



Role of the information specialist at University of Pretoria in 5 Years Time

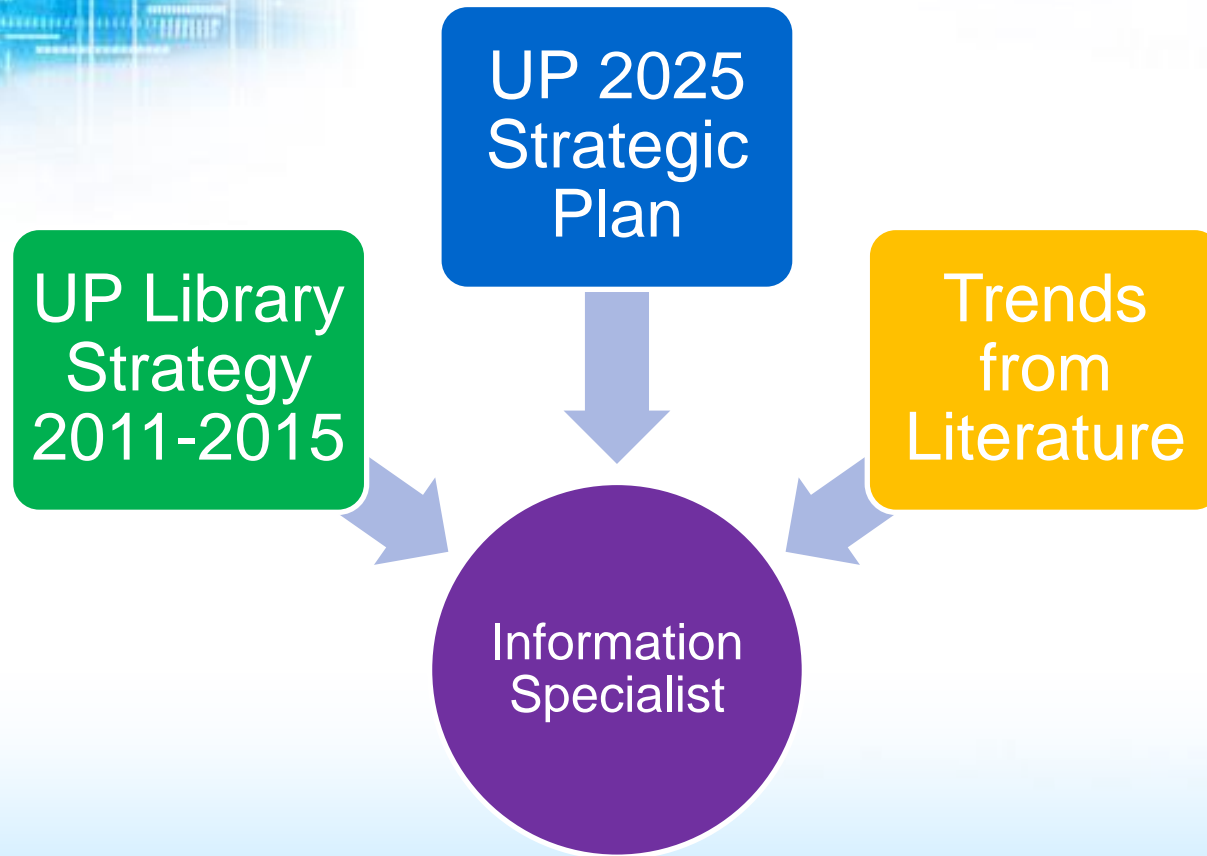
**Presented by Johann van Wyk at a UPLS
Leaders Meeting on 14 May 2012**



Overview

- Introduction**
- The role of the Information Specialist at UP currently**
- Trends/drivers that will impact the information specialist**
- New Role: Characteristics**
- Skills and Competencies that will be required**
- Roadmap and Navigational Markers**
- Conceptual Model**
- How do we get the Information specialist to the desired future**
- Conclusion**

Introduction

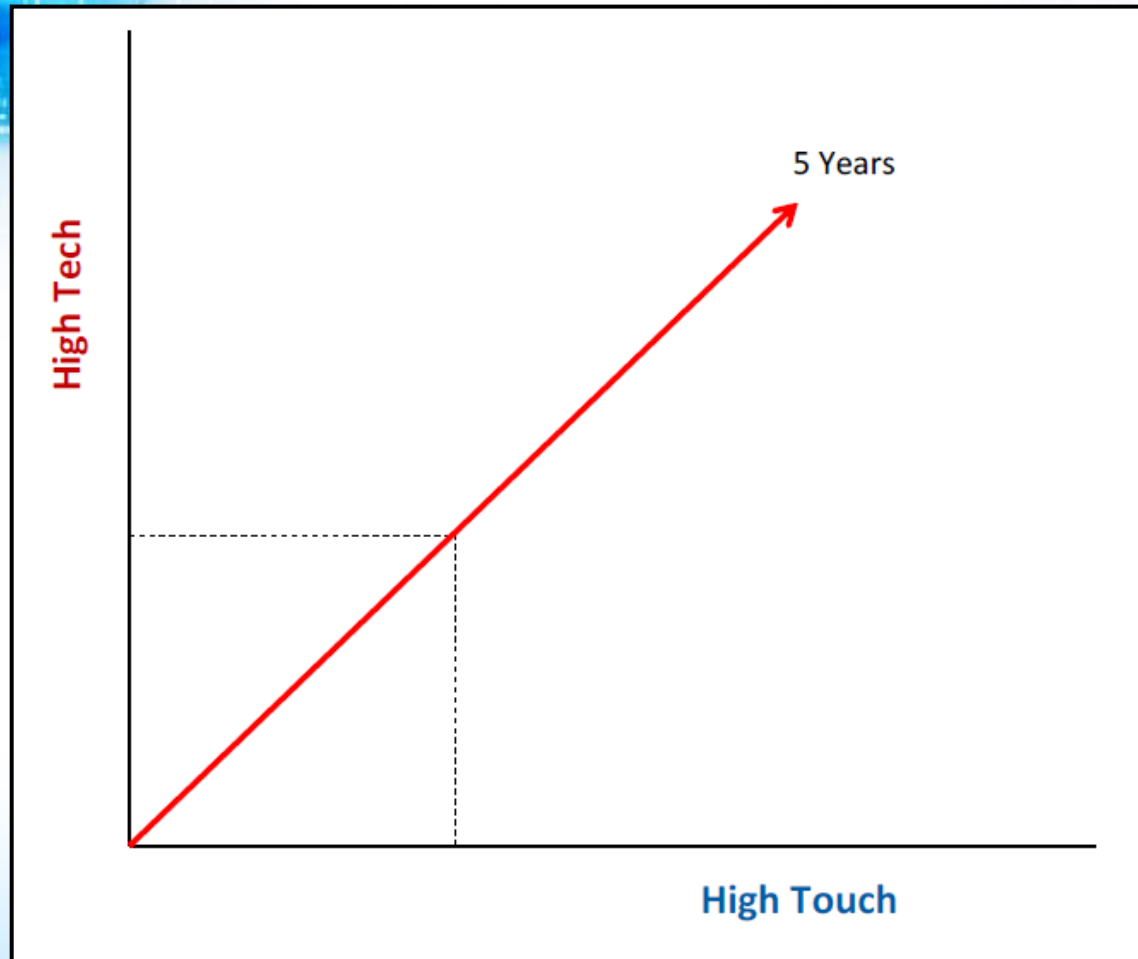




Introduction

Introduction

UPLS Approach





Current role of the UP information specialist

Core Performance Areas

- Information Consultation
 - Information Delivery
 - Information Resources Management
 - Information Literacy Training
 - Information Innovation
 - Create and Organise UP Collections
 - Marketing
 - Knowledge Management
 - Professional Development
 - Work Groups/Projects
-

Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

Web 2.0 (Social Media), Web 3.0

Much more involvement by clients

Mobile Devices,

Emphasis on Enquiry-based Learning

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Greater emphasis on Embedded Librarianship

Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

Increase in the use of online reference, or ask-an-expert services (e.g. WikiAnswers)

UP2025 Institutional Research Themes (IRT's)

Data Curation and Management

Need for products & services that will enhance the dual strategy (professional training & research) of the University

Virtual Research Environments

Advice needed on publishing in High Impact Journals, information on impact factors, h-index, Researcher IDs



Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

Changing E-Learning Environment

Massification of Education (Increase in student numbers)

Gaming

Diverse client corps (Age, race, gender, culture, language, disabled, disadvantaged, educational background, etc)

Virtual Worlds

Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

Open Scholarship (Open Access)

Repositories

Metadata and new cataloguing standards such as RDA

Digitisation

Increasing and changing client expectations

New Role: Characteristics

Embedded Librarian

- Much more embedded in clients' work processes and academic departments.;
- Greater emphasis on collaboration;
- Librarians will work with researchers more “upstream” in research process;
- Embedded librarianship in research setting may be project-based or programmatic in nature(Carlson and Kneale, 2011:168)
- Some Librarians will be part of VREs

Technology Savvy Information Specialist

- Experts in emerging new information technologies e.g. mobile devices, social tools, Virtual Worlds, etc.
- Information specialists will integrate these technologies into their work processes and services
- Train and advise clients on these technologies and how to use them to access the information they need

New Role: Characteristics

Ubiquitous Information Specialist

- Go where their clients are (Seal, 2011: 256)
- Deliver services and products where, when, and in the format the clients need it. (In the library, class, on campus, in the cafeteria, online, mobile etc)

Digital Collection Building

- Greater emphasis on buying e-books and building out e-book collections for different formats (e.g. smartphones and tablets)
- Creating products and services using social tools, or designing apps for mobile technologies
- This will be done in collaboration with clients (students and academics)
- Much lesser emphasis on building out print collections
- Some information specialists will be involved in digitisation

New Role: Characteristics

Information Literacy/Fluency Trainer

- IL Training **integrated within course curricula** of each faculty (curriculum-integrated instruction, enquiry-based learning)(Mavodza, 2011: 449)
- **Mode of delivery:** games-based and social learning approach, using face-to-face, gaming, social tools e.g. Skype and Virtual Worlds(Second Life). Other methods include Fun days, Treasure Hunts, Reading Clubs (which can be mobile) (Tiffen & England, 2011).
- **Content:**
 - information searching,
 - information sources in various formats: Web 2.0/social media tools, as well as emerging technologies e.g. mobile technologies
 - Issues of reliability, authenticity, privacy, and how new formats and tools impact our access to and notions of information
 - digital information literacy: include the ability to access, use, organize, create, disseminate, synthesize and evaluate information in digital formats (Walstrum, Garcia and Morrison, 2011).

New Role: Characteristics

Data Curation and Management

- Will work closely in collaboration with the data curation manager of the UPLS and with academic staff within the faculty, to curate (preserve), organise, and make their research data available and accessible for future researchers.
- As part of information consultation the information specialist will have to do data interviews with researchers

Skills & Competencies that will be required



Transformative/Entrepreneurial/Innovative/
Revolutionary thinking



Change management: change is the new
normal/constant



Listening skills – we need to become learners and
listeners not linear lecturers (Grant, 2011: 164)



Must be a team player



Must be a risk taker (Carlson & Neale, 2011: 169)

Skills & Competencies that will be required



Knowledgeable about the creation of metadata and metadata standards



Negotiation skills



People skills - relationship Builder: – must be able to build trusted relationships (Carlson & Neale, 2011: 169)



Crowdsourcing



Communication Skills

Skills & Competencies that will be required



Subject Knowledge



Facilitation Skills in a project team (e.g. VRE)



Professional knowledge and skills (Library and Information Science)



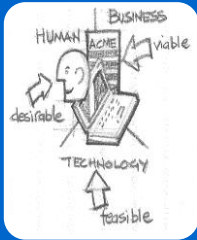
Teaching skills



Knowledgeable about the research cycle and how to support each step in the cycle

Skills & Competencies that will be required

Design thinking



- Put yourself in clients' shoes and create tools, services and products that the client wants rather than providing what the you (designer) thinks they should have.
- This is done through visualisation, observation, games, task analysis or immersion research (Tiffen & England, 2011; Brown, 2008).



Organisational skills

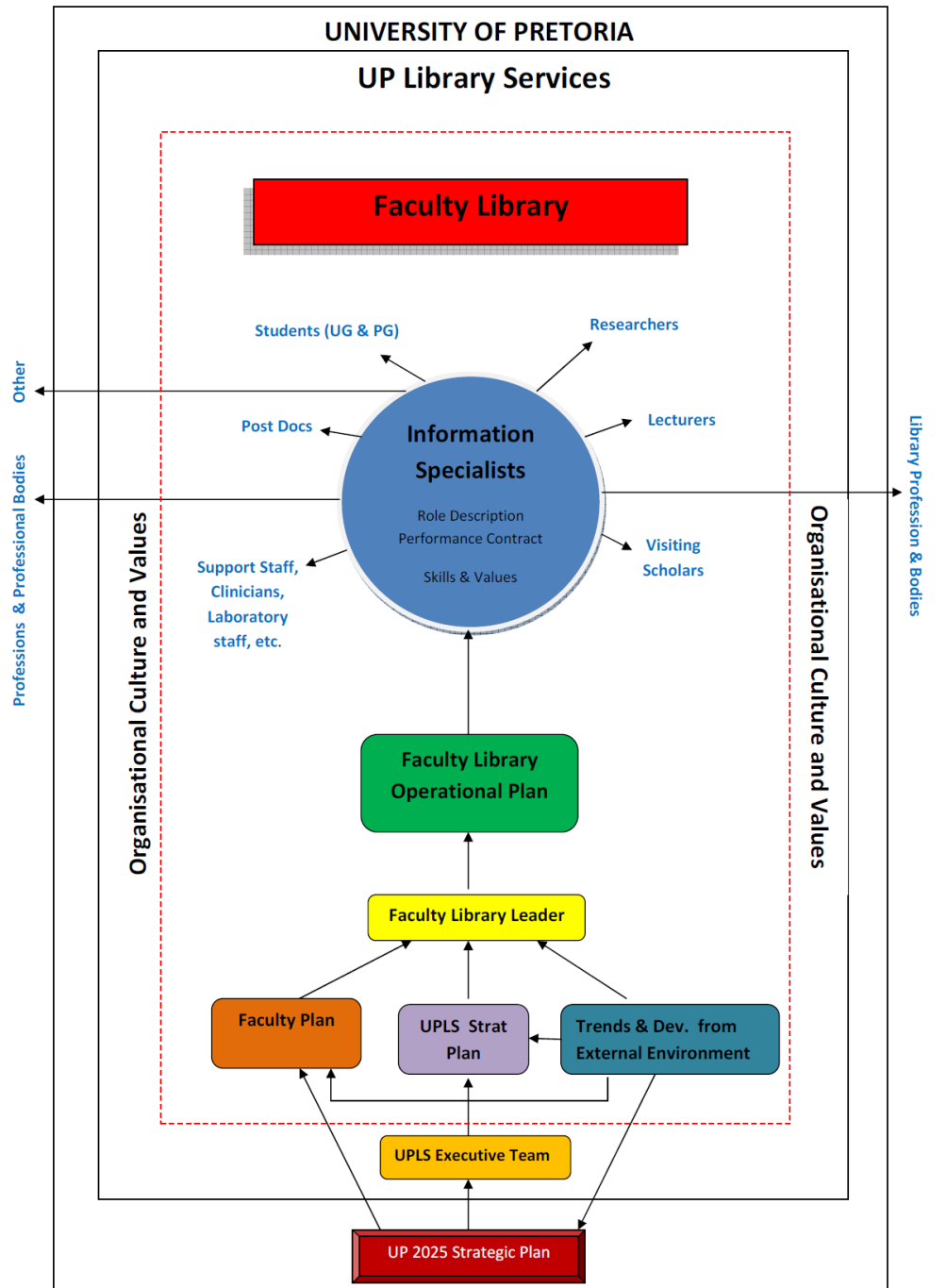
- This is an old librarian skill that will become even more important in the explosion of information in various formats



Knowledge Management

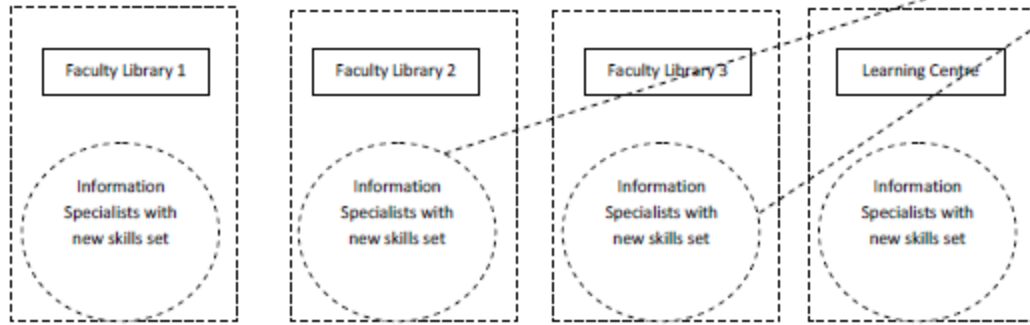
- This will become essential in interaction with researchers, project groups and VREs to help them facilitate their knowledge

Roadmap and Navigational Markers



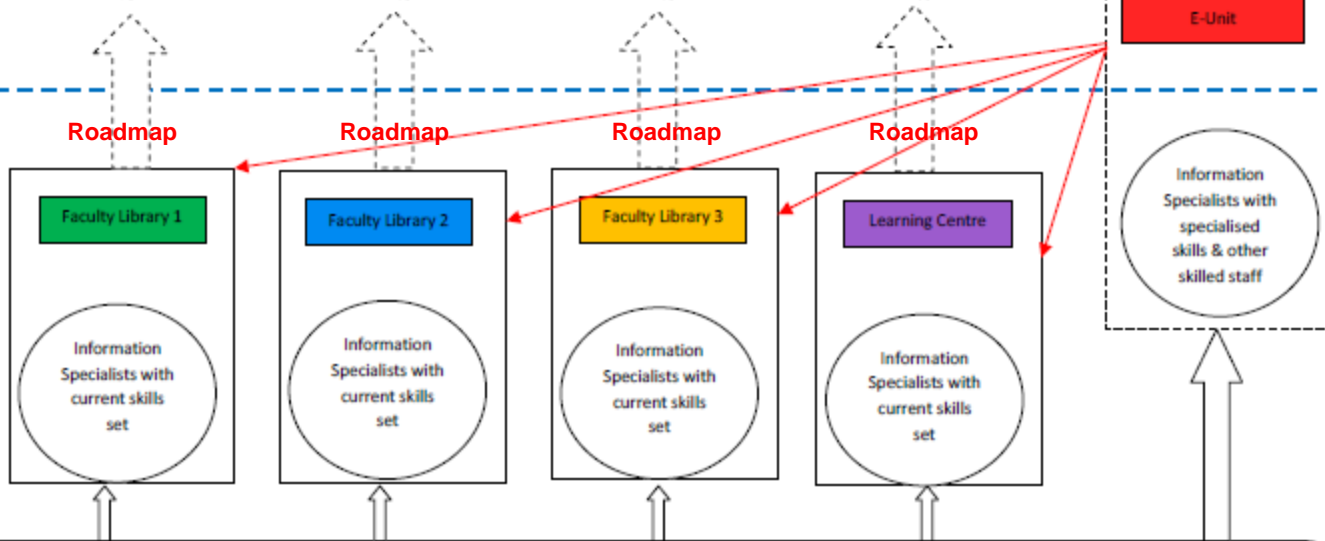
**DESIRED FUTURE
(IN 5 YEARS TIME)**

Virtual Research Environments, Enquiry-based Learning (can be interdisciplinary and can stretch over Faculty and institutional borders)



Communication Plan

TODAY



Create new thinking

DRIVERS

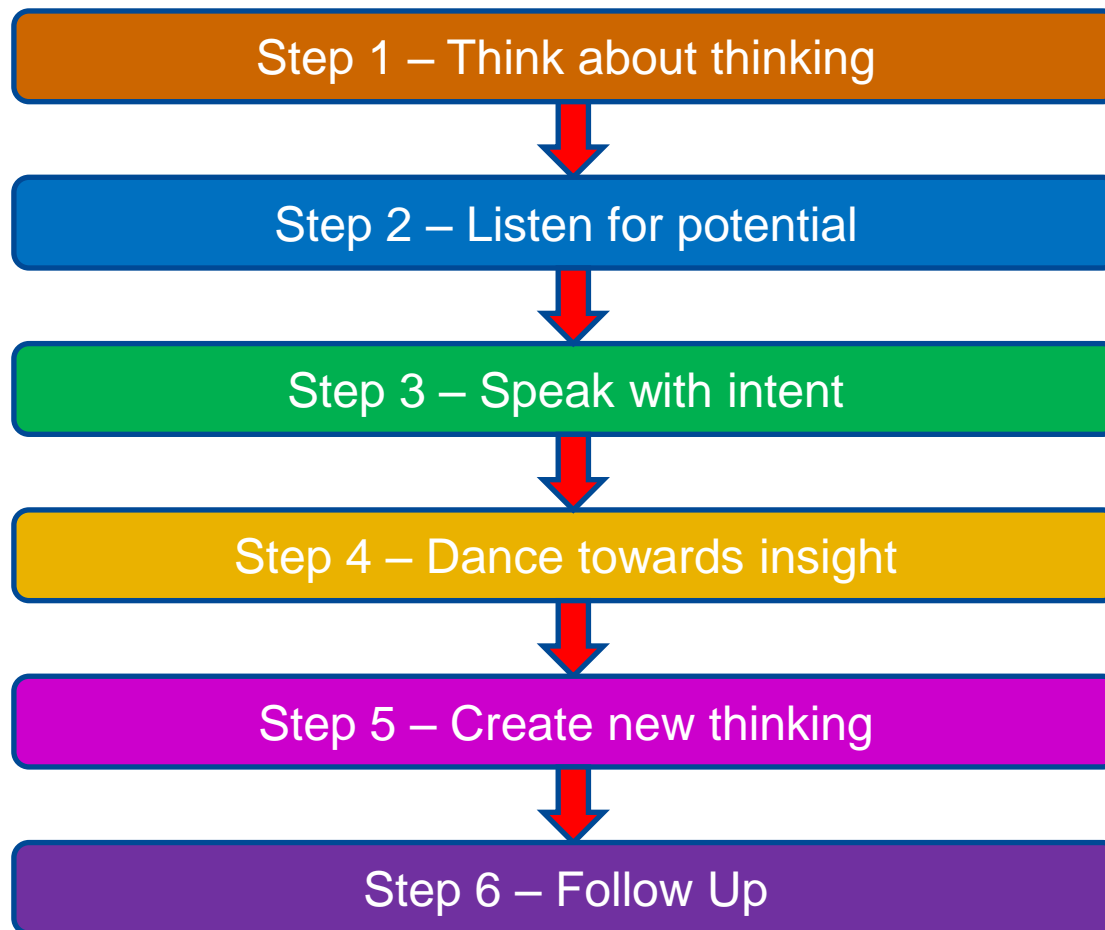
Increasing Client Expectations – Changing E-Learning Environment – Emerging E(Virtual)-Research Environments – Data Curation and Management– Web 2 tools – Mobile Technologies – Gaming – Virtual Worlds – Emerging/New technologies – Open Scholarship – Enquiry-Based Learning – Dual strategy of UP – Increasing emphasis on Embedded Librarianship – Diversity with regards to client corps (Age, gender, language, culture, race, educational background, disabled, etc) – Publishing – Increasing need for information literacy training – Metadata – Open Educational Resources – Digitisation – Digital Preservation – Advice needed on publishing in High Impact Journals, h-factor, Researcher IDs, etc.

How do we get the Information Specialists to the desired future

- ❑ **Performance contracting** with clear performance objectives aligned to the Faculty Library Operational Plan which should be aligned to the UPLS Strategic Plan
- ❑ **Flexible role description** which should be updated regularly to be aligned to Faculty Library Operational Plan
- ❑ **Communicating the Organisational Culture and Values** to all staff members, through dialogue, example etc. The organisational culture and values will create a safe environment within which new change can be embraced
- ❑ **Establishing a Communication plan:** – a clear plan that stipulates how these new changes will be communicated to staff and implemented, while taking into account, technology angst, fear of change, diversity of staff, background etc.

How do we get the Information Specialists to the desired future

- **Create new thinking** (from the book "Quiet Leadership: help people think better – don't tell them what to do", by David Rock)





Conclusion

We are at the threshold of the Great Age of the Librarians!

An exiting time indeed!

Looking at the UP Librarians in 5 years time, I see individuals who are highly skilled technologically, can think out of the box, who are innovative, who embody the values of the organisation, and who are people focused. The people in these roles will make the difference. We as managers will have to help them think better and different. “A thinking librarian will be the best resource in the library”.

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