

Collaborative re-imagining

The digital networked environment has already forced the reconfiguration of many industries, from music to banking to electioneering, and will continue to drive major shifts until few industries resemble their twentieth century model. Our libraries are taking a system-wide view of the impact of this environment, looking to 'unbundle' our activities and to assess the most effective way of tackling these challenges.

The members of National & State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) are using collaboration to change more rapidly than they could on their own. In 2008, NSLA endorsed the *Re-imagining Libraries Strategic Plan* and began to shift resources from individual library activity to collaborative activity.

The projects in the Strategic Plan are underway and the picture of our re-imagined libraries is beginning to take shape. It will include both new services and new approaches to the body of work undertaken in our libraries.

So what will our services look like to those who use our libraries? For them, *Re-imagining Libraries* will mean:

- more of our collections available online and easily able to be found, used, adapted, and transformed;
- more of the community's collections, comments, contributions, and expertise enriching our collections;
- more online tools freely available to take and use;
- more widgets linking to our services, from external web pages, social networking sites, and within other services;
- our research expertise and deep collection knowledge available when it is needed;
- easier access to quick reference answers through mobile devices and other platforms;
- easier and central discoverability of information and collections, backed up by faster digital delivery and home delivery;
- less registration and authentication; and
- similar services and a common experience across our libraries.

For NSLA Libraries, *Re-imagining Libraries* is leveraging the expertise in all our libraries, to achieve more than each library can its own; creating an increased trust and shared commitment between our libraries; shifting a larger proportion of our work to benefit the group of libraries and less solely for our own organisation; building a more agile, risk-taking, and innovative culture; and increasing the profile for our libraries in the networked environment.

Behind *Re-imagining Libraries* is the drive to separate aspects of our work that have always been addressed predominantly within a one-organisation context, moving key parts to a collaborative approach. NSLA has defined these parts within a framework of strategies: One Library; Transforming our Culture; and Accessible Content.

One Library aims for a welcoming, easy, open, and consistent experience for those using our libraries and our collections, with services available at the point of need and community contributions collected and valued.

Transforming our Culture is both a product of the process of Re-imagining Libraries and a support to staff as they reshape our libraries.

Accessible Content is a key driver for this program of work. All our content must be easily discoverable online as all information-seeking is now centred in the digital sphere. The infrastructure and services behind discovering and connecting to our content online are where many gains can be made in an integrated collaborative approach.

Re-imagining Libraries is a five-year program. By the end of 2009, after one year, the program has achieved release of information, training materials, and guidelines for best practice in digitisation; standardised implementation of wireless services; framework report on community created content; agreed lending principles; National Library of New Zealand's beta version of the FIND service; National Library of Australia launched TROVE; Australian Historic Newspapers online service available through TROVE; *Re-imagining Libraries* Program Office established.

The proposed outcomes for 2010-2013 include:

- Release of best practice copyright communications
- Transition to a new business model for virtual reference
- Increased access to e-journals through TROVE and FIND
- Expanded national licensing of e-resources
- Home delivery pilot and increase delivery of digital surrogates
- Greater automation and seamlessness in delivery processes
- Collaborative approach to the collection of serials and other published materials
- Acquisition improvements in manuscripts
- Greater enhancement of TROVE and FIND through ongoing ingest of internal and external content

Re-imagining Libraries represents our unbundling of library work. We intend to open up new services and opportunities for people using our libraries and to act and present as 'one library'.

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