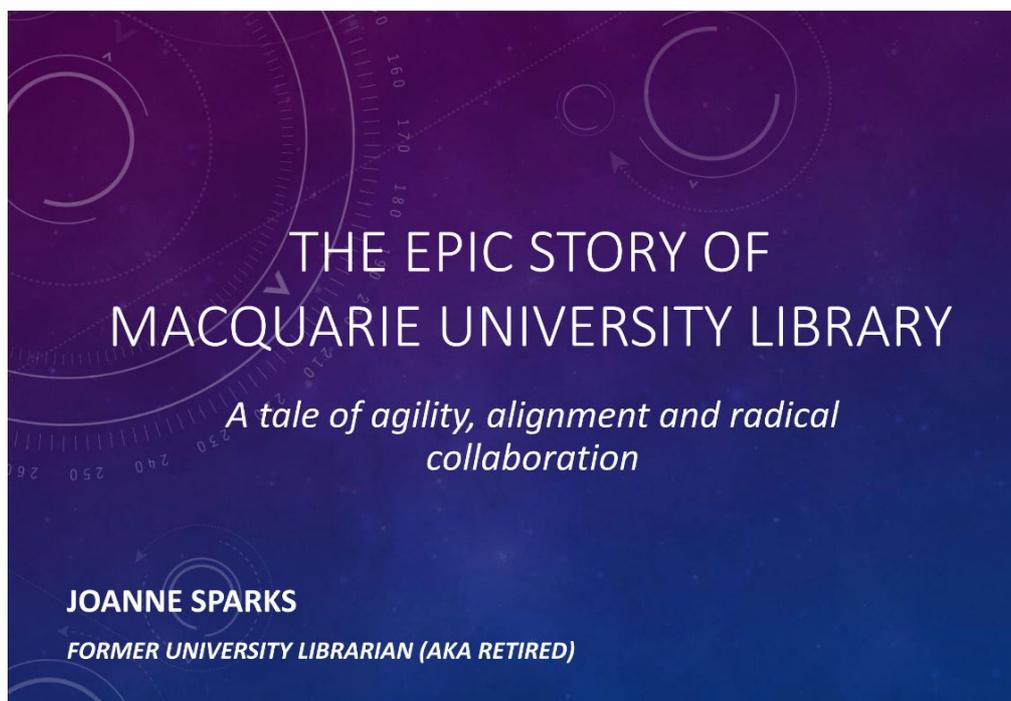
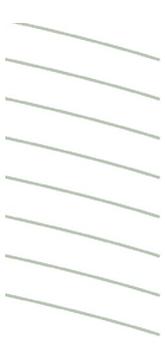




The Epic Story of Macquarie University Library: a tale of agility, alignment and radical collaboration

by Joanne Sparks





BOUNDLESS

The theme of the ANZTLA 2019 conference is 'Boundless' – which aims to express the idea that the possibilities for growth and development for libraries, even small ones, are full of potential

I am not sure where I found this sentence or if I made a note a few months ago? However, I feel I must tell you how attracted I am to the theme of this conference and I hope by the end of my talk, you will understand why. This EPIC tale about Macquarie University Library has its roots in boundless possibilities. I think the ideas, strategies and tactics can be applied in a range of ways and contexts. So choose what resonates with you and add your own boundless flavours and ingredients.

WHY THE TITLE OF THIS PRESENTATION?

The words are chosen very carefully

- EPIC is our project name for our latest strategic development and alignment activities
- The overall aim is agility both in terms of staff flexibility and service offerings.
- Alignment is how we consistently approach our relationship with the university to support teaching and research
- Radical collaboration – a work in progress, relationship oriented



Before we start, I also want to explain the title of this presentation. EPIC has several meanings as you will understand by the end of this talk. At Macquarie University Library, we have been “experimenting” with using stories as a communication method. Told well, they help us understand, remember and repeat to our colleagues.

OUTLINE

- My background
- Macquarie University facts and figures
- Macquarie University Library overview
- Background of the EPIC story
- The tale – the EPIC Story
- Your response? Comments, questions?



So here is the outline, the plan of what I will cover. I realize you have had your dinner and I promise to keep to my script mostly and move along at good speed. If you want me to go slower, can you speak up. If anyone is sleeping, I will go faster. Hopefully the pace will be just right.

MY HIDDEN AGENDA (FOR OUR SHARED PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS)

- You can do it!
- Decide your own boundaries
- Why libraries matter and breaking boundaries is essential
- The Epic Story of Macquarie University Library can be your story, too

However, first I have the idea that it is good to share my hidden agenda first so you are not lost in the “usual stuff” that we share at conferences.



MY BACKGROUND

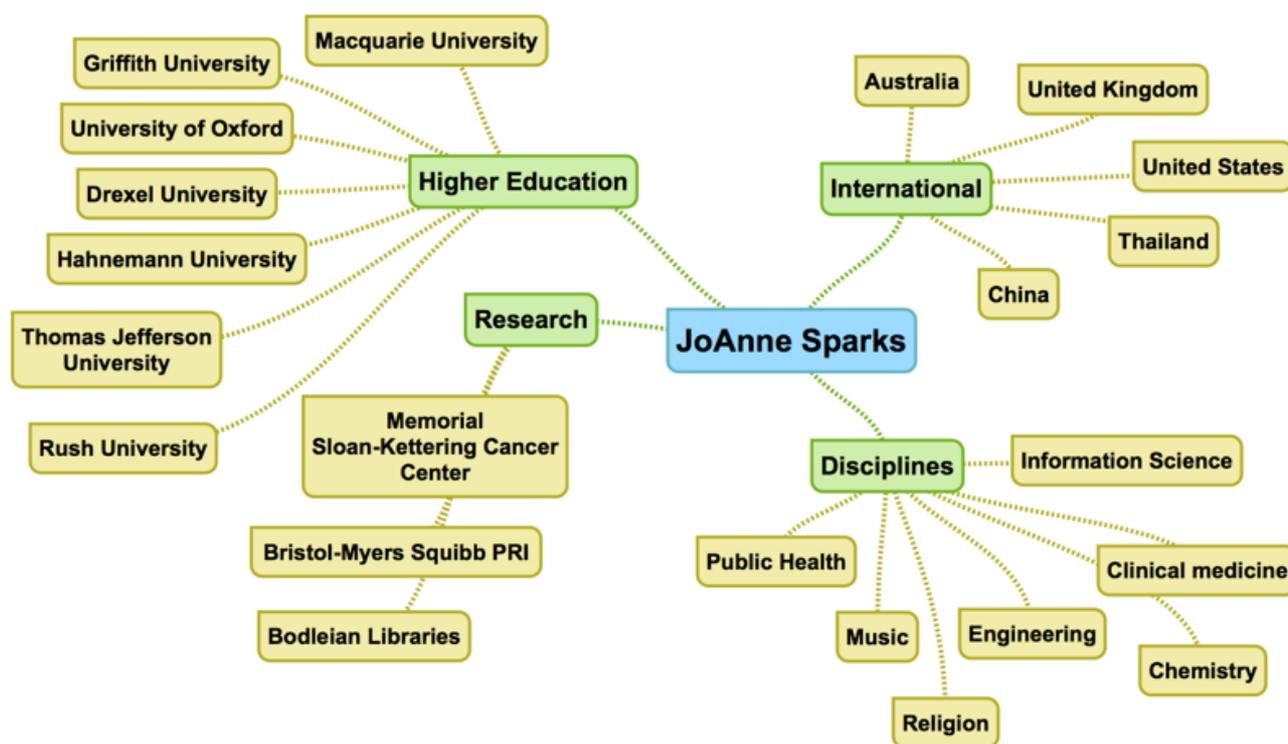


Who
could
this be?

'Destined to become a librarian' by JoAnne Sparks. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

My mother gave me this photo in 2016 which I did not recall ever seeing. I am first in family to go to university, graduate and definitely to become a librarian. It appears it was my calling.

JoAnne Sparks – professional mind map



<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9040-6105/print>

This is an outline of my background in the form of a mind map. My experience in higher education, research, internationally and the subjects where I have the most experience. However, notice under disciplines that Religion is there. My BA is in Religion and my first job was as a faculty librarian that included responsibility for the theological seminary collections as well as other subjects. So I feel a kinship with you all even though my career has taken me to boundless places beyond that first role.

REAL WORLD



'Teaching computers at Noe Poe camp' by JoAnne Sparks. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

This is a photo I took in a refugee camp in 2009. No electricity, no internet. The students were hungry to learn and they find a way to learn and to know about the world. If they can find a way, then so can we. Nothing is too hard or difficult. Sometimes we don't succeed the first time. Then we look at the situation, analyze what happened and consider a new set of options.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY FACTS AND FIGURES

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Located in a large business/technology precinct
Recognised for research excellence
On-campus hospital
43,000+ students with large international cohort
3,200 staff
164,000 alumni



Macquarie is a large comprehensive university with a hospital on campus. Only university in Australia to own their own hospital, current focus is on advanced medicine, high tech (gamma ray knife, etc). We also have Ancient History, Education, Modern History and Modern Languages. The disciplines covered span a big range however, Macquarie is not quite a comprehensive university. We do not have a fine arts department for example and have only dipped into investment engineering.



MACQUARIE RESEARCH



¹ QS World University Rankings, 2019 ² ERA, 2015 ³ QS World University Rankings by Subject, 2019
⁴ QS World University Rankings by Subject, 2019 and *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings, 2019 ⁵ QS World University Rankings, 2019

This slide shows Macquarie's standing on various rankings in recent results.



Future-shaping Research Priorities

Healthy People
Pioneering health, integrated healthcare and lifelong learning for wellness in our ageing world

Resilient Societies
Understanding cultures in our changing world and building ethical, just and inclusive communities

Prosperous Economies
Strengthening economic productivity to promote prosperity in our diverse world

Secure Planet
Sustaining our interdependent world and exploring our place in the universe

Innovative Technologies
Advancing our interconnected world with frontier technologies, systems, designs and creative practice

MACQUARIE University

These strategic priorities guide researchers, faculties and the services in the university who support them. One of the things I really like about the research priorities is that they are wholistic and global. There is a place for every discipline the university covers in this scheme.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OVERVIEW

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN PORTFOLIO

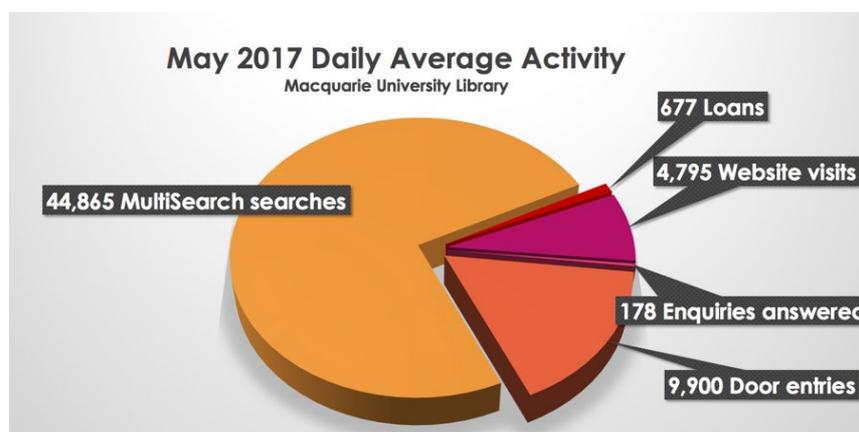
Library, Art Gallery, Archives and Collections

- One Library at the heart of the University
- 2 million+ visits in person annually
- 20 million+ visits online
- Automated storage (robotic)
- Research librarians
- Clinical librarian program to support medicine
- Discipline based operational teams to support faculties



- Added records management, archives, digital information and art gallery/collections in 2017

This is a snapshot of the portfolio. We are concerned with all sorts of collections. It is a very busy place. However, we provide self-service and automated services along with human-delivered and custom activities. Our clinical librarians support the hospital and medical science researchers. Other faculties have research librarians who work in discipline teams. Other operational teams within the library are also aligned with disciplines.

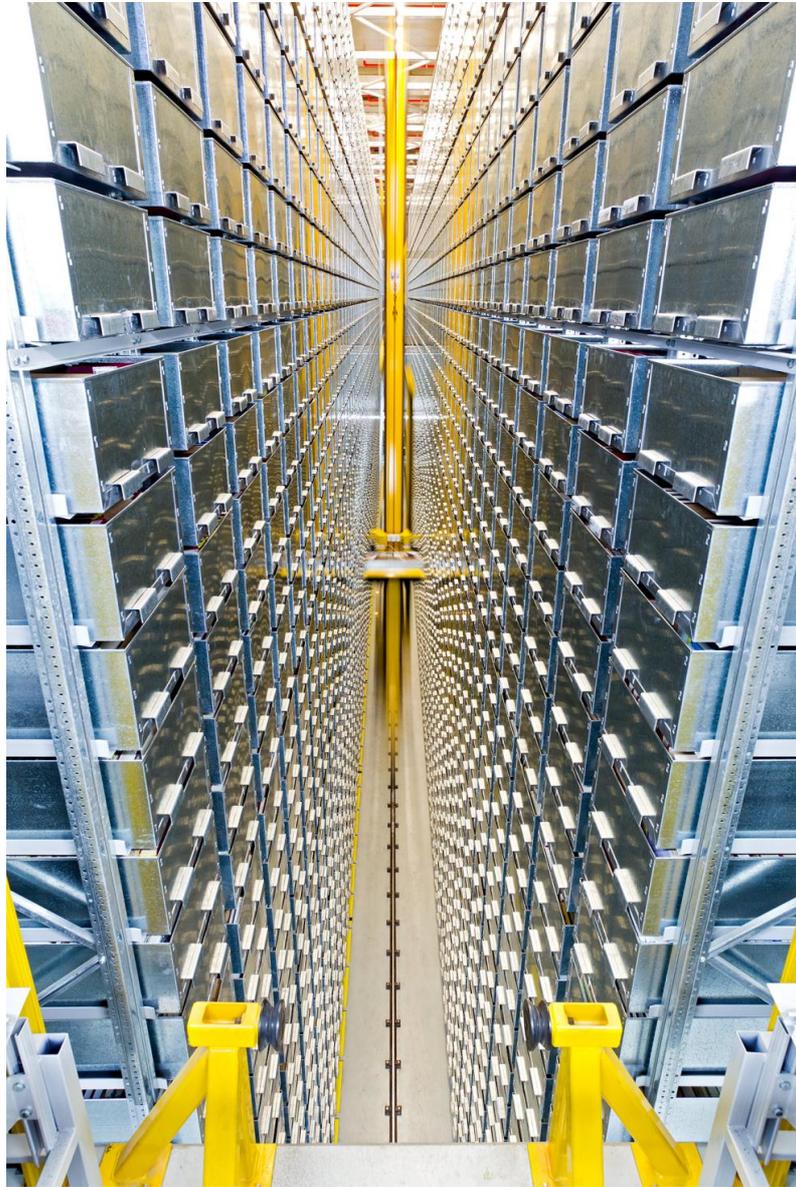




This slide shows a typical day in May which is one of the busiest times of the year. October is the other month with peak volumes at the end of the academic year in the lead up to exams. On a daily basis, this is the volume of activity in the physical building and online.



Visits are going up year on year. Why? Qualitative evidence – come to the library to get serious, get away from the distractions – library as sanctuary. Iceberg – scale. Both physical and online usage is enormous.



The ARC is what everyone wants to see but in reality over 90% of items borrowed are simply taken off the shelves by our users. But the ARC plays a very important role in a number of ways. It has taken lesser used items off the floor and freed up space for people. If those items were on typical library shelving, the library would need another 11,000 sqm of floor space. The sustainability implications for that are large in terms of lighting, heating/cooling, water use.



BACKGROUND OF THE EPIC STORY

I have told this EPIC tale first in Japan at the OCLC Asia Pacific conference without a preliminary background section and also in China just recently. In both cases, there were many questions so I have developed this background section and included it tonight. However, I will move through it fairly fast so we can get to the story.

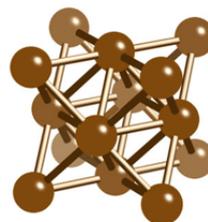
FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES (THE PAST) AND THE FUTURE

My work past, present (and future?)

- First Principles
- Sydney Conference 2015
- Scholarly communications in the future

The background really goes back to concepts that predate me and that I have been developing, collaborating with others and putting into practice for many years.

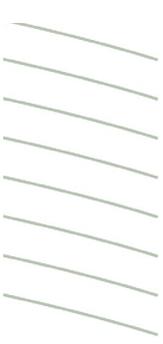
FIRST LAW



Content is primary
(and quality takes precedence over quantity)

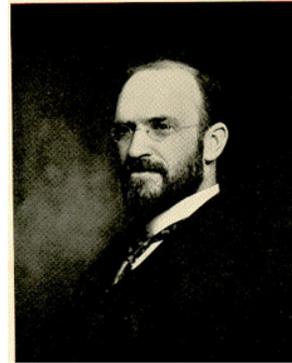
First principles, or foundational “laws” for librarianship. Molecular structure for gold, “pearl”.

Law #1: Content rules – quality trumps everything. And what about the valid NULL result - a very important aspect of original research!



SECOND LAW

Access vs
gate keeping



Melvil Dewey, 1851-1931

Law #2: Access not gatekeeping. Guardians of Knowledge is about preservation and access. If no-one can get to the content (the pearl or the gold), then it is lost. Even at the Bodleian. The John Johnson collection is a great example. Custodial care is integral to preserving access. I would contend that access even though it may be limited because of the item's condition, security or other factors. It is about providing a way for access to occur.

THIRD LAW



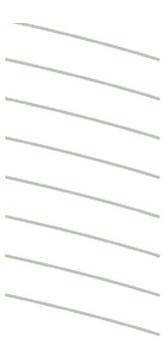
*Louis Round Wilson
1876-1979*

Connect people to
people

(and to ideas and information)



Connect people to people, and people to ideas. More than 70 years ago, UNC librarian and educator Louis Round Wilson crafted an extraordinary vision. He wanted to educate professionals who could **connect people to information**. He died at age 103. **Reliable relationship**. Corporate or institutional cultural memory, metadata tools - reliable partner to collaborate with them on their information needs. Information is the life blood - energy of the corporation or the academy.



SYDNEY CONFERENCE 2015



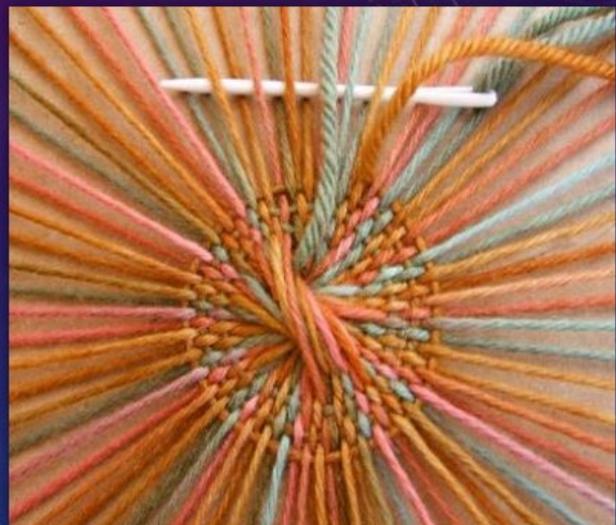
- 100 brains - researchers, authors, students, librarians, publishers
- Issues - peer review, packaging, access, roles & data

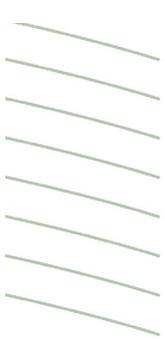
<https://sydneyconference2015.wordpress.com/>
Content on *Storify*, *Vine*, *Twitter* and *Sketchbooks*

In 2015, I convened an international think tank of academics, librarians, students and publishers to meet in Sydney to discuss key aspects of the subject (Sydney Conference 2015) to take on key issues in scholarly communications. 100 brains representing researchers, students, librarians, publishers and others. Key issues ranged from peer review, packaging, access, roles and data
<https://sydneyconference2015.wordpress.com/>

WEAVING NEW THREADS

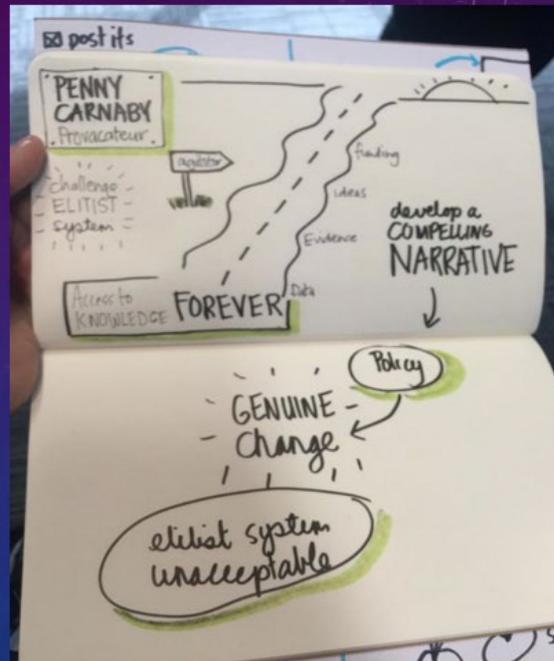
- Sydney Conference - analogy of weaving and collaboration to consider future possibilities
- Consistent themes across 5 main threads
- Very lively discussions re:
 - Living publications that are ever improving
 - Quality of content
 - Containers – do we need them? Anti-containers!



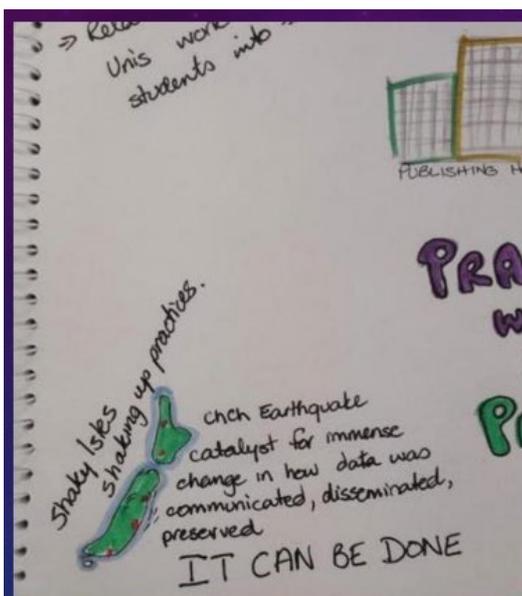


Lots of provoking and challenging the status quo

Active participation and collaborative approach

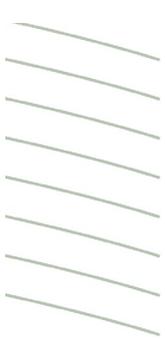


Our library staff at all levels were supporting, participating and observing this think tank, a prequel to the EPIC journey we would embark on two years later.



Christchurch Earthquakes

A disaster promotes new practices and embraces change – maybe we could change when things are not shaking!



RESEARCHERS MULLING IT OVER



Professors Richie Howitt and Sherman Young



'Cahills Lookout, Katoomba after the bushfire' by JoAnne Sparks. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

The future can only be glimpsed at times. You will likely recognize this is regrowth after a bush fire. The ancient trees in Australia usually rejuvenate after a fire unless the core is burned. This one is coming back to life. We cannot always know what the future holds, if the tree will rejuvenate or not?

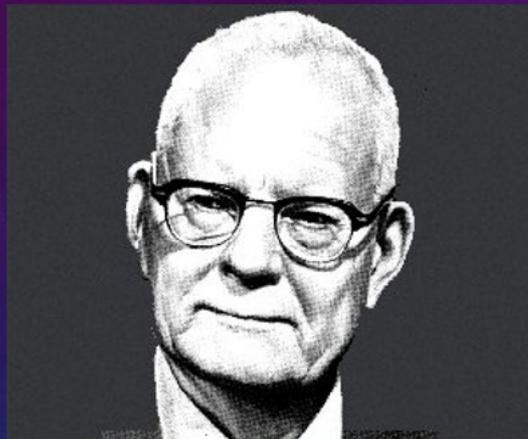
RANGE OF METHODS AND INITIATIVES....

Management approaches, methods, frameworks and initiatives

- William Edwards Deming
- Plan Do Check Act (PDCA), LEAN
- Process mapping
- Governance and policy improvements
- Project management including lessons learned
- Structural Change program over several years
- Service Delivery Model and Quality Framework
- Benchmarking externally and internationally
- What We Do Matters
- Merlin approach - **The Merlin Factor: Leadership and Strategic**

Intent / Charles E. Smith Vol.5, No.1 pp.67-83 Business Strategy Review Spring 1994

WILLIAM EDWARDS DEMING



"A bad system will beat a good person every time."

"Quality is pride of workmanship."

"If you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing."

"It is not enough to do your best, you must know what to do, and then do your best."

"Quality is everyone's responsibility."

<https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/william-edwards-deming-3140.php>

Toyota. Plan Do Check Act (PDCA), LEAN. St Andrews – higher education LEAN

We worked with the LEAN method to improve procedures and processes using the approach for Higher Education developed by St Andrews University in Scotland. LEAN is used in manufacturing to eliminate waste from a process or procedure. For example, Toyota has been using these methods for many years.



Becoming a Lean University: The Case of the University of St Andrews

Mark Robinson
Steve Yorkstone



This article looks at how “lean” can be successfully introduced into a higher education setting by discussing what has become known as ‘The St Andrews Model’. The article demonstrates that “lean” can be adapted to suit the particular circumstances of an institution. Lean, underpinned by a manufacturing heritage, and the subject of a small but growing collection of academic and practitioner analysis, is readily transferrable to other sectors. This article will show that although the model draws on a common body of knowledge, there is not a one size fits all approach. The successful implementation of a lean programme is not an overnight activity; it is, rather, a journey where learning is done by doing.

www.lg-handbook.info

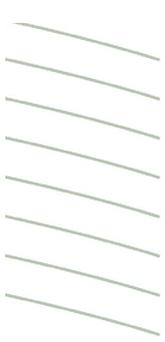
Leadership and Governance in Higher Education, Volume No. 1, 2014

At St Andrews, they have developed a higher education version of the LEAN method. This is the one that was adopted by Macquarie University.

LEAN for Higher Education

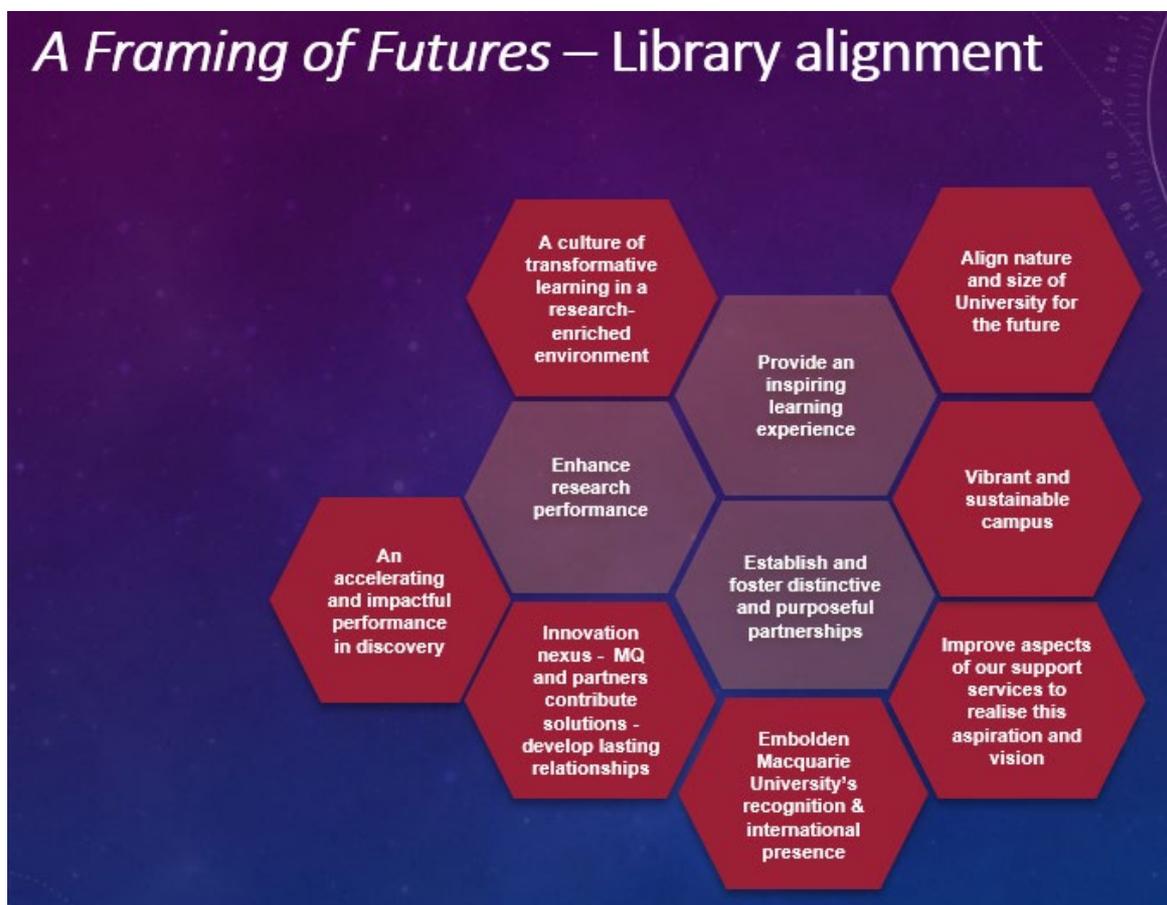
- <http://standrewslean.com>
- Training locally and in the UK
- Library has completed several projects over 3 year period
 - - Delivering the mail
 - - Shelving the books
 - - Lost books
 - - Queries
 - - and more
- Trained and experienced LEAN practitioners on Library staff

Reduce waste and extra steps by mapping and deeply understanding the current process, designing the ideal process and then an interim process (with immediate results). The team includes staff representing

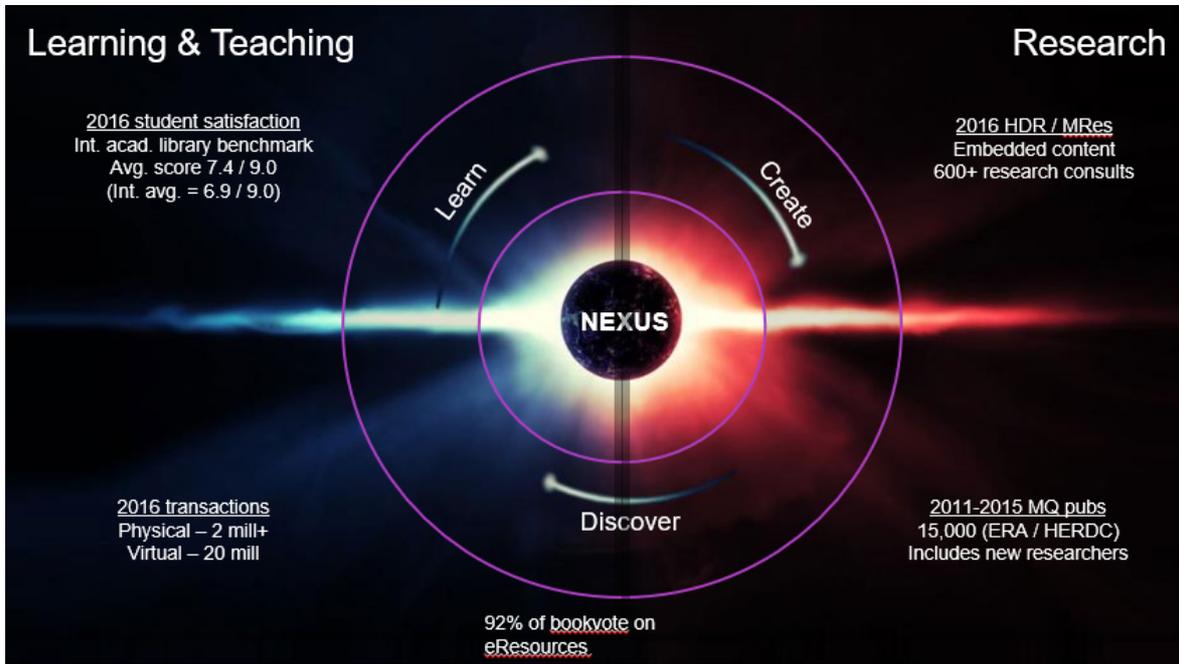


all areas that have a role in the process. Users are also interviewed and other areas that may impact the process.

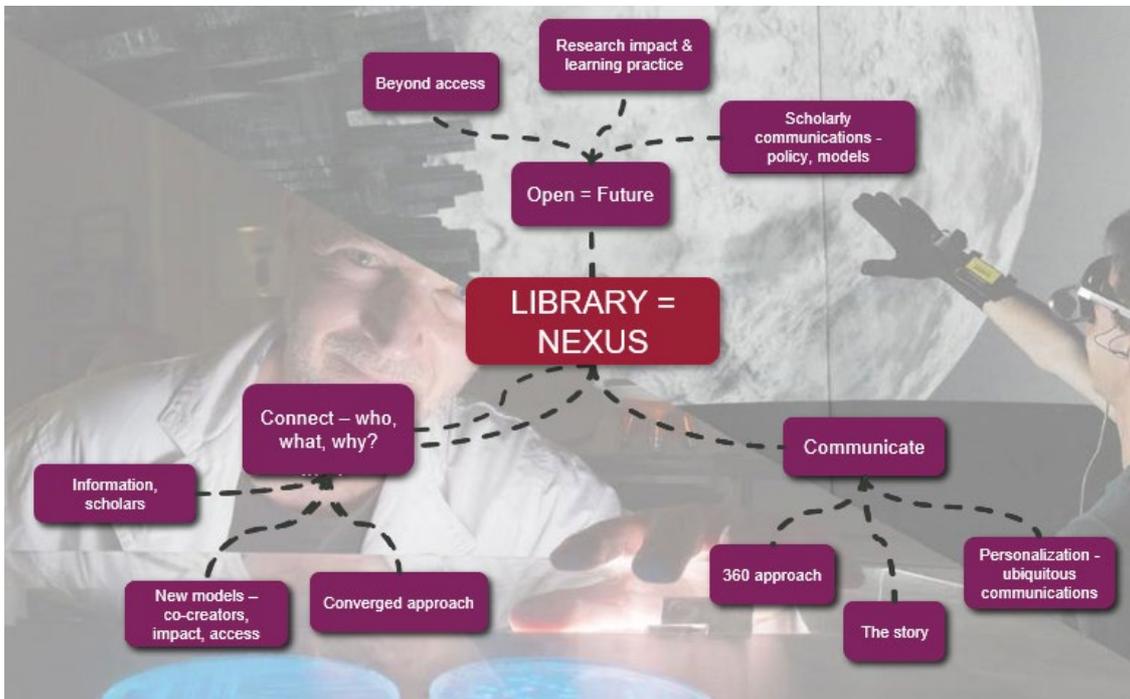
For example, with the first one (delivering the mail), we were moving books repeatedly several times per day. The team consolidated the efforts and reduced the steps to what was required. For queries, had great difficulty mapping the current processes as they were overly complex. The ideal process was clear – ask a question and get an answer! Two steps. We allowed key staff to do secondments and supported overseas training as well as local experience leading LEAN projects.



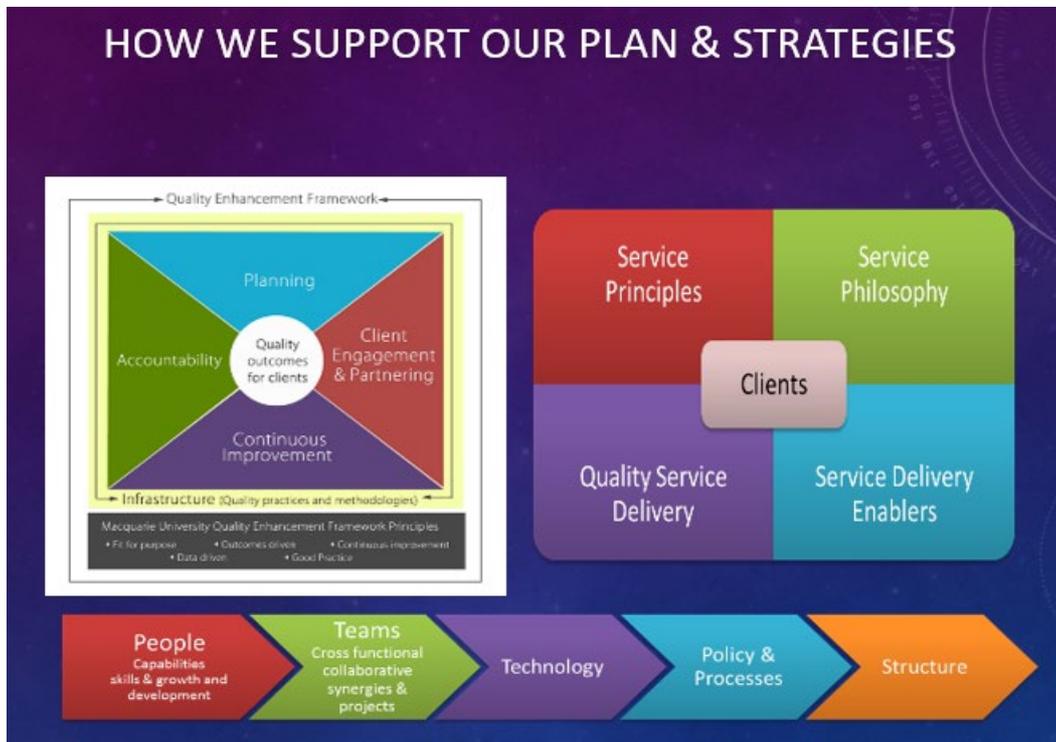
In 2013 the University developed a strategic approach called Framing of the Futures with seven pillars. The Library aligned our goals with all seven pillars. In the centre of the diagram are the Library goals and the darker outside areas represent the seven pillars of the university. For example, the library goal to enhance research performance touches three of the pillars of the university: culture of transformative learning, accelerated performance in discovery and innovation nexus. You can see all of the library's major goals align.



In the next stage, we developed the idea that the Library is the **nexus** to link Learning & Teaching to Research. The circle represents scholarly communications with a cycle of Create Learn Discover. All stages work together and are linked. The library helps to connect the learners, teachers and researchers.



We then developed the concept of the Library as a nexus connecting research and learning. Three branches called Open, Connect and Communicate help us organize our goals to serve as the nexus.



These two frameworks are how we support our planning and strategies. They are called Quality Enhancement Framework and Service Delivery Model. They underpin how we approach our activities.

WHAT WE DO MATTERS Program

This diagram represents the *Quality Enhancement Framework & Service Delivery Model* as understood by staff



We wanted every staff member at every level to understand how our models relate to what they do on an everyday basis. The What we Do Matters program reinforces our values, our teamwork and our quality service.

What We Do Matters (WWDM) - for every staff member at every level: Operationally; Community – local, national and international – tours in languages that staff members are fluent in (Chinese, Arabic, etc) – Indigenous literacy book sale – Harmony Day – Fundraiser for Village in Sudan – Library staff teaching how to write in simple English (refugees in Thailand); Inclusiveness; Welcoming environment – artwork, displays, events, in the future language (like New Zealand).

Staff – strategy and development



- Our profession and our staff
- Support for research
- Modern pedagogy
- Future proofing the virtual learning commons

Why have we invested in strategic alignment that includes developing staff skills around the various methods and approaches?

For our library profession – we need to update skills and services. For our staff – individually and collectively – we need to develop skills and experience.

These skills help us operationally and strategically in order to provide: Support for research; Modern pedagogy.

A key responsibility for the library profession in my opinion is that we must look at future-proofing the virtual learning commons.



Why EPIC?

- Flipped approach
- Agile, flexible, future focused
- Aligns as university strategies evolve
- Library-centric view of wider world of higher education
- Empower staff and partners



Our most recent strategic alignment initiative is called EPIC. At first an internal name “borrowed” from another university in Sydney, but then the name came to inspire us and we began to use it with others throughout the university and finally we are using it externally.

OLD – we tried to embed in others’ plans

NEW - Flipped approach where we start with our library views

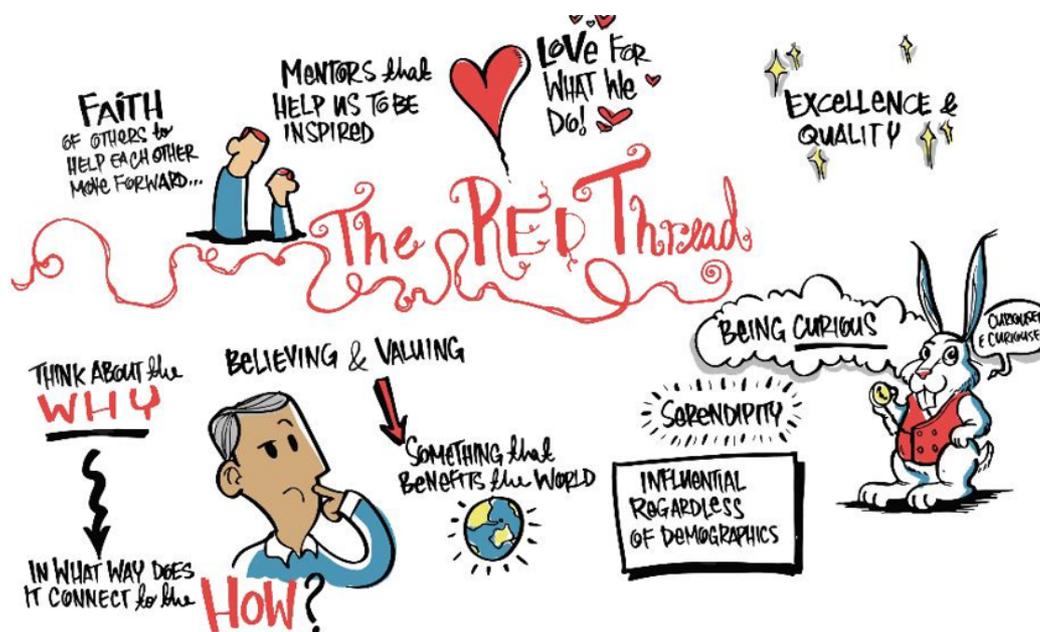
EPIC is agile, flexible, future-focused

An approach we can adjust as we go and as the university strategies evolve and technologies are invented. It is a Library-centric view of the wider world of higher education. As Library leaders, we need to empower staff and work with our university partners.

Macquarie University Library Timeline

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 1968 - Doors open (one first three buildings on campus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.1 One Library concept - 1.2 Cross disciplinary - 1.3 Interaction of scholars a priority <p>2 1968 to 2019 - eight University Librarians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.1 modern, progressive - 2.2 risk takers and change agents - 2.3 each builds on the foundation of their predecessors - 2.4 each has national and international perspective - 2.5 team approach, people centered <p>3 2012 - New Library opens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3.1 careful consultation and planning - 3.2 innovative in design and features - 3.3 first in Australia to have ASRS system - 3.4 comprehensive review of roles, structure - 3.5 new service model implemented | <p>4 2008 - 2019 - Continuous improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4.1 improving alignment to faculties - 4.2 service delivery model developed and refreshed - 4.3 PDCA/Lean implemented - 4.4 business process mapping - 4.5 refreshed governance and policies - 4.6 staff skills development - 4.7 refreshed roles, teams and structures as required <p>5 Ongoing - Strategic alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5.1 University frameworks for Learning and Research - 5.2 Framing of the Futures - 5.3 Research Strategy 2016-2020 - 5.4 Learning & Teaching Strategy 2017-2020 - 5.5 Library as Nexus 2016 - 5.6 EPIC initiative 2016-2020 |
|---|---|

52 years to now, significant milestones. It is clear that our history has prepared us for boundless possibilities, an EPIC approach.



The specific EPIC approach arose out a planning retreat where we did an exercise called The Red Thread. This drawing is what we learned from each other about our common values.

Please note the common value/skill of being curious. Very important for our profession!



THE TALE - THE EPIC STORY

So now I'll share a version of our EPIC story we have used with staff and colleagues externally.

The Journey Begins

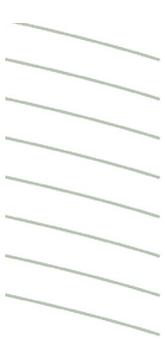
When something is Epic, it is heroic, monumental, ambitious, extraordinary, vast and arduous. **“EPIC is BIG”**. A famous French author, Andre Gide, observed that a condition of setting out to find new lands is that you agree to lose sight of the shore for a very long time. Not everyone is comfortable with this. At first, this is how it felt to some staff.

“This story is about Macquarie University Library and our EPIC journey.”



These photos that follow are where I live in the Blue Mountains and they help to illustrate the story. This short story (or abstract) is about what happened and is happening at Macquarie University Library – have we achieved Jim Neal’s* passion for radical collaboration? Jim is the Emeritus Librarian from Columbia University and recent American Library Association President.

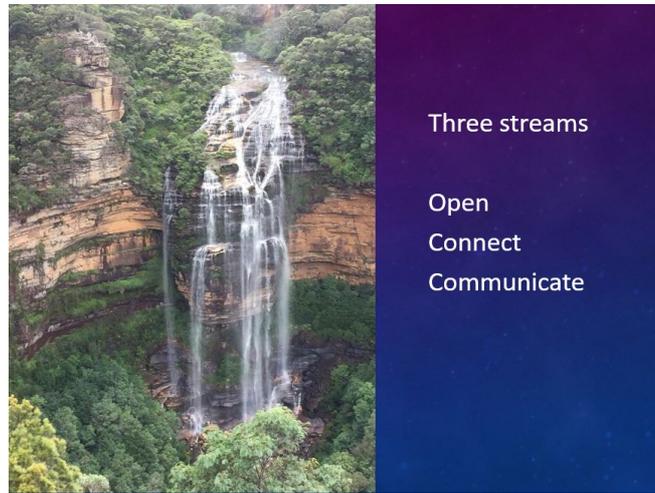
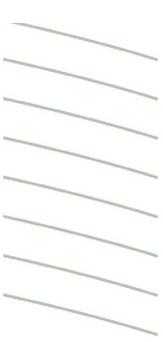
My idea which started with the staff was to flip our approach in order to take the university towards a more open future. This new approach puts the Library at the centre of the activities that matter to the university. **“It’s us, being us, doing what matters to us. It is looking at our context from a library perspective, rather than the other way round.”**



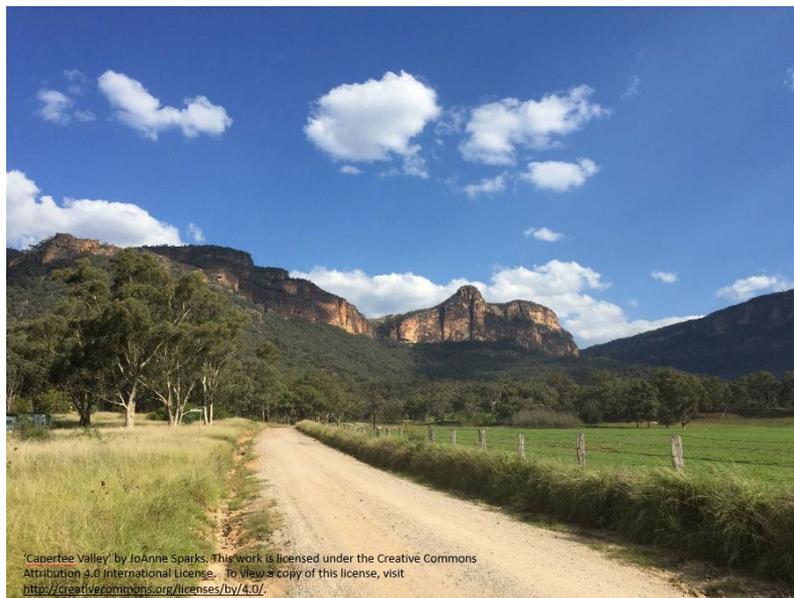
The aim is not to write a nice plan and then rest. Neither did we go off along an unmapped path. EPIC builds on the enduring strengths that have shaped the Macquarie University Library's story to date - centrality, adaptability and diversity. What do these terms mean? From its very beginnings, the library has been at the heart of the university. Over time we have adapted, have offered the services needed, and made everyone welcome.



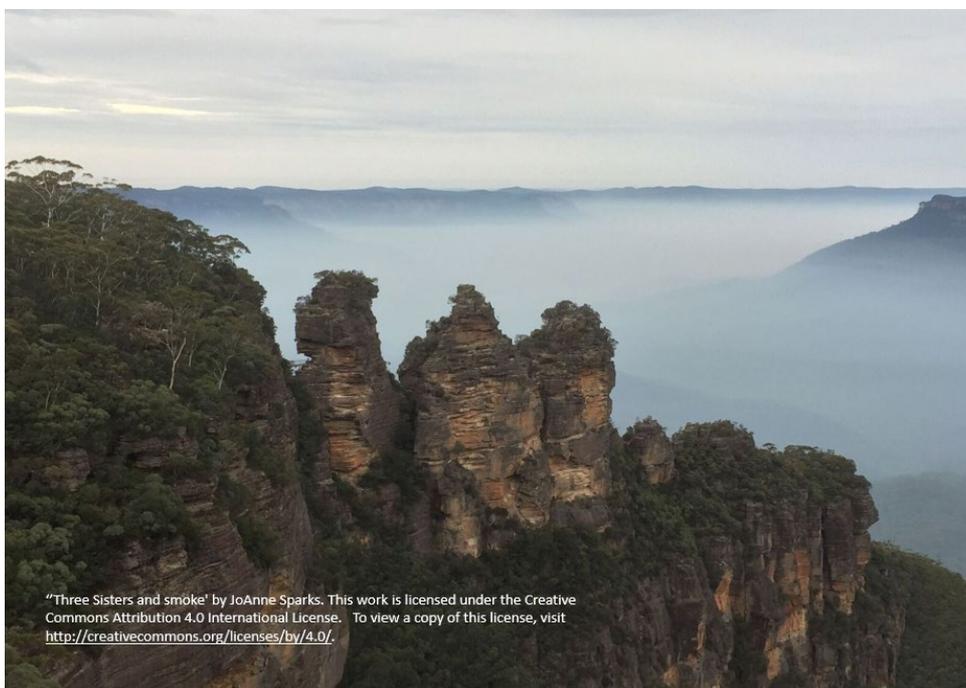
Our EPIC journey is about the future of scholarly communication. How does the library, with our partners, lead the University on these matters? EPIC is how we influence and have impact. EPIC takes a light-handed approach to becoming a smarter, more agile library and to being better leaders as individuals and as a library. **I do admit it was messy especially at first, trending toward anarchy. However, we agreed to experiment and try this new strategic approach to see what it could deliver.**



Lots of things happened quickly. Three concepts emerged: Open, Connect and Communicate. These concepts provided a way for staff to explore where the Library is now and where it could be. Together they make up the powerful vision that is carrying us forward.



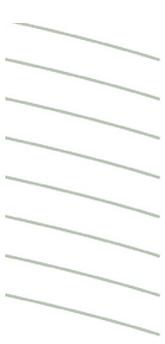
The streams overlap and intersect. **Open** represents the core of the Library's expertise. **Open** advances our shared professional values: freedom of expression, equality of access to information, and preservation of knowledge for future generations. **Open** includes our partners, and how we work with them to create new paradigms for scholarly communications. **Open looks to the future.**



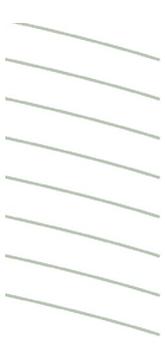
The **Connect** stream is an old one, based in the traditional mission of connecting users to collections and resources. In today's world we need to work harder than ever to make our services visible to the campus community and beyond.

Connect empowers library staff, students and academics and joins up people to each other, to ideas and knowledge. When we break down boundaries, we help people to see the perspectives of others and we build trust. We see **Connect** as a mindful practice, to support each other and grow relationships within and beyond the Library.

Connect also supports ongoing development of a learning commons for all sorts of information and content created by our university community.

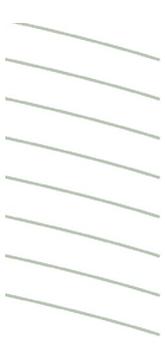


The **Communicate stream** is exploring new ways to listen to library users and to hear what libraries mean to them. **Communicate** also seeks to improve the speed of decision-making and flow of information within the Library.



"Clouds larger view in Wentworth Falls" by JoAnne Sparks. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

In the second year of EPIC, we introduced EPIC Strategy meetings, attended by around 45 library managers and our university partners. We work in small groups on strategic questions around alignment, agility and radical collaboration. **“Do we have new information to share from across the University to shape current and future priorities? Do we need to adjust anything, are there gaps to consider?** In this way, these meetings have become a space for us to engage in strategic dialogue.



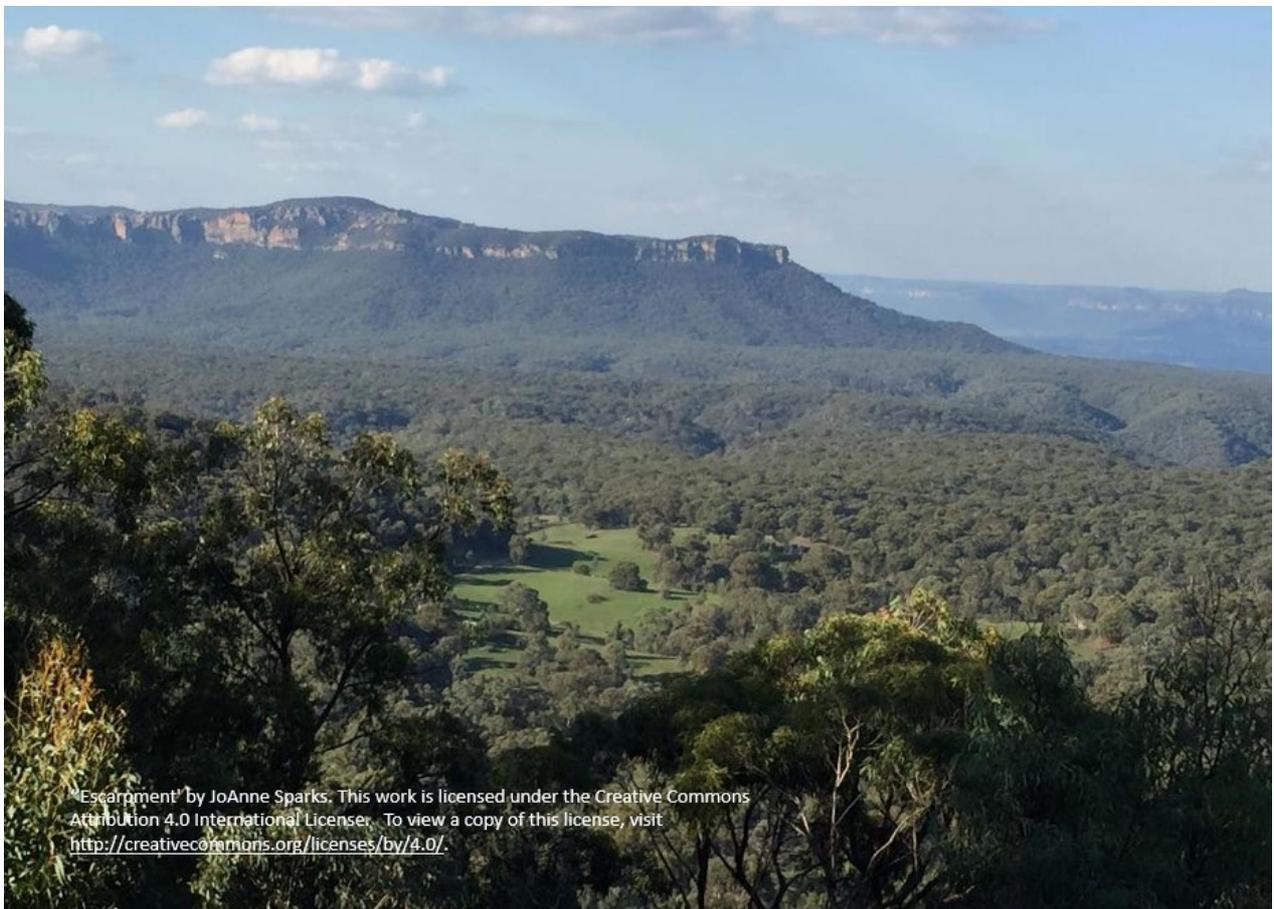
EPIC was an elusive concept for some of our staff. Many wondered – Is it a plan, a project, just the latest project being pushed by management? What does it mean for me, will I have to change what I am doing, how does it relate to my role? Will it add to my workload? How will my contributions be measured or valued?

In the beginning, EPIC happened outside of the regular pattern of meetings. It was not part of library work-group plans and it didn't have a budget. Staff could choose to participate. Lots of activities were generated but there were lots of questions too. Even as all this was going on, there were some staff who were saying, I don't get it, I don't understand it.

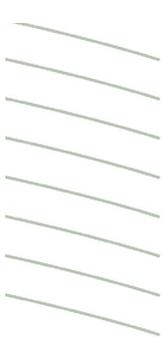


How far have we come?

We could see that we needed to link EPIC to the functional work teams. “So we made improvements, and we are continuing to develop in an agile fashion, not top down but in all directions.” We are now applying the EPIC approach to university-wide issues like our train station closure in late 2018.



EPIC is an evolving strategy. This is destabilising, in a number of ways. It means staff have to trust the method and each other. Most of all, we have to work together, listening, working on ideas together and preparing for the future.



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This photo is outside my house in the Blue Mountains at sunset.

EPIC stuff is what happens when clever library staff have the strength and courage to take risks, to be curious and creative, and to reinvent their core values for changing times.

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