an opportunity to add much more useful content to the website to serve that purpose, with a particular focus on the question/issue of ownership of digital content.

Do you have any questions for me?