THE READING AGENCY

Library 21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Library 21 is an R&D project which explores how, in a digital age, we can make the public library space the most thrilling place to go for readers and give the public access to an unprecedented range of digital content.

The project was led by The Reading Agency, supported by a Vision Group with the Society of Chief Librarians, leading publishers and Arts Council England. It was funded by Arts Council England, as part of its Library Development Initiative.

Library 21 research modelled a vision, tested it with stakeholders, and identified barriers to its realisation. This was done through surveys, one-to-one interviews, focus groups and desk research. Stakeholders involved in the research included readers and library users; digital technology and content experts; publishers, librarians, organisations working in adjacent areas such as the British Library, and policy influencers like Martha Lane Fox.

Library 21 establishes a strong need for a modernised, digitally focused library service with compelling reading services. This would help address society's literacy problems, and improve people's digital literacy and confidence. It would help bridge the digital divide, and motivate people to get online by offering them powerful reading experiences through digital engagement. The report identifies a growing public appetite for sharing experiences in a physical space and explores a vision for libraries' reading services which blends physical and digital reading experiences in the library building.

The project looked closely at how librarians and publishers could partner with each other safely using digital content to develop audiences for reading, with copyright protected. The work runs alongside any e-lending solutions that may emerge from the Sieghart Review. There was positive support from leading publishers for the piloting of new arrangements to share and distribute publishers' digital content in the library building, providing security could be guaranteed. This might take the form of a central repository for copyrighted content in order to guarantee security.

The report recommends a series of **next steps** including the securing of forfunding for *proof of concept* action research to prototype and test Library 21, in a manageable and controlled environment, with a small number of library authorities and participating publishers. It also recommends a strong advocacy campaign to government, injecting a reading for pleasure element into the current debate about libraries' role in providing digital support to the public.

Library 21 identifies barriers that are common to other digital work to take public libraries forward and recommends linking to the work of other agencies trying to dismantle barriers such as local authority ICT restrictions. It also recommends a concerted workforce development programme to address the digital skills gap in the library workforce.

Finally, the report identifies a major opportunity to create an action plan building on The Reading Agency's *Reading Partners* scheme. This currently involves 43 publishers and a regional structure across the UK's Libraries, supported by the Society of Chief Librarians.

1. BACKGROUND

Library 21 is a research and development project funded by the Arts Council to test a proposition which re-imagines the in-library experience for readers in a digital age.

It is led by The Reading Agency and came out of discussions between leading librarians and publishers about how, in a digital age, the two sectors could partner with each other safely and effectively to develop audiences for reading. One simple question emerged: "*how can we make public libraries the most thrilling places to go for readers?*".

A short term Vision Group has worked on this from October 2012 to May 2013, with the Society of Chief Librarians, leading publishers, Arts Council England and The Reading Agency.

The Group explored a vision for public libraries' reading services which blends physical and digital reading experiences in the library building. This would give the public greater access to a wide range of reading material and provide new kinds of discovery and reading experiences. The underlying purpose being to give every citizen an equal chance to engage with the world's reading material to learn and be inspired, and benefit from librarians' guidance on their reading journeys.

Library 21 also explored how the library and publishing sectors might work together in a safe and mutually beneficial way, with copyright protected. This work runs alongside any e-lending solutions that emerge from the Sieghart Review of E-Lending in Public Libraries.[1]

The group undertook research to model a vision, test it with key stakeholders, and identify barriers to its realisation. As a basis for the research a straw man proposition was developed.

"*What if we were to create a digital platform, accessible solely from within the confines of the physical library space, through which users can access thrilling reading experiences unavailable elsewhere? This would include copyrighted and non-copyrighted digital reading material enhanced by contextual content in*

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[1] *An Independent Review of Lending in Public Libraries in England,* W. Sieghart, DCMS, 2013: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/an-independent-review-of-e-lending-in-public-libraries-in-england

a range of multimedia formats. Librarians would use their expertise in curating content and supporting readers to facilitate discovery, experiences and engagement."

We conducted a mix of surveys, one-to-one interviews, focus groups and desk research. The key stakeholders included in the research were: readers and library users; digital technology and content experts such as Microsoft, Valobox, Jellybooks; publishers; librarians; organisations working in adjacent areas like Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), Book Industry Communication (BIC), Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC), British Library; and policy influencers like Martha Lane Fox.[2]

2. NEED

Work on Library 21 was happening at the same time at the Arts Council's work on its new strategy, *Envisioning the Library of the Future.*[3] This sets out a full picture of relevant societal trends and needs. Library 21 particularly responds to some key strategy areas in *Envisioning* and other reports.

2.1 Public Need
Many recent research studies show how much the public look to libraries for support with reading. This is seen as a completely core function.[4]

Literacy
For a developed society with free education we have a shocking literacy problem. In England 5.1 million working aged people have inadequate literacy skills; 48% of the prison population has skills below those expected of an 11 year old; 70% of those excluded from school struggle with literacy. If you have poor literacy skills you are more likely to live in a low income, smoking, non-voting household.[5]

A modernised, digitally focused library service is crucial for giving every citizen free access to reading materials, for improving digital literacy and increasing people's digital confidence.

Equality of access
There is a well-documented digital divide. 7 million citizens in the UK – the majority of whom are poor, disabled or over 75 – have never been online.[6] Martha Lane Fox notes: *"Those being left behind with technology are being left behind across many spheres."*

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[2] See Appendix 1; register of meetings.

[3] *Envisioning the Library of the Future,* Arts Council England, 2013

[4] *A New Chapter – Public Library Services in the 21st Century,* Carnegie, 2012, *What do the Public Want from Libraries?* Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2010) and, *Envisioning the Library of the Future* http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120215211132/research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/what_public_want_from_libraries_practitioner_guide_0112bl2_2010.pdf

[5] National Literacy Trust, *Literacy changes lives* (Sept, 2008) and Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley briefings prison fact file* (Dec, 2010)

[6] Internet Access Quarterly, ONS; http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_300874.pdf

[7] The Guardian: http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/dec/10/uk-lost-200-libraries-2012

UK public libraries have 4,265 physical spaces in every kind of community and are uniquely placed to address issues of access whilst also delivering a new kind of discovery and reading experience for users.[7]

Library 21 gives people the chance to access content which would otherwise be unavailable to them unless they buy the book. For many this is not an option because of digital or financial exclusion – the proportion of the UK population without a credit card is 50%.[8] Many people have no local bookshop; libraries give them easy access to books, and the chance to try something different in a community space staffed by trusted guides.[9]

2.2 Government

National and local government are increasingly aiming to move citizens' contact with government online and to upgrade Britain's digital skills and capacity.[10]

A modernised library system has a key role to play. The public discourse has tended to focus on libraries' role in offering every citizen equal access to digital technology, helping build people's digital literacy skills and supporting those claiming benefits on line. Library 21 adds a further, compelling dimension because it will help get people online by involving them in motivational, joyful reading experiences through digital engagement.

2.3 Libraries

The public library sector is acutely aware of the need to modernise the services available in the library space and take advantage of the digital shift; it is taking steps to do so. There has been a significant increase in visits to library websites over the last seven years [11] and shared digital platforms such as the Summer Reading Challenge's *Booksorter* are creating exciting new crowd sourced reading recommendation approaches from library users across the UK. The new Birmingham Library opening in 2013 will offer the public a range of powerful digital services.[12]

Future library strategy is focusing on working collectively to offer the public better services. The Society of Chief Librarians has launched four "national offers" with The Reading Agency, including a Universal Reading Offer which aims to capitalise on significant growth trends such as the rise in children's book borrowing for the past eight years. [13]

At the same time, visits to physical libraries have declined over the last 7 years [14] and reductions to library budgets are resulting in closures, shrinking resources and de-skilling.[15]

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[8] UK Cards Association, Card expenditure statistics (March 2013)
[9] http://www.goscl.com/survey-reveals-librarians-second-only-to-doctors-in-publics-trust/
[10] The Cabinet Office, Digital Britain 2 (March, 2013) *Digital Britain 2,* The Cabinet Office, 2013
[11] Taking Part Statistical Release , DCMS(2012-13):
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78297/Taking_Part_2012_13_Quarter_2_Report.pdf
[12] http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/digitallibrary.
[13] UK Annual Libraries Survey, The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA, 2012)
[14] Taking Part Statistical Release (Q2 2012-13):
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78297/Taking_Part_2012_13_Quarter_2_Report.pdf

In Library 21's research there was much discussion about how libraries can best respond to people's changing behaviours in searching, accessing, and connecting to knowledge and entertainment. There was a big welcome for the Library 21 idea of working differently with publishers to offer the public an unprecedentedly rich combination of digital and physical reading experiences in the library building.

Mobile access to the internet more than doubled between 2010 and 2012 to 51%. The UK has high levels of social media penetration with 48% of all adults – and 87% of 16-24 year olds - using social networking sites in 2012.[16] E-book penetration of the UK market continues to grow with e-books estimated to account for 13-14% in volume and 12% of publishers' total digital sales.[17]

There was also discussion about libraries' unique offer to the public, at a time when retailers such as Waterstones are delivering library-type services through its in-store digital reading service. Store visitors can read books on their Kindle free of charge and have free tutorials on how to use Kindle devices. [18]

The research suggests that the idea that technology will simply replace physical spaces and experiences is waning. The Arts Council's *Envisioning* research highlights the library space in the community as a critical future priority.[19] Library 21 would help libraries develop their role as a 'third space' - a space which is neither home nor work, one where people can gather, work, or simply decompress. The *#FutureFoyles* report identifies this as an opportunity for bookshops,[20] and other trends, such as increased engagement in the literary festivals, music gigs, museums and galleries, indicate a growing public appetite for sharing experiences in a physical space. [21] Digital technologies can excitingly enhance the experience of physical spaces through technologies like Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and Near Field Communication (NFC) and in-building GPS to create new ways of navigating the physical space and collections.

2.4 Publishers and authors

The research found strong views amongst publishers that they, and authors, need a thriving, modernised library service as a shop window for a wide range of books and reading content. The term 'discoverability' is now key to publishers' drive to change their business models, and libraries, with their 306.5 million visits a year[22] offer an enhanced discovery channel through which they can connect with millions of readers. Libraries' rich data offers the potential for all parties to gain greater insight into people's reading and borrowing behaviour and shape services accordingly.

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[15] Public Library News: http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/
[16] Internet Access Report, ONS, 2013: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rdit2/internet-access---households-and-individuals/2012-part-2/index.html
[17] Publishers Association yearbook, 2012.
[18] See appendix 2: Case Studies
[19] Arts Council England, *Envisioning the library of the future.* (May, 2013)
[20] FutureFoyles, The Bookseller (insert date) : http://www.foyles.co.uk/cms-uploaded/FutureFoyles.pdf
[21] Taking Part Statistical Release, DCMS, 2012-13: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/77537/Taking-Part_2012-13_Quarter-1_Report.pdf
[22] UK Annual Libraries Survey, CIPFA. 2012

The recession and technology-driven disruption is resulting in bookshop closures[23], which is having an impact on book sales and discovery. Recent estimates suggest that "*when a bookshop closes about a third of its sales transfer to another bookshop. This means as much as two thirds of sales disappear. Some of this spend doubtless migrates online; but much of it vanishes from the book sector entirely*"[24] and places the 'discovery' value of bookshops at £450 million.[25]

3. IMAGINE IF: LIBRARY 21 in PRACTICE

Families…

Harpreet 40, and Rajah, her twelve year old son, go to their local library on a rainy Saturday afternoon. Rajah is here for a comics workshop led by a young member of the library team. They are creating a comic based on Colin Meloy's Wildwood. Their comics will be featured on the library's website and the display screen in the graphic novel zone. The author is going to feature his favourite on his website and social media channels.

Making their way to the workshop, Harpreet and Rajah walk through the 'recommended reads' with reviews of the books, and past a display screen featuring a Poetry Day take-over. Poems scroll up on screen, themed according to the time of day, and are interspersed with a touch screen game inviting visitors to guess the next line of a famous poem. They pass a family gathered around a multi-touch screen. A librarian is helping them pull up records and images from the local history archive to create a story of their street which they can email themselves, and share with friends via social media.

At the top of the stairs a librarian is holding an informal 'how to' session on the e-reading and tablet devices that users can now borrow for use in the library.

With Rajah at the workshop Harpreet has time to think about what to read now she's finished *Gone Girl.* Pulling a smartphone from her bag and connecting to the library's WIFI, she logs into her library account.

Alongside a list of books she has 'favourited' to read later, she is recommended books and forthcoming events based on her borrowing history. There's an author event taking place next week so she syncs it to her calendar. Digging into the list of recommendations, she can read reviews posted by librarians and other readers or listen to an interview with the author. Alongside this she can see whether a print or e-book edition is available to borrow or she can click to buy it. There is a 'read now' option, which allows her to read as much of the book as she likes whilst in the library building. She skims the first few pages - the first book isn't for her, but her reading group friend will love it, so she clicks the share button and posts it to her

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[23] Experian/ Telegraph estimates that number of high street bookshops in the UK halved between 2005 and end 2013: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/9741974/Bookshop-numbers-halve-in-just-seven-years.html
[24] Enders Analysis, via The Bookseller: http://www.thebookseller.com/blogs/why-bookshops-matter.html
[25] Bowker Market Research, via The Bookseller, 2013: http://www.thebookseller.com/news/bookshop-browsing-vital-publishing-research-finds.html

friend's Facebook wall where the first chapter appears along with information about the library she is sending it from.

The second book appeals to her more so she makes her way to the reading space filled with comfortable seating, where people are engrossed in newspapers, books, some on devices loaned by the library. An hour later she heads for the café and picks up the hard copy available for loan in the Fiction section.

Book in hand, Harpreet meets her friend Bill and his daughter Claire in the café. Claire insists on a visit to the 'story arcade', an area is filled with books and several RFID-reading media stations. Claire chooses Tracey Beaker and puts it on a special zone at one of the stations. She puts on headphones and watches a video of Jacqueline Wilson telling her why she wrote the book.

Over lunch Bill tells Harpreet about the crime fiction event he attended last week. A panel of British crime writers battled it out with a Skyped-in panel of American crime writers, to be crowned 'best in the world'. Harpreet can watch it later; it's up on the library website.
Later that evening, whilst scanning her inbox in front of the TV, Harpreet opens a message from the library thanking her for visiting earlier. It invites her to rate and review *Gone Girl,* which she recently returned, and offers her priority booking on a forthcoming Chris Cleave event as she had recently borrowed *The Other Hand.* Clicking through from the email to the library website, Harpreet searches for the crime event Bill mentioned and excitedly puts it in her diary.

Older people…

It's Thursday afternoon and **Beryl,** 75, is heading to the small rural branch library near her home. She's got some books to renew. She's heard you can do it online from home, but she wouldn't know where to start, and anyway she enjoys her visits to the library which are one of her main social activities since her husband died. Today she's also taking a selection of old photos for a local history session her friend Arthur told her about.

Walking in, Beryl she sees a large plasma screen with information about today's library activities and an author video promoting books on TV including Kate Mosse's Labyrinth, which Beryl is interested in because she likes history. Nearby there's an *authors of the month* book display tying in with the author videos. Beryl stops for a browse and picks up one of the leaflets, promoting titles to borrow and buy, to give to her daughter.

A staff member, Nya, greets Beryl by name; they talk about the photos for the *Local and Community History* session. The session is at the big communal table. Since they're still setting up, Nya takes Beryl to the local history display they've created.

Nya points out the reader recommendations on the shelf - gathered from libraries all over the Norfolk – and the audio and video content that is available at multimedia points in the shelving. Nya's excited that all the books are now available to read digitally in the library through Library 21 – visitors can read them on their own devices, or they can use one of the library's computers or borrow one of the new tablets lent to visitors. Beryl likes the sound of that; she's tried out her daughter's Kindle and really likes being able to

adjust the type size to make reading easier, because her eye sight is failing, but she doesn't feel confident enough to use one on her own.

Nya shows her the table with built-in tablets on which you can explore bookish apps and games chosen by the librarians, including a new one on Shakespeare's Sonnets. She also explains the informal classes in the library. As well as *using email* and *introduction to social media* they how have a session on *which device?: an introduction to e-readers, smartphones and tablets*. There's one just before her Tuesday *Knit and Natter* club so Beryl signs up –being able to adjust the type size makes her want to overcome her fear of these new gadgets.

In the local history session students are using a social platform called History Pin to put together a scrapbook of the local area. Today they are talking to local residents about their memories of the area and uploading photos and recordings to History Pin, where they will sit alongside videos of authors talking about local literature. The channel they create will be promoted on library and publisher websites via their email lists, and the recordings will feature on the multimedia stations in the local history display. During the session a librarian demonstrates other resources available to help with local history and family research.

After the session Beryl renews her books, and adds a novel by a local author. Inside is an insert inviting her to write her own review for the library website along with links to a video of the author discussing the novel and, next month, a real time Twitter interview run by the publisher. She might just have a go.

4.   KEY STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Everyone we spoke to welcomed strategic thinking around the digital future of libraries and the opportunity to work with a network of partners to mutual benefit.

Readers: we surveyed 509 readers and ran a focus group. These were largely regular library users and medium to heavy book readers.

They said that guidance from the library/ librarians has a considerable impact on their reading choices; 55.8% cited it as a reason for choosing a particular title. 71% are accessing online books and author-related content. Book extracts are the most popular followed by reading guides and author videos. The main reasons for accessing this content are: to inform book selection, to discover new books/ authors and for enjoyment.[26]

A strong theme running through the reader focus group was the library service as one free of commercial interests and therefore a trusted source of recommendation. Attendees expressed the desire for physical libraries to be great social spaces whilst simultaneously developing their digital services in ways that were relevant users' needs and online behaviour: accessible, engaging and social. There was a strong sense that the library has the potential to connect people to each other through reading.[27]

Publishers: were all keen to find positive ways to partner with libraries digitally to extend audience reach for their books and authors, gain insight into reader behaviour, and get more readers reading more.

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[26] Appendix 3: Readers Survey Complete and Readers Survey Summary
[27] Appendix 4: Readers Focus Group

None of the six CEOs interviewed objected to copyrighted content being accessible to patrons within the parameters of the physical library building. But all stressed that guaranteed security was a <u>pre-requisite</u> for participation in Library 21.

They welcomed the opportunity to derive more value from the digital assets they are already creating - chapter samplers, video interviews, animations etc.

They stressed the value of The Reading Agency's library/publisher partnership scheme, Reading Partners, as an important basis for moving forward with Library 21. This involves 43 publishers.

Libraries: there was universal welcome from libraries for the vision's assertion of the social purpose and value of libraries. Throughout the research library stakeholders stressed the future relevance of library staff as trusted digital guides and curators, as well as the importance of local relevance, and see it as essential that Library 21 supports and facilitates this.

All were keen to find positive ways to partner with publishers to develop an exciting discovery and reading proposition for patrons – and potential patrons - which could sit alongside the e-lending solutions that everyone hopes will emerge from the Sieghart Review. Several identified opportunities for their own content and assets within Library 21.

Many wish to see publishers routinely thinking of libraries as strategic and natural partners – as important a 'shop window' as high street retail contracts.

The most common objection raised to the Library 21 proposition was around the tethering of a digital service to a specific physical location. **Digital experts** and librarians felt it was counter intuitive to talk about a library vision restricted to the physical library. They felt it was imperative to support access and convenience for patrons and reach new audiences beyond the library walls.

Despite the objections about tethering, there was universal acceptance of the need for "friction"[28] around publishers' copyrighted content and a welcome for how Library 21 could provide a safe way for publishers to share their digital assets with libraries, to provide a valuable user experience. It could persuade new people to use the library, because the quality and range would attract and retain their interest. It could be a vital step along the way to a superb digital library experience, both in and out of the building, part of an entire digital vision.

Whilst Library 21 is focused on the in-library experience it has the potential to knit into, and support, broader library digital strategy and user touch points. The inter-sector focus group explored how different features of Library 21 might be available inside and outside the physical library building, whether sat at a laptop or using a mobile device, whether visiting a library website or emerging from online search queries. Copyrighted content would be available only as an in-library feature but non copyrighted material could be available remotely. Having some reach beyond the library walls was felt to be important.

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[28] Friction: ensuring that borrowing an eBook from a library requires a degree of time and effort commensurate with the effort and time needed to visit the library to borrow a physical book. Term is used in *An Independent Review of e-lending in Public Libraries in England*, William Sieghart, March, 2013

Barriers: In terms of feasibility and delivery, technology itself is not a barrier. But serious doubt was expressed by all stakeholders (readers apart) about the potential to deliver Library 21 due to the complex and fragmented nature of the current public library system.

Many identified a critical need for national leadership to drive development (digital or otherwise), set standards and policy and support the navigation of localised systems in order for ambitious projects to be delivered across the sector. BNL, Holland's national foundation for public libraries, and Denmark's Biblioteksstyrelse, an independent agency under the Danish Ministry of Culture, were cited as examples of national leadership which provides a one-stop-shop for external organisations wanting to work with the public library sector whilst also supporting regional variation.

5. DELIVERING THE VISION: IMPLEMENTATION, GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

5.1 Shared interests, benefits and partnerships

Library 21 research identified a clear social need for the public to have access to fantastic digital services to support reading, within the library building.

Because of its origins, the research focused particularly on how to achieve this by getting the right partnerships between publishers and librarians in order to move to a new era of content distribution. They have a clear shared interest in helping each other retain existing audiences and open up new ones. They both need to sustain a 'shop window' for books and authors and develop sophisticated digital engagement which matches user behaviour and expectations. These benefits need sharpening and rearticulating: *"you help us reach more people, we help you sell more product, and we both generate deeper insight into customer behaviour and data."*

For publishers there are ancillary benefits to developing standards and streamlining the distribution – either through a centralised hub or through APIs - of non-copyrighted digital assets. This could support distribution to a wide range of other partners and platforms.

Through the research we have identified the potential to link further work on Library 21 with that of other closely aligned agencies in the public/ not-for-profit sector.

- The British Library is working with JISC and others on a strategy to join up public sector digital development in a cost effective way. At the moment public libraries are not integrated into this work.

- JISC has experience in developing standards, systems and digital in-library experiences in the academic/ research library sector and is keen to link more closely to public libraries' digital development.

- BIC's experience in developing standards could pave the way for the development of streamlined distribution of non-copyrighted publisher assets.

- OCLC's national library catalogue covers 80% of UK public libraries and is built on open systems. This could provide a central data 'spine' and help cut through the fragmentation of the public library network.

We also identified a clutch of commercial organisations that could support the work of Library 21. Some already aggregate publisher content and so could act as a central hub for asset distribution – such as Jellybooks for chapter samplers or Nudge for author videos. Others have existing digital systems that could be adapted to deliver elements of Library 21, for instance Public Library Online or Valobox who have an online access model for copyrighted content which can be restricted to IP address and could be applied to the library building.

5.2 Feasibility
Approaches to implementation: technology and standards
Library 21 research yielded useful information about secure access to copyrighted content. It is beyond the scope of this project to draw a framework for implementation, but it has highlighted possible approaches to future development.

It is possible to restrict access to content within browser based systems through IP authorisation e.g. to a pre-approved list of library building IP domains. This kind of restriction operates in Public Library Online and Waterstones' programme where users connected to in-store WIFI can connect to Amazon on their Kindle and read publisher approved e-books for up to an hour or until they disconnect from the WIFI.

Moving forwards the focus of Library 21 should be on user experience and content and on building a flexible, resilient service that can evolve. It should not focus on individual technologies as these become obsolete.

In order to build a flexible resilient service it will be essential to develop principles, for instance the need to focus on open infrastructure. Standards will be vital for taxonomy, metadata and formats – for example of multimedia assets. These will allow the service to adapt and develop in line with future requirements.

There was a universal thumbs-down for the development of an end-to-end system for Library 21, because of cost, inflexibility and heavy servicing requirements. One approach which emerged through the research was the idea of a 'toolbox' (including a secured repository for copyrighted content) on which libraries could build their own local end-user interfaces and experiences. However those in the library sector raised concerns about capacity within some library services to work with this.

The approach that has gathered most weight is one which connects disparate bits of data, provides secure access to copyrighted content, and offers an end-user interface for libraries to use. This would require:

- A central repository for copyrighted content in order to guarantee security and appropriate governance.

- A way to deliver additional product data and content (e.g. multimedia assets). This could take the form of a central repository fed by publishers Digital Asset Management systems via XML feed, or it could be called up from publishers' Digital Asset Management systems via API.

Both of these will require the standardisation of formats and metadata of (non-copyrighted) assets, and our research indicates that APIs for data and content are not yet commonplace among trade publishers.

Challenges to delivery

The barriers to delivering an ambitious digital proposition across the public library sector have been well documented.[29] For Library 21 the main obstacles are:

- The absence of a national agency responsible for leading and co-ordinating the delivery of major projects on a national scale

- The fragmented digital infrastructure, standards and policies in the public library sector. In England 152 library authorities each have their own mix of systems, software and hardware which makes it complicated and expensive to build something that will work across all of them. There are also huge variations in ICT policy around user privacy and usage (from WIFI provision, to software and social media). These are affected by very different approaches within local authorities.

- Lack of skills and time in the library workforce to deliver, maintain and embed Library 21 at ground level

- Among publishers there is also fragmentation which is an impediment to streamlined distribution. This affects standards (for instance of file formats or resolution), and storage and delivery of (non-copyrighted) assets such as chapter samplers, audio readings, author videos.

Governance and funding

Publisher and library stakeholders highlighted the issue of the governance of the Library 21 project as it moves forwards. From a publishers' perspective the key questions were "*who will guarantee the security of copyrighted assets?*" and "*would a national solution be vulnerable to acquisition?*" From a librarians' perspective the key questions were "*where will this sit?*" and "*how will the interests of the public and libraries be preserved?*".

Funding was also raised in the context of future governance. Some publishers felt strongly that the entire project should be free from commercial interests and sit within the not-for-profit sector whilst others were easy with the idea of corporate funding.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This R&D research has confirmed that there is a strong appetite amongst key stakeholders to take Library 21 to the next stage.

6.1 Next steps for Library 21

Secure funding for an action research phase. The strong stakeholder backing for Library 21 and the synergies between it and the priorities in the Arts Council's new *Envisioning the library of the Future* make the project a particularly strong candidate for funding as part of the action plan to enact parts of *Envisioning.* It has the potential, and the backing, to deliver directly on the four identified Arts Council priorities: *place the library as the hub of a community; make the most of digital technology and creative media; ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable; deliver the right skills for those who work for libraries*

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[29] Arts Council England, *Envisioning the library of the future,* May 2013

The Reading Agency, June 2013.
www.readingagency.org.uk

Develop *proof of concept* action research project to prototype and test Library 21 in a manageable and controlled environment, with a small number of library authorities and participating publishers. This would test in detail what is technically possible and what library users and potential users want. The publishers would be doing this voluntarily, in a programme organised by others; this will be important in terms of competition rules.

Establish a governing group to oversee the delivery of the action research phase and ensure the interests of all parties are catered for. The research has identified a 'coalition of the willing' needed to support Library 21 in different ways. In addition to the Society of Chief Librarians, publishing bodies and The Reading Agency, these include: the Arts Council, BIC, British Library, JISC, OCLC, LGA, SOCITM, plus digital technology and user experience experts.

Advocate strongly to government, injecting a reading for pleasure element to the current debate about libraries' role in providing digital support to the public, and their ability to develop the public's fluent digital skills.

6.2 Fitting Library 21 into wider context/other work streams

Library 21 faces barriers that are common to other digital work to take public libraries forward. It also shows the need to plug libraries into the work of a whole range of other agencies, so public libraries are not working in isolation. The project cannot solve these issues on its own, but it can work alongside others to resolve them. Therefore our recommendations are to:

Investigate how future work on **how Library 21 can fit into the work streams of other allied organisations**, such as JISC and the British Library, in order to benefit from their work and avoid duplication.

Address the current digital skills gap within the public library sector – as identified by the report on Digital Skills Sharing, another initiative in the Arts Council's Library Development Initiative. There needs to be a concerted workforce development programme.

Work with urgency with key local government organisations to **dismantle the barriers of corporate ICT restrictions** which are preventing many library authorities' vital engagement work with existing and potential audiences. The key bodies are The Society of Information Technology Management, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and the Local Government Association. This work could include developing a business case for lifting restrictions and working with the bodies above to ensure buy in at corporate/ local authority level. Through the library service representation on the governing group, work in one or two authorities with the ICT, Communications and Marketing, and Education and Lifelong Learning Services to demonstrate the social and skills benefits of easier public access to digital activity through local authority digital networks.

Develop a new era of library/publisher partnership working: there is a major opportunity to create an action plan which builds this into The Reading Agency's *Reading Partners* Scheme. This currently involves 43 publishers and a regional structure across the UK's libraries, supported by the Society of Chief Librarians.

APPENDIX: Methodology and participant list

Library 21 was led by The Reading Agency. Miranda McKearney OBE, CEO of the Reading Agency, and Sandeep Mahal, Programme Manager, worked with a Vision Group who helped shape the research and acted as a critical friend throughout. The group members were:
- Stephen Page, CEO and Publisher, Faber and Faber
- Jamie Byng, CEO, Canongate
- Clare Harington, Group Communications Director, Hachette UK
- Richard Cable, MD Vintage Publishing, Random House UK
- Tony Durcan OBE, Past President of SCL and Head of Culture, Newcastle
- Nick Stopforth, SCL Digital Lead and Head of Doncaster Libraries
- Nicky Morgan, Libraries Director, Arts Council England
- Sally McMahon, Head of Brighton Libraries

Research for Library 21 consisted of:

Desk research
The desk research we carried out covered existing research and literature on publishing, libraries, book retail and digital transformation. Additionally we did nine case studies of services and projects which provide insight into cultural curation, user experience in digital services, location-specific access to content, and progressive digital library initiatives. These were: Culture 24; Last FM; Love Film; Waterstones' in-store digital book access via Kindle; NC State University Library Project; Harvard Library Innovation Lab; Biblio Commons; Digital Public Library of America.

Reader and library user survey and focus group
We conducted an online survey with 509 respondents, predominantly library members and medium-heavy book readers. Six respondents to the Reader and Library User Survey attended a 3 hour focus group at the Free Word Centre in London on 3 April 2013. The group was led by Joanna Ellis.

The focus group consisted of in-depth exploration of the Library 21 proposition, how users discover, new books, how users spend their time in the library, how they use the library website. Participants also took part in two exercises: exploring existing online discovery platforms and sketching ideas for ways in which library services could better support discovery.

Inter-sector Focus Group
12 professionals drawn from across the publishing, public library, academic library and information management sectors took part in a 3 hour focus group at the Free Word Centre in London on 23 April 2013. The focus group consisted of in-depth exploration of the Library 21 proposition, and included group work on customer journeys, infrastructure, financing and implementation. It was led by Peter Latchford from consultants Black Radley, and was facilitated by Joanna Ellis.
The participants were:
- Fiona Marriott, Adult Services Manager, Luton Culture
- David Potts, Business Lead – ICT & Transformation, Birmingham Libraries
- Mark Lenihan, Lewisham Reference Libraries
- Paul Harrison, Electronic Library Manager, Norfolk County Council
- Barbara Scott, Virtual Team, Surrey County Council

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- Bonnie Cruickshank, Digital Project Manager, Random House
- Stephanie Duncan, Digital Director, Bloomsbury PLC
- Ben Showers, Programme Manager, Digital Infrastructure, JISC
- Mick Fortune, Consultant at BIC and RFID expert
- Karina Luke, Executive Director, BIC
- Mark Allcock, Business Development Director , OCLC
- Matthew Murray, UK Products Manager, Axiell UK

Interviews

We carried out 27 face to face and phone interviews with experts in publishing, library, library services, information management, digital and policy sectors. All interviews included gauging the reaction to the Library 21 proposition and were followed by questions, tailored to each sector, around context (e.g. library strategy, publisher strategy, social and behavioural shifts, digital technologies), feasibility and barriers. The interviewees were:
- Andrew Franklin, CEO, Profile Books
- Andrew Rhomberg, Founder of Jellybooks
- Anna Lewis, Founder of Valobox
- Ben Showers, Programme Manager, Digital Infrastructure, JISC
- Bill Thompson, journalist and commentator
- Bonnie Cruikshank, Digital Project Manager, Random House
- Christopher Platt, Director of Collections and Circulation Operations, New York Public Library
- Dave Coplin, Chief Envisioning Officer, Bing UK, Microsoft
- David Potts, Business Lead – ICT & Transformation, Birmingham Libraries
- Elisabeth Robinson, Product Manager, OCLC UK
- Heather McCormack, Collection Development Manager, 3M Cloud Library
- Jamie Hodder Williams, MD Hodder and Stoughton
- Janene Cox, President of the Society of Chief Librarians and Commissioner for Tourism and the Cultural County, Staffordshire County Council
- Joanna Prior, MD Penguin General, Penguin UK
- Joe Regal, Founder, Zola Books
- Luke Burton, Library and Information Officer, Newcastle City Council
- Mark Taylor, National Member of SCL Executive and Head of Libraries, Arts and Heritage Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Martha Lane Fox, Digital Inclusion Ambassador
- Michael Stead, Digital Development Manager for Cultural Services, WLCT
- Mick Fortune, Consultant at BIC and RFID expert
- Philip Jones, Editor, The Bookseller
- Richard Charkin, Director, Bloomsbury Publishing
- Roly Keating, Chief Executive, British Library
- Simon Appleby, Nudge
- Stephanie Duncan, Digital Director, Bloomsbury
- Tom Weldon, CEO Penguin UK
- Ursula McKenzie, CEO Little Brown,

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

A further document is available on request, with case studies and full details of the readers survey and focus groups.

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