

Research on the Transformation of Library Literature and Information Services for Military Academy Think Tanks: Postprint

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Abstract

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Full Text

Preamble

Research on the Transformation of Library Literature and Information Services for Military Academy Think Tanks

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service system. **[Result/Conclusion]** Drawing on practical exploration and experience, the paper proposes literature and information service models and transformation strategies tailored to the needs of military academy think tanks.

Keywords: military academy think tank; literature and information service; think tank research; service model; service transformation

Classification Number: G251

Introduction

In recent years, think tanks and related research have experienced significant global development. Think tanks—specialized research and consulting institutions composed of experts and researchers from various fields—conduct multi-angle analysis, planning, and research to provide decision-making options and recommendations, exerting substantial influence in international competition and political decision-making. On January 25, 2017, the University of Pennsylvania’s Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) released the authoritative “Global Go To Think Tank Index Report 2016” (Chinese version) in Beijing, which revealed that China possesses 435 think tanks, ranking second worldwide [?]. A strong nation requires strong think tanks, and a strong military requires strong military think tanks. Military academy think tanks constitute both a component of university think tanks and an important part of China’s new-type think tank system, providing intellectual support for national defense and military development.

Military academy think tanks are professional consulting institutions focused on national security, military construction, operational research, policies and regulations, development strategies, planning, and equipment demonstration. They include relevant organizations engaged in strategic research and decision-making consultation at military academies such as the National Defense University and the National University of Defense Technology. Examples include the “China National Security Research Center” established by the National Defense University and the “National Security and Military Strategy Research Center” and “International Studies Center” established by the National University of Defense Technology. Currently, as a vital component of China’s new-type think tank system, military academy think tanks have entered a period of rapid development, leveraging this military reform as an opportunity. Historical evidence from renowned think tanks worldwide demonstrates that literature and information work plays a crucial role in think tank construction, with many prominent think tanks establishing dedicated intelligence information service centers, full-time information departments, or specialized databases. Military academy libraries possess abundant collection resources and excellent information analysts, enabling them to provide literature and information services for think tank construction. Under current circumstances, military academy libraries should thoroughly explore their potential, fully utilize advanced technologies, expand intelligence service functions, and deliver comprehensive, multi-angle literature and information services oriented toward think tanks.

2. The Necessity of Library Service Transformation

2.1 Serving Think Tanks: An Inevitable Choice for Military Academy Libraries

The primary functions of modern university libraries include education and information services. Libraries must build comprehensive literature and information resource systems to provide support for teaching, research, and discipline construction while leveraging their information resource advantages and professional service capabilities to serve society [?]. However, the modern information environment has undergone significant changes with the development of information technology. Network information resources have become increasingly accessible, and emerging information service providers now deliver search and delivery services directly to users. These changes have profoundly impacted traditional library literature and information services, gradually diminishing their appeal. S.R. Ranganathan's "Five Laws of Library Science" posits that "A library is a growing organism" [?]. Faced with opportunities arising from new-type think tank construction, libraries cannot remain passive observers but must adopt a reform-oriented posture to become dynamic and creative participants in think tank development—truly becoming "growing organisms."

From the perspective of current think tank construction, well-funded think tanks typically enrich their information sources by purchasing specialized databases [?]. As the literature and information center of military academies, libraries annually procure numerous specialized databases for campus and external users. When military academy think tanks require literature and information services, libraries can efficiently extract relevant data and knowledge from various databases, process and organize it, and deliver it to think tank users. Even when think tank users require databases with distinctive features unsuitable for general faculty and students, libraries can establish cooperative relationships through shared database construction, enriching mutual intelligence resources and achieving positive interaction and mutual benefit between libraries and think tank users.

2.2 Think Tank Requirements Driving Library Service Transformation

All think tanks require substantial information, data, and intelligence support throughout their research processes. Think tank development has transformed the information environment and influenced user intelligence needs and behaviors. Many world-renowned think tanks originated as libraries. For instance, Stanford University's Hoover Institution began as a war documentation library dedicated to collecting books and materials. It now houses nine libraries with 1.6 million volumes, over 60,000 microfilm files, 4,300 categories of approximately 40 million archival items, and more than 25,000 periodicals, making it one of the world's largest repositories of historical documents on political, economic, and social change. Similarly, national libraries have repeatedly undertaken and suc-

successfully completed decision-making consultation tasks entrusted by party and state leaders, central government agencies, and the National People's Congress, leveraging their massive collections, advanced retrieval technologies, and high-quality professional staff. This demonstrates the close relationship between think tank construction and library literature and information services.

Military academy think tanks serve military and national defense construction, aiming to enhance national soft power. In the omnimedia information environment, think tank users have convenient access to information and no longer require simple information sources. Instead, they need institutions capable of systematically organizing and integrating various resource types to provide highly targeted and timely intelligence resources. Under these circumstances, military academy libraries should rely on their resource and technological advantages to proactively expand literature and information functions and achieve service transformation during think tank construction.

3. Advantages of Library Literature and Information Services for Military Academy Think Tanks

Libraries possess three key advantages when providing literature and information services to military academy think tanks: abundant literature and information resources, high-quality information professionals, and high-level information services [?].

3.1 Abundant Literature and Information Resources

Scientific decision-making relies on massive intelligence foundations, with literature information serving as the primary carrier [?]. Libraries hold absolute advantages and unique conditions in collecting various types of literature and information resources. With increased national investment in higher education funding, military academies have devoted substantial human and material resources to library construction and management, resulting in significant library development. Based on distinctive collections, libraries emphasize collecting both public and grey literature related to military construction, weapons and equipment, and technological development, enabling them to provide diverse literature and information resources for military academy think tank users.

3.2 High-Quality Information Service Teams

Beyond strong advantages in literature and information resources, libraries possess high-quality information service teams. Team members come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, with some proficient in library and information science, others possessing strong computer and foreign language skills, and still others mastering literature retrieval techniques and information analysis capabilities. According to the "Blue Book on the Development of University Libraries 2015," the overall human resource structure of university libraries is evolving toward higher educational attainment, multidisciplinary, and specialization [?].

Military academy libraries have consistently emphasized talent team building, establishing cross-disciplinary, multi-level composite information teams [?] that have become indispensable backbone forces in military academy library endeavors and the mainstay for serving military academy think tanks.

3.3 High-Level Information Services

Leveraging their talent advantages, libraries can utilize abundant collection resources to provide intelligence and information services for military academy think tank projects. The most evident advantage of library participation in think tank construction lies in the intelligence analysis functions of library information service departments. With continuously deepening knowledge-based intelligence services and rapidly developing information technology, libraries can further expand their distinctive intelligence service content, transform intelligence collection approaches, expand literature and information service models, and incorporate the promotion and evaluation of military academy think tank research outcomes into their service scope [?].

4. Library Literature and Information Service Models for Military Academy Think Tanks

Based on functional differences, library literature and information service models for military academy think tanks can be categorized into three types: the fully embedded think tank process model, where libraries primarily support think tank operations, making think tank services a regular feature of library literature and information services; the think tank-oriented information service center model, where libraries function as intermediary platforms providing communication channels between think tank users and the library; and the military academy library think tank model, where the library serves as the main body for think tank construction and services, maximizing library literature and information service functions.

4.1 Fully Embedded Think Tank Process Model

As providers and managers of literature and information, military academy libraries should collect literature, intelligence, and data required by school think tanks to the greatest extent possible, systematically integrate intelligence resources from professional databases, OA repositories, and web platforms, and provide subject-specific resources for relevant research areas, thereby delivering embedded literature and information services to think tank users. Such embedded services should be integrated throughout the entire think tank project research process, encompassing both service and personnel embedding. Libraries can provide embedded services from initial research and demonstration through project implementation and decision-making formation, to final research outcome preservation, promotion, and application. This comprehensive, deeply embedded literature and information service represents the future requirement

of military academy think tank institutions for libraries.

The process of embedding literature and information work into think tank projects includes three interconnected components, as illustrated in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]. First, collecting and organizing various information resources required for think tank projects. Intelligence resources originally scattered across databases and web platforms can be consciously collected, organized, and processed by libraries according to think tank needs, saving considerable time for think tank institutions. Second, integrating with the think tank research process, primarily achieved through personnel embedding. By embedding information professionals into think tank research processes, libraries can comprehensively understand project progress, help researchers expand information source channels, and assist in intelligence knowledge extraction, thereby effectively fulfilling library functions. Third, managing think tank outcomes. Modern information society demands stronger resource sharing and utilization while providing more convenient conditions for effective information collection. Libraries can standardize storage and facilitate effective utilization of think tank outcomes within appropriate scopes, becoming reliable partners for military academy think tanks.

4.2 Think Tank-Oriented Information Service Center Model

In the ubiquitous knowledge environment, proactively providing literature and information services to military academy think tanks represents both a service innovation for libraries adapting to environmental changes and an improvement and deepening of the subject librarian system. Maturing and developing information technologies provide technical guarantees for establishing think tank information service centers in military academy libraries. Libraries can proactively establish dynamic integrated service platforms comprising literature and information service teams, think tank users, and information resources, providing communication channels among think tank users, between think tank users and librarians, and among librarians themselves. As shown in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper], this model aims to provide personalized, intelligent professional services for military academy think tanks, achieving true sharing of literature and information resources.

From the library perspective, such think tank-oriented information service centers can predict and analyze think tank project intelligence needs, explore relevant integrated and collection resources, formulate appropriate service strategies, summarize user feedback, and evaluate service outcomes. From the think tank perspective, users can submit questions online, receive answers from professional librarians, or obtain feedback from information experts, ultimately forming an intelligence information resource sharing service system adapted to military academy think tank development.

4.3 Military Academy Library Think Tank Model

Literature and information services have long been recognized as the most technically sophisticated service items in libraries. Strengthening literature and information service functions and enhancing intelligence work levels have become important breakthroughs for elevating the status of military academy libraries in the new era. Currently, some large and research-oriented libraries have demonstrated unique information collection capabilities and intelligence analysis functions by effectively supporting decision-making for government departments and enterprises. Military academy libraries should accelerate service transformation and librarian role upgrading to build military academy library think tanks, providing think tank services to military academy management, research institutions, and even regular university users.

For the military academy library think tank model, libraries can draw on the operational experience of the Hoover Institution. In the initial think tank construction phase, backbone members from literature and information service departments can be temporarily assigned to form project teams for specific think tank research projects, allowing simultaneous completion of think tank work and other business operations [?]. Once the military academy library think tank gains influence, it will inevitably need to establish dedicated think tank institutions with stable organizational structures, enabling library think tank teams with intelligence analysis expertise and information service advantages to complete intelligence content collection, processing, and promotion.

5. Transformation Strategies for Library Literature and Information Services Oriented to Military Academy Think Tank Needs

Current library research hotspots include transformation. While maintaining basic services, libraries must contemplate literature and information service transformation strategies. To better meet think tank needs and achieve service transformation, libraries must strengthen think tank service awareness, enhance information resource practical value, participate in think tank construction, expand intelligence service functions, establish brand awareness, achieve think tank influence, and strive to become indispensable components of think tank construction.

5.1 Analyze Information Needs and Enhance Service Awareness

New-type military academy think tanks should not only conduct basic theoretical research to provide solid theoretical support for military scientific decision-making but also leverage their comprehensive disciplinary advantages and multidisciplinary expert intellectual support to conduct integrated research on major practical issues affecting military reform and development, providing targeted and actionable policy recommendations.

In the new information environment, most think tanks possess strong knowledge reserve functions and convenient information access, placing higher demands on military academy libraries regarding information type, timeliness, and other needs. Regarding resource types, general information services emphasize academic content (such as books and journals), while think tank-oriented intelligence services emphasize timeliness and accuracy (such as newspapers, official website information, and industry data). Regarding service objects, general information services serve faculty and students, focusing on academic information analysis, while think tank-oriented services focus on analyzing practical issues like policy development and military reform. Regarding service content, general information services include document retrieval, sci-tech novelty searches, and patent information, whereas think tank-oriented services tend toward acquiring comprehensive multi-disciplinary information. Regarding service personnel, think tank services emphasize the professionalism, data literacy, and network service capabilities of intelligence analysts [?].

Therefore, libraries must transform their conceptual frameworks. First, they must attach great importance to literature and information service transformation from an ideological perspective and enhance service awareness for think tank decision-making consultation. Second, they must improve information relevance and timeliness based on think tank information needs. Third, they must analyze think tank user behavior patterns to understand intrinsic demand characteristics and patterns, constructing intelligence service models aligned with think tank user features. Through these comprehensive transformations, libraries can not only provide diverse intelligence services to think tank users but also enhance their own service value.

5.2 Integrate Information Resources and Enhance Practical Value

In the new era, libraries must identify breakthroughs for development by fully leveraging their resource advantages, completing service transformation, actively integrating into think tank construction, and reconstructing resources according to think tank needs. Libraries should systematically optimize and integrate information from different carriers and channels, build specialized databases, provide strategic information for military academy think tanks, and enhance information resource practical value. Using the National University of Defense Technology Library as an example, its discipline service platform can automatically organize and collect academic achievement data scattered across different databases by research scholars from relevant institutions, providing disciplinary data support for scientific research. Additionally, the library has constructed sci-tech literature integration platforms and Chinese-foreign language discovery systems that integrate various digital resources and online service tools to provide flexible discipline service functions for think tanks.

Military academy libraries' comprehensive distinctive collection resource systems provide convenient information access for think tank users. Libraries should actively expand information acquisition channels and pathways, fully utilize

grey literature, and employ new information technologies to develop new think tank-oriented databases to promptly meet personalized think tank user needs. Furthermore, libraries can form alliances with other institutional libraries and intelligence service organizations to leverage alliance resources and personnel to satisfy diverse think tank construction requirements.

5.3 Participate in Think Tank Construction and Expand Service Functions

Think tank users expect timely access to information resources when needed, requiring libraries to integrate various information resources and services to achieve seamless connection among information needs, resources, and services, promoting integration between literature and information services and think tank needs. This allows think tank users to access any required information resources without burden. Libraries should actively participate in military academy think tank work or establish military academy library think tanks, promoting excellent think tank products through resource sharing and information exchange with research institutions or think tank organizations.

Military academy library intelligence service function expansion includes: actively understanding and mastering military policies and frontier theories; regularly reporting and discussing intelligence research project progress; collecting distinctive resources to form specialized think tank databases; providing professional disciplinary information and consulting services through collection, integration, and mining of various outcomes and research information; embedding in think tank research to assist domain experts in data mining, forming professional think tank information knowledge products, and providing information technology support for think tank development; and developing think tank projects to advise on military academy development and military construction.

5.4 Strengthen Service Promotion and Expand Brand Effect

The “Global Go To Think Tank Index Report 2016” indicates that in 2016, there were 6,846 think tanks worldwide, with North America leading at 1,931, Europe second at 1,770, and Asia third at 1,262 [?]. These think tanks produce tens of thousands of research outcomes annually, including books, reports, papers, and journals. For military academy think tank research outcomes, libraries should properly collect, preserve, and promote them, systematically collecting institutional think tank research results to form specialized databases.

Beyond building specialized databases, libraries must establish brand awareness to gain think tank institution recognition. They should proactively grasp the pulse of key and advantageous disciplines, monitor disciplinary development trends, and participate in think tank research when conditions permit, providing the most comprehensive information services for think tank project completion to gain think tank influence and expand library literature and information service brand effects.

For publicly releasable think tank outcomes, military academy libraries can make efforts in three areas. First, create branded publications. While providing information services, libraries should concentrate on monitoring research trends of military academy think tank institutions, forming journals, reports, and other publications from provided information services, and widely promote them within policy-permitted scopes to expand think tank influence breadth and establish library service brands [?].

Second, utilize media for promotion. In the mobile internet era, libraries providing think tank services can use military networks, the internet, television, WeChat, Weibo, and other media to publicize and promote library work, influencing the general public through network communication to generate greater effect and brand influence, thereby obtaining more policy support and funding.

Additionally, think tank influence can be expanded through product promotion, academic exchanges, and conference forums, transforming and applying think tank outcomes where policy support and conditions permit.

Of course, it must be noted that many research outcomes and conclusions from military academy think tank institutions are classified. As evidenced by information sources in RAND Corporation's China military reports, China's military confidentiality work has certain weak points [?]. To prevent foreign military institutions and think tanks from obtaining such intelligence, libraries must properly safeguard relevant think tank outcomes.

6. Conclusion

During this critical period of rapid development for new-type military academy think tanks, think tanks have exerted substantial influence on library intelligence services. Libraries should re-examine their positions and roles, actively explore targeted, practical, and era-appropriate distinctive services to further expand and improve library service functions, enhance library influence, increase library resource utilization rates, achieve library literature and information service transformation, and establish libraries as "brain trusts" for military academy think tanks.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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