

Notes from the workshop conducted by the Neville Freeman Agency

30 July 2010, The Country Place, Kalorama

Looking to the future: mega trends and mega shocks

Utilizing the INSPECT process and Zing technology

INSPECT

It's the way I view the world

Nature

Society

Politics

Economics

Culture

Technology

1980 to 2010: mega shocks and mega trends

Culture

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| 1975 onwards | Conflicts/war change our demographics due to refugees, waves of immigration – broader information requirements and languages of resources, multilingual technology/translators. |
| 1980s | Ageing demographic has strengthened user base, post baby boomer is a challenge. |
| 1980s | Decline of literacy levels combined with focus on technology products, public library use by young people declined – passive entertainment reduces stimulus, brain changing (frontal lobe) change to youth (school aged), not young. |
| 1980s | Digitisation impact on availability of resources and ability to communicate with print disabled, digitised books, talking newspapers, audio books, etc., burgeoning consumer choice – user pays. |
| 1980s onwards | Decline of rural communities, led to focus on transition to alternative service model provision. |
| 1994 | Integration with other services and agencies to deliver services, breaking down silo walls to deliver better services to customers (e.g. youth, aged care, babies, lifelong learning). |
| 1994 ish | Internet, etc. has become part of core library services to provide access, training, infrastructure, bridge digital divide. |
| 1995 | Local government amalgamations. |
| 2000 onwards | Consortia/partnerships/collaboration between libraries – led to more cohesive library model, unified but reflects diverse communities. |
| 2000s | Library as a third place – social engagement, exchange ideas, building design – lounge areas, community meeting space, eat, drink, talk. |

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| 2000 onwards | Place of public libraries has become broader, more vibrant, but less clear – greater expectation that libraries have broader role in community. |
| 2001 | 9/11 has increased need for safe community places. |
| 2004 | Social networking – engaging with content in different ways, how libraries deliver information to customers and interact, significant bypass of libraries which needs to be addressed. |
| 2005 | Role of public libraries in information marketplace is less clear due to Google – both challenge and opportunity. |

Economics

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| 1980s | Thatcherism – economic rationalism as economic philosophy of conservative parties – leads to Compulsory Competitive Tendering introduced by Kennett Government in 1990s. Immediate impact upon libraries – wasted time and effort, tendering processes, staff impacted (morale, etc.). |
| 1980s | Floating Australian dollar. Changes in purchasing power of library budgets. |
| 1980s | Free tertiary education abolished and HECS introduced, more student use of libraries, education linked to economic/personal value. |
| 1980s | Today decreasing cost of technologies making PCs affordable for libraries, increased productivity, increased expectations of access and usability of computers, productivity savings lead to improvements in library services rather than staff reductions. Australians early adopters of technology and widespread household PC use. |
| 1980s onwards | Increased prosperity and Australian economic reform (banks, regulation, etc.). Leads to digital divide between amalgamations, increased expectations of service levels. |
| 1987 | Asian financial crisis, changed Australian economy, Keating looks to Asia. Trade links, economic partners. Possible impact upon Asian migration to Australia, increased demand for services in libraries. |
| 1990s | Publishing and copyright industry change, libraries have increased access to international books. |
| 1990s | Local government amalgamations and corporatisation of public/government services. Changed expectations of users/customers. |
| 2008 | GFC, widespread impact on employment and savings, increased library use. |
| 2008 | GFC, funding squeeze on public libraries. |

Nature

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| Ever | Natural environment's vulnerability. |
| 1980s | Ash Wednesday was an extreme event that impacted on staff and libraries provided recovery services. Libraries seen as community resources and shelters. |

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| 1990s | Awareness that energy resources are finite, impact on libraries is that we considered the format of our resources. Libraries are the ultimate recycler! |
| 1990s | Awareness of changing demographics with the ageing of the population, smaller families, impact on the services that libraries offer. |
| 1990s mid | Climate change impacts on library building design and operational considerations such as recycling, waste management. Libraries provide information to communities on climate change and environmental issues. |
| 1990s to 2000s | Libraries perceived as 'safe havens' during and after extreme weather events such as fire, drought, heatwaves, etc. |
| 2000s | Instantaneous nature of news and information creates anxiety in the community about natural disasters, etc. |
| 2000s | Climate change important in the involvement of staff in green energy initiatives (e.g. staff need to multi skill and participate in Council initiatives). |
| 2000s | Libraries leaders in environmental initiatives, no plastic bags, etc. |
| 2000s | Awareness of the 'global village', our responsibility to our neighbours who may be affected by climate change and environmental disasters. |
| 2000s | Energy awareness, yet we use more energy. |
| 2000s | Green Building Design an important consideration in new buildings, issues such as solar power, water conservation, heating/cooling, lighting important. |
| 2000s | New technology has resulted in increased use of energy in libraries. |
| 2000s | Threat of pandemics, disasters has resulted in greater risk management processes in library management and budgets. |

Politics

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| 1980s | Hamer Liberal government good funding for libraries. |
| 1986 | Cain Labour government reduced library funding and took public libraries away from under SLV (Geddes Report). |
| 1980s late | 7 day trading introduced with flow on to libraries. |
| 1989 | Tricontinental fails and brings down Labour government. |
| 1994 | Kennett government's local government amalgamations leading to more sustainable library services. |
| 1994 | CCT schools in libraries being tendered out and loss of collaboration. |
| 1994 | Multimedia Victoria established resulting in state focus on technology for libraries and business. |
| 1990s late | Living Libraries program introduced. |
| 1990s late | UK Best Value implemented in Victoria, resulting in change in accountabilities. |
| 2000s early | Disbanding of regional libraries as a result of local government amalgamations. |

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| 2000s early | Creation of DVC resulting in focus on community engagement and social capital, leading to the libraries as hubs concept, social equity, etc. |
| 2000s | Rise of green politics and ESD. |
| 2007 | Public and school libraries joint services come back to the forefront of the political agenda. |
| 2008 | GFC results in Federal infrastructure funding which benefited some library services. |
| 2010 | National Broadband Network rollout. Will it ever happen? |
| 2010 | State and federal elections may contain promises that impact libraries in Victoria! |

Society

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| 1980s | Double-income families led to higher standard of living. Change in family values, longer library opening hours. |
| 1980s | Libraries as the storehouses of knowledge, customers required to come to library/librarian for information, customer expected to wait for assistance. Customer's called 'Patrons'. |
| 1980s | Most Chief Librarians were male. |
| 1990s | Council amalgamations had impact on local communities. |
| 1990s | Increase in cultural diversity, new language spoken, different values, refugees AND immigrants. Idea of multicultural communities, library collections included LOTE materials. |
| 1990s | Computers in libraries, computer training, beginning of digital divide. Move from subject specialization to generalization. |
| 1997 | Statewide library projects emphasized collaboration and partnerships. |
| 2000s | GFC and drought increased country vs city divide. People now expect instant service and self-service, mobile services, instant access to information. SWIFT and LLV. Ageing population, but fitter, more vocal, demanding appropriate services. Library as social space to congregate (instead of or in addition to church, school or work). Lifelong learning, tourists, grey nomads, backpackers. Wireless, social networking. |
| 2000s | Shift in collections from 'just in case' to 'just in time'. New libraries, more libraries, co-location of services, partnerships, collaborations, 'Learning Communities' concept. |

Technology

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| 1980s | Rise and sunset of multimedia formats, libraries had to continually reinvest to stay current. |
| 1980s onwards | Collaboration is more important than ever. Impact – more planning, loss of local control, improved efficiency and effectiveness. |

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| 1990s | Ebooks started then waned. 2005 ebooks re-emerged and have become a force. Impact – some question viability and future of libraries and will libraries circulate commercial digital content? |
| 1990s | Internet revolutionised access to information |
| 1990s onwards | Continuum from wiredness to wireless. Impact – cost and raised expectations, speed and content and ubiquity. |
| 1990s late | Publishing industry adopted a hostile pricing policy. Impact – consortia purchasing. |
| 2000s | Digitisation of library heritage collections. Impact – free access to heritage collections around the state, country and world. |
| 2000s | Lack of standards and guidelines for access and public use of technology (e.g. filtering). Impact – inequality of access, confusion for users and staff. |
| 2000s mid | Self service technology. Impact – more staff time to provide customer service, improve confidentiality for customers, less staff RSI. |
| 2006 | Swift consortium approach to integrated LMS. Impact – improved customer service through library cooperation. |
| 2008 | Digitisation – concern that Google has acquired the publication rights of public domain content. Impact – may have to pay for the content in the future that the public has already paid for. |

2010 to 2040: predicted mega shocks and mega trends

Culture

- Consumerism – return to self sufficiency imperative. Libraries now need to actively lead building community capacity (information, skills). Libraries learning/information program base will be the central service delivery. Greater polarisation – global/ local. More recycling, built to recycle.
- Local identity – place based planning – community hubs deliver programming and community interaction.
- Device driven – instant gratification, any time, any where. Library irrelevant to books – people writing own product, no publishers – growth of local content facilitated by library accessible to all (multiple formats).
- Brain development – concentration, multi skilling ability diminished, low effort – short snippets, disenfranchised, less connections, epsilons.
- Workforce – lots of jobs in lifetime, short term contracts, flexible workforce, assist libraries to stay current and nimble with change.
- Library space – because people working from 'home', space becomes critical for social engagement and interaction. People could work from library instead of their own workplaces, might become second place. For homeless, it's the first place.
- Paid content, content will no longer be free, publishers give you what they want to provide, libraries don't control collection development.

Economics

- Resources competition – access to materials and energy required for technology production and use is highly competitive.
- Technology is ubiquitous and gets cheaper.
- Shortening economic cycles of boom and bust. More unpredictable and unstable economic climate. More difficult to secure long term funding and security.
- Publishing industry moves away from producing paper books.
- New distribution methods for information – news, creative content, etc. Public creative commons and author direct, online relationships, intellectual property owned by distributor.
- Libraries contributing to cloud of knowledge, content.
- Online franchising of libraries.
- Property value of library buildings increase.

Nature

- No oil. Lifestyle has changed. Trend back to neighbourhoods, working close to home, importance of community hubs such as libraries.
- Population increase. Crowded cities, more people in the country, impacts on services required from libraries. Particularly affecting rural libraries.
- Species preservation. Libraries are the repository of more than information, storing local memory and experiences, providing simulated experiences of nature, smells, touch, plants, etc.
- Larger population means smaller homes. Will lead to need for more public space, and libraries provide safe social spaces.
- Ageing population. Living on limited means, will require more localised experiences. The return of the milk bar.
- Demographic trends. Current mini baby boom will be 35 at 2040, what will they want from libraries? The experience we give them now will impact their view in 2040.
- Migration. Environmental refugees will impact on services, requiring more community language collections and other services. Library will also have a role in upskilling the community to deal with the influx.
- Simple life, reverting to traditional values, role for libraries to train people how to keep chooks and grow veggies, instead of IT training.
- Pandemic. Serious flu has killed half the population, reduced services because of population shrinking.

Politics

- Energy and the uncertainty of supply may have positive and negative impact on libraries.
- Rise of Green politics and push for more sustainability. Borrow a book, save a tree.
- Cost shifting. Which level of government will go?
- Political interference in information access.
- User pays for services. Will traditional free libraries disappear?
- What is political situation for our regional neighbours? Could result in changed demographics and different needs in libraries.

- How sustainable are rural centres with decreasing populations?
- Will we be inviting the President to the next library opening or the Governor General?

Society

- Massive increase in the use of technology in all aspects of our lives, but still a need for human interaction – story telling, teaching literacy and learning.
- Personalisation of libraries, individual's self-selecting information of interest, less mediation by librarians.

Technology

- Digital implants, hardware is obsolete, technology is affordable to all, the human body absorbs the tool.
- Artifact, books are now an object that is rare, libraries become museums that people visit to see books.
- Storage/memory is unlimited and captures every aspect of a person's life.
- Virtual. When do real relationships matter in 2040?
- Language. What happens if English is no longer the dominant world language or communication form?
- Humanness. Tension exists between humanness and technology. When are these two concepts in opposition and when does technology help amplify humanness?
- Privacy. If all thoughts are accessible, could they be hacked? On a macro level, technological terrorism has become a boundaryless threat that consumes a large percentage of public resources.

Six strategic domains (the challenges)

Brand and Identity

- Digital rights. Who owns the information? Therefore, what is the role of the library and what is our identity?
- User pays. How do we sell this to the community? And how does this change the concept of what a public library is?
- Communication technology – expectation of instant high quality connectedness. What is our role in this and what does this mean for our identity? Are we still the trusted impartial supplier?
- No collections, just public spaces ... changes our identity.
- Changes to brain functioning. Will this change the types of programs offered around early years literacy?
- Environment/energy. How do we identify and brand libraries as an essential service so that we get funding and energy allocations that we need?
- Population growth, libraries as the third space and libraries as critical infrastructure in growing communities.
- What is the worth of an information manager? What economic value do they have?
- The book is not disappearing. It's just changing format

- Marketing digital books to replace print.

Community engagement

- How will physical buildings be used in the future for social engagement? Real vs virtual relationships?
- How will we deal with the impact of changing demographics - ageing population, greater cultural diversity, more people, less resources?
- Are libraries going to be relevant in 2040? Can libraries continue to re-invent in the digital world?
- Where do changing literacy and communication tools leave libraries? Vooks, twitter (140 chars) spelling, grammar?
- Will the community want to engage with each other? How will libraries engage with the community? How will libraries measure the outcomes, not just the output of community engagement efforts?
- What will the profession look like? Librarians vs social workers vs community development workers vs teachers vs childcare providers vs aged care. Different skill sets.
- How do we stay green in the future? No digital recycling, carbon emissions from IT infrastructure, etc.
- How do we prevent community engagement turning into community surveillance?
- How will libraries help communities re-engage post major catastrophe/war/pandemic?
- How do we continue to provide jobs in the library sector?
- How do you work with all layers of government to advocate the importance of libraries in the community?
- When is the profession going to decide what is the unique role of the public library in a post print world?

Governance and Regulation

- How will we be able to afford to provide free information if it becomes a user pays environment? How that can work trans-nationally?
- How might public libraries respond to stricter filtering legislation compared with access? Founding principals for libraries, and what libraries are funded for? How much will the state seek to interfere (or rather control)?
- How can we manage the increase in governance and regulation which is oppositional to flexibility and adaptiveness?
- How can we build alliances to strengthen or secure free access to information?
- How can we deal with whatever governance model might be imposed in an environment of resource scarcity and uncertainty?
- What is the future of the book, given libraries as repositories, and given the increasing cost of books and storage?
- If the book disappears, can libraries leap phoenix-like from the ashes?
- How can we provide access to electronic things if there is an energy shortage?
- How can we maintain concentration at the end of the day?

Leadership and Influence

- In a world where information is everything, what will the role of libraries be? Storage or synthesis? And giving meaning and ultimately access in a commercial digital environment?
- Will libraries have a voice (not protectionism) in distributing commercial digital content?
- What role will libraries play in preserving the public right to commercial digital content free of charge?
- How will the virtual meet the physical in the public library space?
- What are going to be the funding models for public libraries?
- Thomas Fry talks about the end of literacy by 2050 due to the end of keyboard input and focus on aural literacy digital implants. Will our children sit at keyboards or will they sit at a PC and just talk?
- What does a shift to aural literacy mean to libraries?
- How far will we move away from traditional print literacy to just tweets?
- Where does reflection occur without having access to the written word?
- Are libraries funded through innovative sponsorship or technology?

Professional development

- Will people need mediated access to information?
- What will be the role of the librarian? Curator, social worker, community development officer, information broker, arts worker?
- How do we prepare library students and current staff to deliver integrated services tomorrow?
- How do we train library staff to work in a virtual environment away from a physical library?
- Will libraries be a collection of allied services, not just library professionals?
- Libraries as information franchises or brands?
- Libraries as vehicles for implementing government policies?

Resources and Resourcing

- With ubiquity of technology, will there be a role for public libraries?
- How will local communities fund global expectations?
- How will we have global reciprocal borrowing? How do we resource it? Is it an issue?
- Where will the workforce come from? What will it be like? What will be still needed?
- Can we afford the expected life expectancy?
- What will retirement age be? Will there be one?
- Will we still need real spaces for real people?
- What format will resources be if there is no oil or metal?
- Will there need to be intermediaries between information and consumer (e.g. publisher, libraries)?
- Greater divide between information rich and information poor?
- Will the role of libraries in supporting disadvantaged communities be our reason for being?

- Challenge of envisioning new forms of collaboration given pressures of resourcing? And other issues such as intellectual property, lack of resources, etc.?
- How will we deal with generation gaps and different expectations?
- Importance of advocacy and being able to advocate for things that are defined as important?
- How do we determine what is authoritative in an increasingly anarchic environment?
- What is our role?

The day in a word (or two)?

- Awareness
- Broad-ranging
- Challenging
- Change
- Disorientating
- Efficient
- Energizing
- Engaging
- Entertaining
- Exciting
- Good
- Great
- Hmmm
- How do we turn all the ideas into do-able practical strategies?
- I want to use the outcomes of today to set up tomorrow's strategies?
- Important
- Inclusive
- Insightful
- Inspiring
- Interesting
- Interesting
- Interesting
- Interesting
- Irritating
- More of this is needed
- More questions than answers
- Nascent
- Pessimistic
- Possibilities
- Reflective
- Relevant
- Scary
- Scary
- Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious
- Thought-provoking
- Thought-provoking
- Thought-provoking

- Thought-provoking
- Validation; inspiring; thoughtful; interactive; potential; flexible; collegiate
- We will be redundant in 2040
- Worrying
- Worrying