


Scenario Planning for Libraries


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ie: Information Exponentials
Information and Communications Management and Development



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My road map

- Perceptions, perceptions, perceptions
- What is Scenario Planning?
- Disruption as a force in planning
- Looking backwards to see forward
- The power of the imagination and stories
- Story telling and the development of scenarios with communities
- New Business models for libraries
- Re-conceptualising approaches



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Perception matters more than reality

- Our realities are not necessarily those of our clients or patrons

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Value that is not valued is not valuable

- As Librarians we believe that we offer fantastic services
- There is a clearly popular view that everything is digital and therefore why do they need a library service
- **Value is a very important concept**

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Patrons do not need librarians as much as they once did

- If it is pointed out to them that they do not gain access to subscribed information through Google, they are usually amazed and perhaps do not care

5 These three points articulated by Rick Anderson



The cool eye of the future

- Future is a very real force in our lives
- We do not know what the future holds
- We use the term very loosely and vaguely
- Intimidated by the future, or the absence of certainty
- So paths to certainty are crucial



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The rear vision view...

- We can only judge how far we have come by looking backwards
- We can only understand our path to the future with a rear vision mirror



The path to the present was littered with choices

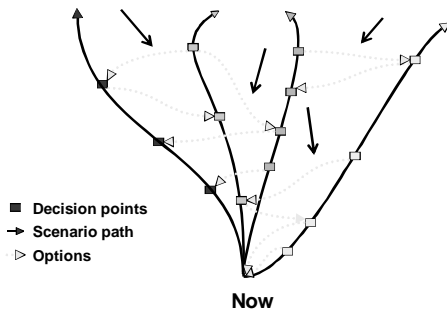
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Photo credit: David Hobbs



The future is not linear...

Alternative futures



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Not always obvious...

- Planning should be unattached to past, but aware of the past
- Reach out, reach out... to user communities
- Connecting to Next Generation
- Collaboration as an integral library department!!

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Choices

- Many decision points
- Better to choose rather than having the future happen to you
- So how is it best to inform the decision points?
- How is it possible to get engagement in the need as well as the choices?

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**“You can’t stop change
from coming...
you can only usher
it in and work out the terms.
If you are smart and a little
lucky, you can make
it your friend”**

Barrack Obama

Time Nov 17, 2008: 25

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**We are all viewing the same circumstances
and yet we all receive different messages**



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Path tunnel gets narrower

- As we look forwards the definition in the distance becomes very indistinct
- The wider environment in the distance; the spaces to each side cannot be seen
- It is only as we approach that point, do we gain greater clarity
- So 'seeing' the future is difficult and lacking in predictability



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What is scenario planning?

- Process allows options to remain 'in consideration'
- Recognizing that we do not have one future, but many
- How many scenarios?
- Allowing all ideas to come to the fore

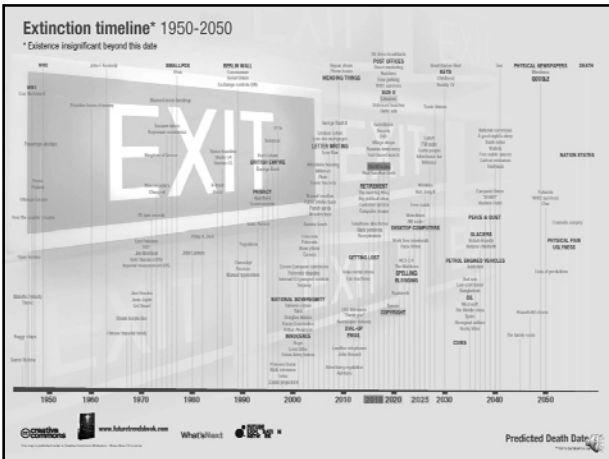


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Imagination and stories

- Strategic Planning is an important process but effectively it concerns the allocation of resources
- Scenario Planning seeks to use the imagination to conjure up new, different options
- Imagination needs to be strengthened so that improbable ideas, impractical ideas are not dismissed
- Scenario planning is usually used for the whole organization, but can be equally viable for parts of it
- Imagination liberates us from past thinking

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Extinction summary

2018 Libraries Blackberries Video rental stores

2020 Copyright

2025 Desktop Computers Blogging

- Disruption: the case of Kodak
- The Traditional Library Business Model has been totally disrupted

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Development of imagination

- Allow the 'left-fielders' to remain as possibilities
 - What if Libraries were extinct?
 - What if there were no copyright?
- Work through issues such as these as if they are real
- Imagination and creativity can come to the fore

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Principles of disruption

- Principles of Disruption by Christenson:
 - We need to focus on our customer
 - What we think that we are good at is our obsession and potential downfall

Clayton Christenson *Innovator s Dilemma*

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Disrupted models

- IBM Mainframe disrupted by Personal Computer
- Diaries... Paper disrupted by PDA
- Diaries, Contacts disrupted by PDA, then Mobile phone
- Kodak industries disrupted by Digital technologies
- Nokia mobile phone disrupted by multi-functioned iPhone, HTA etc.

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At the crossroads...




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Principle: focus on the user


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User focus


- Collaborative
 - Impact of social behaviours e.g. Facebook
 - Information gathering and Study behaviours
- Affecting space
 - Changing nature of information itself and of public communities
 - Mixture of print and digital content
- Information Literacy
 - 'Everything is on the net' attitude
 - Improved Information Satisfaction

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Principle: strengths ???

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Digital & physical libraries

- **Digital** has disrupted the traditional Library business model rendering it obsolete
- Nothing is as it was before, or will be after
- The stand-alone library cannot be effective
- So where to look for inspiration?
 - Listen to users
 - Self-searching as to real professional skills
 - Other Opportunities
 - Other Disruptive opportunities

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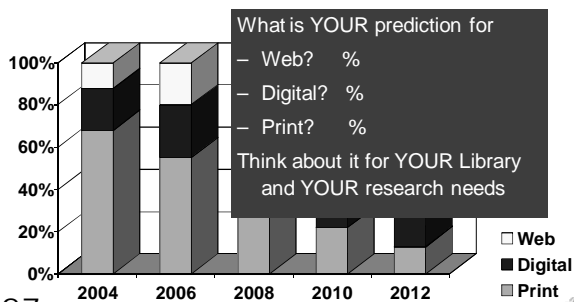
Dwell on what we think that we are good at

- Building collections
 - Strength of Libraries?
- Cataloguing materials
 - Is this the strength of the profession?
- What is the nature of content in the past and into the future?
- Client centered relations?
- Information gathering?

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Predictions...



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Other dimensions

- Use this technique to assess
 - Staff demographics
 - Future Staff budgets and composition
 - Content resources and budget
 - Space need for staff, content, user needs
- Compare industry trends to local present and future need
- This is but one tool

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Inevitability?

- There is risk in disruption
- What is a risk?
 - Risk is not Failure
- What is the level of probability of failure?
- Engagement with Risk in a disrupted environment is a crucial strategy



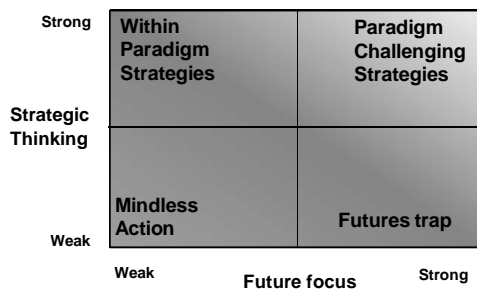
**“If you want to succeed,
double your failure rate”**

Thomas J Watson

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Development of scenarios



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“People want what they want
when they want it.
They don't want something else,
they don't want less than they want,
and they certainly don't want it
at some other time”

Henry Forsha

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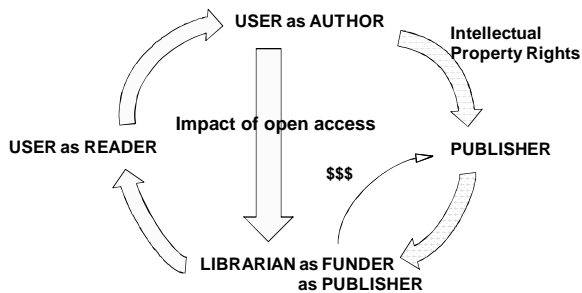




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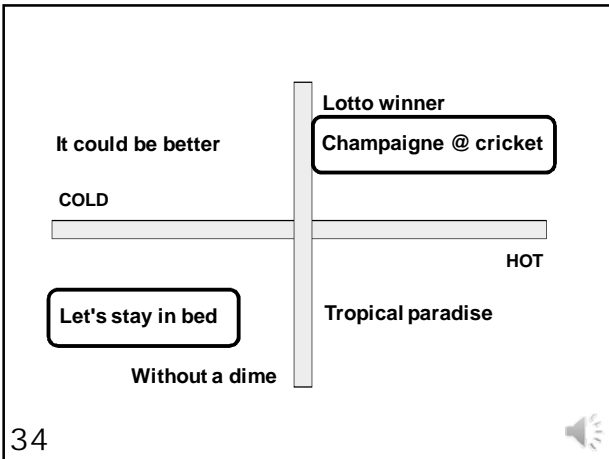


Publishing cycle

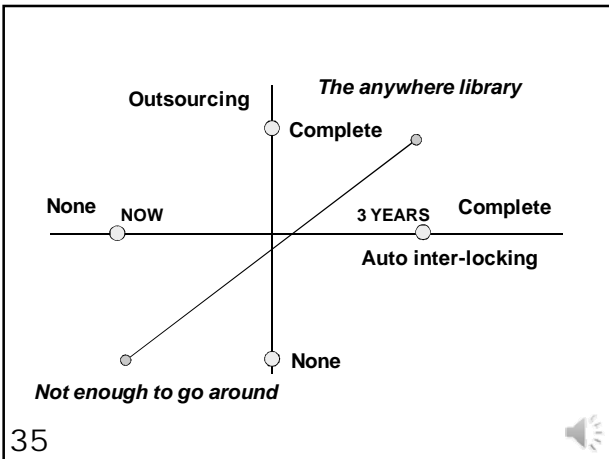


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Avoid group thinking

- Conformity to norm thinking will limit opportunities
- Do not accept stories about library
- Open up and always encourage different thinking
- Think about what is being proposed and encourage an environment of thoughtful, questioning dissent
- Research outside this discipline

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Re-conceptualising: search

- All items in all media are represented by metadata
- All items are simply digital objects
- All Digital objects are equal
- All Digital objects are of interest to all users

What stories emerge??

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Re-conceptualising: content

- Content previously measured by volumes in a library
- Digital 75% of budget
- Content is digital and therefore not bound to physical Library
- Role and housing of Legacy collections

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Re-conceptualising: organisations

- A sustainable light, but inclusive organisation
- Vital, active professional staff
- A flexible engaging and learning (always) organisation
- An organisation which is prepared to listen, make mistakes and try again



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Re-conceptualising: skill

- “The technologies we use are increasingly cloud-based, and our notions of IT support are decentralised”
- “The world of work is increasingly collaborative, giving rise to reflection about the way student projects are structured”
- Different staff skill set
- Future of work is quite different
- Ability to understand ‘absent’ users

The Horizon Report: 2011 edition: 2-3

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Does not need to be spanking new!



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Plan not for tomorrow

- What should the future look like at the end of a time three years hence?
- Start in 2015 and then work toward it
- Spend time getting a **Preferred Scenario** accepted which is preferred by your community

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