

Fremont Rider's 1944 book, *The Scholar and the Future of the Research Library*, had a major impact on research library thinking. The issues raised by Rider, such as research library economics, collection, acquisition and management policies, and library cooperation still resonate today, although his technology solutions have long since been outdated. Rider's thoughts and predictions on research library growth influenced, rightly or wrongly, generations of administrators and librarians, particularly in the United States. The article outlines Rider's thesis and traces trends in research libraries from the 1930s to the present day when libraries will have to become much more proactive in their institutional roles to tackle the new paradigms for the creation, distribution and access of information. We return to the question of what is the future of the research library and its economics in the digital era - no easy Rider?