Performance metrics towards 2030

Investigating news to measure and report on our activities

Hjorring Bibliotek Denmark

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State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria Network

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Executive Summary

Key strategic documents developed both in Australia and internationally predict widespread change in the programs, services and spaces provided by public libraries in coming years, and many of these changes are already evident in Victorian public libraries. In this environment of change, as activities traditionally considered core library services become less dominant and are supplemented by a diverse range of new programs and services and transformed by emerging technologies, there is a danger that the full value of public libraries will not be adequately conveyed by existing quantitative measures of performance.

The need to evolve the statistical and service reporting of public libraries in line with the changing nature of the work they perform and services they deliver has been recognised by many library services, professional bodies and other stakeholders worldwide, and a variety of tools, strategies and reports have been produced that approach the issue from a number of angles. New measures currently being investigated or employed include assessments of economic impact and value (using return on investment, cost/benefit analysis and contingent valuation methodologies), qualitative community surveys and the use of stories and anecdotes to supplement traditional quantitative reporting, and detailed benchmarking and peer review programs.

This report provides an overview of the prominent social trends that are reshaping public library services and the range of new measurement tools and strategies that are being deployed nationally and internationally to meet the challenge of keeping library reporting relevant and meaningful and ensuring the value of public libraries is convincingly expressed to stakeholders. It concludes with the recommendation of the establishment of a statewide working group tasked with the further investigation of the available measurement tools, with particular attention to the potential of The Edge Initiative's toolkit recently developed in the United States, with a view to implementing a comprehensive, standardised and value-focused measurement framework across Victoria's public library services in the near future.

Introduction

For many years libraries around the world have routinely collected data reflective of their activities. This data has been primarily numerical and machine/system generated, and has provided a more or less accurate measure of a library service's membership base, extent of holdings, number of visitors to library branches and circulation activity. In more recent years this data has included, website traffic, usage rates of public PCs and online databases, and program attendance.

However the nature of the work performed and services offered by library services both in Australia and internationally is changing rapidly, and key documents addressing the future of public libraries predict that these changes will continue in line with changes in society more broadly (State Library of Victoria (SLV), 2013). As a result, a number of services traditionally considered core library services will become, or are already in the process of becoming, non-core as libraries shift their focus to address new and emerging community needs and expectations.

In this environment of change and innovation traditional measures of library activities quickly fall short, as the success, effectiveness and impact of many new and future library activities is not accurately conveyed by quantitative measures, if indeed they are measured at all. Furthermore, traditional numeric measures can now in some cases misrepresent library services as being in decline, particularly as circulation and reference statistics drop, when they are in fact actually transitioning to emphasising activities that may be more beneficial and relevant to their communities, but less easy to measure.

Critically, this lack of effective representation of library activities and the impact they have on their communities comes at a time when financial pressures, changing public perceptions and political agendas are placing increased pressure on libraries to demonstrate their value to their communities and stakeholders. Without addressing the growing gap between our standard statistical reporting and the reality of the activities taking place in libraries, we are in real danger of jeopardising funding and the support of stakeholders.

Library services also risk missing opportunities for critical self-evaluation. We collect statistics on our activities not just for the purpose of advocacy and showcasing our strengths, but also to track changes in the ways our services are used, forecast trends and identify potential weaknesses or areas to which we need to commit more resources. Without accurate statistical reporting across the entire range of our activities the picture we have to guide us in these crucial tasks is incomplete at best.

This dilemma has been recognised by many library services and professional bodies around the world, and the last five years has seen the publication of a multitude of reports and measurement tools aimed at finding new angles from which to demonstrate the value of libraries and measure the impact of their programs and services.

This report comprises an overview of traditional and new measurement techniques, tools and strategies both in Australia and overseas, alongside a summary of the emerging trends, as outlined in key documents such as the Victorian Public Libraries 2030 report, that are changing the nature of library services so dramatically. The report concludes with a set of recommendations that Victorian public library services can implement to ensure their activities continue to be measured accurately and meaningfully and that the story of their impact can be effectively told to stakeholders.

Future Trends in Public Libraries

The public libraries landscape is changing so rapidly that identifying emerging trends can be difficult, as is measuring the impact of future trends on our community. The Victorian Public Libraries 2030: *Strategic Framework* (SLV 2013, p.5) has identified five prominent social trends:

- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Brain health
- Dynamic learning
- Community connection

These social trends are significant for guiding the future direction of public libraries. Creative spaces or community spaces (or a combination of both) have been identified as the future focus of Victorian public libraries.

In the creative library scenario, the rising social need is around creativity as more and more people seek the skills and resources to develop and express their creativity. In the creative library, the public library becomes the community's central hub for shared learning and creativity.

A creative public library in 2030 will offer a range of services and programs that promote creative expression and collaboration, such as workshops to facilitate individual and group artistic development, including music, pottery, storytelling, poetry, drawing, writing, painting, sketching, media, etc. Creative spaces for collaborative 'jamming', studios for recording and editing content, business spaces for local telecommuters, along with eResources and physical book collections.

In the community library scenario, the prominent social needs are for a sense of community connection, lifelong learning and a meeting place for people to gather, share and learn.

A community public library in 2030 will deliver programs and activities with a learning focus and take a 'cradle-to-grave' approach, targeting all demographics and socio-economic groups. It will be a community space that offers a range of services and programs that promote lifelong learning and social connection. The community library will include learning, literacy and community programs. It will document, store and disseminate local history, offer social spaces as well as quiet spaces.

With the growing demand for digital collections and community programs, public libraries need to respond to changing community needs by providing new services and programs which will require new ways of measuring the value that these services and programs add.

This is particularly evident in the increased provision of, and community use of, technology in public libraries. The changes seen in public library usage are reflective of new and emerging technology trends in the wider community. Increased affordability of eReaders and tablet devices is rapidly increasing the number of eBooks purchased and borrowed from public libraries each year in Australia.

As more Victorian public library branches connect to the National Broadband Network, it is expected that library patrons will use headsets to connect to family, work and friends through software such as Skype or Facetime. Excellent broadband connections will make it easier for teleconferencing to be used. Conference rooms in some libraries will allow students to study together or let local business groups use teleconferencing capabilities to connect with clients and colleagues. More people will be using wifi on their own devices than using library computers.

Similar trends are emerging globally, with a shift in the role of public libraries from a place focused only on information that is consumed (usually by taking it home to read or view) toward places where people gather, learn from each other and then use new skills.

The shift towards libraries as creativity hubs is more developed in northern Europe where people bring projects to the library, learn how to use relevant software tools and then reserve large blocks of computer time for weeks into the future. In contrast, the North American model for public computer use is based on shorter blocks of daily time and an assumption that people are using the computers to search for information.

Some initiatives taking place in North America are 3D printers that people can use to print plastic objects. The 3D printer is having a huge effect on how youth and older customers view their library system. The District of Columbia Public Library has a recording studio in its Central Library teen area. The Chicago Public Library has a YouMedia Centre where young adults can 'hang out' (talk to each other in informal sessions with no adults telling them to be quiet or to take their feet off the tables), experiment with new technologies and teach each other about ways they have learned to use music and video editing equipment, etc. YouMedia labs are now being established in other cities in the United States.

The Helsinki Library system and other Scandinavian libraries provide video and music editing rooms as well as staff expertise. The Finnish creation movement started with a national initiative to reconnect alienated youth.

With collaboration spaces, meeting areas, quiet computer spaces, wifi zones, noisy computer spaces, creation spaces and gaming areas. It is probable that by 2030 many public libraries will become true community meeting places.

To develop sustainable future business models, public libraries must not only have a thorough understanding of current user needs and satisfaction levels but also be able to demonstrate their value, not only in an economical but also in a more sociological sense. The future success of our libraries depends on how well we tell the story of our libraries impact. Capturing success stories that illustrate meaningful outcomes can provide justification for change and advocacy but are extremely difficult to measure.

National and International strategies for measuring library value

Libraries are adept at collecting and reporting many types of statistics – circulation, door counts, website visits, e-books and articles downloaded, databases searched, programs, PC and Wifi usage.   But these are only a part of the picture and the challenge for libraries is how to incorporate user satisfaction and value/impact measures (Hosseini-Ara & Jones, 2013). Our literature review studied a sample of measurement methods used by library services in Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

National strategies for measuring library value

The State Library of NSW produced Enriching Communities: the value of public libraries in New South Wales in 2008 which found NSW public libraries generate at least $4.24 of economic value for each dollar expended, and $2.82 of economic activity for each dollar expended. The research produced tools for libraries to calculate their own economic benefits and activity. **http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/docs/enriching_summary.pdf**

Virtual visits or visits to a library website are a significant measure of library usage. NSW public libraries collect and report on a number of datasets. When measuring electronic service usage they report on two categories; access (resources available) and usage (resources used).

Access includes:
- "Number of public workstations connected to the Internet in the library
- Numbers of items digitised by the Library
- Number of full text journal, book and video titles available on databases
- Number of e-Book and e-Audio titles
- Proportion of expenditure on digital resources by comparison with print materials"

Usage includes:
- "Number of visits to the library website per annum
- Number of unique visitors to the library website per annum
- Number of internet hours used on public workstations per annum
- Number of internet sessions on public workstations per annum
- Number of wireless sessions in the library per annum
- Number of wireless hours used in the library per annum
- Number of downloads of e-book and e-audio titles
- Number of database searches per annum
- Number of views and/or downloads of full text items from databases and other external or commercial content such as music downloads per annum
- Number of downloads and/or views of items digitised by the library per annum" (Library Council of New South Wales, 2013 p.16-17)

Current Measurement parameters for Library Programs
- "Attendees at library programs are counted by type of program.
- Attendees at each library event are counted, as well as being recorded (counted) in the context of the library service or program to which the event belongs.
- Evaluations of all library programs and events are regularly conducted" (Library Council of New South Wales, 2013 p.19)

The Library Dividend is a major independent study of the socio-economic contribution of Queensland's public libraries commissioned by the State Library of Queensland.

The aim of the study was to expand the understanding of the value of public libraries to the community, prove that public libraries contribute economic benefit to the community, and provide Queensland public libraries with data to build a stronger case in securing their future funding (State Library of Queensland (SLQ), 2012, p.1).

A range of materials has been produced to support the library sector to clearly and powerfully articulate the benefits of Queensland public libraries:

- The Library Value Calculator is a "tool to estimate the dividend the library service generates for the local community and economy" (SLQ, 2012)

- The Advocacy Action Planning Workbook is designed to "help Queensland public library teams plan their own advocacy campaigns, using the findings from *The Library Dividend* and other library metrics a to produce a local Library Advocacy Plan" (Henzcel & McKerracher, 2012)

- The Library Dividend PowerPoint presentation template is a resource for libraries to edit to include their own graphics, quotations and results from The Library Dividend Calculator for use in demonstrating the value of the library to a variety of audiences (SLQ, 2012)

Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries: The landmark study of the socio-economic value of Victorian public libraries (State Library of Victoria, 2011) analysed the socio-economic value of Victoria's public libraries and found that the benefits contributed by public libraries significantly outweigh the costs and represent a sound return on community investment.

International strategies for measuring library value

Canada

The Toronto Public Library consists of 98 branches across the city of Toronto. A 2013 study, *So Much More: The Economic Impact of the Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto,* shows how the Toronto Public Library delivers services that contribute to the City's goals for economic growth and prosperity, provide education and lifelong learning and generates intangible benefits which create significant value for residents. It is the first Canadian public library study to measure the Return on Investment (ROI) for library services. It found that the Toronto Public Library delivers $5.63 of economic impact for every $1 spent, and estimated that library members gain a direct benefit of $502 each (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2013 p.2).

The study reports that the Toronto Public Library economic impact per dollar spent compares favourably with 4 other similar library studies:

- Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries: The landmark study of the socio-economic value of Victorian public libraries - $3.56 (State Library of Victoria, 2011 p.5)

- Taxpayer Return on Investment in Florida Public Libraries - $8.32 (Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development, 2010)

- Santa Clara County Library District 2013 Return on Investment Report - $5.17 (BERK, 2013 p.19)

  - Texas Public Libraries Economic Benefits and Return on Investment Report - $4.42 (Bureau of Business Research, IC² Institute, 2012)

Europe

EU survey

The Bill & Melinda Gates foundation commissioned a research project in 2013 to understand the impact that public libraries in the EU have on users' lives. This study combined key library data from 17 EU countries, an omnibus survey of over 17,000 general members of the public, 1000 from each country, a mainstage survey interviewing over 24,000 library users, qualitative research in each country, discussions groups and interviews with library managers (Quick, et. al., 2013).

The research project addresses the "Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" which has set objectives and targets to be met by EU member states. Some targets relate to developmental areas where access to information is highly important, specifically employment, innovation, education, and social inclusion. Anecdotal evidence suggests that ICT access through public libraries can support the implementation of growth, education, and cohesion policies related to the EU 2020 Strategy.

There are more than 65,000 public libraries across the whole of the EU. In most countries, the vast majority (80% or more) of libraries offer Public Accessible Computers (PACs), the exceptions being Germany and Bulgaria. Nearly one in four adults – that is 97.3 million adults across the EU – have used a public library in the last 12 months. Generally speaking those countries with the highest levels of per capita spending on libraries have the highest levels of usage. Seven out of 10 library users felt free access in public libraries to computers and the internet was very or extremely important.

The survey focus was on ICT use and found in the previous 12 months:

- About 24 million adults (one in four library users) have taken part in informal learning activities in libraries

- 13.9 million adults used PACs

- 2.3 million adults attended a computer training class in a library

- 3.3 million adults used PACs to interact with public authorities

- 1.9 million current PAC users across the EU indicated that there was *no* other free source of the internet that they could use

Impacts of using library PACs reported by users are:

- Education and development

- Increased self-confidence and independence

- Increased ICT skills

- Ability to keep in contact with family and friends abroad via email and Skype

- Access to online job portals help gain employment

- ICT saves time in banking and shopping tasks

- Importance of free ICT access in public libraries to bridge the digital divide

Denmark

A 2009 study by the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media, *The Public Libraries in the knowledge society,* measured comprehensive usage statistics. It captured a decline in usage of print material and a strong increase in digital usage, including downloads of e-Resources and music, and accessing the library via the internet. The Danish Library Association used a Gallup Poll to determine that borrowing books is still the most frequent reason people visit the library. After this the next most frequent reasons were borrowing electronic media, taking children to the library and attending events (Danish Agency for Libraries and Media, 2010).

Ireland

The Republic of Ireland used qualitative studies from the Carnegie UK Trust and in depth statistical data from the Public Library Authority and The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to inform the future strategy for public libraries – *Opportunities for all – the public library as a catalyst for economic, social and cultural development: A Strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017 (*Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013). The Carnegie UK Trust report documents the current use of public libraries and public attitudes to libraries in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Macdonald, 2012). Surveys were used to gain information on library usage by gender, children, employment status, age, readership, socio-economic impact, and factors which might increase library use.

Netherlands

A survey developed to measure the value of library services polled 1,500 people across the Netherlands in 2012, gaining in-depth data on library usage and the value people gained from library services. The survey was developed from a research program to develop outcome measurements for public libraries, and measured the value of library services in four main areas – educational, economic, social and cultural benefits, plus affective benefits (Huysmans & Oomes, 2012).   The survey was based on a Finnish survey which was used in Sweden and Norway, with additional questions from the Gates Foundation (http://www.gatesfoundation.org/) and EILF (http://www.eifl.net/home)

New Zealand

Public Libraries of New Zealand have developed a strategic framework, the Public Libraries of New Zealand: A Strategic Framework 2012-2017 which identifies five roles linked to outcomes sought by the Government. These roles address:

- Providing access to knowledge, ideas and works of the imagination

- Fostering the joy of reading and development of literacy

- Enabling lifelong learning

- Community based services

- Collecting and creating local content and history

The report notes there has been no cost benefit analysis of the value of public libraries in New Zealand, and cites international trends and research, including Australia's *Dollars and Sense* report and the Gates Foundation research (Public Libraries of New Zealand, 2012).

Statistics on usage, patrons, collections and expenditure are collected from public libraries in New Zealand, drawing on ISO Standards. A review in 2012/13 of the way statistics were collected enabled comparisons to made between New Zealand, Australia and Canada and allows the use of ISO 11620:2008 (Library Performance indicators), enabling library performance to be internationally benchmarked (http://www.publiclibrariesofnewzealand.org.nz/about-us/public-library-statistics/)

The United Kingdom

The British Library

The British Library conducted an economic evaluation in 2013 to measure how it generates economic value to its users and the wider community. This evaluation was conducted using benefit cost analysis (BCA) within a Total Economic Valuation (TEV) framework. A key finding was the economic value the Library delivers for society is £5 for every £1 invested (Oxford Economics, 2013, p.1). This study follows on from a similar study in 2004, Measuring Our Value, using the technique of Contingent Valuation which found a value of £4.40 for £1 invested (British Library, 2004). These studies demonstrate the direct and indirect value the library contributes to the community, business, education, and research programs in science, technology and medicine.

Scotland

Public Libraries in Scotland measure and evaluate their services using the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix (PLQIM) developed by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), which aligns with the European Framework for Quality Management, used widely within local authorities (SLIC, 2007). A key component of the success of this approach is that it assists participating libraries in accessing additional funding from the that is made available by the Scottish Government Public Library Improvement Fund to support identified improvement in service delivery. The PLQIM enables public libraries to demonstrate their impact on library users and the community.

PLQIM tools for evaluation include surveys, in-depth questionnaires for users and staff, focus groups, review of resources and services, staff training programs, and action and strategy plans.

PLQIM consists of seven quality indicators:

- Access to information

- Community and personal participation

- Meeting readers' needs

- Learners' experiences

- Ethos and values

- Organisation and use of resources and space

- Leadership

Library services in Scotland may choose one or more indicators to be assessed each year by SLIC.

The United States

The Americans for Libraries Council, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, carried out a study in 2007 - *Worth their weight: An Assessment of the Evolving Field of Library Valuation* (Imholz & Weil Arns, 2007) in recognition of the need for new approaches to library advocacy. The study summarised 17 valuation and impact studies conducted by US public library services, showing a range of methods for measuring library value, from simple surveys to integrated approaches:

- Southwestern Ohio(2006), 9 libraries serving 1.5 million residents, used cost /benefit analysis and measures of secondary impact

- Pennsylvania ((2006), statewide study, used four integrated surveys, cost/benefit analysis using contingent valuation and a statewide economic input-output model (REMI) to determine secondary economic impacts.

- Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (2006) used a survey, focus groups, cost/benefit analysis, secondary economic impacts, value-of-time measures and library visits data.

- Suffolk County, New York (2006) used cost/benefit analysis and indirect impact assessed through the Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS 1& 11)

- Seattle Central (2005) surveyed and interviewed patrons, visitors, business owners, developers and tourism representatives, and included circulation and door count statistics.

- South Carolina (2005) used Web-based surveys and cost/benefit analysis of direct and indirect impacts.

- Kansas City (2004) used Hennen's American Public Library Rating Index (HAPLR Index) which combines both input and output measures in a system that ranks libraries based on a weighted score.

- State of Florida (2004) conducted a statewide study using a telephone survey, an in-library survey of users and non-users, survey of library personnel and cost/benefit analysis of direct and indirect economic benefits.

- State of Maryland (2003) used a statewide telephone survey to examine the perceived social and economic value of public libraries to Maryland residents.

A key finding of this study is that valuation studies such as cost/benefit analysis demonstrate that public libraries often outpace other sectors in the efficient use of tax dollars, and underlines the need to link library facts and figures to community development and social and economic prosperity ((Imholz & Weil Arns, 2007, p.7).

The Edge Initiative

The Edge Initiative was developed by a national coalition of leading library and local government organizations, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The focus of the initiative is on improving public access to information, communication and technology services available in public libraries, by providing benchmarks and a self-assessment tool. The benchmarks were informed by library best practices and research conducted by the University of Washington and the University of Maryland (Clark & Hirsh, 2014).

The Edge toolkit (http://www.libraryedge.org/toolkit) supports library planning and advocacy and includes communication and presentation tools to help explain results and outcomes to local government and community leaders. The toolkit includes benchmarks, an assessment workbook, assessment tools, resources and case studies, training, and reporting and presentation tools.

There are 11 benchmarks within 3 categories:

- Community value

- Engaging the community and decision makers

- Organisational management

The benchmarks evaluate activities, programs, and services including digital literacy, online content creation and delivery, strategic partnerships, staff training and technology management (Clark & Hirsh, 2014).

The Edge Initiative benchmarks were tested in 2012 with more than 160 libraries, with very positive feedback. After further refining, the program was formally launched in January 2014, with more than 1700 public libraries in the United States signing on. At present the Edge Initiative is available only in the United States, but there are plans to explore ways to include public libraries globally (www.libraryedge.org).

A new standard: ISO 16439

Worldwide demand in the library community has resulted in the development of a new International Standard, ISO 16439 "Methods and procedures for assessing the impact of libraries" (www.iso.org). The standard defines terms for impact assessment and specifies methods for assessment, to allow strategic planning and quality management, to promote the libraries' role and value and to support political decisions on service levels and strategic goals for libraries.

A research project conducted leading up to ISO 16439 standard, found that "contingent valuation" is probably the best known method for assessing economic value, and notes that economic valuation is most convincing when evidence of the social impact of libraries is included in reports (Poll p130, 2012).

Summary of current strategies for measuring value

This review of national and international measurement methods shows that library services recognise the changing needs of communities in the digital age and are striving to demonstrate their value to society. In addition to collecting traditional statistics, many libraries now use cost evaluation methods such as ROI, Contingent Valuation and Cost Benefit Analysis. Extensive qualitative surveys have been undertaken and research on improving methods to document the value of library services is ongoing. Benchmarking strategies such as the Edge Initiative and Scotland's PLQIM are additional approaches in use. The research project which lead to the creation of a new ISO standard, found that "contingent valuation" is probably the best known method for assessing economic value, and notes that economic valuation is most convincing when evidence of the social impact of libraries is included in reports (Poll, 2012 p.130).

Recommendations

What do Victorian public libraries specifically need to do to meet the challenges outlined in this report and ensure that their regular statistical reporting continues to be accurately illustrative of the work they undertake and the benefits they provide to their communities? As demonstrated above, there have already been many responses to these challenges from many different library services, library networks, associated professional bodies and stakeholders around the world, and Victorian public libraries, the State Library of Victoria and the PLVN should be congratulated for their proactive approach, having commissioned or undertaken several groundbreaking projects in this field that have served as templates nationally and internationally. There is no shortage of new and innovative approaches to measuring the success and impact of our work as it changes to meet the needs of our communities now and into the future. The challenge now lies in adopting, applying and integrating these measures effectively and consistently as part of a new statewide standard in statistical reporting for public libraries.

To enable this, we propose a working group comprising library managers and/or suitably skilled and qualified public library staff be established, with its task being to thoroughly review the measurement tools and strategies outlined in this report with two possible outcomes in mind:

1. Can a single measurement tool/framework be identified from amongst those presented here that meets the majority of the needs of the majority of Victorian public library services now and into the future?

2. If no single measurement tool/framework can be said to encompass the entire scope of the work undertaken in our public libraries, including services predicted to emerge as we transition to the vision of public libraries presented in the Libraries 2030 and Tomorrow's Library reports, can a new measurement framework specific to the needs of Victorian public libraries now and into the future be developed by drawing on the best/most relevant ideas, techniques and strategies used in the measurement tools outlined in this report?

In working towards one or the other of these outcomes, we suggest that the working group consider the following:

1. The Edge Initiative, launched in the US earlier this year and detailed briefly in this report, appears to provide a comprehensive toolkit for both advocacy and benchmarking purposes, has already attracted the attention of several Victorian public library managers and is heavily focused on emerging trends such as digital literacy and community engagement. Further investigation is required at this stage to determine whether this toolkit is suitable for the Victorian public library context and it is recommended that the working group prioritise a thorough analysis of the product as a potential 'all-in-one' statewide solution.

2. A standardised statewide approach will ensure the best integrity of data. Any proposed framework will need to be accessible by all Victorian public library services to be of the most value, and implementation will need to be consistent to allow for accurate benchmarking, and to ensure that no Victorian public library services are excluded from being able to effectively advocate to their stakeholders.

The shift to the new diverse service delivery models outlined in the Libraries 2030 report and other strategic documents, encompassing the emergence of the creative/community library and increased emphasis on digital content and services, is already gaining momentum. Now is the time for library managers who have not already done so to undertake a critical review of their statistical and service reporting, asking: 'What story is this reporting telling our stakeholders about our service? Is this story an accurate reflection of our activities and of our value? Is it the story we want to tell?' No library service has been untouched by significant change in recent years and all will continue to undergo substantial change in the future. It is vital that our measure of success and the content of our reporting change accordingly.

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