What the library did next: strengthening our visibility in research support

‘If the facts don't fit the theory, change the facts.’
Albert Einstein

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Abstract:
Academic libraries have a long and proud history of supporting teaching and learning in universities. However, there is growing recognition that supporting research in line with their universities’ expectations requires new approaches and different skills from librarians. Many Australian university libraries are now appointing specialised research librarians to take on these challenges. In this paper, we show the scope for libraries to commit to developing new customer-focussed services for researchers that ensure the importance of the academic library to institutional research, while taking into account stakeholder needs and organisational expectations.
Introduction
Australian academic libraries are changing. We are moving away from what Derek Whitehead (2010) calls the ‘cosy library’—the home of traditional library roles, collections and spaces—towards the ‘scary library’, where projects such as repositories are mainstreamed into the library, both our collection and our users are increasingly offsite, and the role of the librarian is less and less familiar. At the heart of this revolution is a dramatic change in the needs, wants and expectations of academic library users—and perhaps also in our understanding of them. The literature indicates a steep decline in undergraduate information literacy levels (Duke & Asher 2011) but neither students nor academics are making as much use of face-to-face reference services (Whatley 2009) as they used to. A decline in print loans across Australian universities (Harboe-Ree 2010; Sheargold et al. 2010; Whitehead 2010) is evidence that we should not invest too heavily in print collections for staff or students. We are listening to our users more, but we still need to establish: if interest in the traditional library is on the wane, what do our users want from us?

Firstly, we should ask: who are our users? In the past, there has been a tendency to focus almost exclusively on supporting the information needs of students. This is understandable: higher education is a multi-billion dollar industry for Australia, and providing an environment for successful completion of degrees can be regarded as ‘the primary mission of academic institutions’ (Stebelman et al. 1999). Yet if we restrict our focus to the teaching and learning activities of universities, we ignore the existence of another user group. Teaching and learning are our bread and butter, but the strategic directions of most Australian universities revolve around strengthening their position in research. Even though Australia has some of the best teaching standards in the world, without world-class research activity we cannot compete on international league tables like the Academic Ranking of World Universities (http://www.arwu.org). New initiatives such as the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment seek to measure the quality—rather than the quantity—of research output as the basis for funding, suggesting that research is not only valued by universities as a mark of esteem, but also expected by the government as a source of income. In the wake of one ERA assessment, and on the cusp of another, it is hard to believe that there are any Australian universities not intensively engaged in research or with a long-term plan to be. A large proportion of our income now depends on the productivity of researchers, including their ability to win grants, attract top research students, and to publish. These figures, when aggregated for the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC), become a surrogate metric for Australian universities’ research intensity.

If the merit of universities is judged almost solely on research performance, what can academic libraries do to support their universities, and how are we addressing these new requirements? In this paper, we examine the growth of new academic library roles specifically designed to tackle the challenges of institutional research support. We look at skills and responsibilities for these roles and give an overview of current research support projects. We propose that library services to researchers should be funded in addition to—but still in harmony with—the liaison model already practised by most academic libraries. Furthermore, we recommend that library services for researchers should be developed as part of a whole-of-library and whole-of-university framework for research support and not in isolation from the work of other institutional support structures. For some universities, the changing funding climate
and universities’ strategic response to it has been a catalyst for the development of new roles for librarians in research support (Mamtora 2011). For others, lobbying for adequate resourcing, and building the interdepartmental relationships required to bring about this kind of change, will be a major challenge. We are now operating within reduced financial circumstances across the higher education sector so many libraries may be expected to cover the growing expectations of research support with existing liaison staffing. However, we would strongly advocate against this.

**What is research support, and is it really that new?**

‘Research support’ is a confusing term for libraries because there is duplicity in the definition. The term already has some credence in the field, in both academic and public libraries—it appears on many of our websites but usually in the context of ‘students who are conducting research’ (Lucas 2011). To clarify our terminology, we need to move away from using ‘research support’ when we mean providing reference services or prescribed resources for students to complete their homework assignments. In the future we may develop new language for how we assist university scholars carrying out novel research, but in the meantime, in keeping with Borchert and Callan (2011) and Parsons (2010), this paper uses ‘research support’ to describe the library’s role in assisting to ‘increase the productivity of research and scholarship’ (Parsons 2010).

**But we already support academics through liaison models**

Most (if not all) Australian academic libraries follow a model of faculty liaison or outreach designed to connect academic departments and the library. For some, this is one liaison librarian per faculty; for others, a whole team. As Rodwell and Fairbairn (2008) recently observed, the early literature around liaison started with a very broad directive of ‘assigning librarians to work with specific departments in a systematic and structured way ... [to create] a channel of communication that allows the faculty’s needs to be understood by the library and the library to be interpreted to the faculty’ (Schloman, Lilly & Hu, cited in Rodwell & Fairbairn 2008). This definition implies a role somewhat embedded in the academic context but with the flexibility and authority to bring about change within the library. Schloman and her co-authors (1989) suggested a wide range of activities for liaison, including ‘establishing contact with user groups; communicating information about library policies and programs; eliciting information about curricula changes; selecting materials and collection development; instructing in library use; providing current awareness, reference, and bibliographic services; serving as a library ombudsman for users; and bringing user perspectives to the technical services departments’. Many of these tasks are common to the role today.

The distinct focus on enabling student success through academic libraries is evident in the faculty liaison role. The model has traditionally supported academics more in their capacity as teachers (or ‘faculty’) than as researchers. Some librarians even couch liaison with academics in terms of gaining an important entée to students (Lipow 1992). Perhaps this distinction can be traced (in Australia, at least) to the relative infancy of research undertakings at many universities outside the Group of Eight. Nevertheless, the definition of ‘understanding the needs of faculty’ (Schloman, Lilly & Hu 1989) should have left room for research liaison in addition to teaching, yet the role quickly broke into two ‘dominant streams’: collection development and
'information services, in particular the educative role of librarians’ (Rodwell & Fairbairn 2008). This development places faculty liaison squarely within a framework of support for teachers, leaving academic libraries drastically short of professional outreach resources to invest in research.

Collection development, as discussed later, plays a significant role in library research support. Information literacy, however, does not. A recent study investigating researcher engagement with institutional support in the UK found that despite heavy library investment in information literacy, researchers ‘showed little interest in making use of information skills training from the library … [and were] confident in their awareness and understanding of both the generic and the specialist tools that are relevant to their research area, and especially in their ability to identify the references … relevant to their specific research proposals and projects’ (Research Information Network 2010). Researchers’ unwillingness to undertake training is hardly enhanced by the findings of an early information behaviour study, which showed that medical students taught database searching by a librarian used the system less effectively immediately following training than six months down the track after not using the system at all (Mitchell et al. 1992). Surely it stands to reason that scholars are unlikely to advance to research roles within universities without the necessary expertise to find and evaluate material in their own discipline. Yet in Australia, library support for research continues to centre on the provision of research training. If we persist in focussing our attention in this area, we try the patience of our academics and run the risk of our services appearing outmoded and irrelevant. This is territory that libraries must concede to progress.

The liaison model is currently under review in many Australian university libraries. Generally these evaluations owe more to establishing how to accommodate the changing demands of teaching support than to making provision for research services. Rodwell and Fairbairn (2008) record some criticism of the liaison model in the past, including Frank et al. (2001), who described the liaison model as ‘too passive and lack[ing] impact’. Yang (2000) critiqued the lack of awareness of academic perception of library liaison programs, compared with the surplus of literature on ‘what librarians deem effective liaison activities that should be offered to the faculty’. Whatever one’s perspective, a brief review of the literature shows that libraries around the world have invested significant time and resources in developing best practice models for teaching support. Librarians frequently experiment in partnership with academics to teach information literacy skills directly into courses (Bhavnagri & Bielat 2005; Brasley 2008); to facilitate curriculum development (Jonathan 2004; Kotter 1999); and to build the collection (Chu 1997). These ventures on the whole seem to have been successful. Yet the literature shows little evidence of libraries investing similarly in support models for research activity. When questioned, academics express equal interest in receiving research support from their libraries as teaching support (Schonfeld & Housewright 2010). The changing place of research within higher education funding models also points to a need for libraries to provide stronger support for research. Therefore, we need to find ways to balance our current proficiency in support for teaching with our commitment to research in order to reinforce our value to our universities.

Academic libraries see teaching liaison as integral to successful outcomes for their universities, and this sentiment is echoed by faculties. At the same time, strategic
goals point towards the need for library research support in addition to the current levels of teaching support. We do not intend this paper to imply that faculty liaison staff do not (or should not) provide services to researchers—merely that it is clear that with a growing cohort of increasingly demanding students, most Australian liaison staff simply do not have time to comprehensively support researchers in addition to the needs of their teaching staff. In response to this need, and supported by a transforming higher education sector, a new role specifically designed to support research activity has emerged across many academic libraries. Librarians involved in research liaison require a broad overview of researcher needs across disciplines and the scope to design new services for researchers based on the changing landscape.

What is a research librarian?
Many Australian academic libraries are appointing research librarians to ensure they can make a concrete commitment to research services. The core mission of a research librarian is still liaison: ‘connect[ing] the library’s work to the academic mission of their university’ (Whatley 2009). However, this time the audience is researchers, and as we discuss later, also the university as a whole. Many of the skills required of research librarians are the same as Stebelman (1999) articulated for librarians in faculty outreach roles. These include:

- leadership skills
- entrepreneurship
- ability to approach and communicate with academics
- willingness to learn and experiment with different ways of promoting library services
- excellent written and analytical skills; and
- the ability to work independently on new or established projects.

In addition, depending on what falls within the scope of library research services at each university, some new and different skills may also be required. For example, some research librarians will need to be skilled in metrics, managing small software projects, copyright and/or research data curation.

Library research support also requires a dramatic shift in thinking. It should be planned strategically and applied systematically, rather than on an ad hoc basis for the individual researcher who visits the library. Research librarians by the very nature of their role do not work to semesters; they are actually more likely to have a heavier load during semester breaks when researchers are freed from the burden of teaching duties and have more time to carry out research. We also should not expect to see these library clients at the reference desk—indeed this user group is largely invisible. The Research Information Network and Consortium of Research Libraries (2007) show researcher visits to UK academic libraries declining steeply from 2001 to 2006, and projected visits for 2011 sinking even lower. This tallies with studies in Sweden (Haglund & Olsson 2008), the US (Hemminger et al. 2007) and Australia (Moncrieff, Macauley & Epps 2007), which found that researchers’ information seeking habits have changed in accordance with the move to online information provision. If researchers access everything from their own offices, we need to tailor our service design and our communication channels to match these changes to
workplace behaviour. For example, email and online learning environments have been essential to connecting with research staff and students at Charles Darwin University (Mamtora 2011).

Librarians often express concern at the idea of interrupting busy academics. On the contrary, our reticence can leave those who do engage with our services wondering why we do not do more to promote them (Research Information Network 2010). Yet surely a greater danger than distracting researchers from research activity is that they might think we are silent because the library has nothing legitimate to offer? If we can ease researchers’ administrative workload, or we need their cooperation in government research reporting, we should not hesitate to contact them. The key is to know at which points in the calendar year promotions, grant applications and research reporting activities fall, then to actively promote only those services we have to help with each of these tasks as they come up. We already have avenues through our standard promotional avenues to refer researchers to the larger suite of services available, so it is advisable to communicate directly with researchers only when we have something new or seasonally appropriate to offer them. If we just want to make an announcement, we can do this through more passive channels, such as university bulletins and newsletters. A fortnightly column for the University’s Research Bulletin ([http://www.research.swinburne.edu.au/ResearchBulletin](http://www.research.swinburne.edu.au/ResearchBulletin)) is a subconscious reminder from Swinburne’s research librarian that the Library has useful resources for research at hand, but this is not intended to be, or to replace, an aggressive promotional campaign. When we do want researchers to actively participate in our services, Swinburne Library has learned the value of holding social events to engage researchers with new library services (Whitehead 2010).

The issue of subject expertise is significant to establishing a balanced and trusted relationship between faculty librarians and research librarians. Research librarians do not need to have subject expertise—without a faculty allegiance, they should in truth aim to be discipline agnostic. Still, they do need to maintain awareness of fundamental differences between fields that may impact on the research environment, or on their service design or delivery modes. Faculty librarians have subject expertise relevant to the departments they support, and should know more about subject-specific resources for the faculty than research librarians. The roles should complement, rather than conflict with, one another. Nowhere is this more apparent than with PhD candidates, who are essentially research apprentices, but also traditionally approach their faculty librarians for individual consultations on subject-specific resources. These scholars benefit from both the research environment knowledge of the research librarian, and the subject expertise of the faculty librarian.

As (Parsons 2010) and (Whatley 2009) note, building relationships is central to successful liaison, and this applies just as much to internal relationships between faculty librarians and research librarians as to their external communication with academics. When library research support is provided by someone other than the faculty librarian, there needs to be constant communication between the two roles to ensure consistency and efficiency of service provision. In harmony with the current models for higher-education funding, Australian academics are generally expected to operate as both teachers and researchers, which means both outreach librarian roles will have some overlap in their client base. Most importantly, we should aim to
ensure that all academics have someone in the library they can approach when they need help, whether this is the faculty or the research librarian. If either has existing ties with an academic, these should be utilised, not ignored. If a query is outside the expertise of one role, it can always be referred to the other.

Many Australian research librarians come from a traditional reference and instruction background. However, the changing academic library landscape has produced increasing numbers of Australian librarians with expertise in institutional repositories and scholarly communication; they might also be excellent candidates for these roles. The prior experience of Swinburne’s Research Services Librarian is in this area, and this necessarily affects her view of research service development. She has a stronger focus on information management and system-level service development than on research training, which is still a focus of many research librarian roles at other institutions.

The role of corporate liaison in library research support
In the late 2000s, Luce (2008) and Whatley (2009) introduced the concept of librarians as ‘middleware’. Middleware is a computing term for ‘software that acts as a bridge between an operating system and applications’ (Oxford English Dictionary 2002). By using it in a library context, Luce likens our role to one as connector between information and people. It is also a good metaphor for the role of library research support within a whole-of-university framework.

Libraries have known for decades that liaison with faculties is pivotal to the communication and use of library services by academics. Yet it is easy to forget about the need to build mutually beneficial relationships with other internal corporate departments as well. The success of whole-of-university projects such as research data management is not guaranteed without input from research offices, faculty administrators, IT services and other key institutional stakeholders. A recent Research Information Network report (2010) shows that libraries are in danger of falling off the research support grid if they do not work more collaboratively with research offices. The report makes the logical conclusion that ‘more support, in more varied forms … can benefit from economies of scale’ (Research Information Network 2010). The same study concludes that ‘the key requirement from most researchers’ perspectives is for services which are there when they need them’. We can surmise, then, that researchers are less concerned than we are about who is actually providing each service. If researchers are looking for seamless support from multiple university support structures, libraries need to find allies within their universities to ensure the delivery of maximum benefits to researchers, and perhaps even to guarantee the place of our services within the institutional framework. University departments are strategic partners (Stebelman et al. 1999), but can also be potential user groups, as we discuss later.

Of course, liaison with corporate departments can be a tightrope balance for libraries. Librarians fear their professional identity is already diminishing, and working closely with colleagues in other areas admittedly allows for scope creep while new research support roles are emerging. Nevertheless, if we want to provide services that matter to our researchers and not be seen as ‘passive and lack[ing] impact’ (Frank et al. 2001), practicality needs to prevail. We expect researchers to develop multidisciplinary teams to ensure they have all the skills they need to reach an
outcome—why are we reluctant to do the same in the corporate environment? Parsons (2010) believes that successful corporate liaison just requires us to establish ‘an ethics of relating, i.e. knowing how and when to compete, to co-operate and to collaborate and also how and when to shift back and forth among competition/commerce, co-operation/public service and collaboration/reciprocity’.

**Modelling research support**

To design suitable services for researchers, we should begin by looking at the framework in which researchers operate, and then match their needs to the services we can provide. Some research support requirements (such as network storage access and research commercialisation advice), will reside more naturally with other corporate departments, and this is to be expected. We need to work in partnership with these groups, presenting a collaborative—not competitive—research support service to our academics.

The Research Information Network (2010) has produced a simple diagram that demonstrates the continuum of research activity:

![Four-stage model of the research lifecycle](image)

*Figure 1: Four-stage model of the research lifecycle, reproduced with permission from the Research Information Network.*

By studying this diagram, we see the need for libraries and other support services to assist with *every* stage of the cycle, not just one or two. Traditionally libraries have provided assistance primarily in *idea discovery* through literature searches; state-of-
the-art research collections; and inter-library loan services for material not readily available on the shelves. These are valuable existing services that can be freshly repackaged as research services. Yet there is also considerable scope for libraries (in consultation with researchers and their universities) to develop new services that assist with these and other elements of the research lifecycle.

Research in Australian universities is heavily influenced by government policy changes, especially the requirements of research assessment exercises and funding bodies. There is a growing need for universities to measure and raise the impact of their research against national and international benchmarks. The Australian Government is clearly striving to improve national research performance—this is demonstrated through greater expenditure on science, the establishment of Future Fellowships, and the methodology of the ERA initiative. Researchers operate in a constant environment of research performance assessment, and they know it. Libraries intending to provide support for their researchers must be acutely aware of this landscape and be careful not to be a cause of unease for researchers.

The key lesson from Figure 1 is that researchers do not have very much time. In fact, they may simultaneously prepare publications at the end of one project while applying for funding for the next. In between all of this comes teaching, supervisory and administrative duties. To develop services that are indispensable to researchers and enhance their research productivity, libraries are well advised to seek out ways to make their researchers’ lives easier. Cohen (2004) tells a familiar tale in talking to academics: ‘One of the commonest refrains amongst academics is that we can never get any “work” done when we go into work. In other words we are so busy and stressed out by our ever increasing teaching and admin loads that we literally have no time or place to think - let alone to do anything approximating sustained research.’

A smorgasbord of research support needs to be met
Having established a clear role for research liaison within libraries, we should now examine the breadth of research support services currently available in Australian academic libraries within the framework of the research lifecycle in Figure 1. We start with the first phase, idea discovery, the traditional domain of researcher-library interaction. Then we jump to the fourth phase, results dissemination, where Australian academic libraries have already made encouraging progress. Lastly, we look at how libraries might engage with the traditionally less visible phases of research: applications for grant funding, and data gathering and results analysis. The experience of Swinburne University of Technology necessarily provides the basis for the study of many of these services. Swinburne approaches research services from a particular perspective, aiming to be ‘client-centred and service-oriented’ and to look for opportunities to apply information management skills to save researchers time—even if it means taking on more work ourselves (Whitehead 2010). Other universities’ experiences may be similar, and are highlighted within the context of particular services.

1. Access to high-quality research materials
Even if no other research services can be adequately resourced, academic libraries must ensure that their researchers have access to first-rate research material. Inter-library loan services must be readily available to researchers for cases where
material cannot be held in the collection. When surveyed, Charles Darwin University researchers found inter-library loans ‘particularly useful in filling gaps in the journal collection’ (Mamtora 2011). However as we know, these services are both costly for us and slow for researchers, and therefore should not be relied on as a proxy for a good institutional research collection.

Conversations with researchers are essential to ensuring our collections are responsive to user needs. Traditional collection development skills play a role in building a strong research collection, but there are other methods that work, too. As Moncrieff, Macauley and Epps (2007) found, there can sometimes be a mismatch between librarians’ view of what constitutes a good collection, and researchers’ perceptions of these same collections. Patron-driven acquisition models at Swinburne allow researchers to play a role in our selection process, an idea strongly supported by Lucas (2011). In addition to this and standard library selection decisions, research librarians can make collection decisions based on data that is readily available to them. Swinburne Library analyses publishing trends to ensure that the collection reflects the current research strengths of local researchers. It is not always possible to own everything; many ready-made journal packages from large aggregators do not allow enough flexibility to build tailored collections of serials. Nevertheless, we should at least attempt to ensure that major outlets in which our academics publish—both serials and monographs—are adequately represented in our collections. Lucas (2011) notes that ‘Getting to know the individual faculty member helps build a collection that houses this person’s scholarly achievements’. Many academic libraries automatically acquire books by their local authors; Monash Library even features them on their website: http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/collections/monash-authors/.

In addition to researchers’ writing habits, we can also begin to make predictions for research collections based on their scholarly reading habits. Book reviews have traditionally been a useful selection tool for libraries, but Swinburne’s research librarian looks at them from a different angle. If researchers publish book reviews in academic journals in their disciplines, it stands to reason that these books should at least be assessed for inclusion in a collection that aims to support research in that discipline.

2. Support for disseminating results after publication

Government support from a number of initiatives in the previous decade ensured that all Australian universities now have an institutional repository. Some are ‘dark archives’ and exist solely as the infrastructure for the ERA review process, but the majority are open access repositories designed to showcase a university’s research output and provide equitable access to scholarly literature. Research funders around the world now expect researchers to deposit publicly-funded research publications, and data, in repositories as a condition of funding, but the statements are poorly enforced and inconsequential as a driver for contribution. Academic libraries have instead looked for ways to emphasise the benefits of increased access to researchers’ publications.

In many cases, the institutional repository is an exemplar of a (usually library-based) research support service. It suits the needs of both researchers—in providing a single place to manage all of their publications—and the university, as a
comprehensive record of its research output. As Parker and Wolff have previously explained (2009), Swinburne’s repository was designed with significant input from researchers so it would be useful, and readily adopted. Swinburne repository managers went against the trend by abandoning self-deposit for authors and shifting content recruitment and permissions responsibilities to librarians. This has been a successful strategy. Since 2009, the repository has evolved to play a key role in all research reporting exercises at Swinburne—if a publication is not recorded in the repository, it will not be put forward as part of the submission. Not only does this provide a comprehensive collection of Swinburne-authored material: it also saves researchers time by allowing them to report their publications only once and then have the data automatically distributed to a variety of channels. The research office has become a dedicated user group, and repository content is also analysed as a basis for content published in the Swinburne Magazine.

At Swinburne the institutional repository is part of the research librarian’s portfolio, but this may not be the case at all universities. We see this as an opportunity for the library to build its visibility in institutional research support through new services based around skills in information management (Whitehead 2010). Australian repositories have received more attention than ever through the ERA process, and there is an opportunity for us to be entrepreneurial by familiarising ourselves with, and interpreting the information requirements for, government research reporting exercises.

3. Help with research promotion and opportunities
Accurate repository content is a goldmine for universities, and a good example of the library controlling something sought after by both researchers and their universities. There are examples of repository content filtering into other areas of the website at Deakin and elsewhere. Swinburne Library has developed a number of projects around the repository, building on its strong reputation for accuracy and attention to detail. These include faculty publications pages in PHP, updated weekly from a feed of repository content. For several research groups, these have replaced static publications pages on their websites that were difficult to maintain and often relied on the basic HTML skills of a single staff member. The pilot group was our Tier 1 software engineering research centre, who worked with us to design a user interface for group publications sorted by year and publication type. This layout has now been implemented across a number of pages at Swinburne. It can be seen at: http://www.swinburne.edu.au/swinburneresearchers/success/

Swinburne Library also managed a major collaborative project with researchers and the research office to develop Swinburne Researchers, a profile page database (http://www.swinburne.edu.au/swinburneresearchers). This web-based information system draws on dynamic feeds from three systems: human resources for contact details; the research information system for grants and Field of Research codes; and the repository for publications. It was designed to communicate at a glance everything a potential collaborator or research student might need to know about a Swinburne researcher. Other modules (such as higher degree supervisions) will be added as these become available in an applicable format. Similar websites exist at other universities but are rarely managed by the library. However, this should be another concrete example of how libraries can stake a claim as experts in corporate information management and use their influence to boost researchers’ profile.
4. Help with publishing results in scholarly journals
Libraries are experts in promoting the end products of research, but we can do more to assist researchers with navigating the early stages of the publication process. We already provide tools such as Journal Citation Reports to assist academics with making informed choices about where to publish, but sometimes they are looking for a different kind of scholarly publishing support. At Queensland University of Technology (QUT), this might include ensuring that their publisher agreements allow them to retain certain rights in their work (Borchert & Callan 2011).

To assist researchers with disseminating the results of their research through scholarly channels, Swinburne Library publishes three journals edited by Swinburne researchers or with strong Swinburne involvement. Two of these are fully open access, and one requires a subscription for the last 12 months only. Publishing support at Swinburne includes:

- technical infrastructure using the Open Journals Software
- assistance with search engine optimisation to increase the discoverability of publications
- help with copyright and open access policies, and author guidelines
- a DOI minting service
- allocation of ISSN, and ISBNs for one-off monograph editions
- subscriptions management where necessary
- advice on entry into abstracting and indexing services; and
- support for engagement with the ERA process to increase the visibility and prestige of Swinburne journals.

The Library is not involved with the processes of content creation, peer review or editing, but we do provide technical and policy support for each of these stages. In addition to the journals published by Swinburne Library, there are other Swinburne journals based in faculties, and we aim to build a community of practice around them. Taking into account what we have learned from journal publishing and what we know about research metrics, we have already assisted one editorial board with a successful bid for inclusion in the 2012 ERA ranked journal list.

5. Help with measuring research impact and applying for funding
Many academic libraries in Australia seem not to provide—or at least promote—services aimed at helping researchers prepare grant applications. Every successful grant application needs a good idea, yet much of the proposal pro forma is an exercise in listing publications and maximising their impact through citation measures. Perhaps we hesitate in this area because of a fear that we might become grant writers, rather than grant advisors—or perhaps our reluctance is fear of stepping on boundaries with our research offices. Both fears are legitimate, but this as a great opportunity to give libraries visibility in generating research income, as well as promoting its outcomes. In 2011, Swinburne’s research librarian co-facilitated a workshop for Swinburne’s social science research centre on preparing Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Project applications, but this is only the beginning of Swinburne Library’s involvement in this area. We see the grant application process as a good chance for researchers to utilise our support services.
Several sections of the current ARC application require researchers to list their publications—usually both a list of recent work and a selection of career-best publications. We can help researchers save time in preparing these sections through reference management software such as EndNote, and in many cases by allowing them to draw from a comprehensive list of their publications in the institutional repository. Librarians are ideally suited to grant support: we know that research metrics are woefully inadequate as a measure of quality (Lawrence 2008; Pendlebury 2009) but that their value is in knowing how to turn citation counts to a researcher’s advantage. We know that having a good handle on discipline metrics includes knowing not just where—but also in which format—researchers should publish. For some disciplines, a refereed conference paper is a dissemination format of prestige and may have been subject to rigorous review and a very low acceptance rate, but for others conference papers are seen as a waste of good content that would have had more research impact as a journal article. We also know that to consolidate their citation impact and enhance their research identity, researchers need to be able to resolve (or avoid) author name variant conflicts (McKay, Sanchez & Parker 2010).

The University of New South Wales Library has taken the lead in designing metrics services for researchers and institutional stakeholders (Drummond & Wartho 2009). It seems logical for libraries to take responsibility for metrics; we house the databases that are used to determine citation impact and we are adept at using them. Through the ERA process, our databases and repositories have received more attention than ever, and this is an area in which we can truly prove that we are neither ‘passive’ nor ‘lack impact’ (Frank et al. 2001). However, we do need to be sensitive: libraries have always been seen as neutral territory—a safe harbour from research quality judgement—so we need to be careful about how we approach metrics work. If we are to become the primary face of research metrics, we need to be seen to be working on behalf of the authors, not as enforcers of the research performance culture.

6. Support for managing research data
Closing the gap in the research lifecycle, libraries have now found a way to apply their skills in information management to the experimentation, analysis and data collection stages of research (phase 3 in Figure 1). Previously this area has been seen as the private domain of researchers and their assistants, but with funding from the Australian National Data Service (ANDS), many libraries have been able to consider the possibility and scope of a role in research data management and planning. Monash Library is a leader in this area, appointing a library-based data management coordinator as early as 2008 (Monash Library).

Data repositories are new, but not entirely unfamiliar, territory for librarians. As discussed earlier, we are experienced at emphasising the benefits of open access to research even when barriers to contribution are high. We know that many researchers understand the value in sharing their data, but the rewards are at odds with the effort that goes into making it available (Parker, McKay & Bennett 2011). We understand that there are complexities around clarity of ownership, description and preservation formats, and that these are unlikely to be resolved soon. Swinburne Library’s involvement in university-level approaches to research data management allows us to help make it easier for researchers to showcase their research, while
simultaneously ensuring that the University complies with its obligations under the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (NHMRC, ARC & Universities Australia 2007).

Institutional research data management is an embodiment of the idea that we benefit exponentially when multiple university stakeholders contribute to research support (Research Information Network 2010). UK researchers see data management as a legitimate future role for librarians (Research Information Network & Consortium of Research Libraries 2007), as does ANDS (Henty 2008), but information management skills can only take a university’s research data management efforts so far. We also need policy direction from research offices, plus storage, formatting and processing infrastructure from information technology services. In this case, because we can see at a glance that many of the skills required for effective research data curation are beyond the scope of libraries, we seem better at seeking out institutional partners to share the load. QUT’s model involves collaboration among library, research office and IT stakeholders. This allows the university to provide seamless access to not only research data storage and description, but also data modelling, visualisation and computational resources. Since ‘researchers prefer to conduct their research in their own way, with as little institutional advice and support—or interference—as possible’ (Research Information Network 2010), a ‘one-stop shop’ for all research data services is ideal. More research support services could benefit from applying this model.

**Conclusion**

Researchers—and crucially, universities—are looking for something new and different from academic libraries. They are looking for a professional partner to work collaboratively with researchers and other university stakeholders to develop a user-centred research support approach that meets researchers’ needs. Universities and researchers need their libraries to match the enthusiasm we have for teaching support with new services to increase the productivity of research activity. Many academic libraries in Australia can see that specialist research librarian roles are one way to allow time, resources and scope to develop service-oriented library support for research, and the last couple of years have seen a shift in the level and type of support available. Many universities have established new positions to carry out research support activities, including research data management support, and we highly recommend this approach.

While Australian academic libraries have already made impressive progress in increasing the capacity of libraries to support researchers, we still have a long way to go. Our research services will need to evolve constantly to match the expectations of local and external research environments. We will also need to be infinitely more flexible in our definition of what research constitutes—many library websites still refer to ‘staff’, without making a distinction between services aimed at teachers and those created for researchers. The term ‘researcher’ is still too ambiguous: where do PhD candidates belong? Our services need to be able to accommodate these and other grey areas; they need to be role-based, rather than position-based; and they need to be willing to change alongside the constantly evolving research environment.

There is still scope for libraries to extend these new customer-focused services, and their future development prospects depend to a large extent on how the research
environment evolves. Research services are a good model for service design across libraries—if we always develop our services with the greater academic landscape in mind, and in close proximity to our users, we are guaranteed to provide services that meet our users’ needs. In finding new and better ways to support both researchers and their universities, academic libraries will secure their place in the institutional support structures in the future.

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