

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Strategic Direction – Vision Document

June 22, 2009

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Table of Contents

- Executive Summary I
- 1. Introduction 1
 - 1.1 Intent and Structure of this Document 5
 - 1.2 The Schomburg Center 6
- 2. The Schomburg Center and The New York Public Library 8
 - 2.1 Importance of the Schomburg and its Location 8
 - 2.2 NYPL Current Budget Situation 9
 - 2.3 Rethinking the NYPL Model 10
 - 2.4 Effects of NYPL Budget Challenges on the Schomburg Center 11
- 3. Strategies for the Future 13
 - 3.1 Role of a Research Library 14
 - 3.2 Role of a Museum versus a Research Library 16
 - 3.3 Relationship of the Schomburg to NYPL 17
 - 3.4 Digital Content Resources 18
 - 3.5 Marketing the Schomburg’s Assets 19
- 4. Mission Review 21
 - 4.1 Creating a 21st Century Schomburg Mission 22
 - 4.2 Examples of Future Mission Statements for the Schomburg Center 22
- 5. Succession Plan: Attributes of the Next Schomburg Leader 25
 - 5.1 Importance of a Strong Leader at the Schomburg 26
- 6. Recommendations of the Strategic Advisors 27

Appendices

- Appendix A: Background Research A-1
 - 1. Environmental Scan A-2
 - 1.1 African American Research Libraries A-2
 - 1.2 Trends in Research Libraries A-8
 - 1.3 Trends in African American Museums A-10
 - 1.4 Internal and External Assessment A-15
 - 2. Contextual Analysis A-24
 - 2.1 African American Cultural Participation A-24
 - 2.2 Overview of the Experience of a Culturally-Specific Museums/Cultural Centers in New York City A-28
 - 2.3 Overall Cultural Marketplace A-29
- Appendix B: Interview Protocols B-1

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Appendix C: Acknowledgements	C-1
Charette Participants.....	C-2
Schomburg Center Collaborative Partners	C-3

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Executive Summary

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a research unit of the New York Public Library, is recognized as the leading research library and cultural center in the world devoted exclusively to collecting, preserving, providing access to, and interpreting research resources on the global black experience. Established in 1925 as a unique reference collection, by 1926 it was offering the 10,000 items from the personal collection of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg. Today, the Schomburg Center, with collections of over 10 million items, exists as a “hybrid” institution. It is the most acknowledged institutional model by African and diasporan nations and communities developing research, educational, and cultural centers and has been the model for three of four *public* U.S. institutions dedicated to this field.¹ The Center sets the standard for African American and African diasporan cataloguing and normalizes the nomenclature for the field. Its attendance is among the top five African American museums although it is a research library² and it is among the top three tourist destinations in Harlem.³

Now in its eighth decade of service to the nation and the world, the Schomburg Center has reached a crossroads in its development. In this time of fiscal crisis and anticipated leadership transition, and expanded transnational diaspora relations among citizens, governments, and multilateral institutions like the African Union, the Center is challenged to plan for its future. The institution has wisely decided to begin planning for its leadership succession, and identification of revenue generating opportunities, as well as opportunities to further increase its on-site and off-site visitation. In late 2008, Lord Cultural Resources was contracted through a grant from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone to assist the Schomburg in the planning, facilitation, and execution of a Strategic Visioning Charette to create a roadmap, guiding the leadership of the Center in the design and development of a renewed Schomburg Center for the 21st Century.⁴

The Charette, co-chaired by Drs., Johnetta Cole and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. was attended by fourteen leaders in the arts, culture, and academic fields including representatives of the New York Public Library, scholars, and subject experts from the east coast region. *A complete list of the participants is included in the appendix of this document.*

The Strategic Direction Document and Executive Summary represent the conclusion of the Strategic Visioning process. The final recommendations;

¹ The Schomburg was a model for The African-American Research Library and Cultural Center in Fort Lauderdale, The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta, and the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, Denver.

² The four African American museums with the highest attendance are: the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit; the Museum of Afro-American History, Boston; the National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, and the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Baltimore. Source: 2009 Official Museum Directory.

³ The other top tourist destinations in Harlem are the Apollo Theater and the Studio Museum. Source: 2004 Audience Research & Analysis commissioned by Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone.

⁴ The Schomburg’s process included a research and assessment phase which resulted in the production of an Environmental Scan, Contextual Analysis and Market Brief prepared January-March, 2009.

- Affirm the need and method for the Schomburg Center to function as a relatively autonomous institution;
- Envision the immediate future for the Center (the next 5-10 years);
- Define the leadership style and characteristics or qualities necessary for the next leader of the Schomburg Center.

Recommendations of the Strategic Advisors

Because of the Schomburg’s hybrid identity, Charette participants made the following recommendations for the future development of the Schomburg Center:

- 1. Continue to function as a relatively autonomous entity within The New York Public Library.**
- 2. Continue to build its extraordinary collections, especially its special collections materials.**
- 3. Continue to build its reputation as a leading repository of the legacy of black people.**
- 4. Continue to build and expand its brand recognition nationally and internationally.**
- 5. Develop and implement a robust marketing plan to build brand recognition, recruit and service donors, and promote the use of its collections and services.**
- 6. Grow its exhibition interpretive and cultural programs and enhance marketing of the same to increase on-site users.**
- 7. Realign allocation of staff and resources to better serve remote users while continuing to provide state-of-the-art services to on-site users.**
- 8. Expand its digital presence on the internet by increasing production of on-line exhibits and products while offering on-line access to full text collections, images and audio-visual resources.**
- 9. Commission a major marketing study.**
- 10. Commission a major study of the use of digital materials from the Schomburg Center.**
- 11. Conduct major capital campaign to finance and support the growth and development of these initiatives.**
- 12. Recruit a first-rate Director to lead the Schomburg Center into its 9th decade.⁵**

Finally Charette, Co-chair Dr. Gates concluded the session with a final comment on the leadership of Howard Dodson, saying “there’s been nobody...who combined the various skills and talents, intellectual attainments, interests, and capacities, particularly intellectual blended with entrepreneurial and marketing...than Howard Dodson.

1. Introduction

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a research unit of the New York Public Library, is the globally identified, though not exclusive, standard bearer among the major research libraries collecting primarily African American and African diasporan materials. The Schomburg was the model for three of the four U.S. *public* institutions dedicated to this field, and is the most acknowledged and sought after institutional model by African and diasporan nations and communities exploring research, educational, and cultural centers.⁶

The Center has the largest public collection of related materials in the world, the largest visitation among African American research libraries and the largest number of scholarly staff. The Schomburg sets the standard for African American and African diasporan cataloguing and normalizes the language or the nomenclature used by the Library of Congress and other research libraries when discussing this particular subject matter. Its attendance places it among the top five African American museums even though it is a research library.⁷ It is among the top three tourist destinations in Harlem and is hailed proudly throughout the Black world as an iconic identity institution.⁸

The Schomburg exists as a “hybrid” institution. It is the **premier research library** in the field for scholars, by the traditional definition of the functions of a museum: a place that collects, documents, preserves, researches, exhibits, and presents educational and public programs. The Schomburg also **functions as the history and specialized museum and educational center of African-American and African diasporan communities** in the New York area. Finally, as a space which hosts a broad range of interpretive programs and performances for its members (local and national) and the general public, the Schomburg **functions as a Cultural Center** and has been labeled a “cultural anchor” for the Harlem community.

⁶ The Schomburg served as the model for The African-American Research Library and Cultural Center in Fort Lauderdale, The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Atlanta, and the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, Denver.

⁷ The four African American museums with the highest attendance are: the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit; the Museum of Afro-American History, Boston; the National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, and the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Baltimore. Source: 2009 Official Museum Directory.

⁸ The other top tourist destinations in Harlem are the Apollo Theater and the Studio Museum. Source: 2004 Audience Research & Analysis commissioned by Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone.

Now in its eighth decade of service to the nation and the world, the Schomburg Center has reached a crossroads in its development. In this time of fiscal crisis and anticipated leadership transition, and expanded transnational diaspora relations among citizens, governments, and multilateral institutions like the African Union, the Center is challenged to plan for its future. The institution has wisely decided to begin planning for its leadership succession, identification of revenue generating opportunities, as well as opportunities to further increase its on-site and off-site visitation.

In late 2008, Lord Cultural Resources was contracted through a grant from the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone to assist the Schomburg in the planning, facilitation, and execution of a Strategic Visioning Charette providing advice for the direction of the Center's growth and development for the next five to ten years. The word charette literally means "little cart" in French and refers to a process in which a team of local and outside subject experts work together in an intensive design activity of a limited duration.

Strategic Visioning for the Schomburg Center presented an opportunity to engage the staff and stakeholders in the determination of the most critical issues facing the Center, and the recommendation of strategies and goals to resolve these issues. The Visioning process is not a Strategic Plan and *does not* include the explicit action plans that are tools for the Staff to implement the decisions determined by Charette participants in the Visioning process. That is expected and should occur at a later time. **Rather, this process has created a roadmap, guiding the leadership of the Center in decision-making and the strategic use of resources and institutional capacity.**

The Schomburg's staff-approved process also included a research and assessment phase which resulted in the production of an Environmental Scan, Contextual Analysis and Market Brief prepared January-March, 2009, intended to inform the day-long workshop—Appendix A of this document. The Charette, attended by fourteen leaders in the arts, culture, and academic fields, amounted to a powerful discussion that will lead to the design and development of a new Schomburg Center for the 21st Century. Participants included representatives of the New York Public Library, scholars, and subject experts from the east coast region. A complete list of the participants is included in Appendix C of this document.

The charette was co-chaired by Drs., Johnetta Cole and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and included a tour of the institution's newest renovations before a presentation on relevant trends and an in-depth discussion. New York Public Library (NYPL) President/ CEO, Dr. Paul LeClerc gave an overview of NYPL's current budget situation and the One NYPL⁹ restructuring. Following his presentation, Dr. LeClerc remained with the group to discuss the Schomburg's place in the NYPL and to answer questions.

The purpose of the charette was not to "protect the Schomburg from being destroyed."¹⁰ Therefore the discussion of the Schomburg's future in the New York Public Library System and the implications of the internal and external environments with respect to future leadership proceeded to:

1. Affirm the need and method for the Schomburg Center to function as a relatively autonomous institution;

⁹ The One NYPL Strategy, created in 2007, consolidates the Research Libraries and Branch Libraries under one director and merges training and planning for one integrated library system.

¹⁰ Quote from Charette Co-Chair and NYPL Board Member Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

2. Envision the immediate future for the Center (the next 5-10 years);
3. Define the leadership style and characteristics or qualities necessary for the next leader of the Schomburg Center.

1.1 Intent and Structure of this Document

This Strategic Direction Document represents the conclusion of the Strategic Visioning process. This document serves as both a record of the conversation that took place during the Charette and a chronicle of the recommended advice to the Schomburg leadership from the Charette Participants. The final recommendations— Section 6 of this report— include an outlay of institutional development priorities for the Center that propose to define its future direction and a definition of the skill sets necessary for the next director to provide leadership for this agenda.

These skill sets will be recommended for inclusion in the job description and representatives of the Visioning Committee will be recommended to serve on the search committee for the new director.

Each chapter frames the discussion and presents key points and directions for consideration, this includes;

- Chapter 2: New York Public Library Situation—Presentation of the current New York Public Library budget and strategic planning initiatives by NYPL President, Dr. Paul LeClerc.
- Chapter 3: Strategies for the Future-- Based on the “Ten Key Points” presented by Co-Chair and New York Public Library Board Member, Dr. Henry Louis Gates—this chapter addresses the five most pressing issues that the Schomburg should address in the next five years.
- Chapter 4: Mission Review—Charette participants established that there is a need to modify the Schomburg’s current mission statement to make it more reflective of a 21st century institution. This chapter presents the suggested mission statement created by the participants.
- Chapter 5: Succession Plan: Attributes of the Next Leader—A listing of the priorities of important qualities for the new director of the Schomburg to possess in order to lead and grow the institution.
- Chapter 6: Recommendations of Strategic Advisors—this final chapter presents the direction of the Charette Participants for moving forward from this Strategic Visioning process. Like other steps in the process, these are by no means final recommendations, but valuable options or insights for development of Strategies for Schomburg’s future development.

1.2 The Schomburg Center

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is recognized as the leading research library and cultural center in the world devoted exclusively to collecting, preserving, providing access to, and interpreting research resources on the global black experience. Established in 1925 as a unique reference collection within the 135th Street Branch of The New York Public Library, by 1926 it was offering the 10,000 items from the personal collection of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg and a few donated resources, it has evolved into a comprehensive research library and cultural and intellectual center on the cutting edge of providing access to resources and services that reach local, national and international constituencies.

As a repository, the Center currently maintains and provides access to collections numbering over ten million items, including 800 manuscript collections, over 185,000 bound volumes, 83,000 microforms, 400,000 photographic images, and 9,000 serials from the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, South America, Africa, Europe, India, and Australia. A vital and dynamic hub for the exchange, creation and dissemination of information throughout its history, it provides access to information through its own creations—Digital Schomburg, publications, exhibitions, forums, performing arts, films and other public programs. Scholarly programs support and encourage study at three levels—a Scholar-in-Residence Program for post-doctoral fellows, a Summer Humanities program to encourage undergraduates to pursue graduate work in the humanities, and a Junior Scholars program to mentor and encourage academic pursuits by children from the ages of 11 to 17.

One of the most heavily used repositories and visitor centers of its kind, the Center hosts over 151,000 annual visitors and provides direct research services to more than 37,000 professional, student, and independent researchers each year. It responds to another 16,000 telephone, facsimile and mail reference inquiries annually.

The Schomburg Center has been in an advance guard position in the development of internet resources on the African-American and African Diasporan experience. The creation of new on-line resources has contributed to broadening scholarship and public awareness, and the exploration of new methods of information delivery. Digital Schomburg served as a model for developing digital content online to support scholarship and research on the emerging subfield of Black Women’s Studies. These online projects included the creation of: African American Women Writers of the 19th Century, and Images of African Americans from the 19th Century.

The award-winning website *In Motion: The African American Migration Experience* is a multi-media resource that offers a fresh approach in its survey of 400 years of African American history through an examination of thirteen primary streams of migration. The site has received national and international acclaim, drawing 3.1 million hits the day after its February 2005 launch, more than 4 percent of which were overseas users. In the first month, there were nearly 215,000 individual visits, with an average of 3,764 visits per day. The content produced for the site spawned the creation of a book published by National Geographic (2005), a Black History Month kit for K-12 teachers, and on-site and traveling exhibitions.

Schomburg Studies on the Black Experience, an online resource published by ProQuest, is a state-of-the-art assessment of the status of scholarship on major themes in African American Studies. Howard Dodson, Director of the Schomburg Center, served as the managing director of the series and Dr. Colin Palmer, Director of the Scholars-in-Residence Program served as editor, and several Schomburg Scholars-in-Residence Fellows were commissioned to edit volumes. Release of the first 30 volumes in the series began in 2005, and a second series is being planned.

Exhibitions have been an outreach mechanism from the Center's inception, and serve as a highly effective mechanism for creating heightened visibility. The Center creates several new exhibitions each year for public view on-site on a variety of themes drawn from its collections. Exploring themes such as African Presence in the Americas, Lest We Forget: the Triumph over Slavery, Stereotypes vs. Humantypes: Images of Blacks in the 19th and 20th Centuries, The Art of African Women, and Becoming American: African Americans & American Politics, exhibitions have afforded a broad cross-section of visitors opportunities to explore in-depth surveys and absorb new information. By the same token, they have been a major draw for visitor traffic, bringing people not only from the Metropolitan New York region, but from across the country and abroad to the Center. It also develops many of its original exhibitions into traveling versions that have served libraries, museums and cultural centers nationally and internationally reaching literally millions of users with new information and new scholarship on the global black experience. Traveling exhibitions have created a public presence for the Center in all of the venues that use this service.

Public Programs include the production on-site of a broad range of more than 70 programs annually. The Center also has sponsored major programs in other venues, including tributes to Paul Robeson at the Shubert Theatre, Ella Fitzgerald at Carnegie Hall, Lorraine Hansberry at the Majestic Theater, and John Henrik Clarke at Town Hall. The annual Harlem Book Fair has brought more than 40,000 visitors each July to outdoor booths on 135th Street and forums in the Center's Langston Hughes Auditorium which are also broadcast by C-SPAN and enjoyed by viewers across the country in the live presentation and multiple repeats. Book celebrations have featured leading literary personalities and authorities in numerous fields. The Center has convened and co-sponsored conferences such as the Black Studies conference sponsored with Princeton University and the City College of New York, the International Slave Route conferences sponsored in conjunction with New York University, and the Medgar Evers National Black Writers Conference.

Music covers various genres ranging from the annual Women's Jazz Festival in March for Women's History Month, to the series co-sponsored with the New York City Opera, and individual performances as well as the introduction of works in progress by leading artists. Videoconferences co-sponsored with the Links, Inc. have brought together youth from sites in the United States with others in South Africa and Senegal. Black Theology forums held in the Langston Hughes Auditorium have been shared beyond via web casts.

2. The Schomburg Center and The New York Public Library

Dr. Paul LeClerc, President/CEO of the New York Public Library and David Ferriero, Andrew W. Mellon Director and Chief Executive Director of The Research Libraries at the New York Public Libraries opened the charette discussion sharing information on:

1. The importance of the Schomburg existence;
2. The NYPL budget situation;
3. Rethinking the NYPL model; and
4. The effects of the NYPL Budget Challenges on the Schomburg Center.

Through an integration of quotes from the presenters and participants as well as synopses of key points, this section presents the main changes that the NYPL is in the process of enacting as well as some comment on the impact on the Schomburg. **Direct quotes are italicized while key points are separated out as bullet points.**

2.1 Importance of the Schomburg and its Location

Charette participants and NYPL staff agreed that among its existing audience, the Schomburg brand is recognized as a leading authoritative source of knowledge on the global black experience. The following statements from Dr. LeClerc's presentation speak to the importance and position of the Schomburg to NYPL:

This [the Schomburg] is the greatest library of its kind in the world. Its significance for people of color is massive. It's level of recognition within the American, African American community as well as worldwide is huge. Its brand is one that is sharply defined and highly valued. And, its role in the preservation of the legacy of people of African origin is one of immense value that can never be overstated. So, this is a very, very, very special place. I mean, I'd like to think that I worked hard on behalf of this Library in my time as President. And, no one wants to see the Schomburg diminish in terms of its brilliance at all.

...There is no thought whatsoever of moving the Schomburg any place at all. This is the Schomburg this is where the Schomburg's going to be for as far as I am concerned, forever. So, now that that's stated explicitly, would we consider moving some of the other research libraries that we have, or research collections into the building at 42nd Street? That's open to discussion, yes.

...Do we still need to have as big a physical footprint for the research libraries other than the Schomburg and could we bring some of those libraries into the building at 42nd Street and then serve the declining number of users as well there as we might in other facilities that are very, very expensive to run in a time when there's less and less money?...You would expect us to be asking ourselves that question, we are.
Paul LeClerc

After hearing Dr. LeClerc’s presentation and potential NYPL budget cuts—discussed later in this section--Charette participant James Early, expressed concern that the Schomburg not just retain its location, but also its culture:

There’s a way in which the name Schomburg can remain, but it should not be a disembodied presence. It has many efficiencies of how it works and where collections are located and all of that, but it’s not just a flat name...right now, even with the gentrification in this community, it still has a resonance of being Latino, being black, people are very proprietary about this. On U Street [in Washington, DC], Famous for black arts and culture icons like Duke Ellington, buildings with Ellington’s name are million dollar condos and you will hardly find a colored person unless you find a Salvadorian in the kitchen cooking an African American dish. Part of this is, while we bring these efficiencies here, we’ve also got to maintain the, socio-cultural dimensionality and meaning of the name Schomburg. I don’t care if green people are living here, they really have to inherit that culture, not just a functionality... This is not just a set of efficiencies and how many people we cut, and how much money we can save. But we’re trying to help fertilize a culture.

2.2 NYPL Current Budget Situation¹¹

- Dr. LeClerc’s remarks directly addressed the budget situation of the NYPL system and the impact this may have on the Schomburg Center. The 2009 operating budget for the NYPL is around \$278 million with capital budgets of \$200 million. The endowment has fallen from \$840 million to the low \$500s.
- The NYPL is funded by city, state, and federal support, as well as foundations, corporations, and individuals; and its capital monies tend to primarily come from the public sector.
- ***At this point, the budget situation is catastrophic with a projected reduction of \$53 million in public and private funding.*** The proposed cut in City funding is 21% or \$28.2 million, which will result in a possible layoff of 400 employees out of 2,300. This will lead to staff reductions throughout the library system. *This is the most significant crisis in the history of the NYPL.*¹²
- *Diversity will be protected as much as possible in the event of layoffs and seniority is the principle driving factor in layoffs with the most senior people being the most protected.*

As a result of Dr. LeClerc’s comments, many charette participants remarked that their thinking and focus for the day was repositioned.

¹¹ As of the printing of this document in June 2009, the NYPL and the City of New York have reached an agreement that will allay many of the budget cuts discussed in this section.

¹² Statement made by Dr. Paul LeClerc during his morning presentation.

2.3 Rethinking the NYPL Model

Mr. David Ferriero provided insight into the restructuring of the New York Public Library and what that restructuring means for the system and the people of New York. Through direct quotes from Mr. Ferriero and synopses of the key points, this section presents the main changes that the NYPL is in the process of enacting as well as some comment on the impact on the Schomburg.

From Mr. Ferriero's presentation:

The past two years we have been working on a massive reorganization known internally as One NYPL and what that really means is, taking the research library and the branch library empires and combining them into one organization.

It's been a difficult process. It is still a work in progress. Some of the highlights of what that means is that we've been able to take our what I call, backroom operations, our acquisitions cataloguing folks, we had separate departments in the branch and research libraries doing basically the same kind of work, combine them into one organization. To take a look at our collections, how we develop the collections and identify the areas in which we have strength...And then, make decisions about playing to that strength. I can tell you upfront that Schomburg is one of the "invest collections."

We are convinced that digital is the future of the Library and you all know the pioneering work that has been done, especially in this Library, around getting our content in digital format in new ways for use of people around the world.

David Ferriero

The following is a summary of the points Mr. Ferriero provided for the participants:

- *The NYPL is the single most effective library in America; and numbers are up throughout the system.* The governance of the NYPL is being restructured under the stated mission of 'One NYPL', a plan in which the system is merging research and branch libraries into one organization. The restructuring allows operations that were once in separate branch and research libraries to combine into one organization. It also allows the library to reassess its collections and identify the areas of strength.
- *The creation of a Strategy Office.* As part of its reorganization, NYPL has opened a *Strategy Office*, a dedicated group of staff members who are in a continual planning cycle, developing competencies in the organization around metrics, gathering better information about who we are serving and what their needs are on both the qualitative and quantitative sides.
- *While bringing efficiencies, we must maintain cultural/socio-cultural dimensionality.* In the present fiscal year, the City gave NYPL enough money to have all the libraries open an average of 45 hours. With the new staffing model, the system is open 52 hours a week. The new Bronx Library Center opened in 2006 and is open 12 hours a day from nine in the morning till nine at night. It will have a million visits minimally this year presumably non-white, African American or people of African origin and Latino.

- *NYPL is servicing immigrants and people who are looking for jobs.* The social value of the use of libraries creates the ability to fulfill people’s needs in this moment where social value is really important—access to the internet, job search resources, etc. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, NYPL is assessing social value to determine ways that the system is connected to place.
- NYPL has prioritized its uses into the following four functions:
 1. Research Library
 2. Community Center
 3. Museum
 4. Branch Library
- When asked about a “hybrid” model of a research/ circulating library and whether that may be an option for the Schomburg Center to combine with the Countee Cullen Library, Dr. LeClerc explained the proposed expansion of services in the 42nd Street building:

It proposes to consolidate the Mid-Manhattan Branch Library and the Science, Industry and Business Library under the roof of the 42nd Street research library building, as the use of branch libraries is up; and physical use of research libraries is down. The idea is that one could “grow up” intellectually, professionally, culturally from toddler to post-doc in one building. It’s a half billion dollar idea that is unlikely to happen anytime soon. (Both SIBL and the Library for the Performing Arts currently have branch and research components.)

2.4 Effects of NYPL Budget Challenges on the Schomburg Center

The following section addresses the comments by Schomburg Chief, Howard Dodson to supplement the presentation/discussion points by Dr. LeClerc about the effects that the NYPL budget challenges will have on the Schomburg specifically:

You’ve heard some of the context in which we’re developing this [review] process. [The] process of merging branch and research libraries is one of the contextual settings [and] research libraries themselves are changing radically

[Then there is] the economic crisis and how it’s affecting the library as a whole and New York City. In the case of the Schomburg Center specifically, we’re modeling 25 and 35 percent reductions.

That translates into about \$1.5 to \$2 million of a \$6 million budget. So it’s a fairly radical prospect...We’ve made some attempt to prioritize audiences, users, and to look at – recalibrating if you will both our approach and services.

[It]is very clear [for instance that we] need to reallocate staff and staff time to better serve the user base that’s coming to us through the internet. This is not just at the Schomburg Center, but in The New York Public Library as a whole, our whole staffing arrangement has been structured to serve the people who walk through the door and we have not done a radical kind of re-calibration of that.

And so, we're looking at ways in which we can reallocate the time that staff members spend focusing in on both developing content and hopefully finding ways of serving users better which is the growth segment of our research and user population.

Howard Dodson

After Mr. Dodson's presentation, charette participant James Early, again warned that the Schomburg not lose its focus:

....we have to give validation to the need to collect the human experience so that people in the future, not just tomorrow, can find out what was there. And you can't do that by attaching everything that comes in [to an] immediate outcome. I agree totally with your notion of democratization. I'm just saying, don't see it [collecting] as a functional thing...Its not going to make tons of money but that gives this place a sociology--not just a set of abstract functions— that we have research materials and we have qualified people. And that's what's going to get lost in this reorganization is that whatever the qualified staff here is, they won't be a collegial team because some of them are going to be downtown.

3. Strategies for the Future

In his overview of the day, Co-Chair Gates, posited ten key questions - that he identified from the March 13, 2009, document *Schomburg: Environmental Scan, Contextual Analysis and Market Brief*. Those questions are:

1. What is the role of a museum versus a library?
2. What does “genuine independence” [for the Schomburg] mean?
3. What does it mean for the Schomburg to be a creator of programming?
4. What is the relationship of the Schomburg to gentrification? With respect to:
 - a. Cultural diversity in Harlem
 - b. To other libraries, branches, and other ethnicities in the broader metropolitan area
5. How does the Schomburg market its intellectual content? (example: collections, services, etc.). What is the future of marketing for the Schomburg
6. How does the Schomburg grow its digital presence?
7. What is [the Schomburg’s]relationship to the NYPL?
8. What are possible future partnerships/ relationships with other institutions (for example museums, black studies departments)?
9. What is the relationship between the Schomburg and the branch (Countee Cullen), particularly its work with genealogy and community center functions?
10. How can the Schomburg be tied into the impetus to create black history curriculum and be an extension of the black history being taught in elementary schools and high schools?

After a general discussion of Dr. Gates’ ten points, the group quickly decided to focus on the:

- Role of a Research Library
- Role of a Museum vs. a Research Library
- Relationship of the Schomburg to the New York Public Library system
- Development of Digital Content Resources
- Marketing Schomburg Collections/ Assets

Through an integration of quotes from the participants as well as synopses of key points, this section presents the discussion of these five significant ideas. **Direct quotes are italicized while key points are separated out as bullet points.**

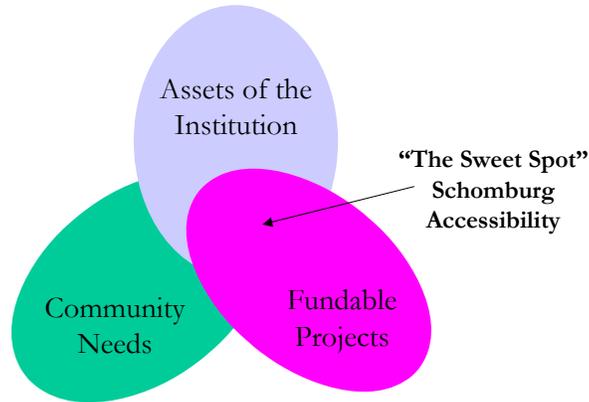
3.1 Role of a Research Library

In the March report, the Schomburg Center was described as a research library, a cultural center and a history and specialized museum. As a result of this presentation of a hybrid identity, participants felt it was important to define both the role of a research library in general as well as the Schomburg's role as a research library. The discussion resulted in the following conclusions:

- *One of the central distinguishing characteristics of a library in this age is its sense of place-- it is a place people come together, it is a community center. Every library in the world is being forced to rethink itself because they used to be built around collecting and organizing stacks but that is no longer its primary function.*
- *The Schomburg needs to decide its primary assets.* Participants noted that collection is a means, not an end in itself. Google is digitizing all of the books in Harvard University's collection, it will do the same for the Library of Congress and we have to imagine that this type of digitization will continue until every book in the world is available online, for free.
 - *The primary asset that Schomburg has is its special collections on Black History, which it needs to exploit.* Collecting has not been actively aggressive as in other collecting entities in recent years, and there is a need to build, preserve, and disseminate broadly these materials for a particular outcome. The Schomburg has to continue to identify and cultivate the audience for which it uniquely has a stewardship. Libraries in this city are becoming more about citizenship and employment. *How do those things relate to knowledge, both deep knowledge for the researcher and more pedestrian engagement-- the touching of an object or the seeing of an image.*
- *The Schomburg must democratize and remain a dedicated research space but also provide opportunities for the masses.* It must expand the universe of users –for example of the Harvard University, W.E.B. DuBois School's curriculum and the ways it is using technology to interest new generations in the study of genealogy using their own family connections.
 - There is an interim step for an ordinary person who comes in whether she or he has a college degree or not, or a high school diploma for that matter, who actually comes in periodically to read a book of poems, or to read a short story, or to see a public program in a more engaged way.
 - The Schomburg must find the place where the deep dimensions of a research library can be parsed so that new/younger publics can understand the functions of research libraries.
- *The fundamental mission of a research library is to create scholarship.* The perception is that research libraries are only for researchers. However, the typical library would also have a regional audience; but the Schomburg is competing on a global framework due to its unique collection. It is about the broad dissemination of materials for a particular outcome. The Center has to identify its beneficiaries—People come first and research libraries allow regular people to access collections and knowledge.

The diagram below graphically depicts the non-profit situation of the Schomburg as interpreted from Jim Collin's, *From Good to Great* and relayed in the charette by participant, Claudine Brown. It shows:

- Assets of the Institution. What do you have that nobody else has that makes you completely unique?
- Community needs. What it’s saying that it needs more than anything?
- Fundable Projects. What funders are willing to pay for?



When thinking about revising its mission, the Schomburg must be thinking about all three of those elements taken together and what is possible. If the Schomburg is not making work public on a website or accessible in a big way, it’s going to be very difficult to raise money. We are living in a moment where it’s very hard to raise funds just for research for a small cohort of people.

Claudine Brown

3.2 Role of a Museum versus a Research Library

A number of important observations about the role of the Schomburg as both a Research Library and a Museum were made in the course of the charette:

- *Museum is a problematic term and there is baggage that comes along with museum functions.* There is a need to reinvent the Schomburg where the museum is only part of it. However, the role of the Schomburg is bigger than a museum vs. library question.
 - What are the structural, cultural, and financial constraints of becoming a curatorial museum-like institution if there's not a capacity in house. How big a leap would that be?
 - The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture will open in 2015, there would be unnecessary "competition" for the Schomburg to have a parallel track
- *The Schomburg is a cultural multiplex encompassing quality features of a research library, museum, and cultural—public educational center.* It is more complex than a library, research center or museum. If the Schomburg identity goes toward a museum, what are the consequences?
- *Branch libraries **now** offer non-traditional entertainment while providing a public and social value.* The traditional library functions are progressively becoming electronic thus expanding peoples understanding of how to access knowledge. The NYPL's activities are museum-like in terms of education and exhibitions. The branches provide social service activities such as ESOL (English Classes for Speakers of Other Languages), job preparation, etc. NYPL branches and research libraries are also community centers serving as gathering places for people whether they are using the collections or not.
- *The culture of the Schomburg must remain present while asking what do our constituents want.* What is the fundamental mission and what do we aspire to be? At the center of the Schomburg is its collections which should be broadly disseminated for the creation of a cultural milieu. It is important to get young people excited about primary research documents while maintaining Schomburg's deep research component. Preservation of the collection is only a means to an end; and one of Schomburg's goals is to use the black experience to illuminate the human experience *through the use of its collection.*

3.3 Relationship of the Schomburg to NYPL

A Respectful Autonomy

- *The Schomburg has a respectful form of autonomy within the NYPL.* For example, the Schomburg makes more day-to-day decisions, such as exhibition development, than other divisions. This is because of its unique socio-cultural history and mission—Harlem --of the Schomburg gives it these exceptions. The NYPL values this specificity of the Schomburg and its unique mandate. The Schomburg should take full advantage of this unique relationship while maximizing its potential.
 - If the Schomburg is melded into the NYPL under its new restructuring it will lose its place as the voice of the African American community. The ideal relationship with NYPL would be one that allows the Center to take full advantage of NYPL technology advancement and its well-developed marketing and donor cultivation opportunities to reach the 60% of NYPL users who are people of color, as well as the others interested in the subject matter.
- *An advisory committee is encouraged, including a federal voice that can argue for the Schomburg.* The advisory group should be dedicated to development, be able to help build a larger constituency. The Schomburg should be a high priority for those who sit on the advisory group and they should be committed to contributing annually and soliciting others to do the same.
- *The Schomburg must take a leading rather than lagging role in fundraising development.* Schomburg funding comes from 51% City, 11% State, 38% Private endowment, donations, grants, etc. NYPL should review the internal affairs policy that may prevent the new Chief from going directly to funding resources (example of the relationship between a department located within a university and the university's development office).

In the following statements charette participants strongly expressed their feeling that this “respectful autonomy” should continue:

How does it [the Schomburg] retain its unique features...and still be part of this larger entity [the NYPL]. And will the transition from Howard [Dodson], who has his own unique identity and cultural capital...become an excuse to change the status within the NYPL?--The question...on everybody's mind. And so, how can we retain a strong leader like Howard if the relative autonomy or independence of identity of the Schomburg fundamentally changes?

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

A respectful autonomy. It has to do with the New York Public Library values—and I thought that Paul [LeClerc] was very clear with the language that he used here—that the New York Public Library values the specificity of this institution...These are things we want to see continue especially beyond Howard.

Johnnetta B. Cole

Given the sui generis nature of the Schomburg Library and its unique historical specificity and function, we hope that it would retain its semi-autonomous status in the family of the New York Public library.

James Early

To the extent that we do have a relationship with the New York Public Library, how do we take advantage of that to the best use of the Schomburg? And my sense is, perfunctorily with respect to marketing and to donor cultivation and to its place in the whole world, that maybe we're not using [the New York Public Library] enough.

Michael M. Kaiser

How do you maximize the potential of the relationship without compromising what you have to do with regard to the work that you have set for yourself? The Center, if melded into the NYPL, loses its authority as an authentic voice on the African and African diasporan experience.

Howard Dodson

3.4 Digital Content Resources

Charette participants noted that libraries are increasingly becoming more digital. In the NYPL—all books before 1925 will be digitized in the next five years. Digitization is a vehicle to deliver products and resources. In the Schomburg's case, this includes collections, online exhibitions, and public and interpretive programs, as well as Center-produced books and other merchandise.

- Through digitization of lectures, seminars, forums, etc. that can then be made available through podcasting and other digital formats, the Schomburg enhances research options and collection accessibility for users. However, digitization needs a sustainable infrastructure; and the question of “what problems does digitization solve?” needs to be answered. One of the keys is to find one specific area where the Schomburg will dominate the online market.
- *There is an opportunity for the Schomburg to become the leading institution of black history on the internet.* The Schomburg must find one specific area of the internet that it will dominate. A typical library might have a regional footprint and by extension, a regional mandate and regional monopoly and so the mission is regional in focus. The Schomburg has a global audience. The thing that forces the Schomburg to start thinking in a very different way is that before, global service, which was desired, was not a viable option. Now suddenly it has become an essential thing to claim or cede to someone else. Through the development of a sustainable online infrastructure, the Schomburg can use digitization as a vehicle to deliver several products from one body of content. This also maximizes research potential.
- *Because technology changes quickly, rather than hiring a fulltime IT, the Schomburg should outsource its technology needs.* The Center should make the same research used for exhibitions available to develop multiple products (documentary, video game, disseminated through smaller clips maximizing opportunities). By creating a portal to access African & African Diaspora materials, the Center will have a viral opportunity to reach multiple audiences.

- The Schomburg online must be strategic in what it addresses. It should increase visitors and revenue, develop the potential for new products, and provide opportunities for entrepreneurial marketing. It should provide a digital connection giving people a proactive way to become an expert.

3.5 Marketing the Schomburg’s Assets

The participant’s conversation concerning the Schomburg brand and marketing the brand segued into a larger discussion of the institution’s audiences and the true popularity of the brand.

- *The Schomburg should develop a broader communication strategy* that has multiple levels:
- *The Schomburg should not overestimate the famousness of its brand.* There are 3.5 million people in New York City of African descent and most of them probably do not know about the existence of the Schomburg. The Schomburg has to get its audience to “pay attention” using tools such as “Institutional Marketing” as was pursued by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

Strategic Marketing Possibilities for the Schomburg

In order to illustrate the difference in the type of marketing necessary for the Schomburg to reach its differing audiences—those that might buy a product as opposed to someone that may make a major gift—Michael M. Kaiser, President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts shared an experience he had as executive director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.

In the early nineties, the staff of the Ailey Theatre realized that it was not as well-known as previously thought. Ailey, led by Mr. Kaiser, used institutional marketing, which is about creating excitement around your organization. In 1992 and 1993, the theatre completed a one-year program marketing blitz including:

- A “Donohue Show” appearance in December of 1992 where Judith Jameson, Artistic Director spoke, the dancers danced—18 million people watched;
- The next month during President [Bill] Clinton’s first inauguration, the Ailey company performed at a gala with Barbara Streisand, Michael Jackson and Bill Cosby—88 million people watched;
- The Theatre then had an exhibition at Lincoln Center followed by an exhibition at the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum, which got a great deal of press in Washington.
- A few months later, in July, Ailey did a huge concert in Central Park and CNN covered it, and it was on CNN for 24 hours.
- The next month, Mayor Giuliani named the company’s street, Alvin Ailey Place.
- A couple months, later in November, Ailey Theatre published two books about the company,
- The next month, December, was the 35th anniversary gala with Al Jarreau, Dionne Warwick, Jessye Norman, Maya Angelou, Anna Deavere Smith, Denzel Washington, etc.

As a result of this media blitz, the theatre built much stronger marketing capacity and firmly established its identity in peoples' minds. The next year the Ailey Theatre raised \$3.4 million, exactly double the \$1.7 million raised the year before.

Ensuring that Marketing Equals Support

- *An economic downturn is a good time to do “friendraising” as well as fundraising. Friendraising activities can help to enhance the marketing effort.*
- *The name Schomburg has resonance. In its marketing, the Schomburg should explode the story of Arturo Schomburg into the community as a pioneer. Reclaim the real name and attach historical meaning to it with a storyline---paper and books tied to a man searching for meaning.*
- *The Schomburg must understand the needs of its market. It needs to determine whether the market wants a black library? Who are/will be the customers? This would include:*
 - Identification of its audiences for strategic marketing. Totally different marketing for scholars versus potential funders (example from Co-Chair Gates of the NYPL’s daily communication with trustees)
 - Expand the universe of the existing and potential Schomburg audience
 - Marketing the fact that the Schomburg Center is growing to age of 100 years
 - What services, programs, and initiatives is it going to pare down and why?
 - Where is the city growth going and what does a knowledge user need vs. a periodic user?
- *The Schomburg should be “plugged in” in a way that it is able to take advantage of teachable moments (popular culture intersecting with Schomburg primary sources – example of the intersection of the release of the movie *Amistad* and interest in the story of the enslaved). When those moments arise, it can use technology to flood the internet with web broadcasts, disseminate, and contextualize the information.*

It can, for example, take advantage of the fact that people like to come together for social gatherings. The Center can then focus on cultural sociality as its brand as opposed to individual research. Hence it could become a “theme park of the mind”, a place where people can come for dynamic intellectual, cultural, entertainment and learning experiences

4. Mission Review

During a spirited conversation, charette participants established that there is a need to modify the Schomburg’s current mission statement to make it more reflective of a 21st century institution that knows its audience, its primary assets and what it needs to do to serve them both.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture current mission statement reads more like a description than a mission statement:

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is a research unit of The New York Public Library. A national research library, it is devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the experiences of peoples of African descent throughout the world, with emphasis on blacks in the Western Hemisphere.

The Center provides access to and professional reference assistance in the use of its collections to the scholarly community and the general public through five research divisions, each managing materials in specific formats but with broad subject access. It also facilitates access to these holdings through its website, mail and telephone reference services, inter-library and inter-institutional loans, participation in national computerized databases and publication of bibliographies and other finding aids.

The Center promotes the study of the histories and cultures of peoples of African descent and interprets its collections through exhibitions, publications, and educational, scholarly, and cultural programs.

The Schomburg mission was then contrasted with the draft NYPL mission statement, which is: *to inspire life-long learning, empower our communities, and to bring New York’s diverse groups together to spark creativity and strengthen our city.*

Because this is not a strategic planning process and the charette participants are serving in an advisory capacity only, it was determined that it would not be appropriate for the group to revise the mission statement. However, as a result of the presentation of both the NYPL’s new draft mission and a review of the Schomburg’s current mission, Charette Co-Chair, Dr. Cole challenged participants to create an ideal mission statement for the Schomburg.

4.1 Creating a 21st Century Schomburg Mission

The discussion around the two mission statements was far reaching. The following questions were posed by the participants in an examination of the mission:

- Who are our customers and what do they want? How can we serve them?
- Who are potential customers and how can we serve them?
- Where do our current offerings line up with those two?
- Where do the offerings not line up?

Mr. Dodson provided context for the mission discussion by explaining the origins of the Schomburg Center and the thought process behind the creation of the institution:

The Schomburg Center is...and always has been a counter cultural institution... It comes into existence as a critique of the colonialist knowledge about Africa and the African world and, as a questioner of the authoritative canon of the Western world.

Its message has always been directed specifically at the African American community, but it is simultaneously about raising questions about the total American experience and through that the human experience as a whole. Every person, certainly every American, needs to know about this dimension of the American experience.

4.2 Examples of Future Mission Statements for the Schomburg Center

A mission needs to be a better mission statement if this institution is to be branded. It's really long, it's hard to remember, and it's not terribly concise and focused.

Claudine Brown

Charette Co-Chair, Dr. Cole, then asked the participants to take a few minutes to write a version of their own ideal Schomburg mission statement. The resulting sample mission statements are recorded verbatim below:

“To build a community of enlightened individuals by preserving, interpreting, and disseminating knowledge of African American history through diverse strategies that foster national and global public engagement.”

Michael Kaiser

“To illuminate the historical experience, the human experience of people of African descent.” (then there's a follow on sentence of, “How,” which is things like preservation, events, you know, production and curricula, that's sort of tactics at some level).

Omar Wasow

“To create new scholarship.” (And add on) “To create an online research environment.” I don’t know how you phrase that in a mission statement, but “To use the technology to replicate the physical space in the online environment,” ‘cause objects are passive. So, you have to have the ability to do something with the material.

Heike Kordish

“To educate the community at large (local, national, and global) about the contribution of African Americans and people of the African Diaspora through the use and access to collections, research materials, exhibitions, opportunities for scholarship, and community involvement/activities.”

And

“ the mission of the Schomburg is to educate people.

Aysha Schomburg

“To educate, to enlighten, to entertain, to inspire the world about the African American experience through a series of tactics, collection preservation and digitization.”

David Ferriero

Our mission is to create and perpetuate an appreciation for the experience of people of African ancestry by collecting, preserving, interpreting and disseminating information documenting that experience.”

Stanton Biddle

To support a global learning community by promoting and understanding of the African diasporan community experience.”

Claudine Brown

“To collect, preserve and disseminate knowledge about the African Diaspora.”

Schroeder Cherry

“To foster public knowledge of the global black experience through research, preservation, education and interpretation.”

Howard Dodson

“In the interest of illuminating the human experience and building”

Johnnetta B. Cole

“To educate and illuminate the public through the collection, preservation, documentation, and interpretation of African American and African diasporan materials.”

Joy Bailey

PAST MISSION: “The mission of the Schomburg Center has been to collect, preserve and disseminate the great books of the black world, period.” It started as book collection and it grew.

FUTURE MISSION: “The future mission of the Schomburg Center is to become the digital repository and dissemination of knowledge about the black world.”

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

These mission statements offer focus and direction for rewriting and refining the Schomburg Center’s mission as it begins to chart a course for its next five to ten years of development.

5. Succession Plan: Attributes of the Next Schomburg Leader

A final goal of the charette was to establish the necessary characteristics for the next leader of the Schomburg. Participants first supplied important qualities and then were asked to prioritize the qualities. Charette participants decided that the following qualities were *most important* for the new director of the Schomburg to possess in order to lead and grow the institution. They are ranked:

1. *The 3 C's: [Knowledge of] Collection, Community, and Conscience.* The new Schomburg Director should be somebody who is passionately engaged, cares about, respects and loves, the black experience. Someone who is grounded in multiple communities because in the future, that's where we're all going to have to operate and those two things are not in contradiction. The last one is more about love in the realm of the collections.
2. *Entrepreneurial.* A strategic business-minded thinker who understands and is motivated by mission.
3. *Ability to work in complex systems.* Able to build both internal and external coalitions. The other thing is that in this institution in particular, a lot of different communities are stakeholders. And, the leader needs to be someone who is very comfortable in a grassroots community and equally comfortable working with, you know, people who are potential donors. But, it has to be someone who is willing to bridge all of those places. CEO and COO are one in the same as opposed to the leader, the transformational leader and the operational manager. This is a person who needs to be able to function beyond class constraints as well as in lots of different venues. Also a risk taker and an institution builder that is able to work on the inside (of the NYPL system), but knows how to push the edges.
4. *Demonstrated reach—and desire to reach inter-generational (younger and older) audiences.* As the median age of the population grows older and new methods of content delivery are being created by, and widely used, by younger audiences, it will be important to engage both young and developing customers or users as well as aging members. A leader that knows how to access and engage both of these audiences will be important to the Schomburg.
5. *Vision to see what will be coming for the field and the industry for years to come (Clairvoyant).* As it prepares to enter its second century, the Schomburg will need a leader with skills, tolerance, and understanding of future trends in order to continue to grow and remain/become relevant to its global community.

Other relevant qualities

Although not ranked highly enough to be considered “priorities”, participants felt that the new Schomburg leader should also possess the following skills and abilities:

- Marketing knowledge and savvy
- Realism – not easily turned on by shiny things that turns heads
- Seen as one of the community
- Ability to cross racial and ethnic communities
- Substantive knowledge of subject
- Library credential is not required
- Commitment to professional development. Interest in attracting and training diverse staff, as a result growing the number of diverse professionals in the field
- Respect for continuation of the current Schomburg initiatives
- Savvy enough to attract and keep the best staff
- Possess a sense of humor

5.1 Importance of a Strong Leader at the Schomburg

Just before NYPL President/ CEO, Dr. LeClerc left the Charette, Co-chair Dr. Gates concluded the session with a final comment on the leadership of Howard Dodson. His comments are recorded below:

The final thing that we would like for you to know, Paul, is the historical role and importance, and indeed the uniqueness of Howard Dodson in the history of black bibliophiles. You know, there have been black libraries since Timbuktu. But, when you think of the great black librarians, and it's hard to even just, to use that word, it sounds so confining for a person like Howard, but he is indeed first and last a librarian, you think of Arturo Schomburg of course, you know, who created the whole thing and Arna Bontemps, who was one of my professors at Yale when I was an undergraduate and the great Dorothy Porter Wesley. But there's been nobody, not including your grandfather, great-grandfather, and Dorothy Porter Wesley, nobody who combined the various skills and talents, intellectual attainments, interests, and capacities, particularly intellectual blended with entrepreneurial and marketing...like Howard Dodson. So I would ask you all to give it up for Howard Dodson.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

6. Recommendations of the Strategic Advisors

Charette participants made several recommendations for the future development of the Schomburg Center. Specifically, they recommended that the Schomburg Center:

1. Continue to function as a relatively autonomous entity within The New York Public Library.
2. Continue to build its extraordinary collections, especially its special collections materials.
3. Continue to build its reputation as a leading repository of the legacy of black people.
4. Continue to build and expand its brand recognition nationally and internationally.
5. Develop and implement a robust marketing plan to build brand recognition, recruit and service donors, and promote the use of its collections and services.
6. Grow its exhibition, interpretive and cultural programs and enhance marketing of the same to increase on-site users.
7. Realign allocation of staff and resources to better serve remote users while continuing to provide state-of-the-art services to on-site users.
8. Expand its digital presence on the internet by increasing production of on-line exhibits and products while offering on-line access to full text collections, images and audio-visual resources.
9. Commission a major marketing study.
10. Commission a major study of the use of digital materials from the Schomburg Center.
11. Conduct major capital campaign to finance and support the growth and development of these initiatives.
12. Recruit a first-rate Director to lead the Schomburg Center into its 9th decade.

Appendix A: Background Research

1. Environmental Scan

The Schomburg exists as a “hybrid” institution. As the owner or holder, of one of the largest collections of books, manuscripts, artifacts and ephemera on African America and the African diaspora, the Schomburg is the **premier research library** in the field for scholars and other users of these materials. By the traditional definition of the functions of a museum; a place that collects, documents, preserves, researches, exhibits, and presents educational and public programs, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture **functions as the history and specialized museum and educational center of African-American and African diasporan communities** in the New York area. Finally, as a space which hosts a broad range of interpretive programs and performances for its members (local and national) and the general public, the Schomburg **functions as a Cultural Center** and has been labeled a “cultural anchor” for the Harlem community.

This Environmental Scan is an introductory tool that includes basic reporting on the six existing and one planned African American research libraries in the U.S. This Discussion Paper provides a shared foundation of knowledge and points of departure for discussions for Charette participants.

- Snapshot of African American Research Libraries
- Trends in Research Libraries
- Trends in African American Museums
- Internal Assessment

1.1 African American Research Libraries

African-American Research Libraries are usually general-service libraries and are parts of the public library system of their city or of a university. The Schomburg Center is recognized as the leading repository of materials about African Americans and African diasporan culture as a result, many of these institutions were created using the Schomburg as a model. The libraries described here are important for study by the Schomburg because they represent the growing field of, and interest in collecting and presenting around this field.

Recognizing that the exhibition and dissemination of the materials collected is an emerging field, many of the institutions studied have significant square footage devoted to exhibition space and most have significant public programming as well as a research facility and cultural center.

The most noted of these libraries are briefly examined below:

- Amistad Research Library, Tulane University, *New Orleans*
- The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, *Atlanta*
- The African-American Research Library and Cultural Center, *Ft Lauderdale, Florida*
- Blair Caldwell African American Research Library, *Denver*
- Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University, *Washington, D.C.*

1.1.1 Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans

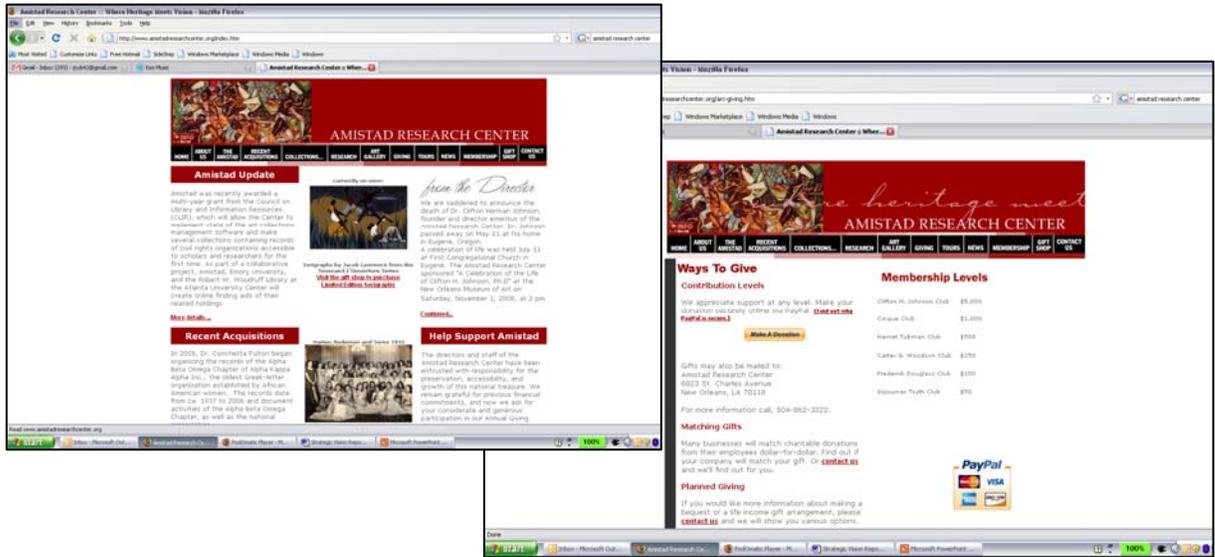


Opened:	First home: Fisk University, 1966, Dillard, 1970, Tulane in 1987
Size:	55,000 square feet
Collecting Scope:	manuscripts, photographs, oral histories, books, periodicals and works of art that contain the history of peoples, of nations, of beliefs and dreams, of a past worth sharing with the future
Exhibition Space:	600 square feet

As the nation's largest independent archives specializing in the history of African Americans and other ethnic groups, the Amistad Research Center is dedicated to preserving America's ethnic heritage by providing a home to the manuscripts, photographs, oral histories, books, periodicals and works of art that contain the history of peoples, of nations, of beliefs and dreams, of a past worth sharing with the future. The library is non-circulating.

The Amistad Research Center has over 250,000 photographs that document various aspects of ethnic history. They are not stored separately. The Amistad Research Center's ties to the American Missionary Association (AMA) can be traced to the AMA's roots in the coalition of abolitionists who came to the defense of the Amistad Africans.

The Amistad Research Library has over 20,000 books and periodicals that document ethnic history. The American Missionary Association and the Promise of a Multicultural America is a digital photo archives of approximately 5000 photographs.



Amistad Research Center on the Web

As shown above, in addition to standard information on the ARC and its namesake, *La Amistad*, the website gives visitors access to the digital archives, email access to research librarians and finding aids. The website features an interactive map of its AMA collection, *The American Missionary Association and the Promise of a Multicultural America: 1839-1954*, as well as present and past issues of its newsletter.

Notably, the ARC has several features on its site that solicit and collect funds. The gift shop, where visitors are given the opportunity to select prints and items from a large list of titles that are available as retail items, and a giving page, pictured above, where donations are solicited on a number of levels.

1.1.2 Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History

Opened:	1994
Size:	50,000 square feet
Collecting Scope:	250,000 photographs dating from 1859, literary manuscript holdings, more than 200 works of African and African American art
Exhibition Space:	3,500 square feet (3 galleries)
Total Staff:	27 full-time

The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History is a Special Library of the Atlanta-Fulton County Library System with the mission to preserve African American heritage by providing a home to the manuscripts, photographs, oral histories, books, periodicals and works of art that contain the history of peoples, of nations, of beliefs and dreams, of a past worth sharing with the future. The library offers specialized reference and archival collections for the study and research of African cultures. The library is a public facility with non-circulating collections, services and programs, free and opens to the general public seven days each week.

The nucleus of the Auburn Avenue Research Library collection was established in 1934 as the Negro History Collection of Non-Circulating Books in the Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library. The Collection has steadily expanded and has served as a focal point for library researchers seeking information on the culture and history of people of African descent.

The programs division provides a variety of events, activities and services that interpret and highlight the various collections and collection emphases of the Library. Programming includes an ongoing series of seminars, lectures, workshops, book discussions and readings, exhibits, and special initiatives.

AARL is in the beginning stages of developing its traveling exhibition services. At this time, the library offers a simple display highlighting the research collections of the Auburn Avenue Research Library. The exhibition is available to be borrowed and displayed at branches within the Atlanta- Fulton Public Library System (A-FPLS). The display is made possible with funding from the Atlanta- Fulton Public Library Foundation a special library of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.

Auburn Avenue Research Library on the Web



AARL uses its website to keep the public informed about events, to solicit volunteers, donations of collections, funds, new and featured acquisitions. Visitors to the website can directly access AARL collections through the website or learn more about visiting the library.

Although the AARL is a part of the Atlanta- Fulton County Public Library System and its site is supported by the System, it is a relatively independent site. Visitors to the site are allowed to explore the AARL and its collection without unintentionally leaving the site. Access to the main AFPLS website is constantly available by clicking the logo at the top of the page.

1.1.3 Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, *Denver*



Opened:	2002
Size:	40,000 square feet
Collecting Scope:	More than 32,000 items includes books, magazines, videos, DVDS and CD-ROMs
Exhibition Space:	7,000 square feet total
	5,800 square-foot gallery
	Conference room with seating for 100 people
	smaller meeting room which seats 20

The Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, serves as an educational and cultural resource for the people of Denver, Colorado, and the world, focusing on the history, literature, art, music, religion, and politics of African Americans in Colorado and throughout the Rocky Mountain West.

Exhibits include an African American Leadership Gallery, a replica of the office of Denver’s first black mayor, Wellington E. Webb, and a changing exhibit. The Blair-Caldwell AARL offers full, traditional library services, and is housed in a newly constructed, three-story, wheelchair-accessible building that has three levels.

The Library features study rooms, individual areas for children, teens, and adults, an audiovisual system providing information on programs, special events and exhibits, and a circulating collection with items in English and Spanish. Tours and programming for adults and families are available throughout the year.

1.1.4 The African American Library at the Gregory School

Opened:	Projected opening September 2009
Size:	30,000 square feet
Collecting Scope:	Books, pamphlets, periodicals, photographs, oral history recordings, maps, manuscripts, newspapers and clippings, personal family archives and ephemera documenting Houston’s African American History and culture.
Exhibition Space:	2,900 square (4 galleries)

The African American Library at the Gregory School, Houston’s first colored public school located in historic Freedmen’s Town, serves as a resource and repository to preserve, promote, and celebrate the rich history and culture of African Americans in Houston, the surrounding region and the African Diaspora. To accomplish its mission, the African American Library at the Gregory School will build, preserve and make accessible to historians, researchers, and the general public an incomparable collection of multi-type resources including, but not limited to, reference books, rare books, archival materials, exhibits, artifacts, oral histories and innovative programs.

The Library at Gregory School will display three permanent exhibits; a 400 square feet restored classroom, a 1,600 square feet gallery which will feature an exhibition on the history of 4th ward and black Houston, and a 900 square feet changing exhibition space that will rotate every 3-4 months. The Library also has a partnership with the planned Houston African American Museum which is projected to open in 2010 and will be approximately 14,000 square feet.

1.1.5 Moorland Spingarn Research Center and Museum, Howard University

Opened:	1919
Size:	25,000 square feet
Collecting Scope:	
Exhibition Space:	1,512 square feet

In April 1867, shortly after the university was chartered, a committee was established to select books for a library. Some of the first books were titles on Africa, and General Oliver Otis Howard for whom the school was named, donated several books and photographs related to blacks. Despite these positive beginnings, the black history collection grew slowly during the nineteenth century. Envisioning a national "Negro Americana Museum and Library," Kelly Miller, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, persuaded his good friend, the Reverend Jesse E. Moorland, to donate his wide-ranging private library on black history to the university for this purpose.

Moorland, an alumnus and trustee of Howard who served as general secretary of the YMCA, announced his gift of some 3,000 books, pamphlets, and other historical items in a letter to university president Stephen M. Newman in December 1914. But it was under Dorothy Porter, appointed in 1930, that the library became a full fledged research library. The collection of bibliophile Arthur Spingarn was acquired in 1946. The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (MSRC) was created in 1973 after her retirement.

The MSRC now consists of four divisions:

- Library division
- Manuscript division
- Howard University archives
- Howard University museum.

The Howard University Archives serves as the official repository for the archival records of the university.

The Howard University Archives Photographs and Audiovisual Collection consists of images, audiotapes, and audiovisual tapes that document the university's physical development, activities, organizations, visiting dignitaries, administrators, faculty, and staff.

The Howard University Museum, located in the Dorothy Porter Wesley Room of Founders Library, is a teaching museum. The museum selects, exhibits, preserves, and interprets artifacts and documents useful information for a broad interpretation of the history and culture of people of African descent. The museum also exhibits documents and artifacts relating to Howard University history. The museum division has no designated staff and tours are generally self-guided.

Staff Organization¹³

A Director leads the MSRC's four divisions. The Library division consists of a Chief Librarian, (3) full-time library technicians, and (1) part-time library tech. There is a line designated for an Assistant Librarian, but is now unfilled due to a hiring freeze. At one point, there were content specialists in certain fields (i.e. African, Caribbean, etc.).

The Manuscript division consists of a Chief Curator, Assistant Curator, Senior Researcher, and (2) library technicians. The Archives division consists of a Chief Archivist and an Assistant Archivist.

In terms of visitation, there are no figures at this time, however, the manuscript division sees an increase in traffic during the summer months when most university scholars are free from classes to conduct research.

1.2 Trends in Research Libraries

- Declining On-site Visitation for Research Services
- Developing Online Access
- Competition for African American Resources
- Expanding Exhibitions and Public Programs

¹³ *Background information obtained from MSRC website and interview with employee.

1.2.1 Declining Onsite Visitation for Research Services

Since the advent of the Internet as a major content provider, there has been a steady decline in onsite visitations to research libraries for research and reference services. For African American research libraries, users who traditionally had to go onsite to secure basic information about the black experience can now access that information online from a variety of sources. Scholarly use of onsite collection materials as well as professional use (i.e., journalists, photo researchers, etc.) continues at pre-Internet levels. But they too are seeking more access to resources online.

1.2.2 Developing Online Access

There has been a tendency by libraries building on-line services to tailor them for their unique user populations. Academic research libraries structure content to serve students and faculty at the host institution. The Schomburg Center, like The New York Public Library as a whole, is neither an academic institution nor one driven by specific curriculum demands. The challenge for the Center and the Library in selecting content for access in an online environment is to develop alternative criteria that serve the needs of its diverse publics. Given the actual and projected growth of online users as contrasted with on-site researchers, research libraries are being challenged to reallocate their material and human resources to serve the projected growth in online users.

1.2.3 Competition for African American Research Resources

Interest in African American materials and memorabilia in the commercial marketplace has increased the demand for such materials and challenged African-American repositories to develop more aggressive acquisition strategies. Research library materials lost to private collectors dealing in the commercial marketplace are not generally accessible to scholars and the general public for research and other purposes. The research libraries' unique preservation role is central to ensuring that there are sufficient primary research materials available to sustain scholarship and learning on the global black experience.

1.2.4 Expanding Exhibitions and Public Programs

Over the last decade and a half, research libraries have shifted from being passive repositories of information in their areas of expertise to active interpreters and presenters (i.e., the Library of Congress, National Archives, Folger Library and Emory University Library). Using exhibitions and public programs they have sought to increase visitation to their respective institutions and promote use of their collection. These onsite activities have been complemented by online exhibitions and marketing activities that contribute to enhancing the institutions' public visibility.

Increasingly, as research libraries have taken on more active interpretive roles through exhibitions and public programs, they have added a museological dimension to their functions. Some, like The Morgan Library & Museum, have formally changed their names to reflect the dual character of their identities.

1.3 Trends in African American Museums

1.3.1 Taking advantage of the surge in Heritage Tourism

Travel Industry Association of America studies have found that people who engage in historic and cultural activities spend more, do more, and stay longer than other types of U.S. travelers. The American heritage traveler is older, better educated, and more affluent than other tourists. Specifically, “a surge of interest in the civil rights movement has dislodged lingering discomfort with the past, bringing new attention to the lunch counters, bus terminals and churches that were the movement's battlegrounds. Suddenly, events both major and minor are being memorialized.” The majority of these tourists are well-educated parents and their children.

Use of Advanced media: Technology is being introduced into many museums to expand the range of experiences offered to visitors. As an increasing proportion of American society expects to receive information from a wide range of technologies museums are introducing more media throughout the galleries, as well as creating more “show” experiences, whether large format, decision or object-theatre and so on.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can the Schomburg be perceived as more welcoming to prospective visitors?
2. How can Schomburg take advantage of the growing young, well-educated audience—both African American and other cultures—culture-interested populations locally, nationally and internationally?
3. How can the Schomburg be more appealing to families and youth?

1.3.2 Collections

Documenting Modern History/Culture – In addition to typical 3-D and 2D materials, history museums and repositories are more actively collecting /recording /documenting contemporary or modern life or community traditions and practices through such means as oral histories, ethnographic studies (field studies). This helps to give a voice to the formerly underrepresented – those who may not have left written historical records¹⁴.

Collections have a more prominent role in visitor experience - Since the late 1980s museums have emphasized their interpretive activities on themes and storytelling, perhaps to the detriment of research and collections functions of museums. Research indicates that the public places a great deal of trust and credibility in museums because they hold authentic collections. Museum associations and professionals are arguing for a return of collections to a more public role¹⁵. Museums are beginning to re-focus on their collection strengths and draw on the stories that are inherent in the objects and art works. While museum visitors are seeking unique, educational and entertaining experiences, it is collections, which set museums apart from other leisure activities.

A more prominent role and increased public interest means new means of accessing information, research and interpretation, including:

¹⁴ Cultural Resource Management (CRM) 2001, International Journal of Heritage Studies, 2003.

¹⁵ Museums Association. *The Future of Collections*. July 2005

- ***Visible Storage/Open display*** bring more collections into the galleries either in traditional visible storage formats, such as the visible storage at the New York Historical Society's Center for the Study of American Culture, or more interpreted formats.
- ***Resource /Discovery Centers within exhibitions*** that allow visitors access to the latest information about a subject, connections to the internet or museum databases and sometimes to specific experts about a subject. Objects may be touched and examined. Museum image and print libraries are finding that by moving these collections into the exhibition halls they are engaging more visitors.
- ***Taking the collections out of the museum*** to engage with communities or groups not able to visit, or unaware of the opportunity, to places such as classrooms, nursing homes and community centers.

Curators have an increasingly important role connecting with visitors and integrating their collecting and research activities with programming, and marketing, and development departments.

Questions to Consider

1. How are the collections used for visitor education and entertainment at the Schomburg?
2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the presentation of the Schomburg collections?

1.3.3 Community Engagement

Museum-going is defined by the mainstream culture as a “leisure activity,” this is not the case for African Americans who largely perceive museum-going as an educational activity.¹⁶ As a result, museums attempting to attract African Americans must satisfy the visitor’s need for education as well as appeal to the same visitors desire for entertainment.

Many museums are building upon their strengths and advantages to make the museum more convenient for the average urban-dweller by:

- Adopting innovative hours of opening to allow visitors to ‘drop-in’ and to accommodate increasingly busy schedules and the impact of changes on the labor force
- Encouraging family and group visits with special programming, activities and events
- Becoming increasingly casual and convenient
- Providing an array of amenities and facilities (e.g., family change rooms, food services, multilingual or multi-sensory interpretation, internet) to appeal to potential visitors
- Creating or enhancing virtual presence and accessibility to draw on-line audiences and distance learners
- Providing real, authentic and active experiences with access to actual objects and artifacts.

Other trends being used by cultural institutions to attract visitors from surrounding communities are;

Meaningful learning experiences for visitors of all ages: *Visitor experiences that mix methods of interpretation and appeal to a wide variety of visitors. They offer hands-on /mind-on experiences for both children and adults and use technology creatively but not excessively. History museums, are creating discovery/resource centers in exhibitions as one of the means to achieve this goal.*

Issues-based exhibitions: These exhibitions, which are more typical in history and art museums, focus on contemporary issues and often address contentious and widely debated topics—in the museum’s community—provoking visitors to engage in material that may impact them.

Questions to consider:

1. How is the Center’s website currently used to attract visitors?
2. What other on-line sites, and resources are you using for your classes?
3. How effective are the current public programs at the museum? Average attendance to programs?

¹⁶ *Leisure Decisions Influencing African American Use of Museums* (American Association of Museums, 1993).

Museums are developing new and innovative ways to create coherent and comfortable environments that can be explored with ease and flexibility, and which can provide opportunities for engaging with the collections and exhibits, as well as opportunities for entertainment and social interaction among all visitors. Visitor-centered museums take into account every step of the visitor services and orientation – from the decision to visit, traveling to and arriving at the museum, orientation and way-finding once there, access to physical facilities, interpretation displays and in-gallery experiences, and exciting. For example, the Getty Museum married architecture with the visitor experience to create a comfortable, relaxing and welcoming environment while at the same time reducing the scale of the galleries and public spaces for more intimate environments.

Orientation experiences – Designed to introduce the first time or infrequent visitor to the main ideas, the context or themes the museum is communicating, as well as to the structure of the museum experiences, so visitors can make informed choices about their visit. The orientation experience (which takes about 15 minutes and could be a show, or object theater) is valuable as it creates a level of familiarity with ideas or objects the visitor will encounter in the galleries or programming.

- Reach out to the public; start the museum experience before people arrive.
- Use marketing to provide meaningful connections with the institution, to build a positive motivation for a visit.
- Provide opportunities for people to construct connections between museum experiences and their lives, both before and after the museum experience.
- Design experiences that allow people to personalize the information presented; this will encourage ownership of information and ensure that learners make the learning experience their own.
- Provide a variety of entry and exit points ("hooks") that permit free-choice learners to pick the point that best meets their personal needs at the time and that acknowledge the varying reasons they want knowledge.
- Attempt to layer the complexity of the experience so that learners can self-select the complexity and depth of information they need and desire at the time.
- Programs which are targeted at a variety of audiences, such as baby boomers, seniors, young adults and adolescents, and offer unique opportunities for engaging with other like-minded individuals.

Multiple perspectives - Exhibitions that have more than “one voice” -- that is present different perspectives on the same event or time period, offering visitors an opportunity to understand the complexity of a situation and make it more relevant to their own experience.

Thematic or interdisciplinary exhibitions - Exhibitions that draw on science, art and history to tell a story. These types of exhibitions have a central theme or idea that connects a wide range of seemingly disparate disciplines and perspectives.

Permanent exhibitions with changeability - Travelling exhibitions are found to increase visitor attendance and this desire for change applies to permanent exhibitions as well. Museums are developing exhibitions that can be easily updated, changed and replaced in order to maintain relevance and meet the needs of the community.

Authenticity - As noted in the Collections section, visitors want to see real things that they cannot see in movies, shopping malls or theme parks. Real objects are powerful and museums are now merging creative exhibiting and teaching techniques with the authenticity of artefacts to develop unique and informative exhibitions and programs.

Questions to consider:

1. *Which components of Schomburg's current interpretation (exhibitions, programs, education):*
 - *Do existing audiences most enjoy?*
 - *Generate return visits and increase length of stay?*
2. *What public programs do existing audiences most enjoy? How can they be more appealing to families and youth?*
3. *What has been tried but hasn't worked? Why?*

In order to attract and retain visitors, museums are increasingly acknowledging the need to fully understand their visitors, and to provide visitor services that meet new and expanding needs. These services range from adequate public amenities (e.g., water fountains, clean restrooms, seating, gift shops, food concessions, and accessible and affordable parking) to providing human interaction via appropriate and visible contact (e.g. accessible front-line floor staff, docents and front desk personnel).

- Visitor-centered museums take into account every step of the visitor services and orientation – from the decision to visit, traveling to and arriving at the museum, orientation and way-finding once there and access to physical facilities, interpretation displays and in-gallery experiences.
- Recognizing that museums can extend their services beyond the visitor and contribute to the neighborhood, amenities such as food services and the gift shop are located within the “unpaid” zone of the museum adjacent to the lobby. This allows area workers, shoppers, and tourists without a lot of time to drop in. Generating volume is crucial to the success of retail and food service sales, and creates a vibrant atmosphere within the museum.
- Interactivity and animations have become almost standard website features helping to enhance the visitor experience. With advances in software and security services, developing an on-line retail store is an option that all but the smallest institutions should consider. On-line registration for educational programming and special events, together with on-line membership applications and donations all help to enhance the services provided to visitors.

Questions to consider:

1. Which amenities and services are most important to Schomburg’s current visitors?
2. Are visitors requesting any amenities/services that are not currently present on the site?
3. Are there any new amenities and services the Center needs if it is to expand its audience?

1.4 Internal and External Assessment

The findings in this section emerge from in-person and phone interviews with senior Schomburg staff, group discussions with Researchers and Archivist as well as Development and Public Affairs staff as well as interviews with key users and stakeholders for Schomburg.

The goal of the interviews was to understand the day-to-day perspective of the Schomburg staff as well as the way that peers perceive the operation and future of the Schomburg. Key findings from these individual interviews are listed below and are supported by quotes. A full listing of interviewees appears in Appendix A.

Key Findings in Detail

The Schomburg brand is recognized as a leading authentic and authoritative source of knowledge on the global black experience. Its identity and integrity must be maintained.

The Schomburg Center is known around the world as a respected and loved, intellectual institution.

“As Motown is to Black Music, so Schomburg is to Black Culture (Keeper of Black Culture.” Can the Schomburg be a creator?

What comes out of the Schomburg Center is always known to be top quality. The level of respect that is afforded to the Center is important. It is in/at the epicenter of the cultural capital of the U.S.

Many people think that SC is a museum, people do not have a clear idea of what the Schomburg Center is. A museum would work well because the Center has many items to be seen.

Schomburg Center has inherited a reputation for its collections. Trying to make the Schomburg Center follow a cookie-cutter mold is to ignore the inheritance.

The Schomburg need to clearly communicate to its staff and public who do you want to be? Who have you been? Where are you going?

Schomburg has been around and thriving for nearly 90 years

Schomburg needs more genuine independence from downtown

Less clandestine planning

Must remain true to its original mission must adopt innovative ways to stay current, and attract visitors

Always remember into collecting, stay current with the collections

SC is a place where ideas abound, very important to have a place where you talk about issues that are discussed nowhere else.

*Heritage constituents – people that see Schomburg as a matter of pride
Main users are younger*

Center is currently largely responsive

- *Good relations with media because Schomburg services*
- *Is a community development model rather than top down*
- *In its reading of trends and servicing trends*

People look to Schomburg to fill the void but we -cant be all things with limited program dollars

The Schomburg has many communities, Geographic:

- Harlem, Manhattan, Bronx, Upper West Side (minus Brooklyn)
- Global / International
- Volunteers come from the Harlem area
- Just under 10,000 members, 6,000 are from the NYC area
- Don't have the ability to track internet users

Psychological – collection of Black Research, people think of the Schomburg as a museum

- *Curious first timers*
- *Visitation – get more “request” in special collections (both physical and online)*
- *Grad and above level go to Schomburg directly*
- *Bring in more people from the community (ex. Countee Cullen Library). Need more communication with Countee Cullen ex. 70's and 80's. Address / Service immediate community. Understand community collection needs.*
- *Pockets of captive audiences → creative programs (classes)*
- *Wireless / Technology issues that are preventing*

Going from idea to implementation

Older brand than Studio Museum which is more edgy

*Brand doesn't necessarily open up to younger group
Brand shifts with the age of the person.*

Physically, the Schomburg is a location that is at the center of the everything

The Schomburg Brand should also be associated with a welcoming environment

Welcome center at Schomburg (reception rather than security) (telephone system)

People have “post-traumatic” slave syndrome”

Schomburg need to have an ethic of care from the minute that people walk in the door (story of MTA track workers)

Every interaction is opportunity for marketing

Staff need “courtesy workshops/training”

We don’t seem to be getting enough resources to front desk

Volunteers – to immediate right to greet visitors (Bronx Library Center).

Greeter that directs patrons to appropriate locations (is a librarian/LTA)

Security:

- *Schomburg may want to hire their own security staff*
- *Magnetometers don’t work well*
- *Address loss of collection*
- *Concern about use of one card*
- *Trained as stakeholders*
- *Feeling from top down (everyone needs to have responsibility)*

Be a Gathering place. Great place, discussion place, slightly more aged

School-age—Junior scholars feel that they can explore ideas in AA history

Young Professional—you are beyond that. Older- Schomburg becomes a meeting place for older groups that come to membership openings/ The Schomburg speaks to them differently

Adjust the language for the audiences that we are trying to attract. Need to be more savvy.

Communication around program. Create a checklist to make sure every department knows what needs to happen in order for a program to be proposed. Have meetings with staff division heads to communicate with each other.

All departments need to understand what Schomburg does.

Harness creativity of staff that have contact with public

The Schomburg must continue to be at the forefront of the creation of African American and African Diasporan scholarship.

Schomburg tells a story and interprets what is put up, general text, illustrations, deeper for people that want to access books online.

Address to teachers and to researchers

Provides people with a wealth of information

Be at the forefront of African Diasporan writing

Materials created by Junior Scholars programs could be disseminated

Research

Collaborations—Different levels of partnerships

Universities (Africa, countries of the Diaspora)

Library of Congress

The Schomburg Center needs a leader who is able to bridge between the academic world and the public, between research libraries and museums, the generation gap between older and younger supporters and members, and between the African American and global black worlds.

Generational shift is necessary but need to know that there is a respect-factor for the older generation that is very important.

Tech-savvy leader

Can work with various communities. Someone that can define what Schomburg Center needs to be, we don't want to isolate loyal donors.

Vivacious that knows how to manage the place as well as downtown

Must fully understand that the Schomburg is a library and in libraries there are public services and collections. Everything else is secondary

Must understand the nature of research libraries to make available a broad variety of offerings

Must know how to serve this broad (not always scholarly library)

Important for staff to believe in the leader and know that he/she feels their work is important (staff morale)

Good Communicator- vision must be clearly transparent. Knows how to seek feedback

Research library-type background or must be aware of the core purpose

Dynamic leader creates the expectation of a dynamic organization

Schomburg has been “playing to the chorus”. Look at the example of 651 Arts in Brooklyn—see how serious young people can see what we are doing

Bring in a director as well as an apprentice or “second”

The Schomburg should make its intellectual property and products available through onsite services, technology, professional consultation, and further museological functions.

Revenue Generation---Berlin has decided to have an exhibition on slavery, there is an opportunity to market scholarly works there.

Allow people to purchase Maps, illustrations published by Schomburg.

Would need to find a structure to market the intellectual content. Difficulty now in putting out the information.

Commerce on the internet—The bookstore needs to have online purchasing capacity.

*Video and music that can be made available
Artwork that could be produced of high quality*

Liberia and Angola-- Planning to reconstitute their National Archives and are using Schomburg as Model (as opposed to National Archives and Library of Congress

- *Direct result of public forums held at/hosted by Schomburg over the years*
- *Hosted African Union, Senegal, South Africa, Nigeria, Slavery museum conversation (Dakar)*

Nationally, the City of Miami sought the Center’s direction in the development of historic tourism planning.

African American research libraries seek out the Schomburg as an example of good overall organizational framework, including the Broward County African American Research Library, Ritz Cultural Center and Museum, Avery Research Center, and the Auburn Avenue Research Center

Consultations on collections (team of 5-6 people on SC staff do this work, does this need to be formally established or is this a collegial responsibility)

Address tourist that come to Schomburg seeking the “Harlem renaissance” or the “keeper of Black history”

Center addressing the numbers of people that want to come to a “museum of African Americans in NY”

Digital Collections: As physical visitation decreases, Schomburg has built its digital presence.

Creating website that will display the work of the students and faculty of Summer Institute

Radio or TV show that goes out live from SC—conversations with Howard, Quincy Troupe series live, talking to artists

Increase amount of rentals

The Schomburg must build its capacity to attract and retain supporters and members.

Need to find a way to get tourist, especially international to buy memberships.

Prices are lower than what you would find in NYC

Something with Amsterdam News digitized – people that come here are looking at newspapers, journal articles, magazines

Website has a global reach. Mission is about African Diaspora—website is the way to reach that world

Raise the cost of membership: Counter to African American culture but at times you need a specialized group. [This] increases the value of the brand when people perceive that they are paying more for premium members. [Also] increase costs for rentals/programs

Use items in the collection to develop products (used Pomengrante before) but need to produce high-quality products. Work needs to be crisp not just the famous images but lesser-known articles as well (WPA paintings)

New creative products (ex. NY Historical Society)

Accelerate and formalize the traveling exhibitions service

*Need a Member survey to find out: How many members come to the website
How many members come into the library for the exhibits?*

Rentals, Bookstore

The Schomburg must attract new diverse audiences.

Attracting younger audiences: Program outreach is skewed toward older segment of population that have connection to African American history, cultural interest

Audience is porous- come to Harlem as tourist, come to see Schomburg

More women than men, older with some education

Schomburg needs to think about succession in terms of the audience—currently tend to be academicians. Scholarly audience can get younger through junior scholars program, rentals, get different types of people.

Audience for Schomburg programs is different than rentals

Younger staff, younger programs

Difference between audience and users: Audiences- people that come to programs, people and users are:

- supporters / constituents don't use but support programs and exhibitions
- Members – users feel free to use center: remotely, communicate clearly usage of collection

Being open and welcome to different cultures, Arturo Schomburg was Hispanic. Reach out to other communities- diversity, American Indian. Latino organizations—explore the ties with the Hispanic/ Black Hispanic community (Arturo Schomburg was an Afro-Puerto Rican. Why don't we do more work with Afro-Hispanics? Stop being afraid.

Less of an old-school feel

People that attend and participate don't reflect the users

Need more programming that speaks to younger people and of a higher- intellectual quality. For example, need programs with people like Zadie Smith, on a regular basis to diversify the types of people that come into the Schomburg

Users will always be the same, visitors will change.

The Schomburg should accelerate its commitment to growing the use of technology.

There is only one person maintaining the digital face of the Center. There is only so much that can be done on this basis. Opportunities to provide access to onsite programs and research created on-site are limitless.

To be successful in the next 5 years, the Schomburg Center will need to take advantage fully of the digital presence. It needs to grow its digital presence with Museum.

SC needs a systematic way of being able to communicate with audience through e-commerce.

Making sure that lay public knows that Schomburg has more things than books. Make sure that they know we can offer something tangible (museum) will

Went to Liverpool for the new International Slavery Museum—something of that nature

State of art and technology-based

Get Active platform- e-commerce tool that the library uses, people can renew their membership, holiday email, manage ticketing, shop online, blogging,

Social networking is important but blogs are not reasonable because there is no one to maintain.

Creating a blog on the reference sheets → is info censored or vetted (does someone on staff review it first)

- *Publicize products and show how to use with classes (put up on website)*
- *Publicize information output*
- *Procedure and information about researching*
- *Too much on website*
- *Artist- age specific*

What about younger kids, they bring an influx of new ideas

Don't exacerbate young and old, educated and non-educated groups

Social-gathering place, want to find the people that want to meet and greet

Attract people that have kids

The Schomburg has to expand its capacity to attract and retain younger audiences.

Each year change the programs so that you continue to keep the attention of the young. For instance the curriculum of the young scholars program changes each year.

Go to where the kids are—maintain your Facebook page

Media-savvy, keep the kids involved,

Continue education collaborations with educational systems and religious institutions. Reach out to prep and charter schools

Utilize NYPL Blog to let people know about new acquisitions—the Schomburg does not currently use the blog. Need a link on the homepage to get on the blog

The Schomburg needs to define and reinforce its identity with new audiences.

Who do you want to be?

For a year focus on building revenue then decide where that money will go in the next year (i.e. Marketing one year, collections, programs, etc). Advertising the things that you do here?

Marketing budget- emails, where are you advertising

Think differently about the people that would come to programs. More targeted marketing for things like the Quincy Troupe serious

Addressing all layers of audience ex. “Schomburg Nights”.

Exporting Programs: HRT has given permission for distribution and sale

- *Percy Sutton tribute*
- *Langston Hughes film*
- *Documented programs-- Opportunity for these to be revenue-generating*

Publicizing collection – use items as showcase

Creating relationships with scholars, writers, collectors, that bring people in for program.

The Schomburg needs to make itself more accessible to its surrounding community as a gathering space.

Religious Institutions – collections, oral history (religious heritage project)

Get “community” involved in acquisitions

Community Acquisition Committee

Ask staff type of research that you are being asked

Genealogy – AAGS often holds workshops. Opportunity to accommodate needs of groups that want to do genealogy research. Formalize relationship with the organization. Establish Schomburg as standard location for group / branch meeting

Workshop programming during closed hours, this would not interfere with public plug resources

SC is required to charge for spaces- usually needs free programming space

Museum of the City of New York welcomes the free programs and is increasingly providing free opportunities for programs that could be held at the Schomburg

Complementary programming. Do program using manuscripts/books. Theatrical productions and exhibitions using papers

Before each production talk about the Schomburg and why it’s a benefit for the community

2. Contextual Analysis

This section seeks to provide a realistic assessment of the overall cultural market in the United States, as well as for specialized, African American and other culturally specific institutions. Since the Contextual Analysis will provide broad market parameters for various cultural institution types, it will stimulate important questions for Phase 2: Environmental Scan of this study as well as the Strategic Visioning Charette.

Using information from the American Association of Museums, Americans for the Arts, the New York Department of Commerce, Woods and Poole The 2006 Complete Economic and Demographic Data Source, Woods & Poole Economics, the 2006 American Community Survey of the US Census, and 2007 and 2008 updates from U.S. Census Bureau.

The data collected includes: size and growth patterns of population, gender, age, educational attainment levels and race/ethnicity. For the purposes of this analysis, we have defined the resident market as the three largest areas identified by the US Census Bureau.

A particularly important audience which is not addressed in this analysis is the global market that exists for the Schomburg. With its work in the area of African diasporan subjects, global interest in the Schomburg Center is substantially larger than other research libraries in the New York Public Library system.

2.1 African American Cultural Participation

As is the case with other culturally specific museums across the nation, the Schomburg is particularly important for people of African descent and this audience represents a core market. In the following areas, this audience is referred to as African American.

The following chart details important information from selected African American cultural institutions, including museums and cultural centers. Looking at African American museums has the advantage of examining institutions whose focus is relevant to the Schomburg. The data helps to provide the following parameters for future planning for the Schomburg.

Chart 4: Analysis of African American Museums and Exhibiting Spaces

African American Museums and Cultural Centers	Year Open	Sq. Foot. (ft ²)	Staff			2007 Attend.	Any Evening Hours?		Adult Charge	Family Membership Charge	MSA Pop. (2006)	African Americans as % of MSA Pop. (2006)	Visitors per 1000 MSA Pop.	Visitors per 1000 African American Pop.	African American Population
			FT	PT	Vol.		Yes	No							
African American Museum, Dallas	1974	n/a	15	2	3	201,000		x	\$0.00	\$50	6,006,094	15%	33	228	881,930
African-American Museum and Library at Oakland	1965	17,500	4	3	n/a	2,000	x		\$0.00	n/a	4,180,027	10%	0	5	399,016
Afro-American Cultural Center, Charlotte, NC	1974	11,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	50,000		x	\$5.00	\$100	1,582,627	24%	32	130	383,566
Afro-American Historical Society Museum, Jersey City	1977	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,500		x	\$0.00	n/a	18,818,536	18%	0	2	3,459,436
American Jazz Museum, Kansas City**	1994	55,000	17	8	9	242,443	x		\$6.00	\$50	1,966,790	13%	123	949	255,493
America's Black Holocaust Museum, Milwaukee, WI	1988	n/a	2	2	15	15,000		x	\$5.00	\$50	1,509,981	17%	10	58	257,192
Anacostia Museum, Washington DC	1967	28,000	19	n/a	60			x	\$0.00	n/a	5,288,670	27%	0	0	1,446,478
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, AL	1992	58,000	24	7	163	145,000		x	\$11.00	\$50	1,089,883	29%	133	464	312,692
Black American West Museum and Heritage Center, Denver	1971	n/a	2	1	15	12,500		x	\$6.00	\$50	2,408,622	6%	5	85	147,361
Black Heritage Museum, Miami	1987	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4,010		x	\$0.00	\$35	5,463,857	21%	1	3	1,149,818
California African American Museum, Los Angeles	1981	44,000	19	7	n/a	45,000		x	\$0.00	\$75	12,950,129	8%	3	44	1,013,090
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit**	1965	120,000	45	14	100	600,000		x	\$8.00	\$65	4,468,966	24%	134	568	1,055,683
Dusable Museum of African-American History, Chicago	1961	52,000	21	21	52	150,000		x	\$3.00	\$35	9,506,859	18%	16	85	1,757,068
Museum of Afro American History, Boston	1966	n/a	7	3	6	230,000		x	\$0.00	\$50	4,455,217	8%	52	678	339,188
Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MOCADA)	2005	2,500	2												
National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center, Wilberforce, OH	1972	55,000	13	n/a	50	2,500		x	\$4.00	\$35	838,940	16%	3	19	131,839
National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis, TN	1991	52,000	30	17	150	210,000		x	\$12.00	\$60	1,274,000	44%	165		
National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Inc., Baltimore*	1983	30,000	9	6	30	200,000		x	\$9.00	\$75	2,658,405	29%	75	256	780,834
Reginald F. Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History and Culture	2005	82,000	28	13	n/a	85,000		x	\$8.00	\$55	2,658,405	29%	32	109	780,834
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture	1926*	75,000	60	13		120,000		x	\$0.00	\$35	18,818,536	18%	6	35	3,459,436
The African-American Museum in Philadelphia	1976	n/a	25	5	86	60,000		x	\$8.00	\$60	5,826,742	21%	10	48	1,238,106
The Apex Museum, Atlanta	1978	25,000	4	n/a	44	65,000		x	\$4.00	\$50	5,134,871	32%	13	40	1,635,156
The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY	1967	72,000	32	4	8	116,159		x	\$7.00	\$75	18,818,536	18%	6	34	3,459,436
Tubman African American Museum, Macon, GA	1982	82,000	15	20	103	68,722		x	\$5.00	\$50	221,212	44%	311	698	98,412
The Weeksville Heritage Center	1971		10	2	10	10,000		x	\$4.00		18,818,536	0%			
Average (all)	1979	50,647	19	8	53	122,053			\$4.36	\$55.53	6,169,304	20.3%	39	183	1,159,222
Median (all)	1977	52,000	18	7	44	85,000			\$4.50	\$50.00	4,462,092	21.6%	11	58	881,930
Average (charged admission only)	1980	43,000	14	5	43	105,678			\$3.75	\$54.50	5,703,577	21.2%	37	235	940,135
Median (charged admission only)	1979	44,000	16	5	15	60,000			\$2.50	\$50.00	4,871,944	21.0%	10	72	831,382

Source: 2009 Official Museum Directory & 2008 AAAM Directory of African American Museums. **The attendance figure reported here is accurate on-site attendance based on previous work conducted by LORD. Figure in Official Museum Directory includes outreach, website hits, etc. and is therefore not an accurate basis for comparison.
2009 IMLS/ AAAM Directory of African American Museums and Cultural Centers
* The Schomburg Collection was acquired from Arturo Schomburg in 1926 where it was a part of the 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library.

Some 21 (84%) of the largest 25 MSAs in the U.S. have an African-American history and culture museum (either existing or being implemented). New York City does not. The Schomburg is viewed as the “de facto” museum of African American history. The others without a museum that explores African-American historical issues (or planned museums) are Portland, Sacramento, and Minneapolis. However, more than 13% of the New York MSA population is of African-American origin, compared to only 3% for Portland, 5% for Minneapolis and 8% for Sacramento.

2.1.1 Attendance at African American Cultural Institutions

The data indicate average reported attendance levels among African American Museums/Cultural Centers of about 122,000, while the median figure was almost 85,000. This is an increase from visitation at African American museums in 2000. At that time, the average reported attendance was 105,000 and median attendance was 69,000.

This increase can be attributed to the increased awareness and number of opportunities for people to experience African American museums—the four museums with the largest attendance opened or experienced major renovations between 2000 and 2008.

The museum with the largest attendance is the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit with an annual visitation of approximately 600,000. The majority of those visitors participate in the African World festival which takes place over a three-day weekend in August. This point emphasizes the importance of outreach activities like festivals and concerts. Without counting festival attendance, Charles H. Wright visitation shrinks to approximately 70,000 per year.

With its four sites and the most recent renovation of the African Meeting House, the second highest reported attendance during 2008 was at the Museum of Afro American History in Boston, which reported 230,000 visitors in 2008. Note that this institution consists of a number of historic sites as well as a Black Heritage Trail (walking tour) and visitor counts take these attractions into account and are thus to some extent double counted.

The American Jazz Museum reported 242,000 visitors including persons attending performances in the Blue Note jazz café and visiting the adjacent Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (all three institutions share the same roof). The National Civil Rights Museum, which regularly has visitation of 180,000 experienced a jump this past year because of the 40th anniversary of the King assassination.

Of the institutions with over 200,000 visitors in 2008, only the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore own a substantial collection—the wax figures. The other museums—American Jazz, Wright, Museum of Afro- American History, and the National Civil Rights Museum—display over 90% of their collection and rely heavily on loans to supplement changing and permanent exhibitions. **The Schomburg has over 10,000,000 items—books, manuscripts, audiovisual materials, artifacts and ephemera in its collection and displays less than one-half of one-percent of its collection. Clearly this is a unique strength and opportunity.**

Although a large African American population – and therefore a larger pool of visitors with a personal connection to the subject matter of the Museum – is preferable, the nature and quality of the visitor experience is a more important predictor of attendance, whether the prospective visitor is or is not of African ancestry.

2.1.2 Psychographic Factors in African American Cultural Participation

Here we focus on the museum visitation patterns of African Americans based on what is still considered to be the most important comprehensive study on the topic.¹⁷ The analysis emerges from a study of African Americans in six diverse communities in the Northeast of the country.

Roughly one third of African Americans are regular museum attenders (which is about the same percentage as in the population a whole), and about a tenth visit museums frequently. The African Americans surveyed by Falk tended not to perceive museum going as a leisure or culturally educational activity. There was a general, though not universal, lack of appreciation for the benefits of museums. The four main reasons he identified were as follows:

- Socio-economic factors such as education, income and employment. Museum-going increases as a function of education and household income; African-Americans who attend museums have education levels and incomes considerably above the national average for blacks. Overall, however, African-Americans continue to have disproportionately lower education and income levels relative to American whites, although the gap is narrowing.
- Institutional factors such as attitudes towards museums and the perceived attitudes of museums towards visitors. Racism, in the form of cultural exclusivity, leads to African Americans being made to feel unwelcome, and conspicuously in a minority group. There was also concern that African culture is not adequately represented in most museums, and thus a lack of connection is felt. There is a general feeling of alienation from what are perceived to be white-dominated, Eurocentric institutions. In addition, information about institutions may not be getting through to African Americans.
- Cultural/ethnic factors such as the role of family and church in leisure activities. African American family groups tend to involve larger numbers of multi-generational individuals, which may be more difficult to organize for a museum trip. Working with local community institutions such as churches, including the distribution of free passes through church and other African American community organizations is recommended. Family tradition is also an important determinant of museum going in that those who had been taken to the museum as children expressed the desire to give their own children the same experience. Since museum going was less likely to be part of the experience of the majority of African Americans, they are not as likely to pass this experience on to their children.
- Regional factors such as rural/urban backgrounds. Those who grew up in regions where museums were absent or unavailable are less likely to develop a museum-going habit.

The central problem is that African Americans who have been historically excluded from museums are unlikely to develop museum-going habits or to pass these on to their children or friends. This absence of the museum-going tradition is cited as the biggest contributor to current shortfalls in African American utilization of museums. Once the black population is sufficiently enticed to come to a museum, Falk suggests, a tradition will develop and African American visitorship should increase.

¹⁷ John Falk *Leisure Decisions Influencing African American Use of Museums*. American Association of Museums, 1993.

2.2 Overview of the Experience of a Culturally-Specific Museums/Cultural Centers in New York City

Many cultural institutions that address specific audiences such as African American Hispanic, Jewish, and Asian American face the same challenges—a perception that the museum is not only *about*, but also *for* the specific ethnic group. A key issue is that persons who are not of the ethnic or racial group perceive they will not feel welcomed or just do not believe that the product offered will be of interest. A good site (offering visibility, easy access, and synergy with other attractions) and a great deal of marketing money help, but as a rule this type of institution has difficulty attracting substantial numbers of visitors. A focus on the experience of culturally-specific museums in New York illustrates this point.

Chart 5: Attendance, Admission, and Staff at Culturally-Specific Museums in NY City

New York City Museum	Reported Attendance 1996	Reported Attendance 2002	Reported Attendance 2008	Adult Admission Charge, 1996	Adult Admission Charge, 2002	Adult Admission Charge, 2008	Full-Time Staff 1996	Full-Time Staff 2002	Full-Time Staff 2008
China Institute Gallery	10,000	10,000	9,150	No charge	\$3.00	\$7.00	18	23	31
Hispanic Society of America	13,172	25,000	25,000	No charge	No charge	No charge	25	25	28
Japan Society Gallery	12,000	25,000	25,000	Suggested donation: \$3.00	Suggested donation: \$5.00	12	4	5	3
Jewish Museum	184,000	220,000	223,000	\$7.00	\$8.00	\$12.00	74	107	126
Museum For African Art	75,000	100,000		\$4.00	\$5.00		16	22	
Museum of the Chinese in the Americas	23,000	32,000	50,000	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	6	5	6
National Museum of the American Indian	330,000	341,123	334,506	No charge	No charge	No charge	170	289	293
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture			120,000	No charge	No charge	No charge			60
Studio Museum of Harlem	100,000	116,159	116,159	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$7.00	41	32	32
Ukrainian Museum	25,000	25,000	25,000	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$8.00	3	3	3

*Source: The Official Museum Directory

The Jewish Museum in New York City is in a community with a Jewish population of 1.4 million. It occupies a very good site on 5th Avenue at 92nd Street, but nonetheless attracts fewer visitors than might be expected. Reported attendance levels, including persons attending performances and other programs, and those in the building for rentals, have ranged from 170,000 to 220,000 over the three years (1996, 2000, 2002) analyzed in the table. Actual on-site attendance levels have been in the range of 125,000 to 140,000. Most of the other ethno-specific museums or community centers attract fewer than 25,000 visitors. The Black museums listed here – the Schomburg, Museum of African Art, and Studio Museum in Harlem – reported a range of between 75,000 and 116,000 visitors.

2.3 Overall Cultural Marketplace

The Schomburg exists as a “hybrid” institution. As the owner or holder, of one of the largest collections of books, manuscripts, artifacts and ephemera on the African American and African diaspora, the Schomburg is the premier **research library in the field** for scholars and other users of these materials. By the traditional definition of the functions of a museum; a place that collects, documents, preserves, researches, exhibits, and presents educational and public programs, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture functions as the **history and specialized museum** and educational center of African-American and African diasporan communities in the New York area. Finally, as a space which hosts a broad range of interpretive programs and performances for its members (local and national) and the general public, the Schomburg functions as a **Cultural Center** and has been labeled a “cultural anchor” for the Harlem community.

The Schomburg Center and African-American Museums

Museums in the 21st Century are among the world’s most successful communication media: institutions that have developed for over 200 years successfully absorbing each wave of new technology from print to television and now the Internet. There is common agreement nationally and internationally that museums have the six basic functions named above. However, the success of museums is very much due to the flexibility of this medium. In fact there are institutions recognized as museums that own few or no collections; including, for example, some children’s museums and “idea museums;” and some historic sites where the building or the site constitutes the collection. The way in which particular institutions address each of these six functions is what constitutes their character and most impacts their credibility.

As a result of conversations with Schomburg staff, the following sections specifically addresses the Schomburg’s museological functions.

While cultural attendance overall has risen dramatically, not all cultural institutions have experienced this same level of growth. Indeed, many museums and cultural centers have experienced lower attendance levels in recent years due to competition for scarce leisure time, while a range of incidents have curbed international and national tourism.

The data analyzed in the following tables presents contextual data from four perspectives; operating data on all types across the U.S., data on History and Specialized Museums, and data on cultural attractions in the museums.

Chart 6: Analysis of Museum and Cultural Attendance in 2006

2006 AAM Profile	Art Museum	Children's or Youth Museum	General Museum	Historic Home or Site	History Museum or Historical Society	Natural History or Anthropology	Specialized Museum	Overall
Sample Size	197	26	73	82	226	43	84	731
Median Attendance	59,822	78,500	43,500	16,000	10,750	62,803	20,000	43,500
Median Adult Admission Charge	\$7.00	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$6.50	\$7.00	\$6.00
Median Operating Income	\$2,314,957	\$478,297	\$1,079,505	\$274,504	\$226,000	\$1,539,358	\$481,454	\$481,454
Average Earned Revenues	24%	51%	27%	32%	30%	22%	34%	30%
Average Revenues from Private Donors	46%	32%	30%	27%	32%	34%	42%	32%
Average Revenues from Investment Sources	15%	2%	10%	11%	8%	10%	4%	10%
Average Revenues from Government Sources	14%	15%	33%	30%	30%	33%	21%	30%
Median Value of Endowment	\$6,980,475	\$282,500	\$1,869,858	\$799,536	\$244,006	\$1,475,035	\$1,580,537	\$1,475,035
Median Operating Expenses	\$2,192,166	\$700,000	\$1,169,647	\$282,088	\$193,639	\$2,036,815	\$537,908	\$700,000
Operating Cost per Visitor	\$37.82	\$9.37	\$20.29	\$18.15	\$21.05	\$26.25	\$27.58	\$21
Staff salaries as a % of total expenses [Median]	49%	56%	51%	57%	48%	51%	52%	51%
Collections care as a % of total expenses [Median]	10%	0%	8%	5%	11%	11%	9%	9%
Marketing Budget as a % of total expenses	5%	6%	6%	3%	3%	6%	5%	5%
Marketing Expenses Per Visitor [Median]	\$1.75	\$0.46	\$1.20	\$0.64	\$0.56	\$1.42	\$1.13	\$1.13

Source: 2006 Museum Financial Information, American Association of Museums, 2006



With a median attendance of about 11,000, History Museums rank lowest as a museum type because there are so many small community and other history museums that are not perceived to be different enough one from the other to warrant visitation. **One of the keys to Schomburg's higher attendance numbers (roughly 120,000 each year) is that—although it is a research library—the exhibitions and programs it offers present a visitor experience that is seen to be compelling and unique.** Additionally, historic houses are a significant proportion of history museums, which attract lower levels of attendance due to their size, preservation requirements, and a number of operational issues.

Specialized Museums, which draw a median of some 20,000 visitors, often face limited attendance because they appeal to specific groups, special interests or enthusiast markets. An institution with a mission of collecting, preserving, and presenting African American and African diasporan history and culture tends to be of greatest appeal to people of African descent, just as an Asian American Museum will offer the greatest level of appeal to Asian Americans, as discussed later in this chapter. **The major problem faced by culturally specific museums is that those belonging to other ethnic groups feel less welcome, or believe that these museums are not for them.** Ways to address this common phenomenon relate to the visitor experience and marketing, which are all important considerations for the Schomburg.

Total attendance is composed of different categories of visitors, as well as market segments. For instance, attendance numbers are based on:

- Program Participants – *those who do not pay admission but pay a fee for participating in a program, such as a summer camp, or attend a charged special event*
- Paid Admission – *those individuals and groups, including school groups, that pay admission. Also included in Admission totals are those who receive discounts or reduced admission prices. **The Schomburg does not have any visitors that fall into this category.***
- Free Admission – *accounts for those who visit the museum, but are admitted for Free, such as members, children under a certain age, veterans, or those who attend on “Free Days” **Although most programs at the Schomburg are free, a large number of visitors to museums are schoolchildren, currently the Schomburg offers limited opportunities for students under the age of 14—a large audience for cultural attractions.***
- Rental Visitors – *museums rent their premises, usually during non-public hours, and while the primary reason for being in the museum is to attend the event, the attendees are exposed to the museum and are therefore often included in total attendance numbers. **The Schomburg has a strong record of rentals. Although the pricing structure of the facility varies widely, the Langston Hughes Auditorium is regularly rented out at least 75% of the year by corporate and not-for-profit entities.***
- Off-Site or Outreach Program/Event Participants – *may be included in attendance, although on-and off-site attendance numbers are separated. **The Schomburg does not currently include off-site participants in its attendance numbers.***
- *With more and more institutions making programs and services accessible via the internet, website hits, are another source of “visitors”. **Currently, the Schomburg does not aggregate visitors to its site apart from general NYPL visitors.***

*One way to analyze visitors is by **audience segment**, such as: **Residents, Tourists, and Cultural/Ethnic groups**. The motivations and needs of these audience segments are quite different and the strategies to market to them are different.*

While all museums are likely to attract each of these audience segments, different types of museums have different proportions of these audience segments. For instance, tourists account for high proportions of visitors to history museums, ethnically-specific audiences are primary visitors to specialized museums and festivals. Visitors to specialized museums are also often motivated by a strong interest in the content of the museum. Audiences can be further segmented by gender, age, and race/ethnicity—examined further in the Market Analysis.

Tourism is a major economic generator in communities across the nation, and tourists can also be segmented by the motivation (e.g., business and convention, leisure, recreational, eco-, and cultural tourists) and activities in which they participate while traveling. The numbers of cultural tourists, who are motivated by an interest in the cultural and heritage of a community, are growing; they also stay longer and spend more money than other kinds of tourists. Cultural and heritage visitors spend, on average, \$623 per trip compared to \$457 for all U.S. travelers excluding the cost of transportation. 30% of cultural heritage travelers report that their destination choice was influenced by a specific historic or cultural event or activity¹⁸.

¹⁸ Source: 2003 The Historic/Cultural Traveler, TIA

The cultural institutions marketplace is made up of a range of identifiable types of institutions, which offer the visitor different experiences and perform differently across a range of characteristics. The following provides a snapshot of the differences that exist between various types of culture institutions. These typologies provide a set of benchmarks, or reference points to assess the performance of individual institutions, such as the Schomburg Center which has unique opportunities and constraints.

Attendance Trends for New or Renewed Cultural Spaces: *The first year of operation of a new museum is typically the highest attendance year for the museum, due to the build of up of interest in the project over several years, and the high levels of press attention, special events and marketing dollars that take place at the time of opening. In Year 2 attendance can drop by up to 30% from the opening year. Over the next 3-4 years attendance will rise and stabilize at below Year 1 levels, but requires investment in changing exhibitions, programming and marketing. In FY 07, the first full year of operation after an \$11 million renovation, attendance at the Center grew from just over 100,000 before the renovation to 120,000.*

Attendance Patterns:

- *Attendance at museums is distributed during the day and from weekday to weekend, according to different audience segments. Due to school visits, weekday attendance in museums may account for 40-60% of visitors, with the majority of school visitors arriving in the morning and departing by 1:00 pm. Afternoons tend to be quiet and are preferred times for seniors and senior groups, with strong marketing. The Schomburg has extensive partnerships with New York school systems which allow for substantial offsite visits by area school groups.*
- *School group visitation can account for 15-40% of totally visitors depending on the type of museum, and tend to be concentrated at the elementary grade levels. History museums are more likely to attract students in Grade 4, when local history is taught.*
- *Weekend days and school breaks tend to be the prime time for family visitors, and the best time for family-oriented programming.*
- *Schools tend to visit October to early December, during the mid-winter term, and peak in May-June.*
- *Tourist visits tend to be strongest during the summer. Tourists can be segmented as short-haul (within a one-two hour drive and are typically day-trippers; or long-haul, who may be in the area for several days).*
- *The success of evening hours depends on programming, target audiences (preferred by young adults), the community's lifestyle and the nature of the neighborhood. Another consideration is ensuring that the Museum is available for major rentals when the Museum is closed to the public. Depending on the community this may vary but tend to be Thursday and Friday, sometimes Saturday nights.*

Chart 7: Analysis of Operating Revenue and Expenses

2006 AAM Profile	Art Museum	Children's or Youth Museum	General Museum	Historic Home or Site	History Museum or Historical Society	Natural History or Anthropology	Specialized Museum	Overall
Median Attendance	59,822	78,500	43,500	16,000	10,750	62,803	20,000	43,500
Median Operating Income	\$2,314,957	\$478,297	\$1,079,505	\$274,504	\$226,000	\$1,539,358	\$481,454	\$481,454
Average Earned Revenues	24%	51%	27%	32%	30%	22%	34%	30%
Average Revenues from Private Donors	46%	32%	30%	27%	32%	34%	42%	32%
Average Revenues from Investment Sources	15%	2%	10%	11%	8%	10%	4%	10%
Average Revenues from Government Sources	14%	15%	33%	30%	30%	33%	21%	30%
Median Value of Endowment	\$6,980,475	\$282,500	\$1,869,858	\$799,536	\$244,006	\$1,475,035	\$1,580,537	\$1,475,035

According to 2008 AAM survey data, the average museum in the United States generated about 30% of its operating income from earned sources (admissions, retail, food, membership, rentals, etc.) while the average history museum reported 26% from these sources. Specialized museums generated almost 32% of their income in this way. Museums require income from a variety of earned, contributed and grant sources and the Schomburg is not an exception. As a part of the New York Public Library System, it has a reliable source of income for basic library functions however for more extensive trained research and program staff, the Schomburg relies on its ability to raise funds through membership and charitable giving. As is typical of most cultural facilities, only a small portion of the Schomburg's exportable revenue-generating.

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

1. What are the measures of the Center’s success?
2. Who and what ways do people, organizations, and institutions seek relationships with Schomburg?
3. What is the role for the Center (Harlem, NYC, NE Region, Nationally, Internationally)? What would you like it to be in 5 years (2014)
4. Current and Future (2014) Schomburg?
 - Role of Tourism for the Schomburg
 - Library Functions (Research, Collections)
 - Museological Functions (Exhibitions, Visitation and Visitor Services)
5. Describe the Schomburg’s current “brand” (Harlem, NYC, NE Region, Nationally, Internationally)?
6. Scholar-in-Residence Center

External Interviews(Schomburg Perception)

1. What are your expectations of the Center (Growth, Audience, Role in the community)?
2. Has the Schomburg met your expectations?
3. What should be the role of the Center in the community?
4. What are some opportunities for collaborations?
5. What are the challenges?

Appendix C: Acknowledgements

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Larry Earl Andre Elizee Lydia English	Houston African American Museum Librarians & Archivists Mellon Foundation
Stephen Fullwood John Franklin	Librarians & Archivists NMAAHC
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Every effort has been made to ensure that this list is as complete as possible, our apologies for any omissions or errors.

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Schomburg Center Collaborative Partners

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