

**THE BIG ISSUES SEMINAR: PUBLIC LIBRARIES, LEARNING,
TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
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E nga matawaka o te motu, tena koutou katoa
(All groups throughout the land, greetings to you all)

Slide 1
Introduction

Good morning everyone I am looking forward to this session with Jan and Prasad where we share our views on what we think are the big issues for the library sector. What are the step changes for national libraries in relation to making a difference for all the wonderful public libraries in our countries? Public libraries are the hub of community creativity inspiration and as public civic spaces have built on over a century of trust in both Australia and New Zealand.

I am going to take you through one idea in very quick time to illustrate what I think were the ingredients of a step change for public libraries in New Zealand – it will be a rapid jaunt through strategy, policy, tactics, inspired leadership, and massive community engagement. The star of this story is the individual Kiwi, Joe or Jill citizen, who we all have the privilege of working for! As this story unfolds I will elaborate on what has become a very strong partnership between the National Library of New Zealand and Public Libraries of New Zealand.

As background the National Library of New Zealand is mandated to partner the work of other libraries and this is the story of how we are doing this for public libraries, ensuring we do not detract in any way from the special relationship between local public libraries and their communities.

Slide 2
NZ Public
Libraries
Strategic
Framework

The story I want to tell goes back four years to 2006 when the National Library of New Zealand along with its Minister and Local Government New Zealand delivered the first central Government summit in New Zealand on public libraries. The gathering brought together local and central Government leaders, three Ministers and anyone who could influence anything in the library and information sector (some NSLA leaders were there).

The then Minister responsible for the National Library, the Hon Judith Tizard, described public libraries as “deeply subversive places”, and they are. She saw access to information as the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy and released a strategic framework for public libraries to guide them and their funders over the next ten years. This was the first time that country had an agreed strategy for the direction and investment in public libraries across New Zealand.

Alongside this the New Zealand Government was rolling out the New Zealand Digital Strategy, which was refreshed last year, and New Zealand Digital Content Strategy in 2007.

You are probably thinking so what's the big issue or idea here. But without these strategies, without getting the policy right, without Government actually understanding how communities through public libraries could really help make a central government strategy rock and roll, my story would end now.

The point here is strategy, policy, combined with an audacious unbridled vision for change, are all really important ingredients to achieving the kind of change I imagine you are all looking for.

Before we get to the interesting stuff, here's some more theory and thinking that originated from the Digital Content Strategy

Slide 3
NZ Digital
Content
Strategy
5 Elements



Figure 1: Digital Content Strategy – Five-Element Framework /p7

This is an end-to-end view of a day in the life of a New Zealand, or equally Aussie digital object – something important to your communities – such as a bit of history, an oral history, a Youtube clip, a mash up. This diagram steps out a straightforward value chain.

The New Zealand Digital Content Strategy says you need to first create stuff then find ways of discovering and accessing it. And if you don't want to delete or lose it, then you had better have a strategy for keeping it. In times of economic recession, how we reuse, or repurpose an idea or thought is really important and you can't reuse unless you can save it. Pay once, use many times, it is simply a good economic value proposition.

Slide 4
NZ Digital
Content
Strategy
Digital Space

One more critical aspect of the New Zealand Digital Content Strategy is that it distinguishes between formal and informal knowledge systems so in a Web 2.0 environment information, citizen-created content is just as important, just as valuable as the authoritative tome of formal content which libraries are more familiar with.

This is very challenging for the traditional way we have viewed content in the past.

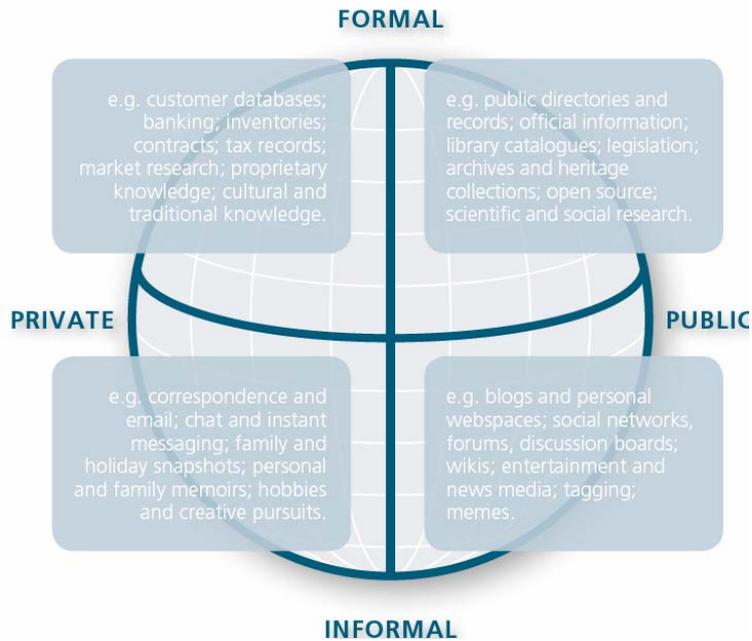


Figure 2: Digital Content Strategy – The Digital Space page 1

So what are we thinking about with public libraries in New Zealand?

The Public Libraries Summit identified that there was a real digital divide between rural and provincial, and city dwellers in New Zealand. We didn't have great broadband into communities and our terrain was challenging. You have the tyranny of distance in Australia and we have our terrain, our mountains. We looked at how we could get free internet and broadband to these communities and run a networked capability that would rival any metropolitan area.

Slide 5
APNK NZ Map

And so we launched The Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa (APNK) www.peoplesnetworknz.org.nz in 2007. The APNK is funded by the New Zealand Government and established to level the playing field of rural and provincial access to, and activities on, the web.

Slide 6
Kawerau
APNK

So what has it achieved since then? Well right now it is connecting over 120 communities with pretty good coverage across the country. The big take-home idea is that APNK is an illusion ladies and gentlemen – overnight a small community like Kawerau in the North Island suddenly had this whiz-bang ICT capability, something that it had never had before. How could this be? They hadn't received any more dollars, yet local youth, Māori, Pacific Island kids who had never used the Library before were engaging with interactive experiences.

Slide 7 & 8
East Coast
& Te Anau

Muscling their way in were superannuitants skyping their grandchildren in London, alongside a farmer doing finances and checking local stock prices. Meanwhile in Te Anau, a picturesque small town in the South Island, a local photographer is getting her content out there and mashing it up with other citizen-created material.

Meanwhile the librarians were in shock – many of them have gone back to be retrained. They needed to adapt and adapt quickly with this unleashing of citizen creativity on the web. Things were not quite the way they used to be. Not as comfortable somehow. What on earth was happening in places like Kawerau, in Te Anau?

Well here's the illusion bit – the APNK's managed network is run from the National Library's offices in Christchurch in the South Island. It's a champagne service served up to communities who are on beer incomes. The great thing is that no one knows the APNK is powered by the NLNZ and nor should they.

Kawerau keeps its autonomy and relationship with community but overnight they have an unimaginable ICT capability and it has transformed their relationship with community. No longer do rural and provincial Kiwis have to put up with substandard connectivity.

Slide 9
3M Award for
APNK

The Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa has been phenomenally successful and so I was very proud when the APNK won the prestigious national 3M Award for Innovation in New Zealand libraries.

One day, true broadband/wireless will be in every New Zealand home but not right now and when it does APNK will be riding the next knowledge wave. So what is next? APNK libraries are now about to flex their content muscles and play their part in New Zealand becoming a vibrant information democracy.

Slide 10
Kete NZ

As part of APNK we have installed a community repository or Kete as we call them in New Zealand - New Zealand's basket of knowledge. These open source repository are being slowly filled with citizen created content and stories – we are seeing the informal knowledge systems really come to centre stage, created by individual citizens who are giving those who have invested so heavily in formal systems like national libraries a bit of a nudge – we are all co-creators these days.

But wait there's more! Just in case some of you are thinking well that's good but it's not great I will introduce you to two more star players important to balancing this knowledge equation - both these will be crucial to APNK making a real contribution.

Let's go back to the Digital Content life cycle, and look at what thinking about in relation to the 'accessing and discovering' part and the 'managing and preserving' part.

Slide 11
NZ Digital
Content
Strategy
5 Elements



Figure 3: Digital Content Strategy – Five-Element Framework /p7

First, accessing and discovering – in the last 12 months the National Library of New Zealand has built significant capability to vacuum across New Zealand metadata and found a way to create, use and reuse New Zealand digital content where the end user can pull a search widget into their own individual environment, engage with this to create new ideas and concepts.

Slide 12
Digital NZ

The end users, can if they choose, contribute content to the APNK repositories or kete and these can be harvested into the “uber” solution called Digital New Zealand www.digitalnz.org (DNZ). DNZ is the harvester of NZ digital content much of which has never surfaced before on Google. Over 1.3 million objects have been added in the first year and this will be doubled in 2010.

The great thing is that as content via the APNK and kete start rolling in much of the DNZ content will be community content – the informal stuff. The emergence of communities telling their stories online has been extraordinary to see. Try telling Kiwis that their public libraries are not keeping pace and they will laugh you out of town. This combination of these initiatives has absolutely revolutionised everything about public libraries in New Zealand.

Slide 13
Digital
Amnesia

So now the final player in balance this knowledge equation – back to that end- to-end diagram again. If all of this Kiwi digital stuff is so great what are we doing to stop losing it? Every minute of every day we are losing our country's digital assets. We are the delete generation and it is our profession at this time in this country that needs to blow the whistle on this unacceptable loss.

Slide 14
NDHA

Earlier this year the National Library of New Zealand launched the NZ\$24m National Digital Heritage Archive (Rosetta), mandated under the National Library of New Zealand Act 2003 to protect and preserve New Zealand's digital assets (born digital publishing; NZ domain, blogs, wikis etc).

Slide 12
NDHA
Partners

This is an extraordinary capability to have and one that we achieved through a successful public and private partnership with key international partners including Sun Alliance and ExLibris

So what part do public libraries play in protecting and preserving New Zealand's digital memory?

We are, as you all know, experiencing one of the most seismic shifts in traditional ways of generating ideas and creating new knowledge. Citizen created (informal) knowledge systems are challenging us to rethink the formal authoritative systems we are all so used to.

As the community repositories (kete) develop in our APNK libraries and increasingly in our maraes (Māori communities) we have the potential as a country to mash up the informal, formal and indigenous knowledge systems and join up the stories, heritage and knowledge of New Zealand.

So in summary how does this all hang together?

The National Library of New Zealand is playing its role in furthering the work of other libraries in lifting the capability of rural and provincial public libraries of New Zealand, without compromising the very special role between libraries and their communities.

Slide 15
NZ joined up

Through DNZ we are beginning to connect the baskets of knowledge of New Zealand harvesting across citizens created content AND (an important "and") if they so chose ingesting this memory into the NDHA to be kept forever.

And we cannot underestimate the strategic frameworks that set the stage for these initiatives - the Strategic Framework for Public Libraries and a robust policy framework through the New Zealand Digital Strategy 2.0 and New Zealand Digital Content Strategy.

The National Library of New Zealand and Public Libraries of New Zealand have developed an enduring partnership and it is all Kiwis who are benefiting. When things get tough up in my office in Wellington it makes my heart sing to think that a large Wellington-centric bureaucracy can make a tangible difference to a small community such as Kawerau.

Slide 16
Global
collaboration

All it has taken is vision, leadership, a will to make it happen, and of course collaboration. And it is not just collaboration and connections at a local and national level. Libraries around the world have an opportunity to leverage from the democratising power of the digital age – collaboration at all levels is key.

Na nei ra tena koutou katoa