
Envisioning the library of the future Phase 1: a review of innovations in library services

Research by Ipsos MORI and Shared Intelligence

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What does innovation in public libraries look like now?

The purpose of this innovation review was to identify genuinely new ways of working and genuinely new services being delivered to the public, which amounted to more than best practice, from the UK and overseas. Our hope was that presenting examples of innovation would frame the workshop open space discussions in the context of innovation and adaptation, highlight how future challenges are already being met, and stimulate debate about what public libraries of the future need to be and do differently.

The innovation review was initially conducted as a desk study. However, as we entered phase two of the research we encountered further examples from workshop participants and others who contributed through the online conversation, or via social media (one library service submitted several examples of innovation in their own service via a series of Tweets following one of the workshops). We also used online resources, networks and curated lists, such as This Week in Libraries, The Information Professional, the Next Libraries blog and its bookmark pages. Our examples are grouped under the following headings:

Innovation in the entire library service – major flagship library projects, wholesale moves from hard copy to digital information, or from general services to personalised services.

Innovation in individual parts of the service – incremental adaptation across the service, for instance promoting services through gamification, media and information literacy classes.

Innovation in funding and organisational models – new partnerships, diversifying income, and seeking donations.

Libraries adopting distinctive local definitions of purpose – such as libraries focusing on being the guardians of community stories and history
Innovation in the professional role – re-examining the core skills required of library staff.

Innovation in library systems – single catalogues over very large areas (regional and national) using cloud data and software.

Applying the concept of ‘public library’ in new, relevant ways – for instance library ‘outposts’ in public spaces, eg in transport hubs, airports and shopping centres.

Other futures exercises – similar projects and studies to this, being undertaken in other countries.



Canada Water Library, London. Photo: Michael Cameron Photography

Innovation in the entire library service

Learning from flagship future-proof libraries

In a small number of places significant investment has been made in flagship library projects, usually in city centres, and usually connected to a bigger construction and physical renewal project. In England the most recent examples include The City Library in Newcastle (new, opened in 2009), Canada Water Library (new, opened in 2012), The Library of Birmingham (new, opens in 2013), and Manchester Central Library (re-furbished, re-opens in 2014). Projects on this scale can only happen in particular circumstances, take years of planning, and cannot happen everywhere. However new approaches from these kinds of libraries can be hugely instructive, eg around the deployment of new technology, involvement and management of volunteers, giving users and visitors more control, and enabling communities to have lead roles in designing and specifying services.

One of the best known examples internationally is the Delft Concept Library known as 'DOK'. Almost every kind of innovation can be found in this one library. DOK aims specifically to be a future-proof library. It serves as the public library of a medium-sized town in the Netherlands. DOK charges a membership fee, with exceptions for those on low incomes or who cannot pay. An estimated 25 per cent of the population of Delft were members of the library in 2011. The library does not think about different types of media as different offers, but rather as a variety of ways to make the same offer – namely access to stories (and opportunities for users to share them with each other).

At DOK, the library is seen as a guide to information. The role of libraries in an environment where information is accessed everywhere – in particular through mobile devices – is also being re-imagined. Not simply a place to find information, the library is also a place where information is made accessible, attractive and enriching. Tank U is a download station from which users receive suggested new content to 'inspire or

surprise' them. Tank U is designed to work with mobile devices. DOK has been described as 'an entrepreneurial public library' where staff are active in generating and testing ideas for user services and engagement. These new ideas and a willingness to test them out quickly allows continual innovation in a library service. A further example of this is their work on using games and gaming in the library – DOK has introduced gaming to its services (meaning that users' experience is enriched through play and rewards etc). Some of these developments have emerged as a result of working closely with the Delft University of Technology on gaming.

Creativity, control and the sharing of skills

Free-to-use computers and free internet access are resources available in almost all libraries. These are vital for people who may not use online resources because they can't get access or lack the necessary skills to use the technology. Combined with ITC literacy support, public libraries can offer users a route for self-directed learning and discovery through digital and technological means. There are new technologies available that can directly enable self-reliance and learning through technology.

The Digital Bazaar® is a monthly event held in Lambeth Libraries where local people come along to get help and advice, or share their own knowledge about using technology. People come to learn about using their mobile phone, putting their digital photos online, borrowing e-books, using online reference material, selling items on eBay, and making video calls to family overseas. Often people bring with them the device they want to learn more about. The events are led by volunteer trainers, but everyone joins in to the best of their ability, sharing what they know and teaching others. The idea was shortlisted for the 2012 Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Libraries Change Lives awards, and other libraries are now looking at running their own Digital Bazaar.

Gateshead Central Library staff recently organised an e-day event attended by around 150 library visitors. The library staff teamed up with Makerspace, a local club for makers, creatives, programmers, scientists and engineers who operate out of a community workshop which is funded by donations and membership fees. Makerspace members brought along their own 3D printers and 'Raspberry Pis' for people to try out. They also brought along other Makerspace members to help library users learn about these new technologies through hands-on experience. Local technology firms like vector 76 also took part and ran demonstrations about 3D programming.

Going one step further are the growing number of 'maker spaces' or 'Fab Labs' being created in libraries. These encourage citizens to regain control of technology and design to create rather than consume information and ideas. When public libraries get involved in this movement it positions them as places not just to learn about the latest technology, but to make things which until recently could only have been made by professionals, academics, or specialist firms. This is not just about having fun, but also about inspiring new product designers, inventors, artists and entrepreneurs. The Fayetteville Free Library became one of the pioneers of make-it-yourself when it opened its own 'Fab [fabrication] Lab'. A Fab Lab is a collection of machines and equipment that enable people to make things – something which until now only universities or large companies could do. However, Fayetteville library's Fab Lab is designed to provide open access to new, affordable equipment and technology. The centrepiece of the Fayetteville Free Library Fab Lab is their MakerBot Thing-o-Matic 3D printer, which cost around £800 and was provided by a benefactor. The Westport Public Library in Connecticut has also joined the movement with its own Maker Space to meet the growing interest in 'maker and hacker' culture.

The Reading Glove applies this principle of creativity to reading and story-telling. A technological sibling of the 'Choose Your Own Adventure' story, the user interacts with a number of electronically tagged objects to create different stories and configurations of information which are then communicated to the user through a wearable RFID-enabled glove.

Community-led design of buildings and services

A new public library for Halifax, Canada, was built with community members taking an active role in and responsibility for its design. This consultation used different methods, including local campaigns, social media, focus groups and open meetings (which were attended by up to 250 members of the public), to ensure that a range of views were represented in the process.

Consultation on the public library started with a call for ideas by the architects and design teams, and from there the ideas evolved through further consultations until a design was agreed upon. This type of creative process drew on facilitation methods, such as world café discussions, which are more open than conventional consultations on public building plans and are more suited to encouraging exchanges of ideas and views. The architects therefore had a 'golden thread' of ideas which they could relate the development of their design to, and to which the community could hold them accountable.

The end product is a design that is said to reflect Halifax's local identity, and includes specific changes brought by members of the public – for example, parking for buggies, stairs instead of escalators and an area designed specifically for teenagers.

A local library service challenge

Awards and challenges help inspire new thinking and in addition to the national awards scheme run by CILIP, the London Borough of Lambeth has developed an online Library Challenge tool where users can design their own library service by making decisions on how much of their £200,000 budget they want to spend on staff, print and e-book collections, facilities and repairs. Users can decide whether or not to use volunteers in the library and what additional services they want to offer. The tool is based on real service budgets and ideas can be submitted to Lambeth Council to inform how library funding is spent in the future, and as such the tool is one way of encouraging residents to express their views on how local services are delivered, and even to co-design them.

Innovation in individual parts of the service

Digital lending, renting and reference

Reading books in digital formats is growing, and with it a different kind of publishing industry is developing. A recent Pew Foundation study found that in mid-December 2011, 17 per cent of American adults reported they had read an e-book in the previous year, and by February 2012 this had increased to 21 per cent. This study also found that people who use an e-reader tend to have a more voracious appetite for reading than those who read only print books – reading 24 books per year compared to 15 for print-only readers. E-reading is also opening up a new and lucrative market for self e-publishers. A number of ‘e-book millionaires’ such as Amanda Hocking (who has made sales of \$2.5 million through her e-published novels) show that e-publishing is a route to market for new writers, or types of writing, that publishing houses have turned down or avoided.

The growing popularity of e-books represents a major change to the environment in which public libraries operate, and there are examples of innovative responses by libraries. In the UK, many libraries now offer e-book lending. Many do this through bought-in e-book catalogues (such as Public Library Online) which borrowers access separately from the main catalogue, but increasingly e-book collections are integrated into the main library catalogue for ease of use. Most libraries have relatively small collections (often fewer than 3,000 titles), but these are growing. E-books can be downloaded onto the majority of digital devices, but not, notably, Amazon’s Kindle which is reckoned to be the biggest selling e-book reader in the UK.

- rather than simply responding to user-demand, New York Public Library is cited as a leading light in developing e-book readership. Their current offering is an OverDrive-enabled service with 22,000 titles (still a small fraction of the library’s total items) in multiple languages

and useable on all major devices including Amazon’s Kindle. This is being promoted and supported through a new reader development service – eBook Central – similar in style to the Genius Bar at an Apple Store. Trained reference librarians provide in-person assistance with e-readers on how to download the library’s digital material and this support is enhanced by information online explaining how to find and access free educational apps, including the library’s catalogue app

- Bilbary book rental began as an online book rental concept akin to the LoveFilm model of online, instant film rental, and in this sense is totally different to any other e-book service. It was announced by British entrepreneur and library commentator Tim Coates in late 2011 and the service was planned for a US launch in 2012. However, Bilbary now says it will be a conventional online retailer of e-books to begin with, with moves to offer rental of academic textbook titles in the future
- academic and national libraries are using digital formats to both preserve their specialist collections and make them more accessible. For example, the British Library is undertaking a number of digitisation projects, including creating digital archives of material from Greek manuscripts to 20th century ICA event recordings and newspapers. The Foundations project at Cambridge University Library is digitising similar collections, including important early works in the field of religion and science. These projects are commonly funded by charitable trusts or philanthropists
- the Digital Public Library of America is a project to create a free, digital library service as a non-commercial alternative to services such as Google Books. It grew out of concern that such services may not remain free forever. The Digital Public Library of America will focus on material from the United States and will begin

with written material but may expand in the future to incorporate other media. It will begin by bringing together digitised material in the public domain and in the specialised collections of research libraries and the Library of Congress. The next stage will be a new digitisation drive, aiming to scan all further printed material from public libraries published since the 1920s

Bibliotherapy: the reading cure

A number of libraries now host specific services that promote books and reading for improved wellbeing. This is not just about reading self-help books (where the term bibliotherapy originated), but reading fiction and poetry of all kinds for pleasure. Reading silently or aloud are both encouraged as ways of improving wellbeing and so reading groups as well as 'mood-boosting' collections are being offered by libraries, often in collaboration with The Reading Agency and The Reader who champion this agenda in the UK.

In Leicester, the Hill of Happiness social group is a reading group (run jointly by a library professional and a therapist) that reads short stories, passages and poetry aloud together. This material is used as a prompt for conversation and an opportunity to discuss and share views. The programme has been designed specifically for 'mood-boosting' and has its own metric of measurement and feedback, the 'happiness hill', which participants use as a way of describing how they feel as they participate in sessions and across the programme more widely. In Southend-on-Sea, the library service in partnership with the Reading Agency and mental health charity Rethink is promoting mood-boosting books and the role of reading in reducing stress.

Sharing books locally

The Sutton Bookshare project was developed as a local response to other projects that seek to share books and information about books in an informal way and using data from LibraryThing and Open Library. Sutton Bookshare is a website where users can upload a record of books they have to share. This is then searchable by other users who can find out whether a book is available to be borrowed, and if so enquire with its owner about borrowing it. This project works on a local level and solely provides a platform for people to find books and ask whether they are available. It carefully leaves space for social interaction, for example by letting

borrowers/lenders agree their own due dates, as well as fostering more discussion and more sharing of books and reading.

Bookcrossing is a playful approach to the principle of sharing books. Instead of individuals cataloguing and keeping mini 'collections' in their home, bookcrossed books are 'released' into public spaces, for example left in cafes, doctor's surgeries, on park benches and buses, where they can be 'caught' by the new readers who encounter them. Before being released, the book owner marks the title with a bookplate. This allows the book to be tracked on its journey as book catchers are directed to report when they've found a book and what they did with it.

Linking school and public libraries

In Stockton-on-Tees, local schools and public libraries are testing a new collaboration. As a prototyping project, the public library service will connect Egglecliffe school library to Stockton's public library systems – including its catalogue of 300,000 lending items, book purchasing, membership system, and e-book lending. All staff and students will then be signed up as library members, creating a blanket 100 per cent membership at the school. While connecting up and blanket membership is useful in its own right, this collaboration also provides a chance to create and test much bigger ideas about enhancing the role of school libraries in supporting pupils' attainment and life chances in school and beyond. Although started independently, the Stockton project is an example of the outcomes that CILIP's Shout About campaign aims to achieve.

Bringing libraries to the doorstep

Doorstep libraries are a different kind of mobile library. They seek out and target families who may benefit from reading and makes using the library as easy as possible. Doorstep libraries are a mobile library service provided by librarians or volunteers who go door-to-door in specifically chosen neighbourhoods (usually where household incomes are relatively low) with a box or bag of children's books. They encourage families to read a story on the spot, and/or borrow a book until the following week, when the library will return to their doorstep. This becomes a regular and predictable service as doorstep librarians follow a particular route on a regular timetable. In this way, there is an opportunity for people to become regular library

users in circumstances which might normally have prevented them from doing so, or where they might simply not have thought of using a library.

- Fulham doorstep library was set up and run by the congregation of All Saints Church Fulham in 2007 with support from the human rights and aid charity ATD Fourth World. All Saints Fulham provided the first set of books and the volunteers now get occasional help from the librarians at South Fulham Children's Centre
- Sheerness doorstep library was inspired by the Fulham project and is run by SureStart and a group of volunteers

Local economic interventions

The Library Lab is a 'pop-up' economic development project based in Willesden Green Library in Brent. It is a partnership between New Windows on Willesden Green (an economic project funded by the Mayor for London) and Architecture 00:/. The space is part of a 'meanwhile use' project on Willesden Green High Street which has opened up an empty retail space to a number of community groups, events and retailers.

Library Lab is aimed at accelerating entrepreneurship in the local community by providing practical, human-centred help and support. The small team of librarians and hosts work with other local non-profit organisations to run free events and workshops (such as managing small business cashflow, maths for all ages, networking for local artists, book binding and self-defence). It also provides a pop-up workspace for freelancers where they hold meetings, and there are market stalls for local traders.

The Library Lab also runs a free weekday crèche so parents can use the library to work, study or make an important phone call.

Westfield shopping centre in West London includes a newly-built public library which makes the most of its setting by having a Workzone – a job service run jointly by Job Centre Plus, the library service and local colleges. Set within the library, the Workzone area serves as a recruitment service for Westfield retailers and includes meeting room spaces that employers can use to work with prospective employees. The service also provides training and job-seeking support more widely to the community

of Shepherds Bush and is used by a range of employers, not just those in the shopping centre.

In partnership with the British Library, the University of Sheffield and Sheffield City Library, the Social Enterprise Resource was a project run to identify the best ways to organise and present information on social enterprise, an increasingly common form of business organisation.

Through an internship given to a Sheffield MA librarianship student, the project aimed to create resources that highlight material held by libraries to support social enterprise. It also created a framework to catalogue and capture future material on this subject. Guides were produced for both University of Sheffield and the British Library, aimed at students, researchers, practitioners and businesses/start-ups. This project has led into a larger piece of research on a digital library concept which used social enterprise materials as a case study.

The Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) Public Library Innovation Programme is an international awards programme which gives small grants to public libraries in developing or transition countries to encourage use of ICT and other technologies. Two grants have been awarded to fund small scale interventions that support a specific local industry and provide either skills or opportunities for growth.

EIFL is an organisation which developed out of the George Soros' Open Society Institute and its mission is advocating for better libraries and access to knowledge. One of the projects it has funded is based at the Saula Public Library in Nepal, where an intensive traditional arts and graphic design training programme has been set up.

This training is available to local craftspeople and artists who wish to learn how to use digital software and technology to enhance their work, help them develop their ideas, and build their businesses online.

A second service funded was AgroLib – a web service developed by a network of four rural libraries in the Jagodina region of Serbia. The service is an online marketplace where local farmers and producers can advertise their products to new audiences. The site was set up and piloted through an EIFL grant and has since received local funding to continue running. Before the project began the

majority of potential users in the farming industry did not have experience of using ICT, and they were mistrustful of using services online. Therefore a crucial part of this project was for library staff to encourage individuals in the local agricultural sector to use the service and to give them the skills needed to access AgroLib.

Supporting local businesses and start-ups

British Library Business and IP centre (BIPC) is a well-established, dedicated area of the British Library designed to provide support and information to established businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs. It does so through reference material and online content – such as PATLIB, market research reports and databases such as Experian. However, foremost in the library's offer is personalised and face-to-face support to discuss and develop business through events and clinics. These are a mixture of free and chargeable events including: researching your business; a beginner's guide to intellectual property and business finance; and pitching green investments.

Very personalised support is also available, for example one-to-one clinics with an expert where people can talk through an idea and centre 'partners' serve as a live link between the library and the business community. Access to the centre is free and available to anyone through the British Library's reader pass arrangements. A 2009 BIPC study of its beneficiaries showed that the creative industries were the biggest single sector served by centre.

Through a partnership between Newcastle Libraries, Northumbria University, Newcastle University and the British Library, BIPC services are available at Newcastle City Library – the only other venue outside of London's BIPC. Here, users have access to specialist advice through a series of financial advisors, innovators, patent attorneys and various other experts who hold regular residencies in the library. Alongside business support, a number of facilities such as computers and interview rooms are specifically available for business use.

Using libraries to provide health information

UK cancer charity Macmillan is using public libraries to support its aim of reaching more people with information and emotional support. Information and support centres have traditionally been integrated into hospital wards, however Macmillan wanted to find locations that could help it extend its support and information service by providing more preventative advice to non-patients, reaching Black and minority ethnic communities and supporting people who may not have cause to visit hospitals. The charity has worked with a small number of library services to develop a cancer information service. Manchester Libraries is one of the biggest Macmillan Library services. It operates across a number of libraries where there is a permanent collection of Macmillan information and a face-to-face service available on certain days each week for appointments. Close working and genuinely shared priorities between Macmillan and the library service enable a smooth customer service and effective integration of Macmillan information and library stock. The model has since extended to a number of libraries across the UK.

An accessible legal advice service

A free, interactive, online legal advice service has recently been introduced into Westminster reference library in London, and is the first of its kind in the UK. The service is provided by Instant Law UK and offers users a video conference facility at the library to speak to an advisor face-to-face. The service was developed because more traditional legal settings can be off-putting for many people. Libraries were therefore seen as an accessible, convenient and customer-friendly way of providing legal services to those who may not access them in other settings. The concept is now being rolled out in other UK libraries, such as in Birmingham.

Turning reading and library use into a 'game'

Lemontree at the University of Huddersfield is using the appeal of gaming to incentivise library use. 'Gamification' of library activities has been going on for some time – the most obvious examples being the Six Book Challenge or Bookstart stickers, which provide a great deal of enjoyment for young readers, especially when they finally manage to fill a whole card. Exploiting game dynamics is still a developing area of library services – points- or sticker-based reward schemes are only one aspect of a much wider concept.

The Lemontree game at Huddersfield university library is more advanced, and is based on a social media model to encourage library use, as well as online interaction between students and staff. Students link their library card to Lemontree to become players and their library activity – for example returning books, or logging in to an e-resource – is then automatically logged and earns Lemontree points.

The Lemontree website shows players their progress towards rewards and incentives, and includes a departmental leader board. The site also links into social media such as Facebook and allows users to interact, for example through recommending material to each other.

Lemontree has been developed as part of the university's IT and library service, and is currently being trialled and evaluated.

Collaborative and social cataloguing

LibraryThing is a portal where anyone can contribute to a growing catalogue of books and reading. Underpinning the appeal of LibraryThing is the opportunity it gives to users to share their enthusiasm for books and interacting with other readers. Users of the site can create their own book catalogue, on any theme, including ratings and comments which can then be searched and used by other LibraryThing users to read about the experiences of people who share their taste in books. The software uses library-quality bibliographic data as a structure and so it is similar to sharing and rating your music collection online through iTunes. It also contains data on reading groups, libraries and shops in your local area.

A Wikipedian-in-residence

The British Library in London recently announced it is to hire an individual to monitor and update its Wikipedia page, which is generally perceived to be one of the most direct means of marketing and informing potential visitors of the library's services and exhibitions. The purpose of the role will be to increase the public's awareness of collections held by the library, whilst organising events and training sessions on how to use Wikipedia.



Library Lab at Willesden Green Library, London. Photo: Lynton Pepper at We Own Cameras

Innovation in funding and organisational models

Sharing services and contracting-out to independent trusts or commercial operators

Libraries are responding to a need to reduce costs by changing the shape of their organisational or funding model. This type of change is also driven by an increased appetite for localism and community ownership, and a merging of the geographical boundaries between individual services and entire local authorities.

- arms-length (or completely external) trusts are running library services in some areas. Several library services, for example in Wigan, Dundee and Luton, are currently run by leisure trusts. Some local authorities are attempting to set up library and museum trusts (for example, Islington, Suffolk, Chester and Cheshire West, Cambridgeshire) which could take on library services. Other authorities have orchestrated the establishment of community controlled trusts and social enterprises to take over specific library branches. For example, Buckinghamshire has created community libraries run by registered charities and staffed by volunteers, but supported by the central library's IT service for integrated borrowing and lending
- Anythink Libraries is an independent library service funded by a community levy. Located in Adams County in Denver, Colorado, the Rangeview Library District became independent from the county in 2005. The district was able to run its own service because the Adams County community voted in a local ballot to approve a 'mill levy' (a form of local property tax) to help fund the library. The service is now independent, with its own policies and classification system, and governed by a board of five trustees appointed by Adams County
- charitable fundraising trusts provide a route for libraries to fundraise. In Manchester, the city council plans to establish a fundraising trust to support its central library. The city is doing this in response to the growing role of charitable organisations in generating revenue for publicly-funded services. A charitable trust will be able to fundraise with more freedom than the local authority can, including being able to apply for grants from other trusts and seeking donations and legacies from private donors
- merging or sharing library services between neighbouring local authority areas can bring scale efficiencies and benefits for users – such as the shared services in the London boroughs of Bromley and Bexley, the central London 'tri-borough' (Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster) and between Colchester and Ipswich museums. Similarly, joint procurement of specific elements of the service (book purchasing and library management software) or of full-service outsourcing (Croydon and Wandsworth) can generate savings from 'buying in bulk'
- high-performing library services are taking over the management of smaller services, and not necessarily in neighbouring areas. For example, the small library service in Slough's unitary council is contracted to Essex County Council library service – a large service with a reputation for excellence. Essex County Council have set up a trading company, Library Services (Slough) Ltd, which now runs Slough's libraries and reports to an expert client within Slough Council. Essex County Council have been able to transfer knowledge and working methods – for example their own approaches to staff recruitment and training, and a volunteering toolkit
- Hounslow's public library service is currently the only example of a UK library service contracted out to a commercial operator although there are other similar examples internationally

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- online sponsorship and crowd-sourced fundraising is another way that libraries can obtain funding from their users and supporters. Northamptonshire Libraries have launched an online appeal, Fund the Future, which encourages the public to donate between £3 and £450 to fund the cost of specific services. For example, £15 will buy three new books, £45 will sponsor a homework club session, and £125 will pay a year's travel costs for a volunteer to deliver the library's home services. Donations can be made instantly via a PayPal button on the council's website. The organisers of the UK's annual Library Camp conference have also used the Crowdfunder website to raise funds to meet the costs of their conference, meaning that it remains free to attend

An integrated public library and primary school

The Deptford Lounge incorporates a mid-sized public library in a building shared with the local primary school, a one-stop shop for council services, a coffee bar and flexible spaces available for use. It is a state-of-the-art library within a mixed-use community facility in the London borough of Lewisham which opened in January 2012.

During the design and development of the Deptford Lounge, the choices made about its physical architecture, internal layout and management strategy were based on creating an open and accessible library service, which is integrated with other public services to create a new 'heart' in Deptford. For example, it offers extended opening hours: 7am–10pm on weekdays and 7am–7pm at weekends (outside of typical school or office hours, but also catering for different work and activity patterns). Due to the number of services co-located within the Deptford Lounge, it becomes a place where 'you can borrow a book, use a computer, play ball games, learn a new skill, meet like-minded people, organise community activities or simply enjoy a coffee and a cake'.

In particular, the Deptford Lounge is an example of arts and library services becoming more integrated and working across venues and localities. The Albany, a performing arts centre in Deptford, manages the events programme at the Deptford Lounge as well as the cultural space at Canada Water library in the neighbouring borough of Southwark. This partnership puts arts and an arts

organisation at the centre of two public spaces. It increases the number of opportunities for local people to engage with arts and also integrates arts into library services which previously would otherwise have remained separate entities.

The relationship with the school is another area of innovation for the Deptford Lounge. The physical architecture has allowed a primary school to be co-located with the necessary privacy and security within a complex of buildings overtly designed to be open and public. Physical design and management allows a balance between privacy for the school and integration and easy access for school children to the library and its services. The lounge is also seen as central to the wider regeneration of this low-income area of south London. Combining the library with other community facilities is expected to encourage greater take-up of the services offered.

Harnessing voluntary contributions

The Mayor of London's Love Libraries initiative galvanises the volunteer offer of a number of libraries, and aims to make volunteering in libraries a more appealing offer. This campaign is running across London and will provide £100,000 of financial support to libraries in the capital to build upon their volunteer base and encourage the recruitment of 'library champions' who can assist with developing the services of their local libraries. The long term aim is to increase the number of people borrowing books and using libraries, as well as improving the basic skills of people across London. Manchester Central Library will fundraise in a similar way when it re-opens in 2014.

Integrated public and academic libraries

The Hive in Worcester houses both the university and public libraries with collections open to all. The Hive is the product of a partnership between Worcestershire County Council and the University of Worcester. The building is also home to the Worcestershire Hub, a public service contact centre. The internal space is designed to meet the needs of general public readers, as well as students doing group work and individual study. The Hive markets itself as a place for friends and family to meet, enjoy a coffee and cake, and check out the library's exhibitions and events.

A different model of integration is on display in Manchester where the city council's public

library service has entered into a deal to run the Manchester College student library. Students gain from having their library run by the city's large state-of-the-art service, and the general public gain from being exposed to information and signposting about college courses.

Integrated library and GP surgery

A GP surgery in Ketton, Rutland, has been moved into an existing library building to create the Ketton Community Hub. The co-location of the two services has helped address the needs of both. The facilities at the original GP surgery could not be upgraded and so the surgery faced closure, whilst the library service (which had capacity within its building) was looking for ways to increase footfall at the branch. By co-locating the two services, the surgery was able to stay open in suitable accommodation, and the library now has an opportunity to attract more visitors.

Similar deals have been done with GP practices elsewhere, such as Eccles Gateway in Salford, where the refurbished Carnegie Library building also now contains two GP practices and a range of NHS outpatient services. In Weston-Super-Mare the deal is slightly different: the library service (run by North Somerset) negotiated space in the For All Healthy Living Centre which is managed by a community-run social enterprise.



Dalston CLR James Library, London. Photo: Michael Cameron Photography

Libraries adopting distinctive local definitions of purpose

An explicitly social mission

Above anything else, the mission of the Chicago Public Library (CPL) is to provide equality of opportunity for everybody in the city to 'Read, Learn, Discover'. This is reflected in the One Book, One Chicago programme which is a continuous, city-wide reading initiative that encourages all people to read a particular book and then participate in a season of organised book-club style events, or to informally discuss it with friends. The library acts on its social mission in a number of other ways, including its 'job-readiness' programme to help tackle the city's high level of unemployment, CyberNavigators which is set up to bridge the digital divide, and the YOUmedia programme which supports 'the way teens pursue their own interests to en-gage, create and learn with digital media' using mentors and online resources.

Much of the work of the Chicago Public Library is backed by the CPL Foundation which the library and the city created in 1986. The foundation attracts major donors and hosts fundraising events. The library is also heavily influenced by the philosophy of asset-based community development which focuses on community engagement at neighbourhood level. The Chicago Public Library has conducted research into the community role of libraries with the Asset Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University in Chicago.

An expert role for young people

Idaho's Digital Literacy Coaches use a 'champions' model to provide a better service and empower local young people. This project offers local youths an opportunity to connect with their public library as an on-call 'digital literacy' expert who is available to coach community members in using technology and online services, such as using Twitter and Facebook, and setting up an email account or using a search engine. This offers people an opportunity

to learn IT skills as well as giving young people a positive role and work experience.

Gearing everything around increasing visits

Tower Hamlets' Idea Stores are now well-known as a model of attractive, modern library facilities that deliver a range of service. They follow a number of key principles which are instructive, and are continuing to innovate. The philosophy of the Idea Store is to draw in as many users as possible, and use this to provide a gateway to other council services. To do so they provide high-quality spaces with a full program of activities – almost entirely free – to attract users, and mix a variety of library, learning and support services in the same spaces. They have long opening hours (71 hours a week, 357 days a year). Their staff are highly professionalised and trained to offer advice on the full range of services, not just one division. They have also sought to actively promote the library service, engaging Tim Coates (former managing director of Waterstone's) to raise the profile of reading and books. From 2008-12 book issues have increased by 28 per cent, without the opening of any new facilities.

An intra-lingual 'library'

Showcased at the 2011, Axiell Symposium, the Intra-lingual Library is an EU European Social Fund project aimed at enabling libraries to be socially active in supporting local people who speak different languages. The project promotes the ideas that libraries, according to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) manifesto, have a role to provide access to a broad range of materials which reflect all communities, as all individuals have a right to demand library and information services in non-native languages and scripts. Libraries have a particular role supporting the information literacy of immigrants or people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, particularly those speaking

non-native languages or dialects, who are the most likely to need help with information and digital literacy.

Finally, libraries attract people from a range of backgrounds and cultures, and are therefore an ideal arena for multiculturalism. This positions them as a place to develop and structure interculturalism. The intralingual library concept turns the idea of multicultural and multilingual societies from an issue to be addressed into 'possibility and richness', while recognising that providing material in multiple languages has clear cost implications for a library service.

Libraries working for digital inclusion

The Birmingham and Devon digital inclusion projects came about through a partnership with the national Race Online programme to help house-bound older people who can't physically access their libraries to get online. Service users in the two areas received a refurbished laptop or PC and regular training to get set up and develop IT skills over a six-month period.

In the United States, Connecting America, the national broadband plan, recognises the key role that libraries have in promoting digital inclusion and supporting access to essential online services such as e-Government. As well as providing additional funding to connect libraries to high speed broadband, it calls for the creation of a major national digital literacy programme – spending \$200 million on a nation-wide digital literacy corps to teach IT skills, and building an online digital literacy portal.

Libraries, the arts and community histories

Peterborough libraries and archives is exploring the history of the new town community in which it is based. Forty Years On is a three-year programme of theatre, oral history and archive work running between 2011–14. This project is being delivered by an arts organisation, Eastern Angles Theatre Company, and Vivacity, a trust that manages Peterborough's Archives Service. It is bringing a creative approach to Peterborough's recent history, from 1968 to 2008, looking in particular at the city's transition into a new town in the 1970s and 1980s.

Volunteers will catalogue and conserve the archive of the Peterborough Development Corporation and oral histories about their city from long term residents, long-established immigrant groups and more recent arrivals from Eastern Europe. Over £200,000 from the Big Lottery and the Arts Council is funding the development of a piece of theatre which will take the form of a documentary drawing together the many stories of local residents.

This year's CILIP award winners, the Skipton Rewind Club in Yorkshire, helps teenagers write music in the setting of their local library. It began as a 10-week course, designed to keep teenagers engaged with their library, but has broken out of being a short term project and is now a group of young local musicians who meet every week in Skipton Library to write and develop their songs. They are passionate about their project as a way to bring their community together around the library, and about libraries becoming more than just 'a house for books'. They have also just won sponsorship from O2 Think Big which supports young musicians.

In Iowa, the city's public library is developing a new role, providing access to music in response to falling demand for its music CD collection. It wanted to move away from simply making mainstream music available to library members, to a more engaged role which makes a difference to the local community. What the library has done through its Local Music Project is re-focus music lending on promoting local Iowa city musicians and bands. The library has forged links with local bands, pays them a fee for including their work on the catalogue, and library members get to download as much as they want (DRM free, ie files can be passed on to others, copied and so on). The Iowa City Library believes this helps local musicians raise their profile and grow their audience. For library members it provides a different kind of music choice to mainstream music which – judging by falling CD lending – they are now accessing elsewhere.

A specific literacy policy

The Greater Manchester borough of Rochdale has recognised the role that literacy plays in improving the life chances of its young people, and more widely as a 'basic entitlement of residents'. Their Literacy Changes Lives policy provides a focus for partners and partnership working which targets people at risk of social exclusion because of their low literacy skills. Standards of literacy

in Rochdale are lower than the national average and the borough has high levels of child poverty and inequality. Literacy Champions is one of the initiatives developed under the policy.

The Literacy Champions project recognises the barriers that exist to some groups in using mainstream literacy and learning services, and it deploys community champions to address this. Champions are 'learning mentors' recruited to give one-to-one support to individuals who struggle with reading, writing, speaking or listening. The 'community champion' idea has been developed and used elsewhere in a number of contexts – for example promoting health improvement or life coaching – as an effective way of reaching those people least likely to engage with mainstream services.

The recently launched Islington Reads campaign is a similar approach. Islington council and its library service hope to increase literacy by working with schools, investing in marketing and promotion, seeking new places and venues where books and reading can be promoted, and by recruiting more local people as reading volunteers.

Business advice across a city region

A total of 14 boroughs across the north west of England jointly offer Ask about Business, a service which provides business-related information and support to entrepreneurs and existing businesses, jobseekers, inventors, business students and consumers. The service is led by Manchester Library and information services and their central and city libraries are the venues for workshops, events and networking opportunities – such as the monthly SME lunch club – and reference material. However, local libraries across the partnership area can provide material and answer general enquiries. An email enquiry service is also offered for specific questions which cannot be answered in local branches.

Innovation in the professional role

Teaching the skills for future public librarians

The Library School in Amsterdam offers the first advanced level study programme looking specifically at public libraries. The Library School is a collaborative project between a number of public libraries and is supported by corporate sponsorship. It is steered by the Netherlands Open University and based in the Amsterdam Public Library.

The change in how people consume information has prompted changes in library services, leading to a need for different skills in the library workforce. Therefore the Library School sets out to be different to existing information management courses. Instead of teaching the traditional principles of managing a collection and making it accessible, it aims to explore and encourage innovation in public library processes.

The first intake in 2012 was a mixture of new and existing library professionals. All students spend their first year on the following core themes, taught through distance learning and bi-monthly discussion sessions:

- the library and culture, which examines the role of the public library as a cultural institution in an era of changing cultural values
- the library and technology, which looks at opportunities to add value to learning, knowledge and libraries through new technologies
- the library and society, which explores the past, present and future role of the library in a participatory society
- the library and organisation, which focuses on management and operational aspects of dynamic library environments

In the view of the founder, Rob Bruijnzeels, the challenge is to move innovations out of the school and into public libraries where they can be implemented. Developing students as 'agents of change' is an important part of the programme and to this end it aims to instil the ways of working – collaboration, reflection, innovation – that allow students to continue putting innovation into practice as libraries continue to evolve.

Along similar lines, the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, in New York State, runs a course in Innovation in Public Libraries. The class was designed and is taught by a professional librarian and an artist. It encourages students to test-drive real experiments as they study. The course principles are based around applied thinking from contemporary art practice. The Fayetteville Fab Lab was one project to emerge from the class.

Librarians seeking to 'reach the parts other libraries have yet to reach'

The Itinerant Poetry Librarian (aka Sara Wingate Gray) is based in the UK and has been travelling the world for the past six years. The goal of her itinerant poetry library is to bring poetry to people and remind people of the importance of free public libraries and that access to knowledge should be free. It is also about re-defining what it is to be a librarian and challenging perceptions about what a library is and does. The core of the collection itself is 'lost and forgotten' poetry, which is installed along with the librarian herself in the places and spaces of the cities, peoples and countries she visits. The Itinerant Poetry Library is part art, part library, part living experiment.

Innovation in library systems

Integrated facility membership

The Active Card is a single library and leisure activity card for residents and employees in south Gloucestershire. The scheme has been developed in a partnership between the local authority and health service teams to cover leisure facilities such as gyms and swimming pools, as well as giving users library membership and internet access in south Gloucestershire and other Libraries West services. The card makes it simpler to use all of these services, whilst also encouraging uptake by cross-selling leisure and library services.

The campaign message for the Active Card is 'an active mind in an active body' and rather than promoting one or other service, is about encouraging residents to lead a balanced lifestyle of 'reading, learning, playing and health'. The partnership between public bodies in south Gloucestershire has enabled this new system to be implemented. In particular, a shared database developed for the Active Card drawing on health and local authority data resources has enabled communication with users to be personalised and efficient.

A similar system is run by the London Libraries Consortium, a multi-borough membership scheme which allows members to search a combined catalogue of 15 member boroughs' public library catalogues, and check out and return books from and to the library of their choice. Users manage all of their loans through the consortium's website.

Building universal access to knowledge

Open Library, an initiative of Brewster Kahle, is creating a catalogue of single webpage book records for every book ever published. It aims to do this by encouraging people to create records containing bibliographic information, reviews and links to where the book can be purchased or borrowed, and where possible digital copies or scans exist. The goal is 'universal access to all knowledge' achieved through getting all knowledge digitised and available freely on the internet where it can be printed out on demand.

QR codes: linking the physical library to digital information

QR (quick response) codes are two-dimensional barcodes which can hold many times more information than a conventional barcode. Originally created for the shipping industry, they are now becoming more widely used thanks to the popularity of smartphones. QR codes can be incorporated into printed material or placed on surfaces and read by smartphones using their built-in cameras and a free app. They provide users with digital information or contain links which quickly and easily direct them to online content. QR codes are commonly used for marketing and promotional purposes. However, they have a wide variety of uses within libraries, where they are offering new ways to provide services, and to incorporate digital information into the experience of physical browsing. For example, when placed on shelves, QR codes can link to further information on related topics, help users locate books, or link to related e-books, digital collections or special items. Placed on books themselves, they can link to book reviews or background information. They can be printed on desks, study rooms and facilities to provide instructions and information, or link to booking systems. Since they are simple to generate, QR codes can be relatively cheap and easy for libraries to deploy.

A number of libraries are experimenting with QR codes. For example, the Southwest Iowa Library Service uses QR codes on shelves to direct users to similar authors. The ACU university library in Texas uses QR codes on the shelves to link to multimedia web content and the library catalogue. The library at the Polytechnic University of Catalunya (BRGF) uses QR codes in a variety of ways, including bookings for study and computer rooms, and to provide additional information from promotional material. Lafayette College Library used QR codes to run an interactive mystery game called Where in the Library is Carmen Sandiego. QR codes can also be deployed externally: Contra Costa County Library placed QR codes on public transport to promote its downloadable audiobook service.



The Hive Library, Worcester. Photo: Michael Cameron Photography

Applying the concept of ‘public library’ in new, relevant ways

A ‘living library’ experience

Calgary Public Library offers a Living Library collection, where users can hire out a ‘living book’: an individual with whom they can have a conversation to increase their knowledge and understanding of a specific topic. A similar Human Library has also been set-up in Malmö, Sweden. The collection in each library includes ‘books’ (meaning people) with skills, experiences or knowledge they are willing to share. The living library is both an opportunity for library users to access a different medium of information and have a more personalised learning experience, and to promote interaction between people with different backgrounds and life experiences, with the aim of increasing understanding between social, ethnic and cultural groups.

The programme is inevitably dependent on volunteers willing to put themselves forward as a ‘living book’. The concept is spreading internationally and is continuing to grow as an innovative concept for engaging with library visitors and for one-off events around specific, and indeed very personal, themes.

Revitalising public spaces

Residents of Berkhamsted, England, can access a small collection of books for free in a Little Free Library set up by a local author. Little Free Libraries are DIY libraries which originated in the USA but are now growing in numbers across Europe and Africa. These small book boxes are bought or hand built by members of the public and erected in their neighbourhood. The libraries have nominated stewards who take a light-touch role in maintaining and changing the collection. Other than this, passers by are free to borrow, return and donate books as they please.

A variation on the little library can be seen in New York City, where a local architect has created phone box libraries which reclaim obsolete public phone booths – made redundant by the rise of the mobile phone – as mini, streetside libraries offering books to passers-by as well as creating a new purpose for this piece of street furniture.

An airport library

In 2010 Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam became the world’s first airport to accommodate a permanent library, with visitors able to access books, films and music catalogues. The project was initiated by the ProBiblio Dutch public library organisation, with central government funding. It is a reference library, designed for on-the-spot consumption of music, books and film, and visitors are also able to download films onto mobile devices for viewing at a later time.

Content is available primarily in English but has been translated into a number of other languages to enable maximum usage of the library facility, which serves an international and multi-lingual audience. The library functions as both an ‘enhanced seating area’ for passengers waiting for flights, and as a place to learn about Dutch culture, giving visitors to the Netherlands the opportunity to learn about the country, its culture and heritage.

Other futures exercises

In seeking examples to include in this innovation review it became apparent that similar questions to the ones being asked by Arts Council England are also being asked by organisations in other countries with a leadership role in relation to libraries. While this is not an innovation in its own right, it is worth noting that these other projects are underway, and it may also be worth comparing where they end up in comparison to the our own futures work here in England.

Bookends, New South Wales

This futures exercise explored how a public library service in New South Wales might look in 2030. Four scenarios of information consumption were developed to enable consideration of the types of roles, products and services that will be offered, delivered and accessed through the New South Wales' public library network in 20 years' time.

Reimagining New York Public Library

New York Public Library (NYPL) has been piloting a number of projects looking particularly at developing adult and youth educational programmes in the Achieve @ NYPL programme. These pilots have been based on research and analysis of community needs, which the library views as an important new role to focus upon.

Academic libraries of the future

The academic library of the future project is being led by the British Library, the Joint Information Systems Committee, Research Information Network, Research Libraries UK and the Society of College, National and University Librarians. The Libraries of the Future project was established to help those running academic libraries to plan for the future and uses three scenarios to examine the implications of changes in higher education as well as technological developments.

The Future of Dutch Public Libraries

This future exercise was carried out in 2008 and looks 10 years ahead. Based on trends data, scenarios were developed and used to make recommendations for the social relevance of libraries in the future. The decision to undertake this work was based on a view that there was no broad consensus on the future directions of libraries.

The State of America's Libraries

This study reviews public libraries across America particularly in light of increased demand for digital material, reduced budgets and continued debates about book censorship in American public libraries.

The Carnegie Trust's Future of Public Libraries

The Carnegie Trust has commissioned a large-scale survey and other research to explore questions about the future of public libraries across the UK. In particular, the study looks at access to knowledge in a digital age, libraries as a hub for service provision, the role of librarians and how libraries can provide safe community spaces.

The Arcadia Programme

The Arcadia Programme at Cambridge University ran from 2008-11, and was funded by Arcadia. The programme explored the role of academic libraries in a digital age, and through a number of projects has sparked initiatives for new programmes and services as well as more generally considering what an academic library of the future could look like.

Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at US Libraries

The role for libraries in providing access to technology has grown, and access to computers and the internet is a basic offer of almost all public libraries. This report is of a large-scale study,

conducted by University of Washington Information School, on users of technology in public libraries, the way they are used and the impact this has on their life. In particular it looked at the reliance on libraries by people looking for work, opportunities to study and other civic information online.

Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes to Libraries in the 21st Century

This study examined public perceptions of libraries and identified implications for a new library system. The findings were that the public favoured a strong library system and saw areas for improvement such as improved internet access, more convenient opening hours and greater support for learning services for adolescents.

The changing role of public libraries in the digital age

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, this on-going study looks at how the role of public libraries is changing in the digital age and explores changing expectations of library users.

Academic Library Autopsy Report, 2050

Brian T Sullivan, instructional librarian at Alfred University, writes about the six causes of death of the academic library in an entreaty to academic libraries to consider how to adapt in the future.

Breaking the barriers of time and space: the dawning of the great age of librarians

This lecture argues that although libraries themselves may be becoming less relevant, the role of the librarian will become necessary in meeting community needs of digital and information literacy.



Schiphol Airport Library, Amsterdam. Photo: Ben Lee