



Can we shape our own future?

Julie Rae
18th September 2014

@raejul



In predicting the future we invariably get it wrong David Pogue in his Scientific American article; how to predict the future of technology, (**Pogue, 2012**) even states that you may find yourself looking like an idiot.

Most futurists will tell you that it is important to look at the trends, and develop various scenarios to assist in determining your future directions. However spotting trends may be more difficult than you first think, trends come and go and which ones will stick and have an influence on your everyday. Take the humble ebook, first introduced in the late 90s but soon disappeared only to now make a significant impact on readers, authors, libraries and publishers some 20 years later. This illustrates that trends may take some time before they become embedded into our everyday.

Take the Titanic, we all know about its fatal voyage, however if it had missed the iceberg would its future as a fast reliable transport still have been doomed? Because at the same time that it slipped off its moorings and headed towards New York City the aviation industry was just emerging.

Those who dismissed some of today's leading technology as simple fads;

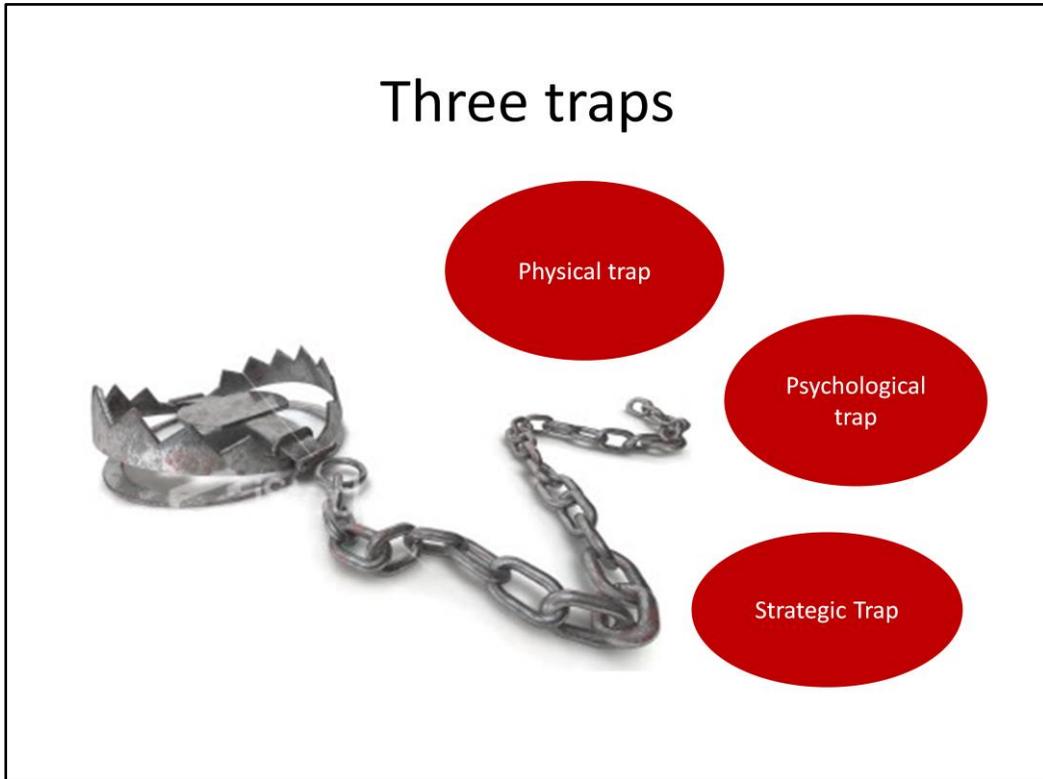
"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers," said the chairman of IBM in 1943.

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means

of communication,” went an 1876 Western Union internal memo. “Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?” asked Harry M. Warner (one of the Warner Brothers) in 1927.

Today we see the impact that the internet is having on business models for companies and lending, curating, and purchasing models for libraries But it is not just the Internet that has had an effect on libraries but the mere fact of analogue turning to digital. When everything is online why come to a library at all?

Three traps



Most companies, of course, never get to the top, and the few that do find it daunting to stay there. Vijay Govindarajan, a professor at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business and co-author of [The Other Side of Innovation](#), says successful companies tend to fall into three traps that make the glory days fleeting. First is the physical trap, in which big investments in old systems or equipment prevent the pursuit of fresher, more relevant investments. There's a psychological trap, in which company leaders fixate on what made them successful and fail to notice when something new is displacing it. Then there's the strategic trap, when a company focuses purely on the marketplace of today and fails to anticipate the future. Some unlucky companies manage a trifecta and fall into all three traps.



It's sometimes [hard to remember](#), but there was a time not so long ago when Nokia had it all: a booming business, the best-regarded brand in the industry, and a seemingly limitless pool of ideas for innovative new products. With early Maemo devices like the 770 and N800 it was clear Nokia could see the direction mobile tech was heading — so what stopped it from capitalizing?

To answer the question, [The Wall Street Journal](#) takes a look back from the 1990s to the present day with some of the Finnish maker's influential characters, including former chief designers Frank Nuovo and Alastair Curtis. An example of where things went wrong lies in the company's titanic R&D spending, which led Nokia to amass a patent portfolio reportedly valued at around \$6 billion — a portfolio that looks increasingly likely to be partially sold off. The story goes to show how hardware is only one part of the puzzle, and how competitive strength in today's mobile market takes the right mix of software, timing, and determination.

More than seven years before [Apple Inc.](#) [AAPL -0.91%](#) rolled out the iPhone, the Nokia team showed a phone with a color touch screen set above a single button. The device was shown locating a restaurant, playing a racing game and ordering lipstick. In the late 1990s, Nokia secretly developed another alluring product: a tablet computer with a wireless connection and touch screen—all features today of the hot-selling Apple iPad.

Enlarge Image

Close

Dan Krauss for The Wall Street Journal Former Nokia designer Frank Nuovo says the

company had prototypes that anticipated the iPhone.

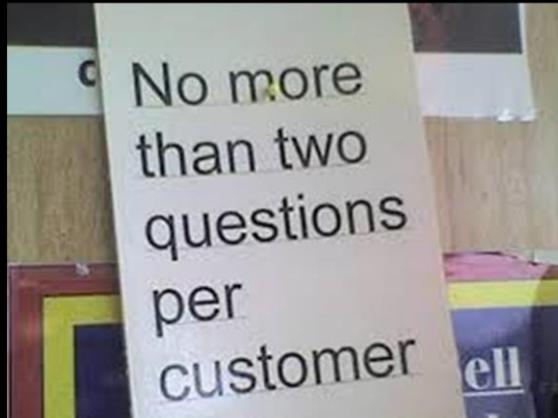
"Oh my God," Mr. Nuovo says as he clicks through his old slides. "We had it completely nailed."

Consumers never saw either device. The gadgets were casualties of a corporate culture that lavished funds on research but squandered opportunities to bring the innovations it produced to market.

Nokia led the wireless revolution in the 1990s and set its sights on ushering the world into the era of smartphones. Now that the smartphone era has arrived, the company is racing to roll out competitive products as its stock price collapses and thousands of employees lose their jobs.

There are a few, but many of the world's top companies in 1985 have foundered, shrunk, grown obsolete, or been acquired by rivals that grew stronger. General Motors and Ford, the world's two biggest carmakers in 1985, spent the last decade in a dizzying tailspin, bleeding cash, losing market share, and struggling to turn themselves around. Venerable industrial firms like ITT restructured and drifted down the Fortune 500, while Wal-Mart, Verizon, banks, and technology firms displaced them. Digital Equipment and Wang Laboratories, once leading computer firms, disappeared completely. Even resurgent titans like Apple and IBM stared into the abyss of irrelevance and made painful changes before clawing their way back to the top.

WE SET THE SERVICE



WE SET HOW OUR CUSTOMERS REACT TO US

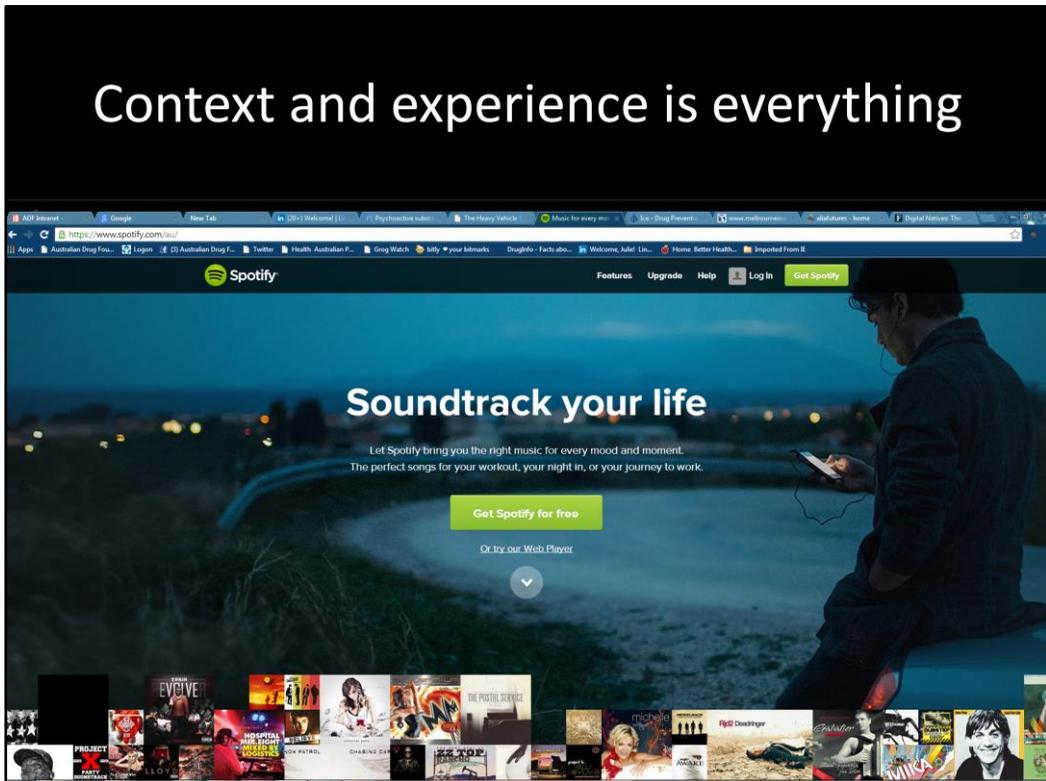
Physical trap - Libraries paradigm shifts We see ourselves as important in people's everyday lives. Over 50 % of citizens are members of our libraries. However only 24% use them on a regular basis. We measure people walking in through our doors, how much they borrow, and how often they visit the website and attend events. We build collections, offer some services, maybe even serve coffee – in short we rely on a model where people come to us. Yes I know we have websites but how many of you have truly online users who can join and use the service without at least entering the library even only once? We set the terms, we say take us or leave us, this is the service. Is this our physical trap?



But it is not just the Internet that has had an effect on libraries but the mere fact of analogue turning to digital. When everything is online why come to a library at all? We revolve our service around the book and not just any book mostly trade – the best sellers etc. But the book is changing Is this our psychological trap?

Future libraries will be valued more for services than for book collections.

Libraries will become more participatory, and librarians will serve as information facilitators. As learning and knowledge creation become more collaborative and dynamic, library spaces will be used more for community services and less as a place to store books. Readers will share recommendations and feedback, enhancing the knowledge contained in texts. —Books in Brief [review of *The Atlas of New Librarianship* by R. David Lankes], Sep-Oct 2011, p. 52



Will the publishers learn from the music industry, *Mark Mulligan research director at [Forrester Research](#)* Napster symbolized a shift from the distribution era, where everything was sold in units, to the all-access paradigm. The problem is that the majority of the music products currently available don't grasp this concept. It took years of denial for the record labels to finally go digital, then to finally go DRM-free, and then to finally embrace ad supported content and the like. The net result of this repeatedly defensive and reactive strategy is always being one step behind present consumer demand. In the music industry's first digital decade, efforts focused on converting 30-something CD buyers to digital downloads and trying to win over the file-sharing Millennials (now aged 16-24) with the wrong digital products. It's still the dominant strategy ([Spotify](#) is one late but crucial step forward). The strategy left the Digital Natives un-catered to, because their needs differ so much from those of previous generations. Digital Natives don't have that analog era baggage. All they've known is digital. Online video and mobile are their killer apps. These Digital Natives see music as the pervasive soundtrack to their interactive, immersive, social environments. Ownership matters less. Place of origin matters less. Context and experience is everything. In a world beyond content scarcity, experience is now everything. With "free" infecting everything, the content itself is no longer king. Experience now has the throne.

RADICAL SHIFT

Social
Participative
Accessible
Relevant
Connected



He goes on to say that A radical shift in music product strategy is the only feasible response. To harness the potential of the Digital Natives and to meet emerging consumer demand, digital music products must have SPARC. That is to say, they must be:

Social: Put the crowd in the cloud.

Participative: Make them interactive and immersive.

Accessible: Ownership still matters but access matters more.

Relevant: Ensure they co-exist and join the dots in the fragmented digital environment.

Connected: 174 million Europeans have two or more connected devices. Music fans are connected and expect their music experiences to follow suit.



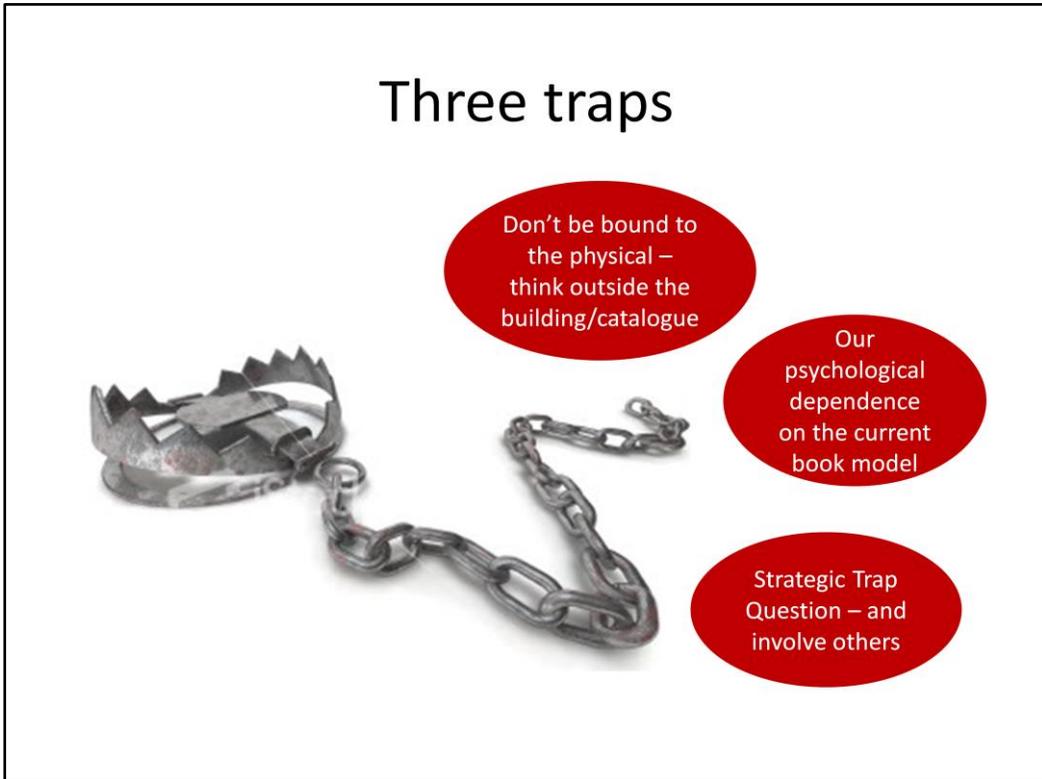
Its all about ME

What I like and want

Its all about me. Personal centric services offering experience, when I want how I want – I don't want to wait for the book, the information, the service. We have two paths.

Our services can no longer be homogenous, they must truly cater for all. Or we must narrow cast our services, understand the particular audience we are serving and deliver it well.

Three traps



So what are our traps.

Physical are we bound to the building, and also the catalogue should we remove the need for the purely physical and converge with others. Wikipedia, amazon, provide our service on any device any where the person is.

Psychological we are bound to the book. OK, can we adapt this, how can we deliver interactive books via Smart TVs Can we partner with authors?

Strategic. – Can we do it by ourselves?



Can we change our future?

Over the past two years ALIA has considered what the futurists are saying, we have held advisory congresses across the country asking our members what they see the future as being, we have had solicited feedback from experts in other industries and in October we held a summit with leaders from other library groups and our own advisory committees.

What has emerged for me is –

Where is our research agenda? – how do we reinforce what we are saying with evidence.

What qualifications will we need? - we see a move for more qualified people in our society levels of qualifications will become even more important – we see this now with compulsory professional development – what are the accreditation needs for our profession?

How are we monitoring the trends such as open access? Copyright? Big Data – what impact will web3.0 have on us? Data and text mining utilising this may offer greater depth of information.

Content is king, but also is experience and place – how do we leverage this? Who is

collecting our small histories, the local tennis club – bridge club etc. Who has the voice for the little people.

How do we connect the author to their reader

During our discussions across the country many in the library world talked about the digital illiterate and digital divide – I got the feeling that one element for our future is the “ghetto” of libraries - bring all your huddled masses.

We can longer consider that we can do it on our own. We need partnerships with technology companies, public institutions; we may need to go global.

At the moment we cling to our brand, our logo and see that this is important

Don't sink after hitting the iceberg and look up at the plane flying overhead.

We can change it but if we do not consider the trends in our strategic thinking then we will drown. Someone else will surpass us and we will be left with what?



Thank you

Julie.rae@adf.org.au

www.alia.org.au

references

- New Newspaper Owner Jeff Bezos on the Bleak Future of Newspapers Last Year. *Gizmodo*. [Online] 08 August 2013. [Cited: 27 August 2013.] <http://gizmodo.com/new-newspaper-owner-jeff-bezos-on-the-future-of-newspap-1035527454>.
- Newspapers' future may lie in data. *Sydney Morning Herald*. [Online] 1 July 2013. [Cited: 27 August 2013.] <http://www.smh.com.au/business/newspapers-future-may-lie-in-data-20130630-2p5b1.html#ixzz2dJSacBTX>.
- Companies are failing the online test. *Business Spectator*. [Online] 26 July 2013. [Cited: 27 August 2013.] <http://www.businessspectator.com.au/article/2013/7/26/media-and-digital/companies-are-failing-online-test>.
- 10 great companies that lost their edge. *US news*. [Online] 19 August 2012. [Cited: 27 August 2013.] <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/flowchart/2010/08/19/10-great-companies-that-lost-their-edge>.
- Nokia's Bad Call on Smartphones. *The Wall Street Journal*. [Online] 18 July 2012. [Cited: 1 September 2013.] http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304388004577531002591315494.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_LEFTTopStories.
- How will the world be in 2020*. Telefonica, 15 May 2011.
- IFLA**. *Riding the Waves or Caught in the Tide? : Insights from the IFLA Trend Report*. Den Hague Netherlands : IFLA, 2013.
- Lankes, R David**. *The atlas of new librarianship*.
- Mulligan, Mark**. Mashable.com. [Online] February 2011. [Cited: 1 September 2013.] <http://mashable.com/2011/02/04/music-industry-digital-natives/>.

images

- Slide 2. [Google images: www.piratesahoy.net](http://www.piratesahoy.net)
- Slide 3. <http://gizmodo.com/new-newspaper-owner-jeff-bezos-on-the-future-of-newspap-1035527454>
- Slide 4. <http://www.smh.com.au/business/newspapers-future-may-lie-in-data-20130630-2p5b1.html#ixzz2dJSacBTX>
- Slide 5. Google images: www.taryncoxthewife.com -
- Slide 7. Google images: vtropes.org -
- Slide 8. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nokia>
- Slide 9. www.digitaltrends.com -
- Slide 10. julesofarc.wordpress.com -
- Slide 12. www.technoworldnews.com -
- Slide 13. www.evollution.com
- Slide 14. www.freedomspheonix.com
- Slide 15. www.csbppl.com
- .
- Slide 16.
- Slide 17. www.passiveaggressivenotes.com



Australian Library and
Information Association

ALIA
MEMBER FOCUSED
OPEN
INCLUSIVE
COLLABORATIVE