

# **Journey maps and customer hacks: redesigning services at the State Library Victoria**

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## **1 Abstract**

At the State Library Victoria we redesigned our service model. We used a design thinking approach so that our new service model would be customer centred and integrated. In redesigning our service model we considered elements such as changing customer needs and expectations and we looked at how people were actually using our library. We considered the physical library space, digital and mobile technology, customer self-help options, number and location of service points, and staff skills and development, as well as trends in service design in other organisations.

We ran a 12-week service design project with a joint team from the State Library and an external consultant. The project began with an intensive research phase and observation of our current services. We identified issues and opportunities with our current services and then developed responses to these through workshops with staff, and through consultation with library customers. These ideas were prototyped and tested to develop a new service model. Testing included redesigning the library after opening hours and inviting staff to walk through and experience for themselves how the new service model could work.

Our redesigned service model is based on eight foundation service principles. The new service model articulates a future state for us to work towards. We have designed service zones that are aligned to designated library spaces. We are redesigning our service processes to make them simpler for staff and easier for the customer. Our new service model brings together the physical and digital to create an integrated customer experience of the library.

We are in the beginning stages of implementing a series of phased projects that move us towards the objectives of our new service model. We expect implementation to be a multi-year, staged process.

## **2 Why we redesigned our services**

When Sir Redmond Barry established the State Library Victoria in 1854, he conceived of it as 'the people's university' – a place where the world's knowledge and information would be freely available to all Victorians, regardless of their social status or financial resources. This defining concept has guided the Library through its history. The Library's current vision is to be:

“a place where all Victorians can discover, learn, create and connect; a cultural and heritage destination for Victorians, and a catalyst for generating new knowledge and ideas” (State Library of Victoria 2013, p.4).

With one of the world's great collections, an expert reference and research service, a focus on digital library developments, an established exhibitions program, and an active public programming calendar, the Library is the busiest public library in Australia, with around 1.8 million onsite visitors and around 3.4 million online visitors in 2013/14 (State Library of Victoria 2014, p.19).

Victoria continues to grow in population size and demographic diversity (Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure 2014; Victorian Multicultural Commission 2013). The Library is responding to these trends by engaging with an increasingly varied community that includes its traditional audience of researchers

and students, as well as families, young and lifelong learners, culture creators and seekers, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and regional Victorians. As the people we help become more diverse, so too do our services and programs.

The people who use the Library have different and sometimes competing needs within shared spaces. For example, a researcher needs access to the collection, staff research expertise, a desk, computer, printing facilities, and a quiet space to concentrate on their work. In contrast, a family with young children needs food, drink, changing facilities, objects to see, touch and explore, informal space to lounge and move around in, and to feel comfortable making noise.

To make the Library welcoming to everyone, there is a need to balance quiet and active spaces. This has been shown to be a “critical concern” for library users across all age groups (Victorian Public Library Network 2014, p.13). Designing our services and spaces for flexibility and the ability to meet multiple needs and uses is critical to our success (Victorian Public Library Network 2014, p.66).

Increasingly, we were finding it difficult to reconcile these competing needs and felt that the quality of service to all visitors was being compromised. To add into the mix, visitor feedback told us that the Library can be daunting for some new visitors. It is a large and imposing building that is hard to navigate, with many confusing rules and processes. While we have a highly skilled team of staff, their ability to offer the best service is diluted by juggling the conflicting needs of different visitors. They are often sought out to resolve process issues, technology troubles and navigational confusion.

In addition to the complexities of serving a diverse and growing community, we are also adapting our services to respond to the changing expectations of the public about how they prefer to access, use and share information. For example, the increased use of mobile devices and new information technologies, trends towards open access, open government, online education, along with the accompanying challenges of digital literacy and personal data privacy (IFLA 2013, p.4).

The above factors led us to decide it was time to review our service model and we identified this as a strategic project in the Library’s Corporate Plan (State Library of Victoria 2013, p.22). While we make continual improvements to the Library’s services, the last large-scale review of the service model was several years ago.

### **3 Our service design approach**

Through the review and redesign of our services we aimed to develop a new service model that:

- meets the diverse needs of our visitors
- supports the Library’s visitor experience objectives
- is cost effective and efficient
- builds visitor satisfaction and engagement with the Library
- aligns staff skills and capabilities with visitor needs
- integrates our service delivery approach
- increases the uptake of self-service by our visitors
- increases the mobility of our staff

We set out to take a holistic approach to redesigning our services. To arrive at an integrated design and appropriate interventions, we aimed to diagnose the entire system, rather than the individual components (Narayanan and Nath 1993, pp.53-

54). Our aim was to uncover the interdependencies so we could design services that would work together as a whole.

Another important goal was to put our customers at the centre of our thinking. There is no doubt that the Library has excellent customer service. However, our systems have grown around the requirements of our collections. This has led to a myriad of complex rules that are often impenetrable to our customers. Along the way, they have hacked our services and found work-arounds for our rules.

Examining and changing the Library's service model is a substantial and complex task. We decided to look at peer practices in GLAM sector organisations and other customer service industries. We wanted to understand the current experience of our visitors and ask for their ideas on how we might make things better for them.

We also determined that it was critical to surface the best ideas of our staff and to have a wide engagement across the Library from different teams. We aimed to make this engagement creative and fun. A key to generating creativity is bringing together and connecting different perspectives to spark new ideas (Popova 2012). Importantly, we had support from the Library's leadership team to take risks, to challenge assumptions, and to think innovatively, rather than incrementally.

These considerations led us to take a 'service design' approach to the project. Service design is "the intentional and thoughtful design of internal and customer-facing activities needed to deliver a service" (Meld Studios 2014). This approach challenges you to reflect on your current services and assess how you are using people, systems and processes to deliver these services. You then develop a vision of the service you want to deliver, reflecting your library's strategy, customer needs, and service innovation. From there, you design how service delivery and customer experience can shift and be supported, setting the path from current state to future state.

It is an inclusive process that aims to "explore multiple ideas...to critique ideas and to refine, revise and reimagine things in a collaborative and open way" (Barker 2014).

Service design is gaining recognition as a useful method for designing library services<sup>1</sup>. We engaged an expert consultancy in service design, Meld Studios, to help us with this work. We formed a project team with two Library staff and two of Meld's staff for a 12-week joint project based in the Library. This approach was critical for us to build our internal service design expertise.

The service model project was structured around a design process led by the Meld consultants. Their approach is summarised as: understand, explore, articulate, realize (Meld Studios 2014). For the Library, this process translated into four phases:

- researching the current state of experience and service
- identifying opportunities for change
- developing concepts
- creating a future state service model

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see recent presentations by Mal Booth from the University of Technology, Sydney <http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/blog/university-librarian/2013/08/design-thinking-and-uts-library>, consultants Zaana Howard <http://zaanahoward.com/2013/05/19/design-thinking-for-designing-and-delivering-services-workshop-redux/> and Penny Hagan <http://www.smallfire.co.nz/2013/11/21/becoming-design-led-exploring-the-role-of-codesign-in-libraries/>

#### **4 Phase 1: Research**

The research phase was an intense period of observation and interviews. The intent was to understand the current state of our services, and to identify where problems occurred and the tensions that needed to be addressed (Design Council UK 2013). Observation included many hours immersed in the Library discreetly watching customers' behaviour and service provision. In order to avoid assumptions we informally interviewed visitors after observing their actions to ascertain more information about their experience. We asked open questions, for example "Why did you come to the Library?" and "Tell me about your experience in the Library today?"

We also talked to Library staff to gain insight into the services delivered in both front of house and back of house staff areas. We approached Library staff who were directly providing services, for example, from the Library forecourt, through to story time sessions, to our online copy order service, or via reference desks and reading rooms. Interviews with service staff continued beyond the research phase as necessary to gain greater understanding of the intricacies of workflows that often crossed over multiple teams.

The team also interviewed senior managers across the Library to identify what the current tensions were, and to gauge senior managers' views of the strategic direction of the Library. The key strategic themes we identified through these interviews were:

- a shift to digital
- the Library's evolution from scholarly reference to broader public access
- decreased funding from government and looking to external sources such as philanthropy
- the changing audience of the Library

The results of the research phase were recorded in four current state journey maps. Journey maps are "a visual representation of a user's journey through a service, showing all the different interactions they have. It allows you to see what parts of the service work for the user (magic moments) and what parts might need improving (pain points)" (Design Council UK 2013).

The four map categories were:

1. Interacting with the physical space
2. Information and collection access
3. The Library as a place to work
4. Community engagement and programming

The maps were largely visual, incorporating line-drawing vignettes of Library spaces, services and people, and included annotations to explain the vignettes. The journey maps were an important communication tool during the project. They were highly engaging and non-linear. Staff could effectively dip in and out of sections of the map to gain an overall impression of the current state, or read it comprehensively. Some of the research results were strongly tied to physical spaces of the Library and the journey maps allowed staff to quickly zero in on services or spaces of particular interest to them.

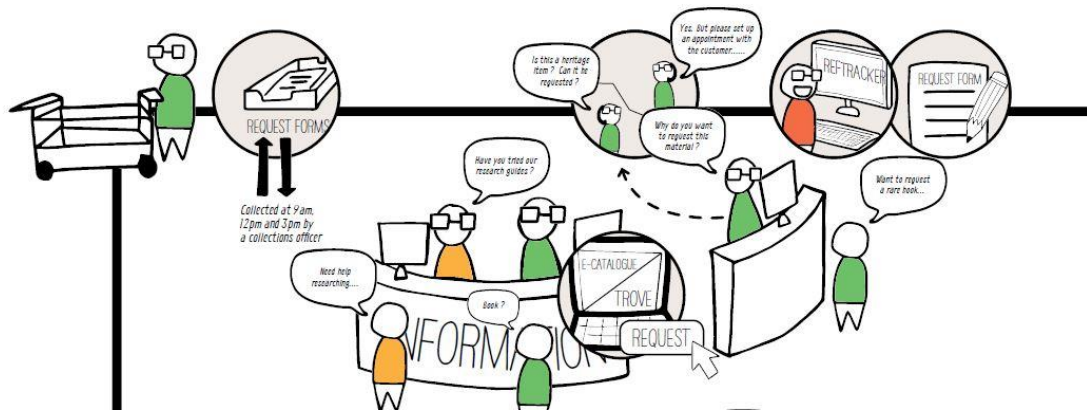


Figure 1: Excerpt from a journey map

Some of the tensions we identified through the research phase:

- Conflicts between different services and visitor needs
- Impacts of poor signage
- Barriers to Library entry
- Architectural constraints
- Congestion and demand on services and spaces
- Promotion of and access to the collection
- Difficulties browsing and navigating the collection
- Inefficient, difficult or hard to understand processes
- Lack of spaces for visitors with specific needs
- Access to staff expertise

## 5 Phase 2: Opportunities

The opportunities phase relied heavily on staff involvement in both formal and informal settings. We ran a series of workshops with staff from a cross-section of the Library. These sessions used techniques such as brainstorming, visualization and sketching to stimulate ideas (Design Council UK 2013). Staff from different teams, functions and positional hierarchy were invited to garner a wide perspective on the Library's services. Customer service, reference, retrieval staff, conservation, curatorial, property, programming and managerial staff all participated in the workshops.

The project team used the four current state journey maps as tools to help staff identify opportunities and issues with current Library services. Many different issues were identified and discussed as candidates for service redesign. The maps were then shared more broadly amongst staff in various ways: casual drop-in sessions were offered to all staff where the project team explained the journey maps; divisional and team meetings were used to present the maps to more staff; and the maps were displayed in staff areas.

The project team invited and encouraged feedback throughout, which was received either in person, via a designated project email address, or through the use of post-it notes directly on the maps.

Opportunities identified for service redesign:

- A more welcoming experience for visitors
- Better orientate visitors within the Library

- Clearly explain the purpose of the Library and its services
- Enable visitors to self-serve
- Better align visitor enquiries with staff expertise
- Simplify access to the Library's collection and encourage use
- Create stronger links between collection and non-collection services
- Better address the needs of visitors using the Library as a place of work
- Create ongoing engagement with the Library

## **6 Phase 3: Concept development**

The concept phase was informed by the feedback, discussions, workshops and service experiences that people shared. We used the previously identified opportunities to generate service concepts, drawing on the ideas of staff for how the future Library could operate.

We established a set of principles to guide service concept development. These principles emerged organically throughout the first two phases of the project. They became a guiding tool to help us stay true to the Library's vision for future services. They were the key to understanding how our services could be redesigned in an integrated way. The eight core service principles underpin our service model and we will use these to validate and assess future service development.

### **6.1 Our service principles**

#### **Place the collection at the heart of the library**

The collection is both what defines the Library and what makes it unique. We will place the collection at the physical and metaphoric heart of the library. The collection will take centre stage in the building, as well as on the website. While we recognize that not all Library customers use the collection, we will do our best to reveal the collection to as many people as we can and encourage use and access.

#### **The library is a place for everyone**

While the Library once catered predominantly for scholarly researchers, today the Library is a place for everyone in the community (Public Libraries Victoria Network 2014, p.13). Across all age groups, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, we want all of our customers to feel welcome. This is especially important as users of libraries have increasingly sophisticated expectations of flexible, functional and welcoming library spaces and "want libraries to strike the right balance between providing quiet, reflective and reading/study-oriented spaces and interactive, culturally rich activity or creative spaces" (Public Libraries Victoria Network 2014, p.37). We will aim to understand our customers and build our services around their needs, and we will trust them to do the right thing.

#### **Aspiring to make the entire collection accessible**

Our collection is only of value if it can be accessed and used by the public. Our aim is to make our entire collection accessible whether onsite, online through digitized versions and e-resources, through exhibitions and public programs, through our creative fellowship programs, via tours, or school programs. Overholt (2013) argues for library collections to be distributed, shared, open and accessible, as well as being "the raw materials upon which the creative energies of the world can be exercised". Or as Rundle (2014) states "for culture to be liberated, collaborative and shared, open access to the products of that culture is necessary" (Rundle 2014). This is our hope for our collection that, as Overholt states, we will be "constantly surprised by

the uses made of our collections in ways we could have never imagined and on scales we could never have accomplished on our own”.

### **Services should be available both physically and digitally**

The Library has a responsibility to serve all Victorians, not just those who can visit us in the heart of Melbourne. As society becomes increasingly connected via mobile devices, and expectations are raised in regards to open access and open government, we have an obligation to ensure we take advantage of new technologies to distribute our services across the state (IFLA 2014, pp13-14). It is important that our digital interfaces be contemporary, usable and friendly (Public Libraries Victoria Network 2014, p.66)

### **Connect customers with the right expertise at their point of need**

Our staff's subject expertise and collection knowledge is one of our core assets. We will encourage our staff to be public advocates for their collection areas. We will try to minimize the referral of Library customers between service points and deliver services to the point of need of our customers.

### **Customers will empower themselves and each other**

We believe that our customers should be able to interact with many of our services without the need for staff intervention. Overholt (2013) describes this as 'disintermediation' and suggests that librarians “not...mourn our loss of control, but...celebrate the empowerment of users”. Wherever possible we will look at ways that we can enable our customers to help themselves and each other, from booking computers, to printing, to requesting collection items, to contributing crowd-sourced and community-created content to our collections. As Rundle says, “the challenge is to work out how to help your community to empower themselves...[and]...provide environments that enable communities to ask more questions” (Rundle 2014).

### **Actively monitor and measure customer interactions and adjust our services**

No service model is ever static or perfect so we will design feedback opportunities into our services so we can refine them. We will monitor customer interactions and adjust our staffing and services over time to better respond to customer needs. Our plan is to incorporate the techniques we have learnt through the service design project to help us design our services in the future.

### **We will charge for our services where appropriate and charge appropriately for our services**

Without compromising our principles of openness and accessibility, we are in a climate where we must look for opportunities to offset our costs. This is a trend felt by many libraries who face the challenge of providing new programs and services with tight budgets. There is an opportunity to “evolve from a cost-free service model to a not-for-profit service model, charging a fee for additional services and programs” (State Library of Victoria 2013, p. 22-23). We see it as reasonable and critical to charge appropriately for enhanced or extended services. At the same time, we will actively raise revenue from new funding streams such as philanthropy and sponsorship.

## **6.2 Service prototyping**

An important aspect of the concept phase was prototyping services. This was a practical way of communicating and testing concepts with staff within the physical space of the Library. Staff were able to experience the proposed changes by participating in interactive walk-throughs over three mornings before the Library opened to the public. Areas of the Library were 'dressed' differently in order to test

the concepts. Each morning of prototyping was followed by a feedback session for those staff who participated. Examples of concepts tested were: new arrangements for reference desks, security and baggage policies, mobile technology and collection arrangement.

Prototyping was an immersive experience for staff and we were able to demonstrate the concepts more clearly this way. The prototyping generated much discussion amongst staff, and the feedback we gained was critical for further refining the concepts. “They showed us the challenges and weaknesses in our concepts and made them better. This exercise inspired advocates and triggered critics amongst Library staff, and our team learned what worked, what didn’t, and why” (Gagarin 2014). We also asked the Library’s customers for feedback on the service concepts.

## **7 Phase 4: Future state service model**

The final phase of the 12-week project was to produce a future state service model drawing on our research, identified opportunities, and concept testing. The model is not a prescriptive, detailed description of how we might change our existing services. It is a vision of where we could take services into the future, moving away from services developed in isolation that are dis-jointed and siloed (Barker 2014). This blueprint is a “detailed visual representation...showing the user’s journey, all the different touchpoints and channels, as well as the behind the scenes parts of a service that make it work” (Design Council UK 2013).

Staff and customer ideas and feedback were incorporated in order to improve and refine the service concepts that had been prototyped. We produced a new service model for the Library documented in a single future state map. The 3 metre long map was visual and included captions to clarify concepts. The map can be hung on a wall and shared with people rather than being a report that is read and absorbed individually. The design of the map actively encourages discussion and collaboration.

At a distance, the map gives a broad overview of the future service. At the macro level it shows an integrated service model that clearly places the collections at the heart of everything we do, with services built around the needs of the customers instead of around our internal workflows or the physical layout of the building, a deliberate decision in order to future proof the model should we make changes to the configuration of the building.

A closer look at the model reveals the zoned approach to designing and delivering our services. There is a ‘welcome zone’, ‘co-working zone’, ‘collections zone’, ‘exhibitions zone’, ‘community & commercial zone’ and ‘family zone’, plus a zone showing what we offer outside of the Library. Through this design approach you can see how services are no longer working against each other. Whereas the current state journey maps showed how everything was working in opposition, the future state model shows how our services could work in harmony. Through this zoned approach, we can identify a service that needs to be redesigned and still do so within the context of how it would integrate into the whole. The goal is to “create clarity and efficient interaction between these different zones” (Danish Agency for Culture 2013).

A more detailed review of the model reveals concepts and elements of what could work in each of the zones and indicates how staff would support and provide those services. Then at the micro level, the map goes into those concepts in more detail, but at this level of detail still leaves scope for us to determine exactly how we would implement the service. This gives us the ability to refine each element prior to



implementation with further staff and customer input. In that sense the concepts are open, so they can evolve, while still reflecting our service principles.

At the culmination of the project we presented the future state vision to the project steering committee and the leadership team. We followed this with wider staff communication at a general staff meeting, in focus groups with staff who had contributed to the project, team meetings, and via open invitation drop-in information sessions. Following this, we displayed copies of the map in staff areas, and distributed a booklet version of the map.

## **8 Making changes to our services**

From this one overarching service design project, we identified around thirty discreet projects to implement over the next three to four years. Many of these are now well underway, but others won't begin for some time. This is because they are either dependent on other projects being completed first, or they require a reallocation of resources.

Examples of projects that are already in progress include: redesigning our welcome zone, better identifying staff in public spaces, giving staff iPads in order to support a more mobile approach to service delivery, and piloting a single customer service point. Less visible projects also underway include: automating and streamlining all of the rosters for front of house, and integrating customer service teams so that we can deliver a more coordinated approach to service.

### **8.1 Redesigning the welcome zone**

One of the biggest problems identified in the project with our existing services was that the library entrance could be very intimidating and imposing to first time visitors. Welcome zones should invite "visitors to venture further into the library's experience spaces" and give them the information and guidance they need to start their library exploration (Danish Agency for Culture 2013). We are making changes to our entrance spaces to make the Library more inviting and easier to understand. Through rethinking lighting, layout of space, positioning and size of service desks and developing a unified approach to signage, we are improving the experience of first time visitors. The simple intervention of having a sign that says "Welcome to the State Library" in the entrance foyer, will reassure people that they have come to the right place and that they are welcome to enter and explore. Having a small exhibition space within the welcome zone will also work as a teaser for what lies beyond in the Library collection.

### **8.2 Placing more trust in our customers**

Through the service model project the security staff presence was identified as a major barrier to entry. Reducing this barrier while still ensuring the protection of the collection is a complicated feat to achieve. We have been able to make small changes that have had a significant impact on reducing this barrier while not compromising the safety of our collection.

One of the simplest changes has been allowing larger sized bags into the library. By rethinking our approach and placing more trust in our customers, there are now fewer conflicts between customers and staff. A flow-on effect of this new approach is that by making security staff less focused on identifying oversized bags, they are now able to be more focused on observing other behaviours of people in the Library.

### **8.3 Uniforms**

By the time this paper is delivered, front of house staff will all be wearing new uniforms and name badges to make them easier to identify for our customers. As part of embedding the Library's new strategic direction, we have re-branded the Library with new positioning, and a new logo and style guide. This has been a good opportunity to update uniforms, signage and other visual cues, giving the Library a fresh and more contemporary aesthetic.

### **8.4 Single service point**

We are changing our service paradigm from having services built around the collections to instead having services designed around the customers' needs by moving to a single service point. In the research phase of the project we identified people being referred from one service point to another as they struggled to determine where they needed to go in order to have their query answered. In some cases the person would talk to four or five staff on their journey. With a single service point, we will simplify customer services and reduce frustration by making most services available from the one place.

### **8.5 Zoned approach**

One of the most complicated projects is to implement the zoned approach to services. This has started with the redesign of the welcome zone and work is underway to scope a 'family zone' to make it a space appealing to both children and the adults accompanying them (Danish Agency for Culture 2013). The creation of a consolidated collection zone is far more logistically challenging to implement and we are currently exploring the best way to achieve this. The Library is about to embark on an \$80 million, 4-year major redevelopment of our spaces. This project is jointly funded by the Victorian State Government and via philanthropic donations. This redevelopment will ensure the successful implementation of our zones.

## **9 Benefits of staff involvement**

We recognised from the outset that redesigning our services would likely lead to Library staff having to make changes to their work practices. We also acknowledged that in order to deliver the best customer experience, we needed to know how we could support staff to do this. As stated by Barker, "staff are often expected to perform heroics on a daily basis, but are generally supported with far from heroic tools" (Barker 2014).

For these reasons, we wanted to involve staff in generating and testing ideas and assumptions, as well as making choices about how to implement changes. We aimed to share as much information as possible to reduce the level of anxiety about change. Through this approach we hoped to overcome some of the potential challenges associated with managing change such as uncertainty and surprise (Kanter 1983). All staff were given the opportunity to contribute to the project and we estimate that at least half of the staff of the Library actively took part.

When reflecting on the project, we noted a number of surprising and positive outcomes that arose from using the service design approach and the breadth of staff involvement. Whilst there was some evidence of change cynicism, the extent to which many Library staff were open to change was very encouraging. The service design approach attempts to alleviate change resistance by providing multiple avenues for staff participation and communication (Meld Studios 2014).

The opportunities for staff involvement and the methods available to provide input appeared to be valued by staff; workshops, feedback sessions and prototyping activities were largely well attended and often at or above capacity. We believe that

the variety of participatory opportunities helped combat resistance to change, as well as generating the best ideas from staff.

A positive unintended outcome of staff involvement was an educative process as staff from different roles, functions and teams learnt about each other's work and experiences and saw a bigger picture together. The participatory sessions allowed more voices to be heard beyond the usual spokespeople and increased understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced in different teams. The reaction to a service design approach by many Library staff was largely positive. We observed a ground swell of interest and involvement by staff throughout the project. Informal feedback provided from staff indicated that overall it was an enjoyable and engaging process.

'I found your Future Service Model workshop today very interesting, exciting, inspiring and look forward to implementation within the Library. The depth, breadth and complexity of the Service delivery model map is exceptional, I believe and zones simplify the model and understanding as well. Staff and customers will benefit.'

- Library staff comment

## **10 Conclusion**

Taking a service design approach to redesigning our services in the Library had many benefits. Having wide staff involvement from across the Library has meant we could engage staff in thinking creatively to respond to the opportunities we had to enhance our services. At the same time, these staff gained a greater appreciation for each other's work, and an understanding of the tensions and challenges inherent in our service delivery. Staff were able to co-create our new service model, thus enhancing their capacity to be advocates and supporters for the proposed changes. By having two of our staff on the project team, we built our internal expertise around service design. We will be able to use this expertise to continually refine and redesign our services into the future.

While there are challenges in implementing what are quite complex changes, we now have clear service principles and an integrated service vision to work towards. This project method allowed for a deep understanding of our current services, the tensions underlying these, and the opportunities we had to redesign our services into a cohesive whole. By mapping and analysing our customers' service journey we can embrace their hacks instead of working against them, and as a result, create a better customer experience.

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