

PASSION, PRACTICE, PARTNERSHIP AND POLITICS – MARKETING THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

THE CHALLENGE

Would it really matter if we didn't have public libraries? Apart from the fact that many of us in this room would be out of a job, perhaps a drain on the social welfare system - would it really matter to society if the public library died a quiet death? Is the public library an institution that has had its day? Should it go the way of the corner dairy? The vinyl record? The silent movie? The Saturday night dance?

It may seem strange to be asking this question at a conference devoted to “positioning public libraries for a healthy future”, but if we don't ask it, and answer it to the satisfaction of those who fund and support us, then we might just find we slip into irrelevance as the 21st century progresses. And that, in my view, would be as catastrophic an event as those which plunged Europe into the dark ages all those centuries ago.

A pretty grandiose claim you might think? A place which lends books and magazines, runs programmes for children and the elderly, helps kids with their homework; a place which is often shabby and well worn, often cramped with not much room for people – is this so significant an institution that we would be plunged into the dark ages without it?

I trust that by the end of this session you will have made up your own mind as to the validity of the claim! And if by the end of this session you feel a little more passionate about the future of public libraries and your task in securing that future then I will feel satisfied that my trip here has been worth it for your conference organisers!

LOOKING FOR THE FUTURE IN THE PAST

The theme of the conference is “Food for thought; time for action” with the by-line “positioning public libraries for a healthy future”. So what is this future we all desire? How can we create the future that will best benefit those we serve? To have any hope of creating this future we need to understand the past.

In the opening lines of *Burnt Norton* in *Four Quartets*¹, TS Eliot eloquently says:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.

¹ Eliot, TS *The complete poems and plays*. London, Faber and Faber, 1969. p171

The past for libraries is a long and noble one and the public library is one of the youngest descendants of this tradition. From the great library of Alexandria in the 3rd century BC to its recreated counterpart due to open in April 2002² the basic purpose of libraries has not much changed. Crawford and Gorman in their book *Future Libraries*³ state this purpose as follows:

“The tasks of the library can be simply stated and understood. They are as true for a modern branch of a public library as they are for cathedral libraries of the Middle Ages or the great research collections of universities. Libraries exist to acquire, give access to and safeguard carriers of knowledge and information in all forms and to provide instruction and assistance in the use of the collections to which their users have access. In short, libraries exist to give meaning to the continuing human attempt to transcend space and time in the advancement of knowledge and the preservation of culture.”⁴

Crawford and Gorman go on to quote RR Bowker writing about the role of the librarian in *Library Journal* in the late 19th century. He said

“[It is for the librarian]...to classify and catalogue the records of ascertained knowledge, the literature of the whole past, and so bring the books to readers and the readers to books. He is the merchant, the middle man, of thought, and performs in this field the function which political economy recognises as so important, of bringing goods to the place where they are wanted and so, also, creating demand. In this busy generation... the librarian makes time for his fellow mortals by saving it; for a minute saved is a minute added. And this function of organising, of indexing, of time-saving and thought-saving, is associated peculiarly with the librarian of the nineteenth century”⁵

And in my view, also with the librarian of the 21st century. A recent customer of Christchurch City Libraries had this to say

“[I]...commend the Christchurch City Libraries for their helpfulness in enabling us to locate and access key market research information. After days of searching the Internet, I suddenly thought of searching the library’s on-line catalogue at <http://librarydata.christchurch.org.nz> and voila! The book I specifically wanted was there, and the Business Centre was really helpful in helping me to extract the information that I required.” Don Rae, Jade Marketing (with his permission)⁶

So the role of the library is to collect, organise, preserve and disseminate recorded knowledge. The librarian’s role is to add value every step of the way by the skills and knowledge s/he uses to achieve this purpose. **How** we do that, and the methods we use may vary with time and with circumstance but the basic purpose remains constant.

Over the centuries libraries have emphasised different aspects of this purpose. The first great age of libraries was the age of acquisition. The most important aspect was to acquire materials,

² Bibliotheca Alexandrina: the revival of the ancient library at Alexandria. UNESCO at http://www.unesco.org/webworld/alexandria_new/

³ Crawford, Walt and Michael Gorman *Future libraries: dreams, madness & reality*. Chicago and London, American Library Association, 1995

⁴ Ibid. p3

⁵ Ibid. p4

⁶ Christchurch City Libraries. Report for the year ended 30 June 2001 [in](#)

often unique and to preserve these for their own sake. Access to the collections was limited to a learned elite and organising wasn't as important because the volume of materials was such that the keepers of the collections knew every manuscript or volume held. The Acquisitions Librarian was King!

As more and more materials were published and printed there was a growing need to organise the collections culminating in the 19th century with the age of bibliography when the Cataloguer was King. Classification systems such as Dewey and Library of Congress and subject thesauri were born. Libraries were still largely research based collections housed in glorious buildings to which scholars and others came.

Public libraries heralded in the age of making available these collections to the masses. The middle to late twentieth century was the great age of circulation and the emphasis was now on systems which made it possible to handle large volumes of items on loan to significant numbers of people at the same time. The emphasis was increasingly on meeting customer demand for a wide range of popular materials, increasingly in formats additional to the book, such as magazines, tapes, CDs, posters, video etc. The Baltimore County Public Library is probably the best known example of this approach detailed in the book *Give 'em what they want!*⁷ The Circulation Librarian was Queen!

Following hard on the heels of the circulation age, and running in parallel with it, is the age of information where the Reference Librarian is Queen! Librarians of all ages have always used their skills and knowledge about the collections, of which they were the custodians, to help users find what they wanted. However, in the late 20th century information and reference services, often focused on special customer or subject groups have burgeoned. Business information centres, government information, consumer information, phone in quick reference and information brokering services have helped customers find what they want quickly and effectively. Variations on this theme include self help systems to enable customers to do more for themselves, such as vertical files of materials, production of pathfinders and so on.

What will be the next great age of libraries? Libraries as civilising forces? As bastions of intellectual and democratic freedom? As forces for social cohesion? Places of life long learning? Whatever it is – I believe it will tie back to the essential role libraries have had through the ages.

Of course, modern public libraries have done more than just provide circulation and reference services. Children's services and programmes, literacy and reading programmes, community meeting places, exhibitions and cafés have become part of the range of services provided. The American Library Association's *Planning for Results*⁸ lists 13 service responses that public library's might choose to deliver:

- Basic literacy
- Business and career information
- Commons
- Community referral
- Consumer information

⁷ *Give 'em what they want!: managing the public's library*. Baltimore County Public Library's Blue Ribbon Committee. Chicago; London, American Library Association, 1992.

⁸ Himmel, Ethel and William James Wilson *Planning for results: a public library transformation process*. 2v. Chicago and London, American Library Association, 1998.

- Cultural awareness
- Current topics and titles
- Formal learning support
- General information
- Government information
- Information literacy
- Lifelong learning
- Local history and genealogy

These roles all link back to the primary purpose of ensuring that the recorded knowledge of human endeavour and learning is available and used:

- support for literacy is important because if people can't read then they cannot readily access the huge range of information recorded in print medium;
- support for intellectual freedom is important because if certain streams of knowledge are censored for whatever reason, then the growth of new knowledge may be limited or skewed;
- provision of meeting places (Commons) is important as the sharing of ideas and learning encourages new understanding;
- Support for cultural awareness, local history and genealogy are important. They allow people to understand where they come from, how they fit in today's world and to have a sense of self grounded in time.

Seventy years ago Ranganathan, the great Indian Librarian published his *Five Laws of Library Science*⁹. As cited in Crawford and Gorman they are:

- Books are for use
- Books are for all; or, Every reader his book
- Every books its reader
- Save the time of the reader
- A library is a growing organism

These very simple statements encapsulate the concepts of access and availability of collections across all fields of interests, organised for quick access – collections and services made simpler for the user by the skills of the librarian – and most importantly that this is not a dead or dying institution but one that is changing, growing and responsive to the world around it.

Walt Crawford and Michael Gorman have reinterpreted Ranganathan's laws in the context of the library of today and its likely futures¹⁰

- Libraries serve humanity
- Respect **all** forms by which knowledge is communicated
- Use technology intelligently to enhance service
- Protect free access to knowledge
- Honor the past and create the future

⁹ Ranganathan, SR *Five laws of library science*. Madras, Madras Library Association; London, G. Blunt and Sons, 1931.

¹⁰ Crawford, Walt and Michael Gorman *Future libraries: dreams, madness & reality*. Chicago and London, American Library Association, 1995

If you haven't read this book, I certainly urge you to do so. Although now six years since it was written (and we know how much the electronic world has changed in that time) it provides a sound intellectual and philosophical framework for considering the role of libraries in the future. One of the aspects that they emphasise is the role of the librarian in providing a human interface for those in search of ideas, information and knowledge. They tell of a video produced by the American Library Association¹¹ to show the services and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In the video a mentally impaired man is helped by caring library staff to find and enjoy books on his hobby of birds and bird watching. This aspect of the human interface whether it is face to face or through phone or computer technologies is one of the differences which could mark out libraries from other providers of information. In fact Crawford and Gorman are very emphatic that libraries will sell themselves short if they think they are primarily about information. Information on its own has no value. It is in the **use** of that information to create understanding and meaning that knowledge is gained. Libraries **are** interested in people **using** the resources we have. Public Libraries are interested in their citizens **using** them for all sorts of reasons: life long learning, education, creative recreation, social justice, democratic freedoms, improvement of the economy and business, support for literacy, cultural enrichment, etc. The outcome of this use is the betterment of the individual and the community in which we live – the social, cultural, economic and environmental well being of our cities, towns and country.

PASSION

By now you might be wondering what all this has to do with the title of my address



The Oxford English Dictionary has 11 different meanings for the word passion! The tenth meaning is given as “An eager outreaching of the mind towards something; an overmastering zeal or enthusiasm for a special object; a vehement predilection”¹².

I believe that librarians need this outreaching of the mind and this enthusiasm, if they are to secure the future for public libraries. We need to do this, however, thoroughly grounded in an understanding of the past and a knowledge of and commitment to the purpose and the principles which underpin the services we provide. Passion without commitment and understanding pretty soon dissipates into so much froth and bubble!

This is not the passion of those defending what they have always done, or the passion of those who believe in the inalienable right of the public library to exist because “it is a good thing”. Rather it is the passion of leadership which is energetic, puts others before self, overcomes huge odds, is prepared to go the extra mile. Passion is the partner to rationality and process – we need all three but perhaps the greatest of these is passion! By this I mean that if you look around you at who gets things done and who doesn't it is usually the person who feels committed or “passionate” about the task in hand that will achieve the outcome. The harder the

¹¹ *People first: serving and employing people with disabilities*. Chicago, ALA Video, 1990

¹² Oxford English Dictionary. *OED on line*. Oxford University Press, 2001

task, the more passionate commitment and hard work is needed, the more inspiration is required to keep us sticking to that task.

It is interesting to note that passion is suddenly becoming an OK concept in the management world! Emotional intelligence, also referred to as emotional quotient or EQ is the topic of many books and websites in the last 5 or 6 years. In a recent book Philip Channer and Tina Hope¹³ set out to explore the traditional and evolving models of leadership, what it takes to manage change, and how well leadership models recognise the importance of emotional competence. Their book consists of several very interesting interviews of successful leaders and attempts to draw some conclusions from this. Whilst all of these leaders had a strong rational bias, particularly under stress, they also had room for the emotional reaction of themselves and others, had strong congruence between behaviour, values and emotions – and were focused on “being human”. They were also passionately committed to the future of the organisation they lead which allowed them to do extraordinary things.

A colleague in New Zealand recently wrote, on the occasion of her departure as City Librarian:

“Librarians (especially library managers) are sometimes criticised for being too passionate about libraries. Apparently it clouds our judgement. My view is that libraries are worth being passionate about. Libraries help individual and communities to grow, they overcome barriers of inequity, they foster identity and learning. The problem is that libraries are so fundamental to a community that they run the risk of becoming invisible, and taken for granted. That’s why the passion is so important – the future development of this library depends on it, and on you.”¹⁴

PRACTICE

As I said earlier passion without commitment can dissipate into so much froth and bubble. Likewise, passion without practice can lack substance. **What** we are delivering and how well we are doing that, are the tangible results of why we are in the library business. So what is best practice now and what does this indicate for the future of libraries?

I have been fortunate over the last five years to have had a number of trips to the USA, UK, Canada and Europe as a member of the International Network of Public Libraries. This group, was set up by the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany “to pool international know-how, to strengthen the exchange of experience among public library experts, to develop concepts for modern library management and above all, to promote the transfer of such model solutions into practice. In all this, the Network is characterized by its great practical relevance: Future-oriented model solutions are developed by practitioners for practitioners”¹⁵

So what is happening internationally?

Buildings

¹³ Channer, Philip and Tina Hope *Emotional impact: passionate leaders and corporate transformation*. Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001 p.x

¹⁴ Dobbie, Allison *in The Word*. Dunedin Public Libraries, June 2001

¹⁵ Bertelsmann Foundation. International Network of Public Libraries at <http://www.stiftung.bertelsmann.de/devision.cfm?lan=en&nId=588>

Well, firstly, libraries continue to be built! In the USA 1200 libraries were built between 1994-2000. Los Angeles Public Library is currently planning another 34 branches, some new, some rebuilds. San Jose Public Libraries have just budgeted \$212 million to build libraries. Singapore is spending \$8 billion on technology, collections, staff and on new library buildings. In Christchurch over the past 8 years we have built new, rebuilt and extended 8 libraries, the architect for the 9th new branch was engaged last week and there are a further two brand new service point planned between now and 2007. (photos of New Brighton)

Library buildings are getting bigger and more complex. Helsinki City Libraries Director, Maija Berndtson, said recently that they were considering doubling the standard for new public libraries which was 50 square meters per 1000 population served. The New Zealand standard is currently around 50-55 square meters per 1000 population and we too have been considering whether this is adequate. The need for bigger buildings arises from a wider range of uses for libraries and also from a growing realisation that libraries are destinations in their own right. Cafés (as in this Starbucks in Marine Parade Library in Singapore), meeting rooms, auditoriums, technology centres (Singapore again), study spaces, auditoriums and lounge areas (newly refurbished Central City Library) are all part of modern new libraries.

Libraries are often the anchor point of whole block redevelopments. Vancouver Public Library and the new Salt Lake City Library due to be opened in 2002 are examples of this. Libraries are part of major urban redevelopment and renewal projects because of the foot traffic they generate.

However, there is competition for that foot traffic from other destinations so libraries need to look and feel good to be in. Décor, merchandising and quality and durable fittings are important. Presentation of spaces, room to meet and socialise, room for study and quiet have to be taken into consideration. Libraries are adopting the display techniques of museums, theme parks, retail outlets. Christine McKenzie from Brisbane City Libraries can tell you of their visual imaging and merchandising projects and we at Christchurch City – Auckland City too – are also looking at how better to present the collections and services we provide.

Whilst we are still on buildings – there is another interesting development occurring – the building of specialist public libraries, often focussed around particular user groups. In Singapore [Library@orchard](#) is a lifestyle library for 18 to 35 year olds. Housed in one of the classiest of high rise shopping malls it has a modern retail look with polished floors, glass and steel. Music plays, coffee is drunk and young people find leisure reading from appropriate paperback stock. Whilst Los Angeles has not built a separate youth library they have converted nearly 300 square meters of prime space in the Central Library to “Teenscape” and a new youth library, Tupu, has just been opened by Manukau City Libraries in an area with a high Maori and Polynesian youth population.

Is all this building flying in the face of the demise of libraries because of the internet? Seems not, if we believe Abigail Sleck who wrote recently;

“The computer actually has increased library usage. This is due in large part to the role libraries have assumed in providing public access to the internet...electronic activity in the library stimulates use of printed material.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Van Sleck, Abigail A. *in Architectural Record*, October 2000

Others clearly see the value of libraries in life long learning and in positioning their countries, states and cities for the Knowledge age: Singapore, Dubai, etc. Still others see the social and economic benefit of libraries to a community – such as Vancouver, Salt Lake City and even in our own case the New Brighton Library.

What is happening in other areas of library development - in services, technology and electronic initiatives? What follows is by no means an exhaustive list – just an eclectic list of things that I have found interesting in my travels both physical and virtual!

Services

Technology based services are growing all the time. Some of the most recent to impact on libraries include the use of radio frequencies in circulation and security systems. These have some advantages over magnetic technologies and are being used to good effect in Singapore to provide a total self help circulation approach.

Telephone technologies are being used by libraries both in providing call centre type services. Christchurch City Libraries recently centralised all its phone services and now answers greater than 80% of all calls, both information based and account based at the first point of call. Telephone dial in systems are now available so that customers can enquire on their account, renew items and the technology is probably not far away that will allow telephone access to reserve items as well. Telephone dial out to notify customers of their overdue items or reserves has been around for some time.

If you are interested in what is happening in internet based services a good summary of the options is contained in a paper by Rolf Hapel, Director of Aarhus Public Libraries in Denmark, and two colleagues.¹⁷ This is published on the Web and gives examples from libraries around the world covering such things as:

- Home page developments
- Virtual tours and maps
- Notification services
- E-zines, e-books,
- Electronic database resources
- Portals and gateways
- Individualised and customised services
- Answering services, virtual reference desks, expert site
- Advisory services and discussion groups
- Training and tutorials

Hapel and his colleagues firmly believe in the future of public libraries involvement in internet based services. They state that “by creating new services based on the possibilities of the Internet, public libraries will be able to pursue their basic values and ideas, now simply doing so by using the information and communication technologies of their time. If such activities are

¹⁷ Hapel, Rolf et al. *Future oriented internet-based services in public libraries – a survey with examples*. International Network of Public Libraries, Bertelsmann Foundation, 2001 [see](http://www.aakb.dk/publikationer/internetservices/index.htm) <http://www.aakb.dk/publikationer/internetservices/index.htm>

not undertaken by the larger public libraries and organizations connected to the sector, the outcome will probably be devastating, as public libraries risk losing their central and crucial role as players in the process of enlightenment for people in modern societies. In short, the development of the virtual library based on the Internet is probably the most important task for public libraries at the beginning of the 21st century¹⁸

PARTNERSHIP

It is all rather daunting in some ways. What should a public library manager or director tackle first? How can we possibly do all the things we would like to be doing and think we should be doing? Well, increasingly public libraries are finding that they need to collaborate or partner with others to achieve the desired outcomes. Libraries have always had a collaborative approach to working together. (As an aside, this has been somewhat knocked askew in the last fifteen years in New Zealand with a push towards a market driven economy but the current Labour/Alliance government is moving us away from that and this should have a positive impact on collaborative approaches). We are all familiar with interlibrary loan, cooperative book purchasing and cataloguing schemes and shared systems.

More recently larger libraries have worked with others to share portal and gateway developments. Christchurch City Libraries has a well developed suite of internet resources, grouped in subject categories which provide free access to thousands of sites on the internet. This service has been supplied, on a pilot basis, to two high schools in the Christchurch city area. In addition it has been sold on a modest subscription basis to cover direct costs to two public libraries in New Zealand. They are able to put their own front end to the resource and to all intents and purposes it appears to be their own site. This has allowed the intellectual effort to be done once and shared with other libraries who do not have resources to achieve the same effect on their own.

Other joint developments within libraries include shared or multi-use buildings. Australian librarians will be familiar with joint school/community libraries but there are also some international developments where public libraries are joining with University or other tertiary libraries to provide services from one facility. An example of this comes from Helsinki where they have a project in development called ARALIS (Arabianranta Library and Information Services) Centre. This is a joint venture with Helsinki City Libraries, the University of Art and Design Library, the Pop and Jazz Institute Library and Helsinki Polytechnic, the aim being to create a new kind of collaboration between public and research libraries.¹⁹

Another type of joint library development is the “follow the sun” type approach to telephone reference services. Libraries at two to three appropriately located places around the globe provide 24 hour coverage for phone in help. The one example I know which is currently operating comes from the University sector (the University of Sydney Library is involved in one) however, some public libraries are also investigating such a service. Australian and New Zealand libraries are well placed geographically to partner internationally in such schemes.

But what about partnerships outside of the library sector? One library which has made partnerships really work for it is the St Louis Public Library. Their approach has been to see every community agency, business or institution in a partnership framework. Sometimes the partnership results in funding, sometimes in time, sometimes in aid in kind. The partner

¹⁸ Ibid see http://www.aakb.dk/publikationer/internetservices/html/conclusions_and_perspectives.htm

¹⁹ Helsinki City Library. Annual report 2000. p.9

variously receives publicity, standing in the community, or awareness of its services to library users. Glen Holt maintains that “partnerships are successful when each partner gains more by working with another than working alone. The partners may gain unequally, but each must be able to measure, or to at least sense the gain. Whether formal or informal, all partnerships are relationships that need appropriate planning and sound operating principles if they are to avoid sour endings”²⁰

Increasingly in New Zealand, local government is looking to work collaboratively with central government for the provision of services. A recent example of partnership in practice is the new homework centres in two of Auckland City Libraries’ branches which are a joint venture with the Ministry of Education. New Zealand public libraries have been advocating strongly with Government the core role that public libraries can play in bridging the digital divide – or in supplying digital opportunities for those who need access to computers, the internet and training opportunities. There are good examples in the UK (the People’s network) and elsewhere of this partnership role for libraries.

And at Christchurch City Libraries we have gone into partnerships with our book and serials vendors – quite a different relationship from that of straight supply. I know Brisbane City Libraries has a very similar relationship. If you are interested in knowing more about this I would refer you to a paper *The power of partnership* by my colleague Anne Anderson which you can find on the library’s website at <http://library.christchurch.org.nz/Bibliofile/2000/LIANZA2000papers/AnneAnderson.pdf>

The blurring of boundaries between institutions, businesses and other organisations is occurring. Some see this as a threat but maybe we have to look at it through a different paradigm. We need to look for opportunities to work with those who might be interested in a part of our traditional business. Maybe we need to work more collaboratively with those who may see us as competitors – the book publishing industry for instance. One thing is for sure – we can no longer keep ourselves locked up within our own institutions – or we will find the world has passed us by.

Politics

The final plank in my model for marketing the future of public libraries is politics. Public Libraries are, by their very nature, public sector organisations subject to the democratic, political process. The majority of our funding still comes from the public purse and politicians want to be sure that they are funding things that are beneficial to the communities which elected them to govern. Public Library managers and directors, therefore, need to be able to clearly articulate the role that the library plays in the community and what the outcome is. This ties back to ensuring that we are clear about what our underlying purpose is. Too many politicians think a public library is a place that lends books and that this is its purpose. It is an easy step then to see declining circulation as an indication that libraries may have had their day. Circulation, of course, is just one of the ways that we have made access to information and ideas easy. New technologies will supply us with other ways.

There is no way any longer, if there ever was, that a library manager can avoid operating in the political arena. For some it may be at one remove – that is they need to advocate at the

²⁰ Holt, Glen *Public Library partnerships: mission-driven tools for 21st century success*. Gutersloh, Bertelsmann Foundation, 1999, p.5 see <http://www.stiftung.bertelsmann.de/documents/holt6en.pdf>.

Corporate level because they do not deal directly with the political interface. The same requirements still apply.

How do we do this successfully? I was fortunate to collaborate with June Garcia on a publication called *Public Library Administrators in the political arena*.²¹ We asked public library directors from Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Germany to provide us with their perspectives on what made for political effectiveness across seven areas. They were:

- Governmental structure
- Perception of the library held by elected and appointed officials
- Ethics
- Communication
- Planning
- Fiscal management
- Service programmes

The 39 perspectives make fascinating reading as our colleagues were remarkably frank about their successes or otherwise and the learning from that. In drawing our conclusions the report has this to say:

“In case after case, it was demonstrated, whatever the governmental structure, that you can’t change the perceptions of the library, for example, without effective communication. In order to communicate, you must establish relationships with the people within the structure, and you must display your integrity and honesty in the process. With the establishment of good relations, the whole mechanism of fiscal management and establishment or maintenance of service programs becomes much easier and more effective....But what runs through these accounts more than any other factors seems to be judgement: there is no substitute for the kind of judgement, tempered by experience and leavened by professional values and ethics, when it comes to dealing with decisions...”²²

I would add into that mix leadership, strategic thinking and positioning and sheer determination and hard work!

Rolf Hapel also puts the responsibility for decision making and influence at the door of Library managers:

“Key actors in this development [of internet based services] will be the leaders of public libraries. Managers and directors of public libraries have a tremendous responsibility in securing that necessary decisions are made within the organizational frames of the libraries and in explaining and expanding the tales and ideas of the digital libraries at the public and the political level”²³

CONCLUSIONS

I started this session with a question “Would it really matter if we didn’t have public libraries?” I trust by now you have your answer and that answer is yes! Libraries are a key part in the growth and development of new knowledge and understanding; they are places of social, cultural and intellectual diversity and cohesion; they are vital to the preservation of democracy and civilisation.

²¹ Garcia, June and Sue Sutherland. *Public Library Administrators in the political arena*. Gutersloh, Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, 1999 see http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/documents/Public_Library_Administrators_englisch.pdf

²² Ibid. p65-66

²³ Hapel, Rolf et al. Conclusions.

I will end the session with another question (well 2 or 3 actually!). In the future there will only be successful public libraries. Will yours be one of them? Will you lead your libraries with passion, knowing clearly the strategic purposes for your community in this time? Will you work with others to achieve best practice and deliver services that add such value that the politicians and the people see their library as an essential service? If the answer is yes, then you will secure the future of the public library.

Thank you.