What if we could build a new kind of book that is not based on the codex? And what if we could build a new kind of academic library that is not based on shelves and lecterns? Such a project would require that we study and understand how the library fits into current and emerging work practices of faculty members, students, and staff. Nancy Fried Foster will discuss ways that this knowledge is already being gained through ethnographic methods that librarians can use with modest training and guidance. She will propose a way of designing libraries that departs from precedent and seeks new metaphors—beyond the shelf and the codex—for use in the design process.

Keith Webster, Dean of Libraries at Carnegie Mellon University, invites all who are interested in the future of academic libraries to attend this engaging seminar.

Dr. Foster is a well-known expert in helping libraries redesign their spaces and services to meet the needs of today’s researchers and students. Widely recognized for her work at the University of Rochester Libraries that began in 2003, Foster has consulted with a growing number of libraries in the United States and other countries, helping them to understand their local and remote users and to design vastly improved spaces, services, and technologies to meet their needs. She has also published books and has led numerous workshops to share her experience and educate librarians on using participatory design processes in their work.

Ithaka S+R has strong, established programs to assist librarians transitioning their services as technologies and research and teaching needs evolve. Its long-standing quantitative surveys and tools to support strategic shifts from print to digital formats in libraries are used around the world.