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'ACCESS AS A SERVICE' – REFRAMING THE SERVICE CATALOGUE AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS FOR INFORMATION RESOURCES

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Abstract

As collection development and the management of information resources have shifted from ownership to access or to ownership as access (in perpetual access models) the traditional distinction between collections and services - as the basis for thinking about service delivery - is no longer a tenable model. This turn towards "access as a service" has also meant that information resources have come more to resemble 'soft services' in their attendant issues of measurement and value demonstration.

Previous input, or infrastructure, measures (volume counts, usage, etc), if not unproblematic in terms of demonstrating their contribution to University outcomes, were at least rigorous in having a shared methodology across the sector, providing a basis for comparison and benchmarking. As such they functioned as proxies for quality but were harder to frame as measures of service outcomes or success.

In the more ambiguous environment of new scholarly communication and access models the quality assessment shift is towards a more direct connection with the client experience. This paper describes Macquarie University Library's development and implementation of a client-centred service model for its information resources services via the development of a service catalogue approach using client 'I can' statements to scope the range of services and service outcomes. The Library's 2013 Client Survey comments on information resources provided context on client service expectations and a 'sense check' for the new service catalogue. This process has allowed for the development of new measures of success and facilitated the mapping of information resources services into service portfolios.

Keywords: access; information resources; measures of success; client experience; service catalogue; collections

Introduction

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there" (Hartley)

Once upon a time, size meant discovery and access (we give you lots, you will find something you want), growth meant responsiveness (we know you need to be up to date with new literature and changing discourses), loans meant connectedness (we know what is distinctive about our clients' needs), and serial counts meant research-enabled (real research carried out here; we have the 'back catalogue' and the recently published knowledge on which to build new knowledge, enabling our researchers to get published and our lecturers to teach an up-to-date curriculum).

But to put it like that suggests a distant past – not the present when our professional organisations still primarily collect and report on size, additions (growth), serial counts, and ratios of same to population (students and faculty) to produce rankings. These were – and for some purposes still are – our proxies for quality, for demonstrating the library's value-add of information resources to the academic enterprise at our home institution, and, via collections benchmarking, in comparison with our peers. These collection metrics were/are our proxies – even though along with them we have also recognised the need for mediation and training for search, discovery and access; and exposing as well as adding to, our resource base. And these collection metrics were/are our proxies even though "[r]ecent analyses of collection circulation data have revealed that as much as half of carefully developed print collections have not circulated for as long as data are available" [Jaguszewski & Williams, 2013:5).

But more important than what, or if, these 'infrastructure' metrics and benchmarking tell us anything useful about quality is that the distinction between the historical stability of collections – the "preselected stockpile" (Anderson, 2011:214) - and collections work (select, acquire, describe, store, and provide retrieval/access) and the ambiguity of the current e-environment is now so marked. Our research collections have long since stopped being "defined by local holdings, hailed as distinctive and vast" (ARL, 2012) rather than by the access provided to subscribed resources or other e-access ownership or 'just in time' models. When "the collection is everywhere and nowhere" (Horava, 2010:151), the turn to access affects the way we measure resources as service delivery rather than as infrastructure.

"You can't step into the same river twice" (Heraclitus)

In this environment, input proxies for quality at the macro level are becoming less important as they are increasingly harder to frame as measures of service outcomes or success. The new resources services are more like 'soft services' where production and consumption are simultaneous. The service provided by the Library is not procurement and description, but access and discoverability. Or rather, it is access and discovery *plus* choice *plus* help – in a context where changeability is the new normal. It is a moveable feast, and the management, communication, and quality assessment of our resources services need to operate within that understanding. It is a moveable feast whose quality –in terms of user outcomes – will be assessed on the success of its management and how we respond to, and enhance, the user experience of it. It is micro, rather than macro - and quality assessment is much more about the quality of the (individual) client experience and how resources services are framed as that experience.

Access as a service has two dimensions:

1) it is iterative, operating in an environment of ambiguous and unstable connections between discovery and access
2) access to information resources in the e-environment is not an alternative form of information delivery, but increasingly an alternative business model, one that is less about control and more about the management of scope, continuity, and risk.

The following table maps aspects of the new reality:

Old Reality Assumptions	**New Reality**
Stability	Moveable feast
Continuity	Ambiguous – publishers, third parties etc move stuff around; here one minute, gone the next
Countable 'information containers'	'Documents', 'packaged' and disaggregated
Benchmarkable in terms of numbers	Issues of data choice and validation
Understood match between scope and findability (eg small result count changes from search to same search)	Large, even massive, search result differences in a short period of time due to content and indexing changes
Library catalogues provide an inventory of best (ie selected for purpose) resources that support the University's research and learning and teaching	Library collections are serendipitous, large parts are legacy-based, and in the e-environment they grow in non-deliberative ways (eg Big Deals in journals, ebooks and primary sources)
System supports self-efficacy	Search self-efficacy supported but access continuity has to be mediated and management of the discovery/access connection is required.
Comprehensive searching is possible in local resources; done well = 'a good job of research'	'Good enough is good enough'

Satisfaction at the macro level – resources meet my needs	Satisfaction at the micro/transaction level – in an environment of change and response

Table 1: *New reality*

This new reality needs new ways of thinking about service and measures of success. In an environment where change is the 'new normal' it privileges a self-consciously continuous improvement approach.

Client-centred measures, service model and the service catalogue

The opening of Macquarie's new Library in mid-2011 was both the culmination of a series of interconnected strategies aimed at delivering a new generation library service and the start of embodying this into specific service provision. New Library planning – itself a product of developing a response to changes in client expectations and the scholarly communication environment – provided an "opportunity to revisit all aspects of our operating principles and practices" (Brodie, 2008:7) and deliver "a new generation library service that is client-centric rather than library-centric" (Brodie 2008:3). The goal was to "group services in a way that made sense from the clients' point of view" (Peasley, 2012:5).

Client-centric rather than library-centric

Throughout a series of reviews and planning for a new generation library service an understanding of what a client-centred model would look like developed alongside the design of specific services as these shifted from being client-focused to being client-centred. This iterative process involved the development of client-centred measures of success, a client-centred service catalogue, and a holistic approach to clients and their needs, captured in a new service model.

Client-centredness included principles and approaches around building design (learning spaces), organisational structure, and physical and online service delivery - all aimed at meeting client expectations and ensuring alignment with, and supporting, the University's strategic goals for research and learning and teaching. A series of papers by Macquarie University Library (MUL) authors has discussed the client-centric approach in relation to: Library 2.0 considerations of design and planning for the new library building (Brodie, 2008); organisational structure and redefining staff roles (Brodie & Martinelli, 2007); and the use of new technologies (Peasley, 2012). While the new building incorporated principles of learner-centred design, and the collection storage model - using an Automated Storage & Retrieval System - allowed "the focus to be on clients rather than books" (Peasley, 2012:2), the client-centric shift still needed expression in client need and service outcome terms.

Client-centred measures

Reframing success measures in client-centred terms was a first step in shifting away from only counting things (that the Library has or does, eg collection size, books reshelved), interactions (eg inquiry numbers), and workload (staff time spent) rather than outcomes from the client perspective. Client-centred measures are indicators of how well the Library is meeting client needs by:

- measuring outcomes rather than outputs and in a way that is relevant to the client
- reporting on things that the clients care about, eg showing how fast books are reshelved upon return rather than how many books are reshelved. The latter shows the work done by staff members, but it has no advantage for a particular client wanting a particular book or books.

The following table illustrates the approach:

General Statistics	Client Centred Measure of Success
Number of books reshelved	X% of books reshelved within X hours
Number of electronic databases available	Electronic databases are available X% of time
Number of books catalogued	X% of new books available in X days

Number of queries/resolved queries	X% of queries resolved within X hours
Number of orientation consultations for new academics and (HDR) students	X% of new academics and Higher Degree Research (HDR) students contacted
Number of reported access issues	X% First Call Resolution

Table 2: *Client-centred measures of success model*

Client-centred measures have the advantage of:

- presenting results in a way that clients can understand and that is meaningful to them
- providing a way to understand service improvement from the clients' point of view
- creating an environment to facilitate and demand continuous improvement

Measured alongside data captured for traditional internal and external reporting exercises, client-centred measures were developed for, and have been included in departmental reporting on, each departmental service area since 2009. While the growth and usage of collections, the use of enquiry services and spaces (door counts), and webpage visits are still reported and tracked (for planning, gap analysis, benchmarking, and value demonstration purposes), the new client-centred measures promote thinking about reach, turnaround times, service availability and resolution of issues, and 'closing the loop' with clients.

Service Philosophy and Service Model

A key piece in the move to build a client-centric new generation service was providing the foundation for "enduring change to both our service philosophy and our service delivery" (Brodie & Martinelli, 2007:2) via the development of a new service model. The *Service Model* is underpinned by a service philosophy and service principles. Critical to success are five key attributes that enable the service principles and the functionality of the model: client-centred; highly responsive; collaborative; cross-functional; coordinated and sustainable; evidence-based.

The Service Philosophy has five key themes:

1. Holistic approach to clients and their needs – responding to them as individuals as well as addressing their collective needs
2. Welcoming and client-centred
3. Empowered by self service
4. Learning together – clients and Library staff sharing a learning partnership'
5. Excellence in quality and innovation

Service delivery is guided by the service principles:

1. All Library staff members are involved in service delivery and must be able to interact directly with clients;
2. Client service needs are considered holistically;
3. Capability is enhanced by preserving and nurturing specialised knowledge and expertise and exploring opportunities for growth and development;
4. Services are grouped and accessed in ways that make sense to users; and
5. Workflows are end-to-end processes free of functional boundaries.

Client-centred service catalogue: 'I can' statements

A first step in developing a service catalogue from the client's perspective was to establish high-level client-side service outcomes: (1) access to information resources; (2) skills to find, evaluate and use information ("learning together"); (3) environments that enhance the learning experience. However, it was still too easy to revert to describing services in Library-centric terms as what 'we provide.' A 'eureka moment' in the development of the service catalogue arrived as part of the process of delineating the methods of service delivery (assisted or self-service) and determining the location of services throughout the Library building – *what* could be done *where* and *how*. These deliberations about client needs and behaviour produced the 'I can' statement approach to service catalogue description. Some indicative examples are:

Self Service	Assisted Help	Skills Transfer
• **I can** find information about Library events, services and locations (by using an interactive kiosk, picking up brochures, checking signage, checking digital information screens)	• **I can** get help and advice in accessing the right service (by having a staff member diagnose what sort of help I need for my enquiry)	• **I can** join orientation tours (by assembling at advertised start points and times) • **I can** improve my skills in finding and using resources (by attending drop in training sessions)
• **I can** look up items to see if the Library holds them and where they are located (using online tools)	• **I can** ask questions and get help with my assignment or research (F2F, or by using phone, email and chat enquiry services)	• **I can** access the Library's expertise in finding difficult or specialised items (by being referred to a staff member with specialised knowledge and skills)

Table 3: *Client 'I can' service statements*

Service catalogue and staff capabilities

Early in the development of the client-centric approach it became clear that client-centred service delivery was fundamentally connected to the development of a client-centred organisation. Client 'I can' statements have correlative staff 'I can' statements - if the client can do something, what do the staff need to know and be able to do? This then provides the basis for staff knowledge and skill training and the documentation of services scope, processes and procedures. A checklist approach to required knowledge and skills also provides both a useful induction tool and a way for staff to self-assess for refresher needs. Examples are:

Client 'I can'	Staff 'I can' (high level)	Knowledge and skills checklist: Able to:
• **I can** get help with my assignment (by asking for assistance at a service point)	• **I can** conduct a reference interview to respond to their immediate needs or book a further research consultation	• Provide direction on how to navigate the Library website to find collections and services information • Identify appropriate, and use, discovery tools to find resources that meet client information needs
• **I can** get advice on options for accessing an item the Library does not have (by asking at a service point)	• **I can** advise on options for accessing items not available or not held by the Library	• Explain the Holds (recall) process and assist clients in placing Holds via MultiSearch • Interpret item information showing a Holds status on a catalogue record • Explain the eligibility requirements and process for using Document Supply

Table 4: *Client and staff 'I can' statements*

Client satisfaction and the client experience

As is usual in the sector MUL reports on a wide range of collection-related data for internal and external ('mission success') purposes, and participates in benchmarking exercises with other academic libraries that track and compare collection-related activities and/or produce rankings within a benchmarking group. The Library also participates in a regular client satisfaction survey that benchmarks performance against importance to clients and provides comparative gap analysis. The *InSync Survey* has been used for a number of years and has allowed us to both track local trends and benchmark with other participating academic libraries. In 2014 we will for the first time be using LibQUAL to permit a wider international benchmarking.

In April-May 2013 MUL carried out its seventh independent Client Satisfaction Survey, using *InSync Surveys.* The surveys typically return a good and statistically valid response rate, including a sizeable percentage of respondents who provide comments in addition to ratings.

The *Survey* results are presented in three main categories:

- What clients believe is important for the Library
- How clients believe the Library is performing (top and lowest performing categories)
- Where clients believe the Library can improve (top gaps)

The last of these is used to identify improvement opportunities. Benchmarking – via placement in a quartile vis a vis other surveyed libraries, is provided. A wide range of demographic data is mapped to responses, permitting a more granular analysis by Faculty and cohort categories.

In the 2013 survey, of the resources-related factors, ‘online resources (eg e-journals, databases, e-books) meet my learning, teaching and research needs’ ranked second highest in importance and seventh highest in performance, while “I can access the Library resources and services from off campus’ ranked third in importance and fifth in performance. This is in line with assumptions about the importance to clients of anytime anywhere access. However a gap between importance and performance is identified for: ‘the items I’m looking for are usually available’ in both this and the previous survey, suggesting that – the convenience factor aside - clients still privilege actually getting the item they want and fault us if this is not the case.

A detailed analysis of 2011 and 2013 survey responses related to resources services has been carried out.

	Total responses	**Total commentators**	**Resources commentators**	**Resources comments**
2011	2344	1166	159	182
2013	3111	1800	412	475

Table 5: *InSync Surveys – 2011 and 2013 comparison*

Comment themes were tagged for analysis:

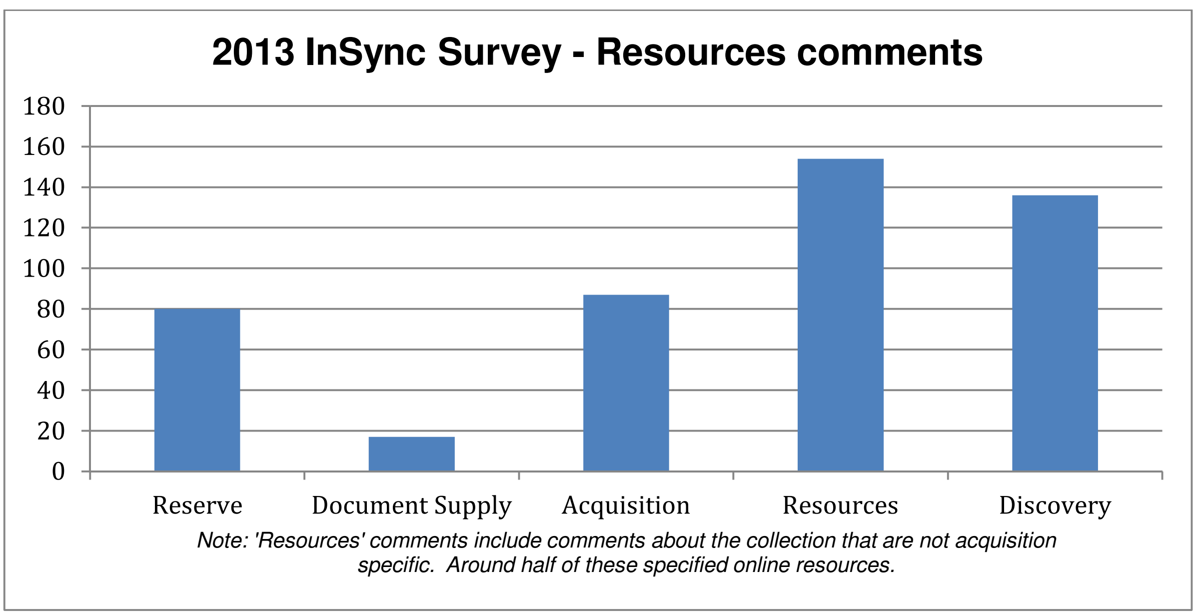

Figure 1: *InSync Survey – resources comments by category*

A dominant theme was the demand for e-resources (as positive comment on current e-holdings, or request for more), whether e-journals, ebooks, digitising older material, e-versions of course reserves, and commentary when e- access isn't working: broken links, and discovery that does not lead to access. Comments noting comparisons with other universities have become a feature, indicating an increased awareness of the university information landscape in a more mobile student environment. The overall survey ratings on the importance of e-resources and the commentators' focus on e-access match the shift in print to electronic usage, but seen within the framework of the client's satisfaction with the provision of resources and with his/her experience of it.

Usage and the user experience

All happy users are alike; each unhappy user is unhappy in its own way
(with apologies to Tolstoy)

The user experience is not usage, and an exploration of the vast field that is usage studies is not the focus here. However it is true that, for collection development and analysis, "[u]se statistics have changed the balance in how assessments are conducted, as they provide a new empirical grounding for decisions" (Nabe, 2011:13) While issues with data verification have perhaps hindered a move to benchmark downloads as a quality proxy across peer institutions, usage is tracked locally not only for return on investment-type analysis but to identify changes in the information-seeking behaviour of clients. This continuous assessment is as much a part of the continuous improvement landscape as more direct forms of engagement via focus groups and surveys.

Macquarie captures client feedback – whether through 'summative' client surveys, focus groups, or other feedback options – and reports back to clients via a "*You said, we did"* communication strategy. This approach has become a ubiquitous feature of the Library's quality framework and serves to not only close the loop with received feedback, but builds trust and confidence around responsiveness and continuous improvement. This approach is viewed positively by students and has recently been recommended for use by the student representatives on a campus-wide student experience review. A key aspect of this approach is creating, managing and communicating a sense of responsiveness and momentum around continual change and improvement – via a clear and readable message.

Organisational response

Implementation of the new service model has also required a more structural response in terms of re-framing services and service outcomes as these are delivered through departmental and team responsibilities and roles. Like many, if not most, academic libraries, MUL has an organisational structure that separates a 'Services Department' from a 'Resources Department' although many, if not most, services are described as, or in practice function as, matrix-managed, with cross-departmental processes and workflows.

A first organisational step towards the new model for resources services occurred at the time of the move to the new Library with the implementation of an 'expertise cluster' approach to organisational structure. What had been a fairly traditional 'technical services' department with responsibilities for acquisition and cataloguing became a larger Library Resources department with service teams for: collection development (monographs and serials), resource discovery, document supply, learning resources (Reserve/reading list material), and research and scholarly information (Repository and services around the University's research outputs). The new department would share: common issues in the management of increasingly diverse and complex digital resources; the impact of the new generation of systems, tools and workflows; and competencies around schemas, management of the scholarly communication lifecycle and new publishing models, and the provision of expert advice on licensing and copyright.

A 2013 review of the provision of information resources and associated services, and the underpinning systems and processes used by the Resources Department has resulted in a more overt framing of Resources as services. There have been two key elements:

(1) the Service Model principle that everyone provides services that can, from the client perspective, be viewed as end to end processes, and that all teams and staff engage in client liaising, intelligence gathering and report back has provided a philosophical underpinning
(2) shifts in framing from ‘back room’ provider of ‘infrastructure’ and inputs (physical and e-resources, activity data) to ‘frontline’ service provider with direct connection to end clients and other stakeholders, and with a service catalogue built around client expectations of service outcomes

Some indicative examples of this approach are:

Activity	**Service (client-facing - external and internal)**
Description (metadata creation) • Activity output: Records (Catalogue; Alma; e-Reserve/iShare; ResearchOnline	Resource discovery • Alma/Primo; iShare; ResearchOnline • Research Data Australia (RDA) • Other (eg Google Scholar)
Capture and storage (archive) of MQ research outputs • Theses storage • Activity output: ResearchOnline; RDA	MQ research outputs exposure (promotion and metrics) • Theses exposure • Scholarly communication advisory • Support in meeting Open Access mandates
Reading list material captured and stored in Reserve/e-Reserve • Activity output: Reserve Collection/e-Reserve (iShare/Copyright Collection)	Unit readings availability - Embedded access to reading list material/required readings Reading list management and advisory (in liaison with course convenors)
Copyright, licensing, and access considerations incorporated in acquisition and discovery activities	Copyright, licensing, OA (including mandates) and publishing advisory provided to external and internal clients • in relation to MQ outputs • in relation to acquisition, document supply, reading list material

Table 6: *Resources – Activity to Service*

Some of this shift is subtle, but nevertheless crucial. Enabling and managing it are organisational design and staff capability strategies, notably:

(1) a service portfolio and portfolio management approach – using synergies in service outcomes and workflows, common system/s and their roadmapping, responsibility for projects and ‘product, specialist knowledge and skills, and participation in communities of practice
(2) an approach to the identification and development of staff capability that focuses on client outcomes, with a particular focus on:
   - reframing traditional specialist skills in terms of their roles in meeting outcomes, eg description, subject analysis (metadata) skills re-framed in terms of their value to outputs (discovery, profiling, value demonstration) rather than as inputs
   - staff development of strong client facing and analytical skills that will engage academic staff, and capture ‘client intelligence’ for collection planning and decision-making
   - consolidating/enhancing licensing and copyright expertise and leadership – increasingly important for changing access models
   - enhancing ‘systems librarian’ expertise to maximise client benefit from systems that are fit for purpose and tailored to client needs

The set of capabilities required for resources services are not unlike those identified in a recent report for ARL on the liaison role: “capacity to cultivate trusted relationships with faculty and others, the ability to engage and thrive in the messy and ambiguous, aptitude for systems thinking, an ability to connect research and learning" (Jaguszewski &Williams, 2013:14). Following the review, a new Resources Department structure has been implemented as of 1 May 2014.

Conclusion

'All politics is local'

In 2006 Atkinson identified the reasons for building collections as: institutional capital, preservation, and privileging (Atkinson: 245). Library collections as 'assets' or infrastructure were conceived as a foundational part of the Library's and the University's 'value proposition.' There was an assumption that they had intrinsic value, separate from use. Even where, as at MUL, there is a primary academic responsibility for selection of material, we have always known too little about how much of these acquisition requests were for immediate, near term, or planned future use, or just investment.

The current focus on the good client experience is taking place at the same time that the provision of information resources is becoming more ambiguous, less predictable, and facing "challenges in creating an integrated experience" (Dempsey, 2012:4). The new scholarly communication environment no longer privileges the 'stockpile', but the 'collections' we build for our clients out of access and discovery should still be 'privileging' quality resources. To do this we need to "devise and iterate new business models, new services philosophies, and new tactics and strategies." (Matthews, 2014:23). We may no longer be the custodians of information and the gatekeepers of its access, but we can be custodians of *the good client experience* – one that provides access, facilitates informed choice, and provides help, both on demand, and as identified through our engagement and assessment activities. It is in this light that the current move toward 'less is more' may be seen.

The Heraclitus quote above continues: "for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." Our clients are shaped by their previous and on-going experiences and bring this to each new information resource encounter. It is up to us to do our own shaping of the access and discovery 'river' and build the necessary service catalogue and measures of success.

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