The University Library as a Key Player in the Research Evaluation Process

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Key ideas

• The notion that libraries should be passive providers of information is redundant
• The information landscape is becoming complex
• Librarians can be and should be active parts of their clients’ research communities
• We should not sit in libraries waiting for things to happen
• There is much in academic life to which we can contribute
Outline

• What is a Library today? Tomorrow?
• Pathways to transformation
• The changing research environment
• What is a Librarian?
• What role for Librarians in the research environment? In research evaluation?
Experience-centered - 3rd generation

Looking for educational impact.
Choice of study experiences to enable appropriate engagement with information.
Interacting with information printed, digital, moving media and other people

Connected Learning Experiences - 4th generation

Creating spaces based on pedagogy
Looking at the whole campus as a learning environment
Weekly visits to the library

Usefulness of print resources

www.rin.ac.uk
Changing user demands

- End-user searching of CD-ROM databases
  - 1992

- Demand for electronic rather than print (new issues)
  - 2002

- Demand for electronic rather than print (complete backfiles)
  - 2005

- Early development of online journals
  - 1997

- Institutional repositories
  - 2004

- One login for everything
  - 2009
  - Everything electronic
  - Seamless interface

How to proceed?

- Continue and complete migration from print to electronic
- Retire legacy collections
- Continue to repurpose library as primary learning space
- Extend focus of collection development from external purchase to local curation
- Reposition library expertise and resources to be more closely embedded in research and teaching enterprise

Shifts in knowledge production

- Mode 1 and Mode 2
- “Traditional science” and reflexive research
- Triple helix of overlapping interests (university, government and industry)

Adapted from David W. Lewis
Funding structures and requirements 1

- External funding
- Diverse source of funding
  - Government
  - Not-for-profit
  - Industry
- Economic outcomes
  - Increase wealth creation & prosperity
  - Improve nation’s health, environment & quality of life
- Innovation
- Improved competitiveness
- “Commercialisation” of research
- Less “curiosity-driven” activity

Funding structures and requirements 2

- Evaluation, evaluation, evaluation…
- Cost-effectiveness or “value for money”
- Economic and social relevance
- Requirements of research assessment
  - Increased quantity of published outputs
  - Increased “quality” of outputs
- Compliance requirements
  - Published outputs in open access
  - Storage and re-use of data sets

Players in the formal scholarly communication process

Scholars
- Do research
- Write articles and provide quality assurance through peer review.

Publishers and learned societies
- Accumulate
- Copy-edit
- Provide quality assurance through peer review
- Produce
- Market
- Distribute.

Academic libraries
- Buy
- Archive
- Provide access.

Players in the formal scholarly communication process

Funders
- Establish research priorities
- Provide resources.

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Emerging practice

- Diverse location of research (university, hospital, industry, research institutes)
- Collaboration amongst teams
- Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity
- Focus on problems rather than techniques
- Changing modes of communication (more informal and ICT based)
- Guarding of intellectual property

ICT and e-research

- Democratisation of informal networks
- “De-formalisation” of formal networks
- open publishing and self-archiving
- open peer review
- blogs and discussion boards
- Pervasiveness
- Inter- and multi-disciplinary
- Mainstream

A pathway for the future

- Understand the researchers’ experiences
- Integrate with their workflow – using the Web 2.0 mentality
- Play to our core strengths

Research assessment

UK Research Assessment Exercise (1980s)


Australia ERA (2009/2010)
Implications for libraries

- Institutional focus on research may reduce funding to support teaching
- Pressure on researchers may require libraries to become more student focussed
- Emphasis on e-learning
- Greater demand for research collections
- Focus on collections for immediate use rather than “just-in-case”
- Institutional infrastructure - repositories etc
- In-house research evaluation support

But there are lots of opportunities - if we seize them

What is happening in the world is bypassing university libraries

Peter Murray-Rust
The scientist’s view
JISC Libraries of the future debate, April 2009
Researchers and discovery services

Behaviour, perceptions and needs

A study commissioned by the Research Information Network

November 2006

“…contact with librarians and information professionals is rare”

“…researchers are generally confident in their [self-taught] abilities… librarians see them as relatively unsophisticated”

“…librarians see it as a problem that they are not reaching all researchers with formal training, whereas most researchers don’t think they need it”

The part that academic librarians should play remains unclear

Raise awareness of research, its management and evaluation amongst library staff

Provide advice on data management and research evaluation to researchers

Data curation is vast, complex and requires subject input

Library anxiety

“The image of librarians in popular culture discourages a user from approaching a librarian”

Nilsen and McKechnie, 2002

Libraries or Librarians?

• We promote the Library
• Visit the Library to X, Y or Z
• Satisfy your information needs at the Library
• Rather than:
  • Consult the Librarian to A, B or C
  • Your Librarian is a highly-trained professional
• Our view of the profession itself, and of our skills, should not be limited to a building with four walls
Come back to our core knowledge

- Librarianship is a profession of searching, discovery and analysis
- Too often we are viewed as keepers and protectors, as curators and gatekeepers
- We are a profession educated to solve information problems

Resources and tools

- Collection development: Specialist books
- Know what is good scientific practice in each field
- How to search, find and critique the literature old and new
- Help with literature searches and bibliographies
- Help with updating services eg RSS feeds etc
- How to use search tools
- Know about publication changes in online and print
- Knowledgeable about technology
- Provides online tutorials on every aspect of thesis production
- User education and ‘how to manage consumption rather than content’

Disciplines

Know the disciplines
Know the research methodologies in competing paradigms of a discipline
Be able to refer to the best theoretical underpinnings in subjects
Know who’s who in the subject fields
Know the key journals in the disciplines
Knowledge of impact factors eg h index and JCR
Research

General
- Research ethics and plagiarism; copyright
- Aware of social and cultural values the researcher must respect
- Research savvy

Guidance
- Have model PhD theses for each subject
- Know about thesis structure
- Have models of literature reviews in every subject

Other
- Understands teaching and learning — theory, methods, paradigms, styles
- Knowledge of digital rights and intellectual property
- Effectively markets him/herself and the library and its services
- Supports open access
- Actively involved in institutional repositories; find ways of ‘harvesting e-resources’
- Forward thinking about acquisitions and collection development
- Support collaboration; sharing and promoting access to resources — promoting access and curation in the new information age — knowledge management
- Explore new ways of servicing an increasingly remote user population

So what can we do in our institutions?
- Research support must be a given
- Understand the research culture of our institutions
- Understand government and funders’ expectations

Research

Process
- Help students relate the theory to their study
- How to write a good introduction and conclusion
- Know about academic writing and needed writing skills
- How to prepare a bibliography
- Referencing techniques
- Data management practices

Publication
- Understand order of authorship for publication
- Know where to publish and how to choose journals
Support research evaluation

- Provide access to the tools
- Provide expertise
- Tie together disparate elements of the research evaluation enterprise
- Act as honest brokers

Understand what is expected

- Raise the difficult questions
- Articulate changes in the landscape
- State our potential role

“I love you, my dear library”
Changing nature of scholarly communication

- Traditional journal articles remain strong, but accompanied by:
  - Open access
  - Repositories - institutional and disciplinary
  - Working papers, pre-prints
  - Blog posts and wiki content
  - Social networking sites
- How will these be “measured” or reviewed?

Other environmental factors

- Economics of publishing, cuts and budget constraint
- Whither the scholarly society publisher?
- Faculty are our collaborators - they innovate, they drive change, we need to work together

Disciplinary differences

- Well understood by librarians
- Changes in scholarly communication may accentuate the difference between some disciplines
- But might also reduce traditionally sharp divide between science and humanities

Playing to our strengths

- We have been long-standing users of citation indices
- We know our way around the system - but need to do more
- This needs to be informed by strong understanding of research and disciplinary practice
New measures

• What can we help to develop for new forms of communication?
• What can we detect in the changing scholarly landscape?
• What place will other surrogates of impact take?
• For example, downloads from repositories, COUNTER data, Google analytics

There are great examples of this already

• Institutional repositories
• Research support services
• Academic information specialists
• Metadata expertise
• Researcher ID
• People Australia

Conclusion

• We have worked hard to build new services and structures to reflect a rapidly changing research environment
• Librarians have the skills to play an important role in research evaluation
• We have the good standing in our universities - and beyond - to maximise our role
• We should construct an $i$-index to record and measure the impact of our work