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Pivoting to the Digital Era: State Library Victoria's Redevelopment

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ABSTRACT

In 2017, the State Library of Victoria commenced *Vision 2020*, an AU$88.1 million redevelopment that aims to transition the established 19th century Library into the digital era. Over four years, the Library's physical spaces, provision of services, organizational structure, and the way it is experienced by users were reimagined and reshaped. Like many other major public library developments internationally, State Library Victoria's redevelopment is a response to broader economic and cultural shifts shaping the public life of cities and citizens in a digital era. This article situates the redevelopment within this broader transformation. We draw upon interviews with professional staff and users in order to understand the contrasting ways digital technologies and a digital culture are impacting upon libraries and their publics.

Introduction

In 2015, Australia's oldest public library, the State Library Victoria in Melbourne, announced *Vision 2020*, an AU$88.1 million (approx. US $59.9 m/€54.2 m) redevelopment project funded by state and philanthropic investment. The redevelopment will open up forty percent more of the heritage building to the public, create 'enriched,' hybrid spaces for users to experiment with new technologies, design purpose-built quarters to attract children and young people, and introduce degrees of paid membership to the Library in the form of 'freemium' coworking spaces to support innovation and entrepreneurship.

Many of these plans echo the wider transformation of libraries internationally. They take inspiration from broader trends in the way libraries, and other cultural institutions, are seeking to relate to their publics in knowledge-driven cities where future prosperity is envisioned in the flourishing of digital innovation and creative industries (Leorke and Wyatt 2018; Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018a; Mattern 2014, 2007). Like other libraries around the world, State Library Victoria is responding to both the functional and social impacts of digital technologies. The Library is acutely aware of how social media,

Figure 1. State Library Victoria (Children's Quarter). Photo credit: Dale Leorke.

mobile devices and constant connectivity are transforming the way people work, socialize, access information and engage in the public sphere. These shifts are reflected in the changing composition of the Library's users and their patterns of library use. State Library Victoria recognizes the need for an institutional response to the challenges and tensions brought about through digital technologies. But its directors also see these technologies as a vehicle to enhance the Library's public visibility and augment its position in the cultural and economic life of Melbourne and the state.

This article is based upon a report we developed in collaboration with the Library documenting the findings from qualitative research of the State Library Victoria redevelopment.[1] The research examines the redevelopment at its inception, after being imagined and planned and in the early stages of its implementation (Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018b). It draws upon field-work with professional staff and library users to understand the visions and experiences driving institutional change as the Library pivots to embrace the digital era.

Fieldwork included[2]:

- Six approx. 60 minute, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with senior professionals, selected on the basis of their direct involvement in

Figure 2. State Library Victoria (ground floor information center). Image credit: Dale Leorke.

envisioning, designing and implementing the redevelopment (conducted between July and November 2017)[3];
- Ten 30–60 minute open-ended, semi-structured interviews with ten library users, recruited through the Library's website and the University of Melbourne's staff and student newsletters (conducted between July and November 2017)[4];
- One 20-question online survey of State Library Victoria users, circulated in on the Library's website and newsletter in March 2018. The survey attracted 224 responses with a 90% completion rate.[5]

Interviews with professional staff were intended to establish the practical and material dimensions of the Library's use and the functional intentions behind the redevelopment. However, as a qualitative study, we were also interested in the terms through which State Library Victoria is understood and valued. For Library staff and the architectural design team, this meant not only asking about the kinds of problems the redevelopment would address but also identifying the visions driving its transformation. In what terms did staff describe the Library's new direction? How did they envision its future?

Our questions to users in both the interviews and survey revolved around practical issues of use like frequency of visitation, the spaces they occupied and

the practices they occupied. But we also wanted to understand how these habits of use related to their lives as citizens, students and workers. What did they value about the Library as an institution? How did it contribute to their personal aspirations and participation in the cultural life of the city? We situated our interview data within a literature review of academic, mainstream and policy literature, and State Library Victoria's own internal strategic planning and user survey reports.

This article does not recapitulate the findings of the report.[6] Rather, our aim here is to use a limited sample of interview data – extracts from professional interviews, and three user interviews – to reveal a more generic narrative of how State Library Victoria, and libraries generally, are implicated within broader currents of economic and cultural change. In what follows, we situate the words and sentiments of our informants within the climate of technological and cultural transformation that is reshaping the relationship between libraries and their publics. In particular, users' experiences bring to light peoples' ambivalence toward digital technologies. In their mixed feelings, we see the importance of libraries tempering their enthusiasm for novelty and currency with the recognition that security, boundaries and continuity with the past are as vital in a digital culture as keeping pace with technological innovation.

State Library Victoria

First opened in 1856, State Library Victoria is Australia's oldest public library, the most visited library in Australia, and the fourth most visited library in the world (Temple 2018). In contrast to the typically moderate, predictable increases in patronage experienced by most other state libraries across Australia, State Library Victoria's visitation levels have risen sharply. A visit to the Library itself on any given day and user surveys provided to us by staff reveals that this is a thriving and much-loved institution, but also one that is at the limits of its capacity.[7] Director of Library Services and Experience, Justine Hyde, told us 'We have five thousand people a day coming through the doors. That will only increase post-redevelopment. We have about four and a - half million using our online resources' (Hyde Transcript 2017). The physical traffic is driven, in part, by a combination of increased residential occupancy in inner Melbourne, and the concentration of international students around the inner city (Fincher and Shaw 2011). For Hyde,

> . . . the library has been evolving, I guess, over the last decade or so from being a fairly elitist, impenetrable institution focused mainly on researchers and post-docs and academics to being much more open and accessible and focusing on new audiences like children and families, for example. Entrepreneurs is another space that we're moving into. So broadening out the audience and recognising that the demographics of Melbourne and Victoria are changing and responding to that change. (Hyde Transcript 2017).

In this dynamic environment, the State Library must play multiple roles. It must be at once a state resource providing access to scarce and rare materials; a local library for Melbourne residents; a workspace for students and a workforce fragmented by increasingly casualized employment and the impacts of the gig economy; and a touristic attraction for international and interstate visitors. This echoes the transformation of libraries in urban centers internationally, which must adapt their spaces and services to accommodate the 'creative,' 'smart' and 'innovative' strategies of the cities they serve (Leorke & Wyatt, 2018).

The architects of the State Library redevelopment, Australian firm Architectus and Denmark-based firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen (SHL), have looked to new libraries, like SHL's internationally renowned Dokk1 in Aarhus, and to other 'traditional' libraries like the New York City Library, as blueprints for the new design. But they have been more strongly influenced by a broad and intensive process of consultation with the State Library's users and Library staff, and with the considered brief developed before awarding the contract. In this sense, State Library Victoria's Vision, while resonant with international movements in library design, is equally a response to needs specific to this institution and to Melbourne as a city.

Library staff responsible for the redevelopment recognized that change brings risk and that it was important to respect the values people associate with the institution: that libraries are free and open to everybody; that they are safe places for people to gather and socialize; that they hold vital collections that support learning, connection to the past, and an informed public. As the Library's CEO Kate Torney told us,

> I think more and more it's harder to find the kind of space we offer, which is free, where there's no transaction involved, and we don't care why you're here. We welcome you if you're a homeless person looking for a bit of respite. We welcome you if you're an author writing the next great literary work. (Torney Transcript 2017).

At the same time, staff were aware that traditional uses, like quiet study and research, were beginning to conflict with newer activities and different forms of use. For Head of Digital Engagement & Collection Services, Sarah Slade, 'if you've got events in a space and you've also got collections and you've also got noisy activity going on, they can all clash, so no one gets the particular, you know, situation that's ideal for them' (Slade Transcript 2017).

The redevelopment will address these conflicts through the separation and zoning of spaces. Noisy, high-traffic spaces on the ground floor will be distinguished from quiet study zones in the Library's interior. Improved wayfinding will be realized through the clear zoning of spaces. And the Library will broaden its 'offer' to the public through purpose-designed 'quarters' which cater to particular user-communities. These include:

- Children's' Quarter with low tables for groupwork, spaces for play, and a children's loft with quiet nooks for reading.
- Create Quarter fitted out with creative media, 3D printers, mixing labs and post-production equipment, and soundproof audio booths for recording podcasts or music.
- Conversation Quarter for public lectures and presentations.
- Ideas Quarter, a resource center for emerging entrepreneurs providing information, programs and work-spaces to support start-ups and new business ventures.

Despite the public emphasis on these bright new spaces and facilities, the Library understands the redevelopment as more than just a pragmatic exercise in space management. Justine Hyde distils the project as an attempt to 'reposition […] the Library in the public's imagination':

> [W]e're moving from being an institution that's focused on consumption, so information storage and consumption, to an organisation, an institution, that's more focused on creation than just consumption … and a bigger emphasis on engagement, a closer engagement with the people who use the library, and a more diverse audience using the library.

This repositioning from consumption-based repository to creative producer is most obviously evident in the range of creative technologies and spaces that the Library has invested in. But it is also being expressed through the way the Library is seeking to contribute to Melbourne's creative and cultural economy. Torney described how the institution is aligning itself with the strategic direction of Melbourne's other cultural institutions by identifying opportunities for partnership and collaboration:

> More and more I think we are focused on not just doing bespoke programming but really looking at the events across the city and partnering with other organisations to make sure that we're celebrating a particular week that is being acknowledged […] or we're looking to Melbourne University to partner on blood exhibitions, or we're looking to the City of Melbourne to make sure that if they've got a major program happening – so that we're not just a standalone beautiful institution that creates bespoke experiences, but that we are very much part of the city, as well as servicing those that live close to us and giving people a reason to come in as well. (Torney Transcript 2017).

'Key outcomes' of the redevelopment convey this macro-scale reimagining of the Library's remit across the city and the state. It seeks to '[r]einforce Melbourne's position as a UNESCO City of Literature and reputation as world-class center for culture, arts and events'. It will support 'Victoria's education economy' and contribute to its 'tourism economy' as a premier heritage and exhibition space (State Library Victoria 2019). Here, the shift from an institution of consumption to one of creation is linked to the cultural economy and creative industries. Implicitly then, 'creation' is entangled with

agendas around urban economic development: attracting new markets to the city like international students and tourists; stimulating economic activity through supporting entrepreneurship and innovation. While a key component of the redevelopment involves maintaining the current values of the library as repository, safe space, and place of learning, State Library Victoria's broader vision also signifies the degree to which libraries are seeking to be significantly more than cultural institutions. As we have identified in other research, libraries have sought to retain their relevance in a digital culture and within a climate of decreasing investment in public services by aligning themselves with broader governmental agendas. In particular, new, high-profile public libraries have been integrated into urban renewal strategies and become the visible symbols of their city's transition to a globally competitive service and knowledge-based economy (Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018a, 2018a; Wyatt, McQuire, and Butt 2018). The strategies articulated by State Library Victoria's directors, while expanding the library as an institution, also put it in tension with its traditional values and with the expectations and associations of many of its users. In a small way, these tensions are expressed in collectively held anxieties around the library's perceived departure from 'the book.' As Justine Hyde told us:

> Probably the biggest challenge was this concept around moving all the physical collections out, and what that means if you walk into the library and you don't see any books. I mean, that's a tension for libraries everywhere. (Hyde Transcript 2017)

Libraries in a Digital Culture

The ambitions of the State Library Victoria are not unique. They can be situated within the broader contours of the rise of digital technologies and the digital culture they have shaped. Historically, public libraries have always had to balance divergent interests and stakeholders. Since at least the nineteenth century, they have played a role in educating populations and conscripting them into a modern public sphere (Bennett 1998; Black and Pepper 2012). They have served a range of governmental policy agendas, from childhood literacy to bridging the digital divide (Jaeger et al. 2012). And they have contributed directly to local economies by establishing commercial and trade departments and supporting emerging industries (Mattern 2007). Libraries have also been celebrated as civic landmarks, both symbols of community values of openness and universal access to knowledge (Mattern 2014; Worpole 2011), and signposts of their city's credentials as modern, liberal-minded, multicultural, and economically resilient (Aabø and Audunson 2012; Audunson 2005; Dudley 2012).

The rise of networked digital technologies has made the task of balancing these civic, governmental, economic, and community interests more complex.

As historical centers of knowledge, libraries have proactively incorporated digital technologies into their institutional model, expanding access to their materials while also attracting new users and new forms of use through targeted and diversified programming. But this transformation has also exposed the library to new pressures and stretched them to accommodate divergent, sometimes competing, needs and agendas. The new, 'third wave' of library redevelopment that is presently unfolding (Mattern 2007) can be understood in the context of two broad frames: the digital economy and the creative city.

Digital technologies have transformed the role of knowledge, from scarce resource to a currency at the center of economic development (Castells 2002; Sassen 2002). Libraries are directly implicated in the new ways knowledge is being generated, legitimated, archived and distributed and have positioned themselves as places that can support the translation of knowledge into new, productive forms. On the one hand, this has involved assuming an active role in reskilling people to take part in the digital economy through programs around digital literacy and bridging the digital divide. On the other, libraries like State Library Victoria – at the metropolitan center within a cultural and educational precinct – are catering to the tech-savvy elite of the digital economy, establishing innovation and entrepreneurialist hubs to support start-ups and future industries.

Concurrent with the rise of digital technologies, the transition of cities from manufacturing centers to service centers supporting the knowledge economy has expanded the role of culture and creativity in urban life. Urban policy agendas like the creative cities paradigm (Florida 2002; Matarasso and Landry 1999), creative industry policies (O'Connor 2016) and culture-led urban redevelopment strategies (Luckman 2018) have shifted the status of creativity from a marginal or elite practice to a distinguishing feature of urban life, used to attract knowledge workers and enhance economic activity through urban vitality and lifestyle consumption. Melbourne's status as a UNESCO city of literature, and large-scale events like *White Night* or *Vivid Sydney* attest to the way creativity has become widely distributed throughout the city, and a desirable feature used in civic branding. Libraries have aligned themselves with creative city and creative industry agendas. Increasingly, they promote themselves as places that support the creation of content. They have invested in new technologies, spaces and programs to stimulate new creative practices in a range of different fields (Jochumsen 2017), from running workshops in digital storytelling to hosting makerspaces, fablabs and hackerspaces (Torrone 2011).

Users in a digital culture

These two frames, the digital economy and the creative city, underlie how State Library Victoria is seeking to reposition itself through the redevelopment. But

our research was equally interested in what these broad shifts mean for library patrons. In what follows, we draw brief profiles of three State Library Victoria users and link these to some of the structural changes in work, communication technologies, and cultural participation that are changing the relationship between libraries and their publics. The intent of using these three profiles is not to illustrate a representative sample. Rather, we are interested in the way different user cohorts – from older, 'traditional' users deeply invested in the Library's physical and archival materials, to younger users, mostly international students, attracted by its free spaces for work and study – have been impacted by the economic and cultural changes we have described above.[8]

Digital disruption: changing patterns of work

Elizabeth is in her 50s and works in university administration. In 2015 she began studying part-time and now uses the library extensively. The Library's late opening hours make it possible for her to use it after work, and she particularly values having access to heritage material that is not available elsewhere or online. State Library Victoria has become her primary space for research, mostly because of its wide range of materials and because it offers efficient access to collections in storage. But she also finds studying here appealing because 'architecturally, it's just a really nice place to be, so I quite like that – almost that feeling of being in that traditional study space'. Her view of the Library is strongly influenced by memories of the university libraries she saw in Cambridge and Oxford. She recognizes that people use the Library for activities other than studying, but nevertheless, she regrets the amount of chatter, noise, the use of screens and social media that she sees invading the Library's spaces – even those reserved for 'quiet study.'

Elizabeth is also seeking to transition to a career where she can be more creative and expressive:

> I also write and direct theatre and stuff. So I've got a couple of writing projects that I would – which will be long-term. They're not short projects. They're longer pieces that I want to do . . . So for me this is an opportunity to, I guess, transition to something where I can – rather than coming in and delivering, I can actually explore and try things and learn and perhaps contribute in a different way in that sort of – I think they sort of call it an encore career. (Elizabeth 2017)

She has ambitions to do an MPhil and PhD and also hopes to develop her many creative projects and interests. The Library is one of the few places where she feels her dream of a creative life becomes a little more tangible and possible.

Elizabeth is one of several users we interviewed who reveal the changing patterns of work in a digital culture. Working lives are longer, often involving multiple, 'portfolio' careers, or multiple career changes over the course of

a working life (Portable Report 2017). People are intertwining paid work with personal, creative projects or study, and work is becoming more dispersed and precarious as labor is casualized (Sennett 2006) and mobile technologies and digital networks enable work away from a centralized office (Spinuzzi 2012). Policy initiatives promoting 'lifelong learning' and digital literacy speak to the way governments and institutions are attempting to prepare people for a more varied and unpredictable employment future. For public libraries, this future means that they are not only 'third places' providing leisure and relaxation away from work but also institutions supporting its transition – providing training, resources, and a comfortable, connected environment for an increasingly independent and atomized workforce.

State Library Victoria has actively assumed this role. One of the redevelopment's most promoted new features is Start Space, a center within the Ideas Quarter which will offer 'fremium' paid membership, coworking spaces and services to 'support early-stage entrepreneurs' (State Library Victoria 2017). Start Space is partially funded by a 2 USDmillion donation from businesswoman Christine Christian. For Christian, this service 'will take the fear out of getting started by providing access to the right support, advice and networks, which I know from experience makes a significant difference to a venture's success' (Christian, cited in State Library Victoria 2017). In partnership with the Australian Center for the Moving Image, and supported by the Victorian Government, Start Space will also host programs explicitly targeted at supporting 'creatives' to develop 'sustainable businesses,' taking techniques of the technology sector – where incubators, labs and accelerator programs help to foster new business ideas – and apply them to the creative industries.

Start Space was developed because State Library Victoria recognized the challenges of adapting to an entrepreneurial, post-fordist culture of work. As someone who expressed an interest in transitioning to a more independent, creative career, it is interesting to speculate whether Start Space could be a catalyst for this transition for someone like Elizabeth. We can note however that the creative industries rhetoric of Start Space projects a competitive, economistic model of creativity (McRobbie 2016; O'Connor 2016) very different to Elizabeth's more romantic ideals of an artistic life. In a national study of craft micro-enterprises in Australia, the authors found that despite policy assumptions that craft-makers all aspired to scaling up their enterprises into profitable businesses, many designers and craftspeople resisted pressures to commercialize and mass produce their designs. They valued the handmade, embodied nature of their creative work (Luckman, Andrew, and Crisp 2018). From these minor examples, we can see that Start Space supports a very particular vision of creative labor, one that is not necessarily representative of the variety of existing creative careers and career aspirations. While the Library's 'traditional' materials have always inspired creative production, Start Space exemplifies the way libraries are now responding in strategic and formal

ways to the shifts in work driven by the digital economy and the creative city. As institutions, they are seeking both to be at the forefront of these transitions, and to ameliorate the social inequalities they generate.

Ubiquitous technology: inescapable connectivity

Carol is a Chinese international graduate student in her 20s who uses the Library regularly while undertaking her degree in Melbourne. She distinguishes its 'quiet' and 'historical' nature from other spaces where she might study – like modern libraries or cafés. The Library's historic-domed reading room 'helped me concentrate' she said. 'I like the dome and the atmosphere and the very old wooden table and the green lamp'. Like many students, she finds studying at home challenging, 'so I prefer to go to a library. I feel more efficient when I'm in the library'. Part of this feeling of efficiency is linked to a sense that she can disconnect from technology in the Library.

> I don't really use a lot of the internet [at the library], because I feel that that's a bit disruptive. So when I'm doing work or study I try to turn the internet off. That's also one reason why sometimes I prefer State Library, because the internet access there is not as good as the one [at my university]. So that's actually an advantage for me […] if they totally take away the Wi-Fi I would like it better.

In addition to the study, Carol also conducted tutorials in the Library's ground floor Information Center. This was a paid service she offered to other students, advertised on community websites. It is a common practice, she told us, with other tutors operating 'like a small business,' setting up tables of four to five students in the Library's busy ground floor.

Like many of the users we interviewed, Carol's story reveals an ambivalence about digital technologies. They are a source of pleasure, convenience and social connection, but they are also distracting. Constant connectivity in the Library may have been useful for Carol while running her tutoring business, but it was enough of a disruption while studying that she sometimes wished she did not even have the choice to use it. By contrast, while Elizabeth was not herself tempted by screens and social media, she experienced the use of these technologies by others as disrespectful, feeling that they undermined the Library's sense of scholarliness. '[T]hose desks are quite valuable, in terms of space, they've sat at the desk and they can be there for two hours and all they've done in that two hours is watch YouTube.'

There is increasing recognition of the psychological impact of the inescapable nature of digital media. Social media and e-mail bring pressures of reciprocity and responsiveness into our domestic and private lives, further blurring the distinction between work and home (Gregg 2011; Turkle 2015). Mobile and social media use sits within a wider network of ubiquitous computing in the form of screens, sensors, and location-aware-networked

devices. These technologies are transforming our relationship to space, enabling more interactive and immediate forms of engagement on the one hand, and adding new forms of distraction and surveillance on the other (McCullough 2013; McQuire 2016). Libraries like the State Library are using architectural design and programming to manage the noise and activity that comes from media use in their spaces. But our respondents' experiences with technology indicate how libraries might also offer respite from these technologies, providing a rare opportunity for people to disconnect, concentrate and be present in the here-and-now of a shared physical space.

Implementing 'device-free,' and/or 'wi-fi free' spaces would run counter to much contemporary infrastructure planning, which centers on ubiquitous access and overcoming 'dead' spots. Yet our user portraits suggest that there is a strong opportunity for libraries to consider voluntary 'phone free' zones/ times – where users make a single conscious decision to disconnect for a period, so they don't have to manage interruptions on an *ad hoc* basis. This is supported by research on school libraries showing how students are struggling to focus on study. As networked devices become essential research tools, they also become constant interrupters as social media, instant messaging and e-mail vie for students' attention (Freitas 2016).

Cultural Participation: the 'rise of the user'

Paul is in his early 30s and is undertaking a PhD on representations of soccer in Australian literature. After an unwelcoming experience of the State Library in 2001, he has since reconnected with the institution to advance his academic research and pursue his interests as an amateur soccer historian. He uses the Library to research old newspapers, magazines, match programs and year-books, tracking the match statistics and history of South Melbourne football club and the Albert Park precinct where they train. This amateur research is a way of contributing as a club member to South Melbourne Soccer club. Paul is an avid Twitter user and draws upon his research to write his own blog about the club's culture and history.

> Well, I have a blog about South Melbourne which has been going for nearly 10 years now, so I've built up a small cache of followers. It's a very niche topic [...] it's all about the club and what's going on, the games, the culture, history. I try and throw in everything [...] and over time the writing itself has a sort of literary quality [...] and I want to see how that fits in with what other sort of literary attempts have been made with soccer in Australia. So I look at memoir as well, for instance.

Digital technologies have made it cheaper and easier for people to produce their own creative content, and to share and distribute the material they produce. Often described as 'participatory culture' or the 'rise of the user', this blurring of the distinction between cultural producers and cultural

consumers is shaping an expectation, particularly amongst younger people, that they can 'speak back' to dominant cultural narratives and have more agency in shaping their own micro-publics around particular issues and cultural practices (Grief et al 2012; Jenkins 2013; Wright 2013). When libraries embrace creativity and promote themselves as spaces of creative production, as the State Library is doing, they tend to invest in high-end creative media and facilities that would be too costly for the average person: items like 3D printers, recording studios, and powerful design software. But our user interviews suggest that 'traditional' materials, like books and heritage collections – used extensively by Paul and Elizabeth – are equally sources of creativity and cultural production.

Most of the users in our sample could be considered 'traditional' library users: they are 'consumers' of the State Library's physical and online collections or use its spaces for study. These practices do not exemplify the shift to creative use that the redevelopment is hoping to stimulate and support. Nevertheless, for many in our sample, the State Library contributes to a range of creative practices conducted beyond the space of the Library itself, many of which are directly or indirectly shaped by digitization and the rise of new technologies. Blogs, plays, academic essays, personal archives, journals, and academic research were often shared on online communities, or connected to other digital archives. These practices are forms of personal expression for our informants, but importantly, they also contribute to a range of social and cultural objectives advanced by government – like social inclusion, maintaining cultural identity and heritage, and creating a sense of place.

Conclusion

What comes to light most vividly in these stories is the contrasting ways digital technologies are perceived by the Library and its users. For the team behind the redevelopment, these technologies signal the Library's embrace of innovation and its institutional relevance to broader discourses of economic and cultural development. User stories on the other hand expressed less excitement or sense of possibility around 'the digital.' Rather, they reveal the profound ways technology is redrawing the boundaries that have historically separated the domains of leisure, work and social life, and with this, creating both new pleasures and pressures that require institutional support. These findings point to the way libraries might amplify their public relevance, not only by situating themselves at the vanguard of technological change, but also, by catering to the needs of publics in a maturing digital culture in which technology is experienced as at once a novelty, a necessity, and a disruptor to established values and ways of life.

State Library Victoria opened its transformed spaces to the public in December 2019. As people flow through the doors and become habituated to the institution, future research might examine how publics are responding

to its new spaces and facilities. Such research might evaluate, pragmatically, how well the redevelopment balances the needs and preferences of different user cohorts. But any future study should not neglect tracking the *changing significance* of libraries to publics and cities in a digital culture in which technology brings mixed effects and unequal benefits.

Notes

1. Leorke, D., D. Wyatt and S. McQuire (2018)*A Library in Transition: State Library Victoria's redevelopment*. https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2872126/a-library-in-transition-report.pdf
2. For a more detailed account of the research methods and design, see (Leorke, Wyatt and McQuire, 2018), p. 13.
3. For a full list of professional respondents, see Appendix 1. We used no interview schedule template for professional respondents. Questions were tailored to the role and expertise of each individual respondent.
4. For a full list of user respondents, see Appendix 2. For user interview questions, see Appendix 3.
5. For the survey questions, see Appendix 4. The survey was intended to expand our sample of Library user data. Survey respondents represented an older cohort of users than the sample captured by State Library Victoria's internal market research. Our survey cohort could be described as 'traditional' users, many with a long association with the Library, and with a preference for its physical collections like books and heritage materials. For a more detailed analysis of the survey respondent demographics and responses, see (Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018a), pp. 18–19.
6. For aims of the broader research, see (Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018a), p. 12.
7. For analysis of professional staff interviews, see(Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018a), p. 14.
8. For a full analysis of user interviews and the user survey, see (Leorke, Wyatt, and McQuire 2018a), pp. 15–23.

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Scott McQuire is Professor of Media and Communications in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. He is one of the founders of the Research Unit for Public Cultures, which fosters interdisciplinary research at the nexus of digital media, contemporary art, urbanism, and social theory. His research explores the social effects of media technologies, with particular attention to their impact on the social relations of space and time, the formation of identity, and the functioning of contemporary cities.

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Professional interviews.

Name	Title
Kate Torney	CEO of State Library Victoria
Justine Hyde	Director of Library Services and Experience
Stephen Sayers	Manager of Digital Experience
Sarah Slade	Head of Digital Engagement and Collection Services
Lucy Croft and Ruth Wilson	Architects from Architectus

Appendix 2

Table 2. State Library Victoria user interviews.

Name	Age	Occupation	State Library Victoria Use
Anne	60s	Student studying Medieval history	study; exhibitions; lectures; performances; family genealogy
Arthur	50s	Carer for his mother	archival research of West Ham United football club matches and statistics
Brigid	30s	Shift-worker and part-time student	study; exhibitions; borrowing
Carol	20s	International graduate student	study; tutoring
Elizabeth	50s	University administrator and part-time student	study; heritage collections; storage materials
Karen	20s	International student	study; journal writing; web browsing and social media
Martin	20s	Actor and model	research for theater performances; rare books
Paul	30s	PhD student studying literature	study; heritage collections, newspapers and yearbooks
Ping	20s	Recent university graduate	Study
Sue	60s	Retired high-school teacher	lectures, exhibitions, private research on French language and culture; meeting friends

Appendix 3

Table 3. State Library Victoria user interview questions.

Name and date of interview
Place of residence
Country of birth
Time lived in Australia
Reason(s) for moving
Language(s)
Age
Gender
Education

Appendix 4

For the purposes of the transcript, can you verbally state that you have read and understood the Plain Language Statement?

(1) How long have you been going to the State Library?
(2) What was your immediate impression of the space when you first went there? Has this changed over the period you've been a visitor? If so, how has it changed?
(3) How often do you visit?
(4) Why do you normally go there? What do you usually use it for? What facilities or resources do you use when you're there?
(5) Do you always end up doing what you planned or intended to do in the Library? If not, what distracts you from this?
(6) Has being in the Library influenced your work/study/leisure activity in some way? How has it done this?
(7) Do you use other libraries besides the State Library (public, university, etc.)? If yes, what are the reasons you go there, and are they different to the reasons you use the SLV?
(8) Do you use other spaces and institutions to do the same things you do in the Library? Which spaces?
  • Home
  • Work
  • Another cultural institution
  • Cafe
  • Studio
(9) What attracts you to the Library in particular?
  • The architecture
  • The staff
  • The books and specialist collections
  • The exhibitions
  • The atmosphere
  • The programs and activities
  • The free WiFi
  • The computer terminals
  • The design of the space – furnishings, space to charge your devices, relax, work uninterrupted.
(10) Are there particular qualities of the Library that you can't find anywhere else? What are they?
(11) Do you normally go to the Library alone? Do you ever meet up with other people while you're there?
(12) Are you curious about what other users are doing? Do you ever find yourself engaging with other library users?
(13) Which *spaces* of the Library do you normally use? Why is this particular space appealing to you?
(14) Are there areas you would like to use but don't? Why not?
(15) How much do you know about what the Library has to offer?
(16) Are there programs or activities that you would like to participate in? What would encourage you to do this?
(17) Are there any aspects of the Library, or your experiences there, that you don't like, that you wish were different? Can you tell us a little about this?
(18) How long do you normally spend in the Library when you visit?
(19) How often do you use some kind of device in the Library – a phone, an iPad, a laptop?

(20) What do you normally do on this device?/these devices?

(21) Do you use these devices outside the library for different purposes than in the library?

(22) Are you currently working/studying? Do you enjoy it? Do you plan to stay in this line of work, or this area?

(23) What keeps you busy outside of work/study? How important is this to you?

(24) Where do you spend a lot of your time?
- Cultural institutions – museums, galleries, cinemas, theaters, etc. . . .
- Restaurants/cafes/bars/clubs
- Parks/nature
- At home – alone or socializing
- Socializing out with friends
- Working out/at the gym/playing sport
- Community centers and local community facilities

(25) Are you aware of the State Library's redevelopment project? If yes, what are your impressions of it? How do you think the library will change because of it?

(26) If the State Library wasn't there or it changed in a way that you didn't like, what would you do with the time that you would normally be there?