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NEW CROSS-ORGANISATION VISTA FOR NEW GRADS

Academic libraries have experienced rapid transformation in the last twenty years. The availability of digital technology has provided leaders with the opportunity to overcome the access limitations of traditional libraries – and is opening up a new vista for information professionals.

Historically, academic libraries' central good has been the large, local book and periodical collections bought from suppliers to fulfil the teaching, learning, and research needs of a library's users. The collections' learning, research, and teaching value was held as the primary indicator of the quality of a library. However, new forms of access have now emerged that have resulted in the dominance of these collections being reduced. Academic libraries have shifted their focus to specialist services as a way to remain relevant.

The services that academic libraries now provide are no longer universal from library to library. Services may include digital content management, research support, copyright advice, research data management, or in-house publishing, but whether a library supports one or all of these services will depend on each library's institutional infrastructure and setting. However, services supporting digital content management have emerged as a necessity in the service era.

In universities, the digitisation of scholarly and administrative functions in academic and professional departments has produced a deluge of digital content. This has created an opportunity for academic libraries to participate in the management of universities' research outputs and digital assets. Academic libraries now manage one or more of research outputs, research data, theses and dissertations, administrative records, university publications, multimedia collections, learning objects, and course materials. In physical form, the environment for managing such information had been scattered throughout faculty departments and administrative units, without common management policies and guidelines. With the addition of centralised organisation, management, discovery and delivery of digital content created at universities, libraries can provide a value-added input to an already trusted body of information.

Digital content management represents a challenging, technology-dependent, and evolving area in the library sector. Universities in Australia, the United Kingdom, and North America now commonly advertise positions for digital archivists, digital collections librarians, and digital preservation specialists. The range of job titles is as wide as the required skills. In many cases, the job descriptions combine a number of existing professions, including archivist, records manager, copyright expert, policy maker, and IT specialist. While digital content management is a new area in academic libraries, many of the skills and functions performed have an analogy to traditional librarian functions, including acquisitions, management, discovery, delivery, patron accounts, metadata creation, storage, and security.

Institutional repositories are the most established digital content management service in academic libraries, with every university in Australia now operating at least one repository. Institutional repositories collect, organise, and provide access to an online collection of a university's research outputs. Government assessment reporting requirements, new research frameworks, and institutional awareness of the importance and complexity of managing digital content have supported the growth of institutional repositories. Project funding for these digital content management systems aimed to create a network of repository systems capable of collecting research outputs

created at universities.

Their success has been dependent on strategic service design that is value adding, while still being sustainable beyond short-term project funding bursts.

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Responsible digital content management will see academic libraries fostering programmatic development, rather than project development, which more often places the system ahead of the more important service.

As innovation in technology expands, user demands increase, and e-scholarship becomes the norm, academic libraries will have to create services not traditionally considered part of their domain. This requires people that span library and university departments to collaborate to combine technological capacity and administrative oversight, as input from a range of university departments with knowledge and expertise beyond librarianship is called for. Academic library services will increasingly become deeply embedded within their institutions and cross-department collaboration will continue to develop alongside targeted library services that aim to achieve wider outcomes for universities. This represents an important marker of growth for academic libraries.

Academic libraries are now increasingly dynamic and complex units in universities. The responsibilities of libraries are expanding and new expertise is being called for. These changes require new graduates of library courses to have broad outlooks and flexible attitudes towards work. The field of digital content management provides an exciting opportunity for willing new graduates to be involved in an evolving field where they will receive a range of unique yet transferable skills related to - but not always available on entry into - traditional library roles. By entering the field at such a beguiling juncture, new librarians will cement themselves as information professionals in a rapidly evolving information society.

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