



Australian Library and
Information Association

FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSION

© 2014

Australian Library and Information Association

Future of the Library and Information Science Profession

Canberra ACT, Australian Library and Information Association, April 2014

www.alia.org.au/futureoftheprofession

ALIA FUTURES

*Initiatives for the future of the library
& information sciences profession.*



Australian Library and
Information Association

CONTENTS

Shaping our future	03
The project	07
Introduction	09
A healthy exchange of ideas	10
A positive environment for library and information services	12
World view	14
ALIA Future of the LIS Profession Summit	16
Themes	17
Actions arising	40



SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Australia is well served by libraries in all sectors. Like other nations across the world we are, however, seeing a decline in investment in school libraries and special libraries for industry and other organisations. The major reason given for this is economic, from funders who view libraries as less relevant in a world with Google.

If we want to reverse this trend, then we need to consider what is happening now, what will happen in the future, and shape our services accordingly. Above all, we need to ensure we are seen as vital, not only to the knowledge base of our communities but also to the economic, social and environmental development of our country.

Most futurists will tell us that it is important to look at the trends, and to develop various scenarios to assist in determining our future directions. However, spotting trends may be more difficult than we first think. The ebook was first introduced in the late '90s, then disappeared, only to make a significant impact on readers, authors, libraries and publishers some 20 years later, illustrating that trends may take some time before they become embedded in our everyday lives.

Let's look at some trendspotter predictions.

- Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) expects interactive games, particularly mobile phone applications, to be one of the highest revenue growth areas, driven by mobile internet access.¹ Some of our libraries are using 'serious games' to engage with new generation library users.
- Telefonica in its video *How will the world be in 2020*² states that the 'process of globalisation' will continue, and we should see traditional boundaries blurring. Of course we can see this trend developing through online sites and the use of social media. Libraries no longer need to work in isolation either geographically or by sector.

1 *Newspapers' future may lie in data* Sydney Morning Herald [Online] 1 July 2013 [Cited 27 August 2013] www.smh.com.au/business/newspapers-future-may-lie-in-data-20130630-2p5b1.html#ixzz2dJSacBTX

2 *How will the world be in 2020* Telefonica 15 May 2011

- Telefonica sees that the scarcity of resources (power, water, food) will determine our economic models.³ Australia has had a boom from natural resources, but as this slows, governments, universities, organisations are cutting their spending and we are all competing for meager dollars.

In the past ten years we have seen dramatic changes in technology: TVs connected to the internet, cloud technologies, online classrooms, mobile devices with fast computing power. We need to think how we will utilise these technologies and integrate them into our service delivery models. For example, all public libraries have websites but only a small number offer online membership without applicants having to come to the library to confirm their details.

Vijay Govindarajan, a professor at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business and co-author of *The Other Side of Innovation*, talks about how successful companies can easily lose their edge and has categorised three traps that companies can fall into:

1. The physical trap, in which big investments in old systems or equipment prevent the pursuit of fresher, more relevant investments.
2. The psychological trap, in which company leaders fixate on what made them successful and fail to notice when something new is displacing it.
3. The strategic trap, when a company focuses purely on the marketplace of today and fails to anticipate the future.⁴

³ *How will the world be in 2020* Telefonica 15 May 2011

⁴ *10 great companies that lost their edge* US news [Online] 19 August 2012 [Cited 27 August 2013]
money.usnews.com/money/blogs/flowchart/2010/08/19/10-great-companies-that-lost-their-edge

Libraries measure people walking in through our doors, how much they borrow, and how often they visit the website and attend events. We build collections, offer some services, maybe even serve coffee — in short we rely on a model where people come to us. So are we too tied to the physical library building?

David Lankes in his book *The Atlas of New Librarianship* states that ‘future libraries will be valued more for services than for book collections’.⁵ He asserts that our services will move from our traditional role of book storage and lending into a dynamic community space. We need to embrace both our physical environment and our virtual environment, allowing our customers to interact with us wherever they are located via any means they choose. Anders Sorman-Nilsson expresses this as Digilogue; how to win the digital minds and analogue hearts of tomorrow’s customers.⁶

In our buildings, virtual or physical, we house rows and rows of containers holding content, the majority of our digital content today is really just a conversion of the print into a digital format. It still looks like a book or article. As learning and knowledge creation become more collaborative and dynamic, we need to make sure that the book is not our psychological trap. We need to consider how we tap into the content and repurpose it or bring it alive.

Augmented reality is an excellent example of how we can combine content with technology to provide a greater experience. We can feed local history information (maybe even genealogical information) into travel guides, so when a person points their smart device at a building, not only will it tell them what it is, but also what it was and who lived there, providing the tourist with an experience of the past, present and the future.

5 Lankes, R David *The atlas of new librarianship*

6 Sormann-Nilsson, Anders *Digilogue: how to win the digital minds and analogue hearts of tomorrows customers*. Richmond, Victoria, Australia : Wiley, 2013. 9781118647936 (hardback).

Avoiding the strategic trap, where we focus on what's happening today, rather than looking ahead to tomorrow, is what prompted the ALIA Board to initiate the Future of the LIS Profession project in 2012.

Over the last 18 months, we have consulted with hundreds of people, both within the library and information field and outside it, and this series of reports is the end result. ALIA has synthesised and analysed all the feedback we received, and from this distilled a number of themes, some generic, others specific to the different sectors.

One overriding theme emerged, and that is that, to move forward successfully, we will need to work collaboratively with technology companies, publishers, governments and each other. These collaborations, at a national and international level, will enable us to data and text mine, look at 'mashing' content, think about creating outstanding experiences, and be even more proactive with the rich content contained in our libraries.

Julie Rae
President, Australian Library and Information Association

THE PROJECT

Exploring the future of the library and information science (LIS) profession has been a highly collaborative project. It was initiated by the ALIA Board in 2012 and has involved consultation with a broad range of stakeholders through a year-long process.

This consultation was based on an initial Discussion Paper published by ALIA in May 2013, and was supported by the ALIA Futures wiki. The wiki is now closed, but papers, submissions and postings can be found on the ALIA website.

The findings from the project have been produced as seven documents, including one each for school libraries, public libraries, tertiary education libraries, special library and information services, collecting institutions (our National, State and Territory Libraries), and one for the library and information professionals who drive the sector. These documents are available as pdf downloads from the ALIA website.

For more information about this project, contact advocacy@alia.org.au.

www.alia.org.au/futureoftheprofession

How will libraries remain relevant for users?

What changes will institutions and individuals in the sector experience?

Will 'library and information professional' continue to be a necessary and desirable occupation?

INTRODUCTION

In this project, we set out to investigate the big questions. Heading towards 2025:

- How will libraries remain relevant for users?
- What changes will institutions and individuals in the sector experience?
- Will 'library and information professional' continue to be a necessary and desirable occupation?

We were looking for bold thinking and we received challenging, insightful, inspiring responses to our request for feedback, through submissions from individuals and groups; participants at our Future of the LIS Profession discussions around Australia; senior library leaders, who gathered at our Summit; and the heads of other associations in the sector, who attended our sector roundtable. All these events were held between May and October 2013.

Conversations initially focused on the current issues facing library and information professionals, before projecting forward into how we saw the landscape developing by 2025. As a result, we have been able to identify indicators, which will enable us to map our journey, and actions that will support positive outcomes.

We concluded that the future is not fixed and we are in a position to write it ourselves rather than having it written for us. We need to be the architects of our own destiny, anticipating change and adapting our library and information services to be part of the flow.

A HEALTHY EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

There was plenty of discussion, debate and diversity arising within the ALIA membership, in the broader library and information sector, and with external stakeholders. The many issues raised about the current environment can be summarised in a SWOT analysis:

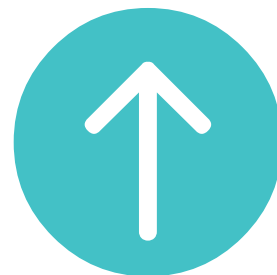
Strengths

Users need, want, love libraries, and they value the expertise and support of the staff.

‘Library’ as a term has universal awareness and the strength of the brand has developed over centuries.

Libraries are not simply about the materials and the technology, they help satisfy the need for people to connect.

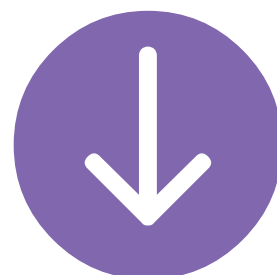
Libraries ensure access to books, resources and technology for everyone, promoting equality of opportunity.



Weaknesses

Management and funding decisions are often made by those who are not library users.

‘Library’ as a term can be seen as old fashioned and outdated, while ‘information service’ is not well understood.



Opportunities

We are living in an increasingly information rich, knowledge-based society.

New and disruptive technologies will help improve access to information.

Ebooks and eresources provide an exciting new format.

Growth in education through greater availability of online courses can only increase the demand for library services.

Libraries have an expanded role in content creation and can help disseminate new work.

In university and special libraries, there is an increased role for information professionals in the research field.

Information professionals are well positioned to counteract executives' information overload.



Threats

Free, cheap, ubiquitous online content competes with free library content.

Policy- and decision-makers are taking a DIY approach to sourcing information, with not enough concern for rigour, accuracy and completeness.

Shrinking budgets and higher costs make it hard to satisfy growing demand.



A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

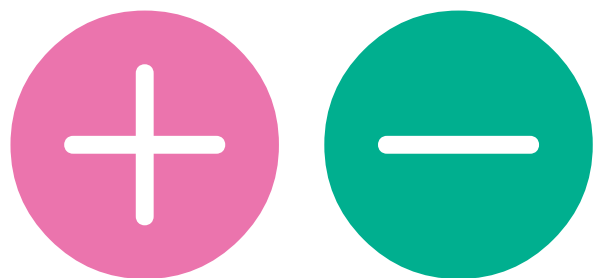
During the consultation period, there was no question that we would still be here in the future, and this optimism was endorsed by an exercise in matching what our sector provides against the type of society we live in.

Library and information services and professionals thrive best in an environment where:

- People respect and strive for truth, knowledge, justice.
- Governments are committed to freedom of access to information and freedom of expression.
- Citizens have enquiring minds.
- Literacy is a necessary skill.
- Reading for pleasure is a popular activity.
- History and heritage are valued.
- Information is abundant.
- There is evidence-based practice.
- People actively seek to reduce inequality.
- There is a sharing society.
- There is pride in civic and institutional infrastructure.
- Investment in knowledge is seen as essential for successful outcomes.

They do not thrive well when:

- Governments are oppressive.
- New ideas are seen as dangerous or irrelevant.
- The past is easily discarded.
- People don't value books and reading.
- There is a 'near enough is good enough' approach.
- Poverty and disadvantage go unchallenged.
- Enterprise and innovation are moribund.



WORLD VIEW

Australian libraries don't exist in a vacuum; they are part of worldwide networks of similar institutions. The future of Australian library and information science is wrapped up in the future success of libraries on a global scale and ALIA connects through the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

IFLA is carrying out its own extensive investigation into the future for the sector and, in August 2013, published the *IFLA Trend Report*. The *IFLA Trend Report* points to five high level trends that will change the information environment:

1 New technologies will both expand and limit who has access to information

An ever-expanding digital universe will bring a higher value to information literacy skills such as basic reading and competence with digital tools. People who lack these skills will face barriers to inclusion in a growing range of areas. The nature of new online business models will heavily influence who can successfully own, profit from, share or access information in the future.

2 Online education will democratise and disrupt global learning

The rapid global expansion in online education resources will make learning opportunities more abundant, cheaper and more accessible. There will be increased value on lifelong learning and more recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

3 The boundaries of privacy and data protection will be redefined

Expanding data sets held by governments and companies will support the advanced profiling of individuals, while sophisticated methods of monitoring and filtering communications data will make tracking those individuals cheaper and easier. Serious consequences for individual privacy and trust in the online world could be experienced.

4 Hyper-connected societies will listen to and empower new voices and groups

More opportunities for collective action are realised in hyper-connected societies — enabling the rise of new voices and promoting the growth of single-issue movements at the expense of traditional political parties. Open government initiatives and access to public sector data will lead to more transparency and citizen-focused public services.

5 The global information economy will be transformed by new technologies

Proliferation of hyper-connected mobile devices, networked sensors in appliances and infrastructure, 3D printing and language-translation technologies will transform the global information economy. Existing business models across many industries will experience creative disruption spurred by innovative devices that help people remain economically active later in life from any location.

We used these trends to help frame the latter stages of our consultation process.



ALIA FUTURE OF THE LIS PROFESSION SUMMIT

More than 50 library leaders from across Australia and New Zealand came together at the State Library of NSW on 14 October 2013 for ALIA's Future of the LIS Profession Summit. The event started with futurist Mark Pesce's keynote 'our hyper connected future.' He said:

'Let me begin this morning with the good news: you've won. The culture of shared knowledge which is the essence of the message and purpose of the library has now become an established feature of global culture. The light of knowledge shines more brightly than ever before, from two billion smartphone screens.'

Mark framed his discussion by showing how far the industry, and access to information, has come and asking what this relatively new world of easy access to information means to the future of the sector.

'We got the world of our dreams, a world of nearly infinite knowledge nearly universally available. The price of this victory is an existential crisis of the first order: In the new culture of shared knowledge, what is a library?'

He suggested the following roles as those that libraries will provide:

- In a culture of shared knowledge, the library turns into a generator of value.
- Libraries and librarians have a role to play acting as filters.
- Librarians will become the solvers of problems automated systems like Google cannot solve.

THEMES

From the ALIA Future of the LIS Profession consultation, we have extracted the ten generic themes which follow, along with themes that we have divided by sector — school libraries, public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries, collecting institutions, and library and information professionals.



THEME 01

BUILDING THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRAND

Many library users and professionals say that 'library' is the word that unites and defines the sector, and that it sends out positive messages. Others, especially those working in business, industry, government, health and research, say that 'library' is outdated and they prefer to talk about their information service. 'Library' provides an easily understood shorthand, but how does it relate, for example, to a virtual service that is primarily concerned with online access to electronic databases?

As an Association, we use 'library and information service' and 'library and information professionals' as the all-encompassing terms, recognising both perspectives. Qualified professionals in the sector can start out studying for the same degree or Masters, but their work experience and professional development may take them along parallel trajectories. The role of someone working in a public library will be very different from that of someone providing a specialist information service to health practitioners, lawyers, engineers or government officials.

Information is so closely tied to information technology, that information management is often linked with it, yet the two are very different. For the future we need to work at making IM as strong as IT as a descriptor, so that both library and information management become strong brands in the public eye.

THEME 02

THE 'WHY' IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE 'HOW'

Most aspects of a library can be found elsewhere. Bookshops stock books; parks provide community spaces; researchers can find data on the web; people can access the internet on their smartphones; students can study in classrooms; informal learning can take place in neighbourhood houses. The unique features of libraries are not based on physical items and activities, they are in the expertise of the staff, the fact that most services are free for users, and the ethos of universal freedom of access to information and resources. These less tangible features make the whole greater than the sum of the parts.

The 'why' of libraries is more important than the 'how'. Libraries exist to help preserve the human record and promote equality of opportunity by connecting people with information and ideas. These outcomes can be achieved in many different ways — through book borrowing, access to electronic databases, programs and activities — but libraries' special position now and in the future will be based on their impartial, apolitical contribution to a fair and just society.

An extension of this is copyright. Australian libraries support copyright reform that includes a 'fair use' provision, providing protection for creators, while enabling the use of their work by students and others, for social good rather than commercial gain. At the same time, we support the extension of the Public Lending Right and Education Lending Right to a Digital Lending Right for authors of ebooks.

To be a voice for fairness. Subvert the norm. Highlight privacy and personal identity.

– LIANZA WORKSHOP NOTES

We connect with either end of the age spectrum, as well as the socially disadvantaged through to high end researchers. Others will dip in and out. Staff are non-judgmental — there's no need to explain yourself and there's no commercial agenda.

– ALIA FUTURE OF THE LIS PROFESSION SUMMIT NOTES

THEME 03

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Helping to overcome the gap between advantage and disadvantage is fundamental to the library ethos. This encompasses providing resources and guidance for students, supporting participation in tertiary education, ensuring litigants have access to the information they need to build their cases, patients to the health information they need to participate in treatment programs, and so on.

Looking into the future, we see no quick end to inequality. According to the latest research, in Australia approximately one in five five-year-olds has serious literacy issues⁷, nearly half the adult population is unable to read and write fluently⁸, and 17% of households don't have internet access⁹.

Gesture-controlled and voice-enabled devices facilitate communication, but there will continue to be a need for basic literacy.

If people are to remain engaged in the broader community, they will need the skills to handle new technologies — for seniors and people who are unemployed, this means public access devices and low-cost, easy entry training opportunities.

Fast internet connection may eventually be available in schools, homes and workplaces across Australia, but until that time, there will be a need for public facilities.

7 [www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/aedi/Report_NationalReport_2012_1304\[1\]\(1\).pdf](http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/aedi/Report_NationalReport_2012_13041.pdf)

8 www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4228.0Main+Features202011-12

9 www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/8146.0Chapter12012-13

THEME 04

FUNDERS UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE VALUE OF LIBRARIES

There is a disparity between funders, who think of libraries in terms of line items on their budgets, and library users, who see libraries as an essential community, workplace, research or education asset. Public library members will rise up at the prospect of a branch closure; medical staff will protest at cuts to health libraries, and academics will petition against service reductions in research libraries, yet administrators persist in thinking that such cost-reduction moves can be initiated.

Unless funding bodies and management teams have an inherent understanding of, and belief in, the value of libraries, there will continue to be a slow drain on investment. Cost-shifting will occur between different levels of government, and we will suffer from the fact that we cross multiple portfolios at a federal level — arts, education, health — with no single department required to take responsibility for Australian libraries.

Shrinking budgets and rising costs.

— ALIA NATIONAL ADVISORY CONGRESS NOTES, SYDNEY



people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think--' (she was rather glad there WAS no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word) '--but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand or Australia?' (and she tried to curtsey as she spoke--fancy CURTSEYING as you're falling through the air! Do you think you could manage it?) 'And what an ignorant little girl she'll think me for asking! No, it'll never do to ask: perhaps I shall see it written up somewhere.'

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. 'Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think' (Dinah was the cat.) 'I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and

THEME 05

THE LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

For more than 150 years, libraries have existed to satisfy the information needs of Australians. From the early university and state libraries and Mechanics Institutes, through to the end of the 20th century, libraries' principal goal has been to bring books and information within the reach of all citizens.

Libraries' values and mission remain highly relevant to today's society, but technology has brought new ways of realising these objectives, and libraries find themselves facing greater competition. We have been the market leader in the free/shared space, we are now losing market share to online providers. This means that library and information professionals need to see what they do in the context of competing providers.

Whereas information used to be in short supply, it is now readily available through the internet. That's not to say that the information is complete — much remains in print format awaiting digitisation — nor to say that it is, or will remain, free. Books, which used to be expensive to produce, are now much more affordable, and many ebooks are free, especially those that are out of copyright.

Libraries' exclusivity over books and information in the public domain has given way to a proliferation of sources, but more people than ever before are using public libraries. In the information business, special libraries maintain their market share because users buy into their brand values and want the added value service delivered by library and information professionals. In all cases, people are choosing to engage in the library experience, and it is the library experience that provides us with our competitive advantage.

In the future, we will need to put even more focus on the library experience. Rather than allowing it to grow organically, we will need to direct its development, using planning tools to look at the journey from the users' perspective — great customer service, anticipating your needs and tailoring services to meet them; what you want, when you want it, 24/7; easy, convenient, user-centric.

THEME 06

ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL

ALIA published a paper for discussion in 2013 entitled *50:50 by 2020*. Our theory was that despite the hype around ebooks, public libraries would continue to offer both print and digital formats for several decades at least. Electronic devices, new technologies and formats will come on stream, but it looks as though they will co-exist with the analogue originals for some time.

We can see this in retailing. Apple has opened stores where people can go and play with the physical devices; online clothing sales are growing, but people still like to try things on before they buy, and bricks and mortar retailers are focusing on building the shopping experience, with valet parking, lively cafes, concierge services and special family activities to encourage people to visit shopping malls.

Members of public, school and academic libraries enjoy the serendipity of discovering something new when browsing the library shelves.

Most libraries will need to have a foot in both camps — analogue and digital — and they will need to look as good online as they do in the real world. With a few exceptions, libraries' current presence online, through websites and social media, tends to be purely functional.

Staff must understand how to attract and engage successfully with users online — a passive presence will not be enough — and libraries will need to have a greater degree of control over their online look. Most are currently competing with other departments for the attention of their organisation's IT department and their web presence is restricted by organisational constraints.





THEME 07

MORE SPACE, NOT LESS

A greater emphasis on digital materials will not equate to a smaller footprint for the library. Yes, there will be fewer shelves, but the changing needs of library users will require more space, not less. The new Adelaide City Library opened in February 2014, with a third of the space for books, two-thirds for people. University libraries are putting physical items into off-site storage, in order to open up more study space. Schools are similarly investing in facilities for individual and group work, as part of the library. State Libraries are creating innovation labs, such as Experimedia at the State Library of Victoria and The Edge at the State Library of Queensland, and all major city libraries have exhibition areas.

And how will people use the space? In the past, staff ensured that these were quiet places; then libraries opened up as social spaces, with areas to chat. In the future, library users themselves will dictate behaviours, including designating specific areas for quiet study and reflection. Going into a library is one of the few opportunities people have to give themselves permission to switch off from their hyper-connected lives. It is a paradox that, while libraries will promote people's connection with information, ideas and each other, they will also provide an opportunity for users to disconnect from the stress of being perpetually contactable.

Another paradox: in special libraries especially, clients will seek fast track answers — they will want to be rescued from information overload — but in other types of libraries, people will welcome the opportunity to browse. Both high speed connection and leisurely exploration will be valued parts of the library experience.

THEME 08

STRETCHING COLLECTION BUDGETS EVEN FURTHER

There will be more and more content from commercial publishers. Prices will come down, but library budgets will still be squeezed, as items will be needed in a variety of formats; some owned, some licensed; some ebooks with one-book-one-user restrictions, others with a relaxed policy for use by defined groups (a school, for example).

Much that is on the internet will remain free, but paywalls are going up around quality content. Library and information professionals will need to be smart purchasers. We can expect to see more consortia arrangements at local, state and territory, and national level, making slim margins even slimmer for library vendors.

There's the growth in paywalls. Newspapers were freely available online for a nanosecond in time.

— ALIA FUTURE OF THE LIS PROFESSION SUMMIT NOTES

THEME 09

COMMUNITY CREATED CONTENT

There will be stronger community- and self-publishing sectors, with producers looking for channels to market, some free, some paid for. Libraries will provide an exciting route for content creators direct to readers, peers, students and experts in the field, and quality content from alternative sources will help libraries acquire more content with their limited budgets.

The opportunities for free content through open access to government-funded research and scholarly works, will be balanced by paid-for content that rewards the efforts of creators and enables them to earn a living from producing original works.

We may see more libraries moving into publishing, whether that's along the lines of the University Press model, print-on-demand or providing a digital self-publishing platform. This will also require libraries to find new ways of collecting, curating and displaying content to make community content easily discoverable.

THEME 10

UNIMAGINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

No-one can predict with absolute certainty where technology will take us next, but we can be sure there is more to come, and that it will take us to places that are currently unimaginable.

Advances in size, speed, weight, usability, functionality, intelligence, personalisation, connection and affordability — all these characteristics are on the horizon and they will make today's tablets and smartphones look clunky. Whether we wear them, put them in our pockets or roll them up and carry them around with us, connected devices will be ubiquitous.

Technology will clearly have a massive impact on the library and information sector. Applying Deloitte's Digital Disruption mapping tool, we are looking at a 'short fuse, big bang' situation. If libraries were simply about access to information, we might be questioning our relevance, but we are about freedom of access, equality of opportunity, preservation of the human record, informal and formal learning, community spaces, and so much more. Technology will affect how we do things, not why we do them.

Mobile phones used to be banned in libraries.
Now they are the libraries.

— DAVID NICHOLAS, FOUNDER DIRECTOR OF CIBER RESEARCH UK



THEME 10 (CONT.)

UNIMAGINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

There will be challenges:

- The ethos of library and information professionals endorses privacy and protecting one's personal identity online. However, if we are to provide an efficient library service and a personalised service to library users, with their consent we will need to make use of information about their reading, borrowing and research habits.
- We need to find ways to collect and analyse the big data generated around library and information services. By aggregating data, we will be able to provide a stronger picture of libraries' value, impact and influence.
- We see the short term issues about ebooks, particularly with bestselling fiction titles, disappearing within a few years, as the book industry finds an economic model that works with digital, and there is greater competition amongst lending platforms.
- Funding shortages will require innovative approaches. 'Free' is an essential component of the library brand, but we have to be open-minded to the potential for more funding from sources other than government, such as philanthropic and charitable organisations, for added value services. There may even be the potential to crowd-source funding for some experimental aspects — maker spaces, environmental initiatives and so on.

ACTIONS ARISING

ALIA and colleagues in the library and information sector can't afford to relax. Challenges will be coming at us from all directions and we will need to define and redefine our value proposition as we move within the rapidly changing information environment.

ALIA

- We will ensure that we recognise and promote the 'I' in ALIA.
- We will continue to lobby the Australian Government for copyright reform and the introduction of a Digital Lending Right.
- We will actively promote the value of library and information services to funding bodies and develop evidence and materials to help members advocate within their own organisations.
- We will continue to research and report on trends to assist our members to plan for the future.
- We will look at developing a user experience toolkit to help managers assess and refine their offering.
- Our ALIA PD and Training will reflect the needs identified in this report, including enhanced skills in areas such as purchasing, community publishing and managing big data.
- In partnership with other associations, we will investigate new relationships between libraries, content creators and publishers.



Advocacy

- The sector needs to unite behind the term information management to help increase awareness of this as an aligned but distinct discipline.
- We must uphold and promote the traditional values of fairness and equality associated with libraries.
- We need to close the gap in understanding between users, who clearly see libraries' value proposition, and funders, who focus on budget line items.



Professionals and their organisations

- Libraries and information services will need to focus on the user experience, not only in terms of content, but also how the service looks and feels in the real world and online.
- User data, gathered with consent, will play an important part in tailoring the library experience to individuals.
- Websites will need greater attention to turn them from purely functional devices to an easy, engaging and useful part of the library experience.
- Opportunities to collect, curate and disseminate community created content will be open for investigation.



