

Planning for the Future:

An evaluation of academic and public library strategic plans in New Zealand.

by

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Abstract

Research problem: This study does not consider the strategic planning process, but looks at the end product of the process – the strategic plan itself. A review of previous international studies suggest that library strategic plans are not always completed or focussed, and thus do not assist the library in its forward planning and advocacy efforts as well as they might. This project aims to establish if the state of strategic plans in New Zealand is similar and, if so, provide guidance for their future development.

Methodology: The methodology for the research project was two-fold. The first part consisted of a content analysis to identify key strategic terms, issues and priorities from among the strategic plans. In the second part, a prescriptive analytical framework was applied to the core components of each strategic plan in order to measure the level of completeness. The overall sample size was 33 library strategic plans, comprised of 25 public and 8 academic plans.

Results: The results from the first part of the study showed a high prevalence of strategic terminology across the library plans. The academic library plans used terms that reflected more future oriented thinking. In comparison, the public library plans used more performance based terminology. The second part of the study highlighted a general lack of 'completeness' across the plans, particularly the public library plans, when measured against a traditional strategic planning framework. The areas of priority facing libraries included staff, collections development and improving technological capabilities.

Implications: This study addresses a gap in the existing literature as no prior research has been conducted on the level of completeness of library strategic plans in New Zealand. The findings from this study can be used to help in the formulation of future strategic plans for New Zealand libraries, including areas of current strength and improvement. Suggestions for future research studies include conducting qualitative research among library management to better understand their use of strategic planning methodologies in the development of their strategic plans. In addition, an analysis that compares a series of plans over a period of time could also be explored to understand evolutionary patterns in strategic planning development within the library sector.

Keywords: strategic plans, academic libraries, public libraries.

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1. Introduction

Libraries are in a state of constant change. The advent of new technologies is influencing the way people interact with the library. It is essential for libraries to evolve so they continue to best serve their customers and communities. This requires a future focussed approach and this is where strategic planning can have a major role in the future success of the library. A strategic plan helps to manage the uncertainty of a dynamic environment and assists in identifying future opportunities (Pacios, 2007). It enables library managers to articulate their vision, mission, and goals, and to measure the results of their progress. The strategic plan is a framework to enable libraries to continue to enhance their collections and services for the benefit of society.

2. Problem Statement

This study does not consider the strategic planning process as there are numerous studies already on this. Instead, it looks at the end product of the process – the strategic plan itself. A review of previous international studies suggest that library strategic plans are not always complete or focussed, and thus do not assist the library in its forward planning and advocacy efforts as well as they might. This project aims to establish if the state of strategic plans in New Zealand is similar and, if so, provide guidance for their future development.

2.1 Rationale for the Study

The scope of the project will be limited to New Zealand based institutions to ensure the findings are relevant and actionable. I selected this topic due to my previous experience in corporate strategy, as well as my general interest in strategic planning. Furthermore, I particularly enjoyed the assessment in INFO 521 which required an evaluative report on a strategic plan from within the information sector. This sparked my interest to broaden the scope of the report into a more comprehensive study for my INFO 580 research project.

The significance of the project is three-fold: 1). The project has a degree of originality as it addresses a gap in the existing literature; 2). The findings will identify the level of completeness in the strategic plans, including areas of strength and improvement; 3). The analytical framework can be used as a template in the formulation of future strategic plans for New Zealand libraries.

2.2 Research Objectives

There are two key objectives for this research project:

1. To analyse the level of similarity and difference of strategic terms, issues and priorities across public and academic library strategic plans in New Zealand.
2. To evaluate the level of completeness of New Zealand public and academic library strategic plans as measured against an analytical framework.

2.3 Research Questions

The key research questions to be addressed by this project are:

Part One:

- How prevalent is the use of strategic terminology in New Zealand library plans?
- What are the key issues and priorities for the sector identified within the strategic plans?

Part Two:

- To what extent are the core components of a strategic plan evident in the sample?
- What areas of strength and improvement can be identified from the strategic plans?
- Are there any trends that can be identified as to how strategic plans have evolved?

2.4 Delimitations/Limitations

The only delimitation identified in the study is the exclusion of school and special libraries due to the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient sample of strategic plans. A limitation of the study is that the sample size of the academic libraries is significantly lower than the sample for public libraries. There are options to adopt a mixed-method approach, through the use of focus groups or in-depth interviews to improve the level of academic library representation for future research studies.

3. Literature Review

The literature review comprises an examination of strategic plans and planning within peer reviewed journal articles, books, and dissertations. The focus is on academic libraries, primarily because this has been an area of much research over the last two decades.

The focus of this literature review revolves around five core themes:

1. The importance of strategic planning;
2. Benefits and challenges;
3. Analytical frameworks;
4. Institutional alignment;
5. Common issues and priorities

3.1 The Importance of Strategic Planning

The adoption of strategic planning in libraries has been a slow process. It would be premature to state that it has reached the stage where it is become common across the types of libraries – academic, public, school, and special. Historically, the role of the library has been taken for granted (McNicol, 2005), and as such has been generally avoided (Moran, Stueart & Morner, 2013). The findings of one study revealed that of a sample of 74 universities and libraries only 32 university and 22 libraries had current strategic plans with 33 libraries not having a plan at all (Pacios & Ortiz-Repiso, 2010). In another study only three public libraries in Greece had developed a formal strategic plan (Kostagiolas, 2009). However, the absence of formal strategic planning is becoming increasingly anachronistic.

Libraries are becoming more accountable as to how they add value to the wider parent institution (Saunders, 2016; Birdsall & Hensley, 1994). The role of strategic planning has become a critical element in how libraries articulate this value so as to safeguard their long term viability (Germano & Stretch-Stephenson, 2012). Libraries are now recognising the importance of strategic planning as a mechanism to secure funding, and as an effective means of coordinating and implementing activities to improve their products and services to customers (Brown & Gonzalez, 2007). These changes have resulted in more libraries developing formal strategic plans. For example, in one study of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), nearly 80% had produced a strategic plan (Staines, 2009).

3.2 Benefits and Challenges

A number of studies attest to the benefits of strategic planning for libraries. These include the realising of a shared vision and gaining greater focus of the library's role in the wider institution (McNicol, 2005); to improve decision making (Staines, 2009); and to help clarify purpose and determine priorities (Corrall, 2000). A strategic plan allows libraries to manage change more efficiently and reduce uncertainty, and as Pacios argues, it can also be an "efficient marketing tool" (Pacios, 2004, p.2). Although not a 'silver bullet', strategic planning helps improve the effectiveness of an organisation. The findings from a study at the University of Malawi revealed that the development and implementation of a strategic plan guided the planning, budgetary and financing functions of the university, along with the planning of the library's services and systems (Mapulanga, 2013).

As strategic plans have become the norm rather than the exception within the library sector, there has been an increased willingness to commit and improve the strategic planning process (Brown & Gonzalez, 2007). For example, the introduction of a strategic planning process, helped set a new direction for the National Library of Scotland in 2004. The strategic plan clarified and articulated the objectives and key priorities of the library for the future (Wade, 2013).

Academic libraries have also used strategic plans to create fundraising opportunities. Given resource constraints and the increased demands for technological support in the form of computers, online subscription journals and databases, some academic libraries are incorporating fundraising into their plans as a "central strategic object" (Brown & Gonzalez, 2007, p.4). In the same study it was noted that relationships developed with key stakeholders during the strategic planning process placed libraries in a stronger position to compete for institutional funds.

A lack of commitment to the strategic planning process has been a challenge for libraries as it is often seen as a time consuming and unproductive exercise (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012). The influence of institutional politics is another factor that can shape the outcome of strategic plans (Brown & Gonzalez, 2007). Germano and Stretch-Stephenson (2012) argue that failures to execute action plans properly are driven by a lack of clarity, poor leadership, and slow decision making. The planning process at the University of Malawi library was one example that faced external political, social and economic forces, along with a lack of stakeholder engagement in the environmental scanning phase. These combined had a negative impact on the implementation of the plan (Mapulanga, 2013).

Similarly, a study which investigated strategic planning in UK academic libraries found that the level of staff involvement in the planning process varied across libraries. The attitude and approach of senior managers was one of the causal factors (McNicol, 2005). On a positive note, the findings did highlight that this is changing as libraries are adopting more formalised planning processes, and are aligning their plans more closely to those of their parent institution.

3.3 Analytical Frameworks

The development of strategic frameworks are fundamental to the formulation of a strategic plan. A prescriptive and consistent approach can result in clear, focussed objectives that are linked to actionable and measurable outcomes. There are numerous books on strategic planning frameworks for public and non-profit organisations (Bryson, 2011; Norton & Kaplan, 1996; Allison & Kaye, 2005). Although some of these are dated, they still provide important insights, especially regarding the core components of a strategic plan (Birdsall & Hensley, 1994). In a more recent study, Hijji (2014) developed a strategic management model for academic libraries. This study combined a content analysis with in-depth interviews to construct a strategic management model for academic libraries. The purpose of the model was to address gaps in existing frameworks by providing an approach to connect the library's overall mission and objectives with those of the parent institution.

From the literature there are few studies that provide guidance or examine the use of analytical frameworks or rubrics as tools to evaluate library strategic plans (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012). Chance and Williams (2009) noted that while rubrics exist to assess the quality of the planning process, they are not readily available when assessing the end product. Their function is a scoring tool that divides a plan into measurable components to determine a "comprehensive, holistic assessment of quality" (Chance & Williams, 2009, p.45). The benefits of this approach, argue Chance and Williams, is to inform "decision-making, articulate performance measures, and specify quality expectations" (Chance & Williams, 2009, p.45). Their study compared two university strategic plans against the development of a rubric. The rubric served as a benchmark for quality improvement, with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of strategic plans in the future.

A similar study was conducted for public libraries, a rarity within the academic literature. In this research, Buchanan and Cousins (2012), utilised an inspection-based approach to evaluate the strategic plans of Scottish public libraries. This was based upon a strategic framework that identified attributes within each component of the plan, which were then measured on an assessment scale. The framework provided a method to identify and assess the completeness of the plans, in conjunction with a qualitative assessment of each plan's terminology, cohesion and integration. The

findings highlighted that Scottish libraries need to improve the completeness of their plans, particularly the “precision, specificity, explicitness, coordination and consistency” (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012, p.125). The theoretical frameworks from both studies were informative in their approach to identifying and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of library strategic plans.

The balanced scorecard has been a strategic framework adopted by many profit and non-profit organisations, and is one that is increasingly discussed within the academic literature for libraries. For example, one study analysed the network strategies of academic libraries in Finland to present an “approach to the evaluation of strategic plans and their implementation” (Kettunen, 2007, p.409). The findings highlighted that the balanced scorecard, developed by Kaplan and Norton (1996) was an effective framework to evaluate strategy and performance. A balanced scorecard measures the communication and implementation of a strategic plan across a range of aspects from customers and finance, to internal processes and learning (Kettunen, 2007). Kettunen argues that it is reasonable to apply the balanced scorecard to the evaluation of strategies, because the approach is a “safeguard that the strategy can be described and implemented in a balanced manner” (Kettunen, 2007, p.413). He states that the advantage of a framework is that it removes the subjectivity, based upon personal experience and attitude, from the evaluation. The key finding from the study was that a balanced scorecard creates strategic awareness among the library staff, and facilitates alignment of the library’s objectives with those of the parent institution.

Another study evaluated the methods in academic medical libraries that engaged in strategic planning (Piorun, 2011). The aim of the study was to understand what strategic planning processes are used in academic medical libraries, who is participating in the process, and the methods used to evaluate strategic plans. Piorun (2011) discusses a conceptual model for strategic planning evaluation proposed by Dalrymple (2007) which is “comprehensive and systematic,” by measuring the five elements of “communication, leadership, culture, budget and planning” (Dalrymple, 2007, p.56). The findings suggest that these libraries are evaluating the strategic planning process as well as the outcomes from the plans. The evaluation tools used varied from balanced scorecards and benchmarking, to focus groups and general informal feedback. The strategy planning process identified by Bryson (2011) was adopted by the libraries, but was modified to meet local needs.

The balanced scorecard approach, Chance and Williams (2009) argue, is an example of “traditional business-oriented planning models that inadequately reflect the complex inter-relationship inherent in higher education” (Chance & Williams, 2009, p.39). Given this, my contention with the balanced scorecard is that the framework is designed to communicate and implement a strategy, but not as a

tool to measure the quality or level of completeness of the strategic plan itself due to differences in terminology and structure.

3.4 Institutional Alignment

The alignment of a library's strategic objectives with those of the parent institution can be an effective form of cooperation with opportunities to deliver greater focus and service delivery. According to Birdsall and Hensley (1994), libraries are likely to be "guided and directed by the broader strategic planning done in their institutional settings" (Birdsall & Hensley, 1994, p.149). Birdsall and Hensley examine the components of a strategic plan starting with the need for an environmental scan that includes areas relevant to advancing both the mission of the university and library (Birdsall & Hensley, 1994, p.152). The article discusses each component of the strategic plan from the executive summary, mission, objectives, strengths and weaknesses, and timeline. Each of these is the foundation of most strategic plans, and as such, will be key components in the analytical framework of my study. Likewise, Saunders (2016) argues that strategic plans determine the direction of an organisation in the form of setting a mission, objectives and actions in order to accomplish them. The increasing pressure for academic libraries to demonstrate their value has led to the development of strategic plans that support the mission and objectives of the wider institution. In Saunders' (2016) study, nearly two-thirds made reference to the parent institution's mission and objectives within the library strategic plan.

In a related study by Bielavitz (2011), a key research question was to understand whether the strategic plans of urban academic libraries reflect the initiatives of their institutions. Bielavitz argues that strategic plans are an "organisation's formal articulation of its priorities... and that coordinate... the strategic plans of lower-level units with those of the overall organisation" (Bielavitz, 2011, p.2). His content analysis of the library strategic plans among 46 Urban Serving Universities (USU) in the United States aimed to determine "evidence of correlations between the library strategic plans and the USU's themes and initiatives" (Bielavitz, 2011, p.2). The research findings indicated there was a high degree of alignment between the strategic plans of the library and those of the university.

The success of a strategic plan in achieving the objectives it sets out can only be determined by measuring the results through an assessment. To deliver high quality services that meet the needs of customers, it is argued that libraries incorporate assessment criteria against each objective within their strategic plans (Lakos & Phipps, 2004). Piorun (2011) writes that the majority of research on strategic planning in libraries has focussed on the process, rather than the end product, and as such there has been little mention of how objectives are measured. She notes that it is through

"continuous review and evaluation... that a strategic plan is transformed from a static document into a relevant and timely action plan" (Piorun, 2011, p.54). There are a number of studies from the literature that examine the use of assessments as a method to measure the level of contribution achieved among academic libraries (Saunders, 2016; Dole, 2013; Lewin & Passonneau, 2012; Lakos & Phipps, 2004). As Dole writes, "library strategic planning and assessment are closely related activities" (Dole, 2013, p.288). The study by Saunders (2016) mentioned that assessment or evaluation was in over 70% of the plans, whereas conversely in an earlier study among a sample of 124 ARL members, it was discovered that only a third provided any assessment data (Lewin & Passonneau, 2012).

3.5 Common Issues and Priorities

The goals or objectives in a strategic plan can be developed from a SWOT analysis or environmental scan. They may then be prioritised to highlight where the library should focus its resources. The strategic plan makes clear these intentions, so that key stakeholders can understand the future direction of the library as well as how they align with broader institutional objectives. Saunders (2016) conducted a content analysis among 63 member institutions from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in the United States to identify key terms, phrases, themes and concepts among a sample of strategic plans. This examination revealed that "collections, physical space, collaboration, instruction and staff" were the main priorities among academic libraries. The research design used for this study was useful in understanding how the results from a content analysis were evaluated. Another study of ARL libraries in North America demonstrated that Canadian academic strategic plans were more user-centred, whereas American plans focussed more on topical issues. The emerging themes identified from the plans included space planning, offsite storage, assessment, development, and personnel (Staines, 2009). Similarly, a comparative analysis among 73 American public library strategic plans between 1998 to 2010 highlighted the top five priorities to be collection and resources; lifelong learning; buildings, facilities, and equipment; staff; and management (Pacios, 2007).

In an earlier study by Saunders (2015), a content analysis was conducted to examine the stated directions and goals of libraries with the purpose of examining how academic libraries respond and allocate resources to current issues. This study examined the planning documents of academic libraries to determine how issues were prioritised. Saunders analysed 170 institutions, from which 63 strategic plans were examined for specific words, phrases and concepts to find any clear patterns or trends.

A limitation of the study was the level of geographic representation due to the relatively small sample, which is surprising given the fact that the population base would be significantly large. The analysis exposed the interchangeable nature of words such like goal, direction and objective. This highlights the lack of consistency in the application of strategic planning terms across academic libraries. Another point was the level of detail in the plans. Saunders notes that some were no more than a page long, whilst others exceeded ten pages or more in length.

The top trends identified in collection development was access to the collections, followed by implementing or expanding an institutional repository, shifting from print to electronic resources, preservation and digitisation initiatives. The area of facilities, such as having comfortable and safe physical spaces, was very popular. Other areas including collaboration within the libraries and across the campus, and instruction, in the form of teaching and learning, were the key trends identified in the majority of plans (Saunders, 2016). A point to note was that the study focused only on strategic plans. Any supplemental documents such as annual reports were excluded.

4. Research Design

4.1 Research Sample

The research population for this study consists of public and academic libraries as they constitute the majority of all libraries in New Zealand. They are also more likely to have published and accessible strategic plans. According to the 'Local Government in New Zealand – Local Councils' webpage, there are "78 local authorities comprising 11 regional councils and 67 territorial authorities" (localcouncils.govt.nz, 2011, Local Government Sector Profile, para.2). There are public library services available within each city or district council in New Zealand.

An online search was conducted of every city or district council website in order to identify and review the latest published library strategic plan. This could be in the form of a stand-alone document or as part of a wider council annual report or long term plan. In some cases, there was little or no reference made in these documents to libraries. Accordingly, these district councils were not included in the research sample. From the search, 23 city or district public libraries were identified as having a stand-alone strategic plan for their library or alternatively included as a component of a long term council strategic plan. The spread of libraries in the sample reflects a strong geographical representation across the country which adds validity to the research. In addition, I have included the strategic plans of the National Library of New Zealand (which is

currently undertaking a consultation process on their draft strategy to 2030)¹ and the New Zealand Public Libraries Strategic Framework to represent a broader, national perspective in the sample. A point to note regarding the National Library of New Zealand strategic plan is that although not a 'public library' in terms of its remit and priorities, it was included in the sample as it plays a supporting role by collaborating with public libraries through Te Puna, EPIC, Kotui, and the Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa. Overall, there will be a sample of 25 public library strategic plans analysed in both parts of the study (see Appendix A).

The academic library population consists of universities, polytechnics and institutes of technology. There are eight universities and sixteen polytechnics or institutes of technology in New Zealand (nzqa.govt.nz, n.d., ITPs in New Zealand). An online search was conducted of all 24 academic institutions to identify their most recent library strategic plan. This search produced only five strategic plans – all of them from university institutions. To improve the sample, I sent an e-mail to the 19 library managers requesting a copy of their strategic plan (Appendix C). This approach resulted in another three plans being made available. Whilst many ignored my request, some did respond by stating that their institution was too small to have a strategic plan, or that they could not send one as it was outdated or confidential. The outcome of the process resulted in a total of eight library strategic plans being made available from academic institutions (Appendix B). The overall sample for the research study will comprise 33 public and academic library strategic plans.

4.2 Research Methodology

The methodology for the research project was two-fold. The first part consisted of a content analysis which can be defined as a "detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases" (Leedy & Ormond, 2013, p.148). The rationale for this approach is that it is the most suitable technique for identifying key strategic terms, issues and priorities from a large body of text based material. A coding schema was developed to collate the information. This methodological approach will enable the first research objective, and associated research questions, to be addressed for the first part of the study.

As discussed, this study does not intend to analyse the strategic planning process. Rather the aim is to evaluate the actual strategic plan itself. The challenge though is that there is no universally agreed definition or template of what actually constitutes a strategic plan. What is clear is that they

¹ Haines, C. (2016, August 26). National Library of New Zealand: "Positioning for the future" submissions. A message posted to nzrecords-bounces@lists.vuw.ac.nz electronic mailing list.

all share similarities with respect to the core components, if not the terminology used to describe them. There is a wide variety of strategic planning frameworks available, so it is imperative for this study that the one selected closely resembles, if possible, the type of framework adopted by academic and public libraries in New Zealand.

In the second part of the study a prescriptive analytical framework was applied to the core components of each strategic plan in order to measure the level of completeness. The analytical framework proposed was one utilised in a study of Scottish public library strategic plans (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012). This framework has been critically tested against a number of library strategic plans, and incorporates a numerical scale that can be easily adopted for the New Zealand study. In addition, a consistent analytical approach enables a comparative analysis of the public library component of the research against the Buchanan and Cousins study. This analysis will be outside the scope of the current study, but could be explored in future research studies.

4.3 Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted in a way that best answered the research objectives and questions set out for this project. As mentioned, the first part of the study will consist of a content analysis. The benefit of a content analysis is they are “not necessarily stand-alone designs” (Leedy & Ormond, 2013, p.148). This approach will work well if further research beyond this project becomes evident. For instance, a content analysis can complement other methodological approaches to form a mixed-method design for more comprehensive research investigations.

The 33 library strategic plans were each subjected to a content analysis. This involved analysing the plans to identify the prevalence of key strategic planning terminology. In addition, key issues and priorities were identified and tabulated using the same method. The strategic plans, in conjunction with the existing literature, were examined in order to understand whether library strategic plans have evolved over time or if the library institutions developing formal strategic plans have shifted away from them altogether.

In the second part of the study, a theoretical framework was employed to measure, on a numerical scale, the core components of the library strategic plan. These are the vision, mission, goals, objectives, and action plans. The evaluation scale for this study was adopted from the Buchanan & Cousins (2012) study, which was derived from another study by Chance and Williams (2009), as outlined in the literature review. This comprises a four-point scale: Excellent (3), Good (2), Poor (1), and Absent (0). The results were tabulated by the numerical score for each component of the plan.

All the component scores were then be aggregated to determine the overall level of completeness of the strategic plan.

It is imperative the collection process generates data that can be analysed to reach meaningful conclusions. Therefore, a pilot study of 3-4 strategic plans was conducted for both the content analysis and analytical framework components of the study prior to the main analysis. A pilot helped to pressure test the validity of the data collection process to ensure that the data generated was robust and credible for the purposes of the project.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The body of material consulted were text-based documents only. The research project did not involve human subjects. Therefore, there are no known ethical issues with this research project that required approval from Victoria University of Wellington's Ethics Committee.

4.5 Data Analysis

In the first part of the study, the body of the library strategic plans were examined to identify core strategic planning terms and phrases like 'mission', 'vision', 'objectives', and 'goals', along with key issues and priorities. The data analysis included identifying the frequency of these terms and phrases, which were then tabulated to enable analysis of any patterns or trends in the data. The use of descriptive statistics was used to calculate the average number of times a particular word is cited in the plans. The data was then compared and contrasted within and across the public and academic sectors to identify any significant similarities or differences. An important consideration during the content analysis stage was to be mindful that the terms and phrases are "context-dependent" (Staines, 2009, p.154). Therefore, care was taken to prevent misinterpreting statements or expressions within the larger body of the text.

A similar analytical approach was conducted for the second part of the study. The results from the tabulated scores were analysed to ascertain the extent of 'completeness' across the strategic plans. The scores were subsequently compared and contrasted within and across the public and academic library strategic plans. From the data analysis there is a discussion on the relevant findings. These can be useful in contributing to the development of strategic library plans in the future.

5. Results

5.1 Strategic Terminology

5.1.1 Content Analysis

There were forty strategic terms selected from a variety of sources. A content analysis of these resulted in a total frequency count of 3,839 references from among the 33 academic and public strategic plans in the sample. The following graphs highlight the most prevalent strategic planning terms. The frequency count percentage represents the number of times each term was identified as a percentage of the total frequency count.

Figure 1: Top ten strategic terms (total sample)

The term 'plan/planning' was the most referenced among both the academic and public library plans. This prevalence was driven primarily from the public library sample.

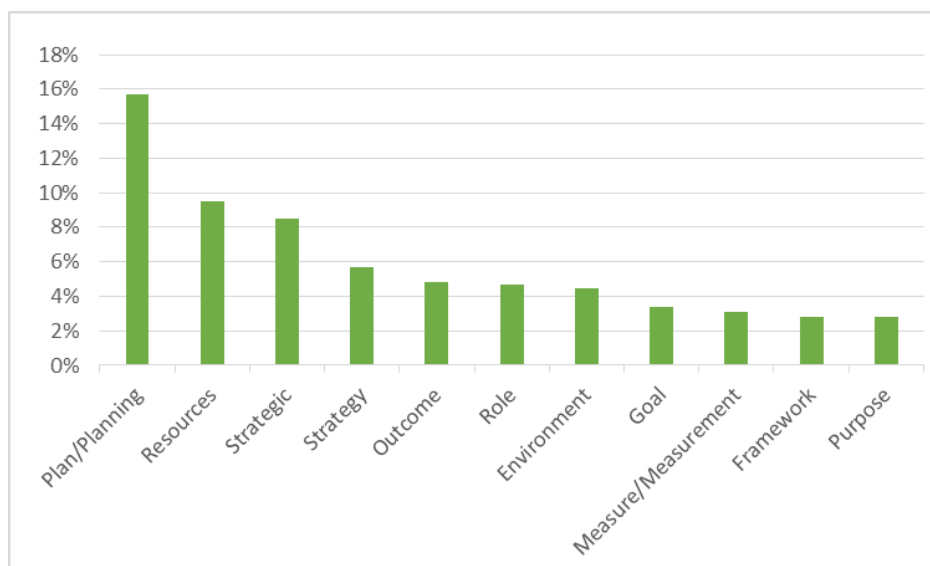


Figure 2: Top ten strategic terms (academic sample)

The terms 'strategy' and 'resources' were the most referenced strategic terms identified among the academic library plans.

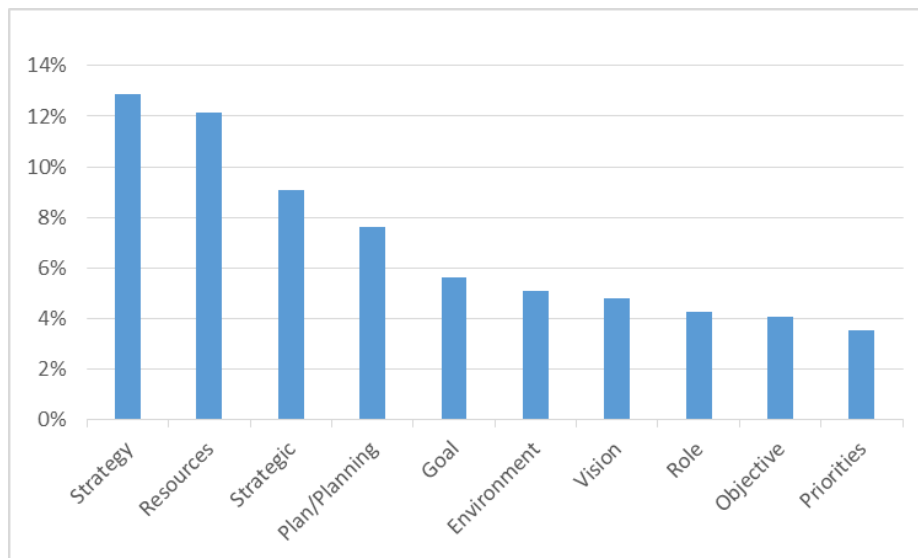


Figure 3: Top ten strategic terms (public sample)

The term 'plan/planning' was the most frequently mentioned strategic term identified among the public library plans.

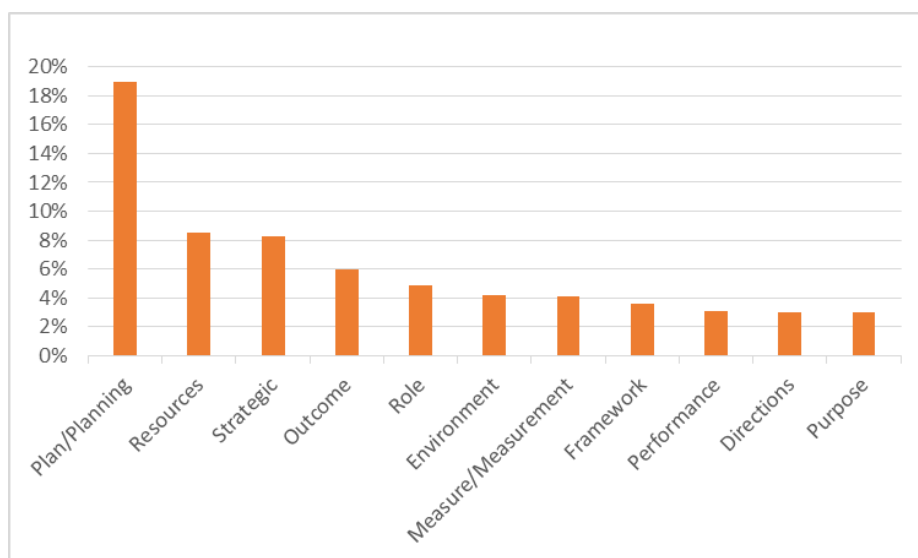
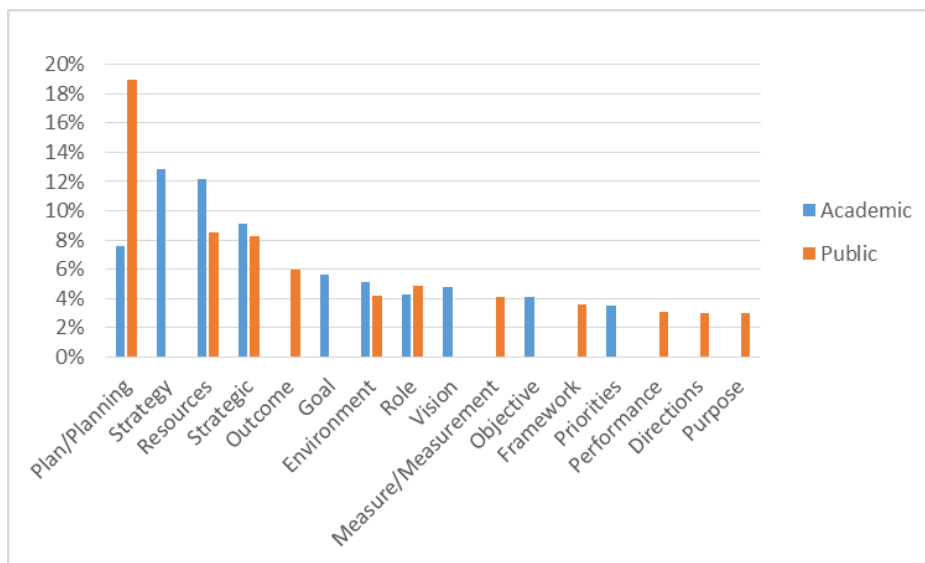


Figure 4: Top ten academic and public library strategic terms

After the term 'plan/planning', the next most common terms shared between the two samples were 'resources', 'strategic', and 'environment'. The terms 'strategy', 'goal', 'vision', 'objective', and 'priorities' were exclusive only to the academic library plans. Likewise, the terms 'outcome', 'measure/measurement', 'framework', 'performance', 'directions', and 'purpose' were exclusive only to the public library plans (within the top ten list).



5.2 Key Issues and Priorities

5.2.1 Content Analysis

A sample of 39 key issues and priorities were selected for analysis. A content analysis of these produced a total frequency count of 3,200 references across the 33 academic and public strategic plans. The following graphs highlight the most prevalent issues and priorities. The frequency count percentage represents the number of times an issue or priority was identified as a percentage of the total frequency count.

Figure 5: Top ten issues and priorities (total sample)

The term 'digital' was most prevalent within both the academic and public library plans. This was closely followed by 'staff', 'online/web', and 'collections'.

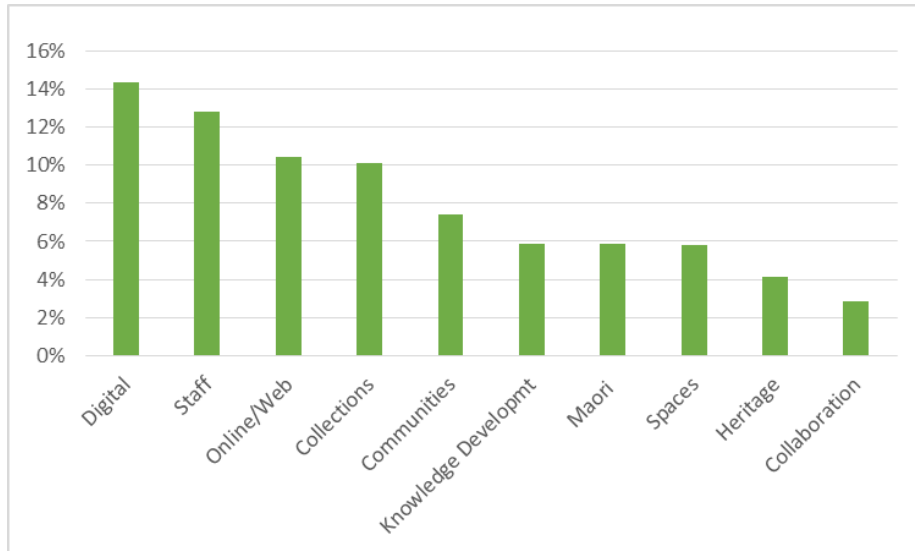


Figure 6: Top ten issues and priorities (academic sample)

The terms 'staff' and 'collections' were the two most prevalent identified within the eight academic library plans.

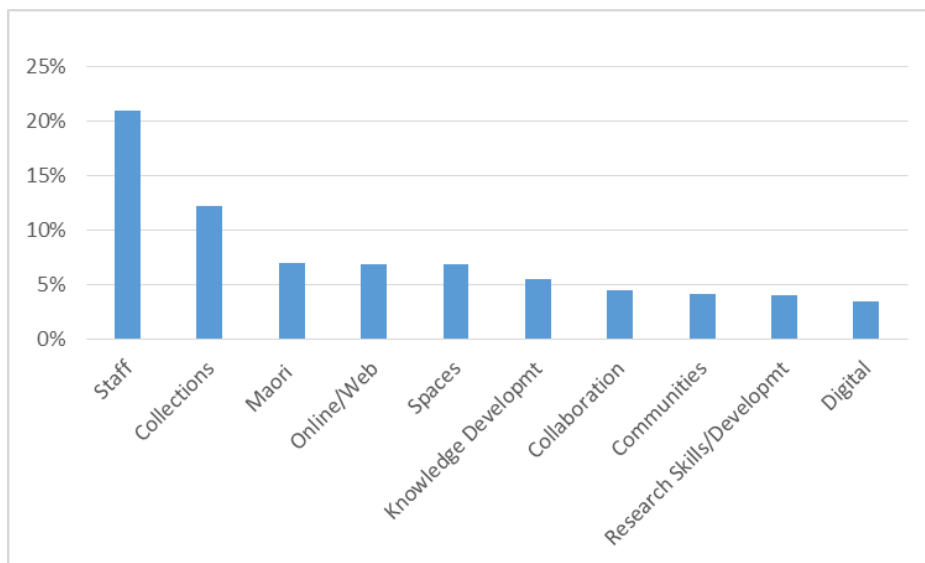


Figure 7: Top ten issues and priorities (public sample)

The terms 'digital' and 'online/web' were the most prevalent identified within the 25 public library plans.

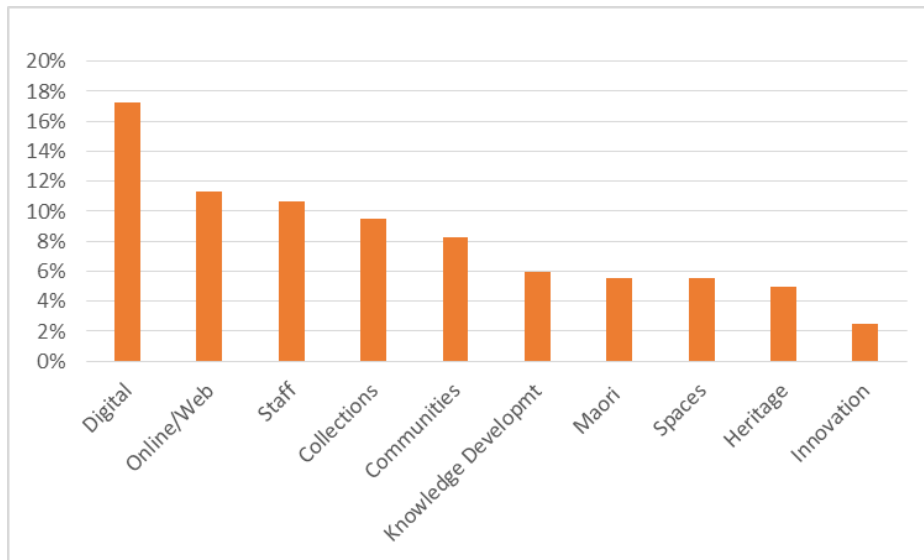
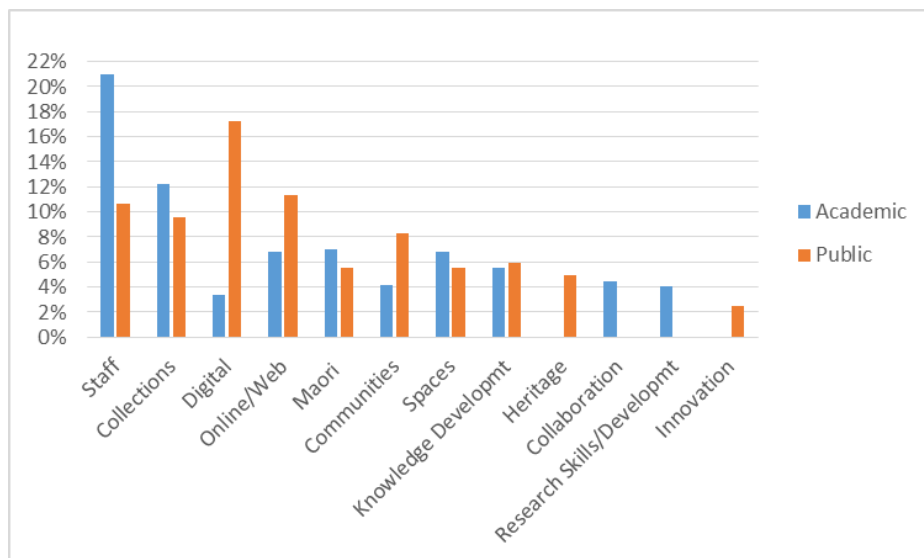


Figure 8: Top ten academic and public library issues and priorities

The most common issues and priorities shared between the two sectors were 'staff', 'collections', and 'digital'. Prevalent only to the academic plans were 'collaboration', and 'research skills/development', whereas for the public library plans it was 'heritage', and 'innovation'.



5.2.2 Key Priorities Exploration

In addition to the content analysis, a further exploration of the key priorities was conducted. These were prioritised in order to develop a top five list of the most common priorities and issues discussed in the academic and public plans.

Academic

Priorities

1. Using technology to provide innovative information and learning support services.
2. Providing easy and cost access to information and resources.
3. Strengthening strategic internal and external relationships.
4. Developing library staff capabilities and expertise.
5. Evaluating and improving systems and processes to ensure optimal use of resources.

Public

Priorities

1. Using new technologies to deliver content and services.
2. Providing access to information in a digital world.
3. Supporting lifelong learning and literacy.
4. Enhancing customer and community connection.
5. Providing buildings and spaces that are fit for purpose.

5.3 Core Component Analysis

An evaluation scale (Table 1) was used to measure the level of completeness of the strategic plans. This scale measures each component within the strategic planning framework as specified by Buchanan & Cousins (2012). The authors note in their study that the numerical scale was applied to what is an essentially qualitative assessment, and therefore the results should be interpreted as indicative and not absolute (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012, p.127). Each of the components was weighted equally, with an overall score calculated based on the average of each plan component. The quality of each component is not measured. To ensure objectivity, a score is assigned based

primarily on whether it is included in the plan, in addition to how well it is coordinated with the rest of the strategic plan components. This approach helps to eliminate subjectivity from the scoring.

Table 1: Evaluation scale (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012, p.127)

Excellent	3	Clearly and thoroughly addressed, and well-coordinated with other components.
Good	2	Largely addressed but incomplete and/or uncoordinated.
Poor	1	Largely unaddressed.
Absent	0	Not addressed.

Table 2: Evaluation score for strategic plans (total sample)

Description	Components					Average
Library	Vision	Mission	Goals	Objectives	Action Plans	Average
Total Average	1.5	2.2	1.7	1.1	0.9	1.5

The absolute scores in the above table reveal generally low scores against the evaluation criteria. The overall score of 1.5 out of a possible 3 indicates that a traditional strategic planning framework is not being adopted from across the 33 strategic library plans in the sample.

Table 3: Evaluation score for strategic plans (academic sample)

Description	Components					Average
Library	Vision	Mission	Goals	Objectives	Action Plans	Average
Open Polytechnic	2	2	2	3	3	2.4
University of Auckland	3	3	3	1	2	2.4
Victoria University of Wellington	2	3	3	0	2	2.0
Auckland University of Technology	2	3	0	2	1	1.6
Unitec	0	2	2	2	2	1.6
University of Canterbury	0	3	3	0	0	1.2
University of Otago	3	3	0	0	0	1.2
Massey University	0	1	2	1	0	0.8
Academic Average	1.5	2.5	1.9	1.1	1.3	1.7

The overall average for the academic strategic library plans was 1.7, with a median score of 1.6 out of a possible 3. This reveals that academic libraries are not fully adopting the strategic planning framework as specified by Buchanan and Cousins. The mission statement was by far the strongest component of these plans (2.5) with nearly all but one scoring at least two and above. This was followed by 'goals' at (1.9). The 'objectives' component received the lowest score (1.1).

The Open Polytechnic and the University of Auckland had the most complete academic library plans, scoring a total of 2.4 out of 3 on the evaluation criteria. These plans addressed each component, were clearly expressed, and well linked with the other strategic components. The 'vision' and

'mission' were usually clear, discrete statements and not implied or buried within service type statements. This made it clear as to the long term direction of the library.

Table 4: Evaluation score for strategic plans (public sample)

Description	Components					
	Vision	Mission	Goals	Objectives	Action Plans	Average
Library						
Hauraki District Libraries	2	3	3	2	3	2.6
Hamilton City Libraries	2	2	2	3	3	2.4
Nelson Public Libraries	2	2	2	2	2	2.0
Public Libraries of New Zealand	3	3	2	2	0	2.0
National Library of New Zealand	0	3	2	2	2	1.8
Palmerston North City Library	3	2	2	2	0	1.8
Waitomo District Library	3	3	2	1	0	1.8
Wellington City Libraries	2	2	2	3	0	1.8
Auckland Libraries	2	3	1	1	1	1.6
Far North District Council	3	2	2	0	1	1.6
Whanganui District Library	2	1	2	2	1	1.6
Rotorua District Council	0	3	2	0	2	1.4
Tararua District Council	1	3	2	1	0	1.4
Tauranga City Libraries	0	3	2	2	0	1.4
Waimakariri District Council	2	2	1	2	0	1.4
Horowhenua Library Trust	2	0	2	0	1	1.0
Christchurch Libraries	2	0	2	1	0	1.0
Dunedin Public Libraries	2	2	0	1	0	1.0
Puke Ariki - New Plymouth	1	2	1	0	1	1.0
Gisborne District Council	0	2	2	0	1	1.0
Hurunui District Council	0	2	2	0	0	0.8
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	0	1	2	1	0	0.8
Invercargill City Council	0	2	0	0	1	0.6
Manawatu District Council	2	1	0	0	0	0.6
Waimate District Council	0	2	1	0	0	0.6
Public Average	1.4	2.0	1.6	1.1	0.8	1.4

The overall average and median score for the public strategic library plans was 1.4. This score was lower than the academic average, thereby suggesting that public libraries are less likely to adopt a traditional strategic planning framework. The strongest component of the plans was the mission statement (2.0), followed by 'goals' (1.6). Similar to the academic strategic plans, the weakest numerical score was for the 'action plans' component.

The Hauraki District Library strategic plan was the most 'complete' plan from among the public library sample with a numerical score of 2.6 out of 3. This was closely followed by Hamilton City Libraries (2.4). The scores for both plans were rated good to excellent across all five strategic framework components, with the 'action plans' component scoring an excellent rating.

The numerical data was also analysed by the percentage of plans that had a strategic component rated from good to excellent (a score of two and above) on the evaluation scale. The table below compares these scores between the academic and public library samples.

Table 5: Percentage rating by strategic component

Academic Libraries	Vision	Mission	Goals	Objectives	Action Plans
Score of 2+	63%	88%	75%	38%	50%
Public Libraries	Vision	Mission	Goals	Objectives	Action Plans
Score of 2+	60%	80%	72%	40%	20%

The comparison shows a high degree of consistency across the majority of the strategic plan components. The exception was the 'actions plans' component where the academic plans scored considerably higher indicating possibly a greater possible focus on explaining to institutional stakeholders how these libraries execute their strategy.

5.4 Key Strengths and Areas for Improvement

A strengths and areas of improvement evaluation was conducted for each of the plans. These were prioritised with the purpose of developing a top five list for both samples.

Academic

Strengths

1. Clear alignment to parent institution strategies.
2. Clear and easy to read plan, especially strategies that had a 'plan on a page' (VUW/UOA).
3. A good range of references to support the strategy.

Improvements

1. A lack of specific and measurable objectives and targets to track progress.
2. No action plans available or referenced.

Public

Strengths

1. Clear link to parent institution strategies in the stronger plans.
2. Attractive, well presented, and easy to read.

3. Evidence of user surveys, public feedback and library data used to support the strategy in the stronger plans.
4. Linked to the 'Strategic Framework for Public Libraries 2012'.

Improvements

1. Lack of specific and measurable objectives and targets to track progress.
2. Lack of an action plan.
3. Lack of detail, particularly for plans incorporated as part of a wider institutional plan.
4. No mention of research to inform the formulation of the strategic plan in the weaker plans.
5. No link with wider parent institution strategies in the weaker plans.

6. Discussion

6.1 Strategic Terminology

The results exposed a high prevalence of strategic terminology across the library plans. This is evident when the ten most frequently used terms comprised two-thirds of the total frequency count. The most common term was 'plan/planning'. This is not unexpected as the sample is a representation of library strategic planning across the country. This term was used frequently among the public library plans, and given the larger sample size would have skewed the data to some extent. This was followed by 'resources' and 'strategic'. The term 'resources' was second among both the academic and public library plans. This is a positive finding as a strategy is only as good as the people or financial means to implement it, and reflects a desire to bring about change, which bodes well for the future of New Zealand's libraries.

The terms 'environment' and 'role' complete the list of the ten most common terms. Although the rankings of these terms differ slightly between the two samples, it does indicate that context and function are necessary functions in strategic planning. The frequent use of 'environment' reveals that libraries are cognisant of the parameters they operate within, and it suggests that the plans are directed towards making changes within these parameters. Likewise, the term 'role', although broad, states the function of the library in terms of what their purpose is and how they intend to deliver on it.

As stated, there were also some differences between the two samples in terms of the type of strategic terminology used. For instance, the academic library plans used terms more consistent

with a traditional strategic framework terminology. There was also a greater emphasis on terms that were future focussed in comparison to the public library plans. For example, the term 'strategy' represented 12.9% of the total references in comparison to only 2.8% among the public library sample. Similarly, terms like 'goal' (5.6% vs. 2.5%), 'vision' (4.8% vs. 1.9%), 'objective' (4.1% vs. 0.7%), and 'priorities' (3.5% vs. 1.9%), all indicate that the academic plans were more closely aligned to a more orthodox strategic framework.

Why is this? One line of thought is that academic libraries, like their wider parent institution, the university or polytechnic, are reliant to a great extent on generating revenue from student fees. There is a high level of competition to attract students to tertiary institutions so in order to keep fees affordable, the environment is focused on fiscal management and generating a return on investment as key priorities. The outcome of this for academic libraries is that they have to increasingly prove their existence. In order to do so, the development of a strategic plan articulates to wider stakeholders their 'purpose', among other things, as a way to obtain funding and to safeguard their long-term viability. Consequently, this endeavour is reflected in the type of terminology used in their strategic plans.

In terms of public libraries, even though their funding is derived from council rates and from various library charges, they face the same funding pressures as academic libraries and are under the same pressure to prove their worth. This is reflected in the type of strategic terminology used, specifically performance management and measurement type language. For example, the term 'outcome' represented 6.0% of the total references in comparison to only 2.0% for the academic library plans. Likewise, terms such as 'measure/measurement' (4.1% vs. 0.7%), 'framework' (3.6% vs. 0.8%), and 'performance' (3.1% vs. 0.9%), emphasise performance measurement to a greater degree to justify their return on investment as a community institution.

Although not consistently applied across the public library sample, particularly among the stand-alone plans, it was clear that performance measurement terminology was a key component of the long term plan of the parent institution. For many smaller public libraries, their size does not justify a stand-alone plan (there are exceptions to this like Hauraki District Libraries). The plans of libraries incorporated as part of their District Council's long term plan, are usually between two to four pages in length. This differs from stand-alone plans which are generally longer in length, anywhere from four to seventy pages, and cover a greater depth of detail about the strategy of the library. For uniformity within the long term plan, every area like libraries, parks, or community halls, all need to follow the same type of format. For example, in the case of Rotorua District Library the plan includes key components such as 'what we do', 'why we do it', 'measuring our achievements',

'performance', and 'issues/risks/negative impacts'. This prescriptive approach helps to explain the higher prevalence of performance measurement terminology among public library plans. In addition, some of the council's operations require strict performance management and measurement such as in the management of the town water supply, roads, or sewerage treatment. Therefore, all other areas, like the library, adopt the same terminology for consistency reasons. A downside to this approach is that it inhibits library managers from developing a more flexible library strategic plan that would perhaps enable a greater range of issues to be discussed, and in greater detail, like with stand-alone plans.

6.2 Key Issues and Priorities

6.2.1 Content Analysis

The top ten issues and priorities identified were consistent for both the academic and public library plans. The area of staffing had the highest number of references across the academic and public library plans. There are a number of reasons for this such as in the development of library staff. With rapid technological change occurring across the library sector, it is critical for staff to have the relevant skills to ensure that users receive the best possible service. Furthermore, as the average age of library employees is increasing, the issue has become of great importance to the profession. This point is supported by Denise Donaldson who writes that "the consequences of an ageing workforce" are "problematic as the profession... attracts an older workforce" (Donaldson, 2014, p.6). Because of this, there are conversely "comparatively fewer younger people...entering the profession" (Donaldson, 2014, p.11). This will have a considerable impact on participation rates and productivity in libraries across New Zealand (Barthorpe, 2012, p.9). Furthermore, according to research in Australia, there is an insufficient number of library graduates to fill the void from retirements over the next decade. This has been driven partly by fewer library and information science programmes on offer, because of falling demand, than a decade ago (Franks, 2012, p.106). The impact of these trends are that libraries, over time, will lose these skills and knowledge as there are not enough young, qualified employees available to lead and manage them in the future. This point emphasises the critical role of succession planning and knowledge transfer for the library sector, and reinforces the point as to why staffing is the number one issue or priority cited in the academic and public library strategic plans in New Zealand.

The next most important issue or priority was collections development. Many of the libraries hold vast physical collections. In order to maintain existing collections whilst acquiring new materials is a considerable investment for any modern library. In light of continual budgetary pressures, the long

term maintenance and development of physical collections was highlighted as a key area of focus for both the academic and public libraries. As users become more technologically sophisticated, investment decisions facing library management are becoming shifting increasingly towards the provision of more digital content. This was more a prevalent issue among public libraries with technological attributes such as 'digital' representing 17.3% of the total number of references in comparison to only 3.4% for the academic library plans. Similarly, 'online/web' was 11.4% compared to 6.8% among the academic libraries.

Another reason is the ongoing concern of ensuring that a library's collection remains relevant to the user. As the population becomes more ethnically diverse, it is crucial for libraries to ensure that their materials meet the needs of the students and communities they serve. This is a challenge facing the Auckland region due to the growth and increasing diversity of the population. This situation is placing greater demand on the resources of the Auckland library system. It will pose an even greater challenge in the future as the Auckland region is expected to grow by a further 200,000-300,000 more people over the next ten years (Auckland Libraries, 2013, p.11).

An observation among the public library plans was the higher number of references to 'communities' (8.3% vs. 4.2%). This again is not surprising given that the purpose of a public library is to enhance the lives of their community. The purpose is different between the two library types with academic libraries focussing on meeting the needs of students at the university, whereas community collaboration, at least from a library perspective, is not the top priority. The focus on 'heritage' was also greater among public library strategic plans (5.0% vs. 0.9%). Many of the public libraries hold heritage materials relating to the local history of the community. The discussion of heritage relates in many cases to their preservation, either in a physical sense or by preserving them digitally. There was also mention on improving access to heritage collections for the community.

6.2.2 Key Priorities Exploration

The results suggest that among the academic plans, the use of technology was seen as the highest priority, particularly as a mechanism to deliver innovative solutions that enhance and support access to information and the provision of learning support services. This was followed by strengthening internal and external collaborative relationships, developing staff, and improving systems and processes to optimise the efficient use of resources.

The upgrading of technological capabilities for public libraries was also at the forefront, especially in terms of improving access to the digital world through the provision of free and fast internet connectivity and access to computer terminals. Improving access to information facilitates to encourage lifelong learning remains a key service attribute of any community based library. It is evident from the plans that these continue to remain top priorities for public libraries.

Some of the differences among the two samples was the emphasis on developing staff capabilities at academic libraries. This could be driven by the scale and diversity of the collections, along with the technical knowledge required to deliver services that meet the needs of students, researchers, and faculty at academic libraries. The public library priorities included a focus on improving the buildings and spaces for their customers and the wider community. As the library is becoming the hub of the community, enhancing these spaces to encourage greater interaction remains a top priority.

6.3 Strategic Plan Evolution

There were some notable differences between the two samples regarding the age of the strategic plans. Of the eight academic library plans, 38% had been written within the last two years. This compares with only 4% among public libraries. A reason for this becomes clear when comparing this against the duration of the plans. The academic library plans had an average plan duration of 4.5 years, compared to 8.3 years for public libraries. As the public library plans are written less often, this indicates that they are more likely to become outdated, particularly in a fast pace environment such as libraries, with the effectiveness of the strategy also diminishing. A shorter planning period would increase the relevance of the plans, thereby making them more actionable than those of a longer duration.

There is little from the strategic plans to indicate whether they have evolved significantly in recent years. Although there are differences in the look, feel, and type of content discussed, particularly among the stand-alone plans, there was a certain level of consistency in the use of strategic terminology regardless of when the plan was first written. To gain a greater understanding of whether there are any evolutionary shifts in library strategic planning frameworks a like for like comparative analysis of a cohort of plans over a period of time would provide a more insightful understanding of whether any movements have occurred. What was noticeable, though to be expected, was that the content had evolved considerably, especially with regards to technological developments, like e-books, digital preservation, and improving access to online information.

6.4 Core Component Analysis

From the results, the data highlighted a general lack of 'completeness' across the plans. An explanation for this could be that library institutions no longer see the need to adopt a traditional planning framework because of the fast changing, and often turbulent, environment they operate in. Perhaps such a framework is too restrictive, and therefore is not conducive to the formulation of a long term strategy for these types of institutions? To gain a better understand on whether this would be the case, further research among library managers and those involved in strategic planning would be required.

The scores indicate that the mission statement was the most frequently included component among the five from the Buchanan and Cousins (2012) framework. Conversely, action plans are least likely to be included in the strategic plan. As these plans are designed to be 'strategic' this absence is not necessarily significant, but what is interesting is the absence of any reference to an action or operational plan anywhere else among the plans. This absence suggests the lack of an operational plan, or it is not seen as relevant to include in a strategic plan. It is worth mentioning though that the plans with the highest scores were those that had a detailed, and well-coordinated action plan.

A final point to make is the high number of public library strategic plans. This skews the average when measuring each strategic plan component at a combined level. Therefore, it is more meaningful to analyse the academic and public components separately in order to determine a clearer understanding of the similarities and differences between the two samples.

There is a high likelihood that the use of strategic terms like 'goals' and 'objectives' are used interchangeably even though the definition of each is quite distinct. Furthermore, even if goals and objectives are present, they had to be consistent with the component attributes as specified by Buchanan and Cousins. For example, objectives need to be specific, measurable, and time bound (see Table 6). If any of these attributes are insufficiently met, then a lower score would be assigned to that specific component.

Table 6: Component attributes (Buchanan & Cousins, 2012, p.126)

Component	Should be
Vision	Specific Inspiring Challenging
Mission	Purposeful Targeted Stakeholder-focused
Goals	Stated as ends Specific Translatable Traceable
Objectives	Specific Measurable Timebound
Action plans	Measurable Timebound Linked Resourced

Academic & Public Library Comparisons

A comparative analysis of the scores between the academic and public library plans highlighted similarities with the components 'vision' (1.5 vs. 1.4) and 'objectives' (1.1 for each). What these scores reveal is that these two components are either not seen as a core part of the strategic planning framework among New Zealand libraries, or as stated earlier, there are differences in application of the terminology, where for example, a vision statement is substituted for a mission statement or an objective is phrased as a goal. If this is the case, then it shows there is a poor understanding of the definitions of these terms and how they should be applied within the context of a strategic plan.

There were some notable differences in the scores when comparing the academic against the public library plans. Specifically, the components 'mission' (2.5 vs. 2.0 – even though this was the highest component score among the public library plans), 'action plans' (1.3 vs. 0.8), and 'goals' (1.9 vs. 1.6), were all higher than the equivalent among the public library plans. As to why this may be the case, and as mentioned earlier, many of the public library plans in the sample were part of a district or city council long-term plan. These plans are formatted to ensure the focus is on performance issues and measurement, along with the role and purpose of the library. This usually includes a description of the services the library provides under the headings 'What we do' and 'Why we do it'. However, these are not generally stand-alone, explicit statements that are purposeful, targeted, and stakeholder-focused, but are instead implied within service type statements. The consequence was a generally lower score for this component of the plan.

As a collective, four of the five component scores among the public library plans (with the exception of 'objectives') were below the equivalent scores of the academic library plans. Based on an analysis of the results, there is an argument that public library managers are less inclined than their academic counterparts to follow a traditional strategic planning framework. The framework restrictions of these plans is a contributing factor, but there could be other reasons as well. Is it because public library managers are of the view that they see less benefit from adopting a strategic planning framework in the development of their library strategic plans? This was certainly not the case throughout the public library sample with the two highest scoring strategic plans (Hauraki and Hamilton) both showed a high level of style, substance and conformity to a traditional planning framework. These differences highlight the need for more in-depth research to understand the rationale behind how public libraries decide on their strategic framework for their plans.

This highlights the point as to why do some public libraries adopt a stand-alone plan while others incorporate it into a wider long term plan. The obvious answer is that many libraries may not have a choice in the matter. The analysis suggests that the scores are generally lower for those libraries that conform to an institutional framework. This is supported by the fact that 44% of public libraries had stand-alone plans in comparison to 100% from the academic sample. There are a number of factors such as expertise, cost, and time that influence these decisions, but as noted by the Hauraki strategic plan (which is a comparatively small district council) they are not insurmountable barriers. Overall, the analysis suggests that the adoption of a traditional strategic planning framework among public libraries is not consistently applied, with over half the sample conforming to wider institutional frameworks. This is not to state that there is anything wrong with this approach, but instead highlights that there is not an overall standard to the development of public library strategic plans in New Zealand.

6.5 Key Strengths and Areas for Improvement

In terms of strengths, the highest scoring strategic plans from across both samples all incorporated linkages with their parent institution into their strategic plans. Another commonality was that the better plans were clear, presentable, and easy to read, with some, especially the academic plans, including a 'plan on a page' which helped to articulate the strategy more clearly. Among the public library plans there was evidence of public feedback and surveys to help in the formulation of the strategy, with some emphasising their alignment to the New Zealand Public Libraries Strategic Framework.² The areas for improvement from across both samples were a lack of specific and

² *Public Libraries: Strategic Framework 2012-2017*. (2012). Retrieved January 23, 2017, from <http://www.lianza.org.nz/public-libraries-strategic-framework-2012-2017>.

measurable strategic components. Furthermore, many did not have action plans which resulted in a lower score when measured against the strategic framework. There was also a lack of detail for some plans, particularly among those incorporated into a wider institutional plan.

7. Conclusion

The 21st century library is undergoing rapid change. This has been driven primarily by a technological evolution that has transformed the way people access and use information. To remain ahead of the curve, libraries need to continually respond and adapt to these changes in order to best meet the needs of the customer. This is a pivotal function for any library. However, libraries are increasingly having to justify their existence. The pressure on cost management, along with generating a return on investment, are key issues facing both academic and public libraries, not only in New Zealand, but around the world. This why strategic plans are so important. The strategic plan is the mechanism to articulate a library's sense of direction, its reason for being, to outline key strategies, and how they are to be accomplished. For stakeholders that have a vested interest in the long-term viability of such institutions, then a strategic plan is a critical document that helps mitigate risk by providing the necessary information to make informed decisions.

Given this, the more comprehensive the strategic plan, the better the level of decision making. This study set out to understand how complete library strategic plans were across a sample of academic and public libraries in New Zealand. The overall conclusions formed was that there was a high prevalence of strategic planning terminology used among both the academic and public library plans. However, what was clear when measuring the key strategic components of each plan, was that these terms were incorporated into plans that did not, in many cases, follow a traditional strategic planning framework. The discussion in this study sets out some explanations as to why this might be the case. The real question becomes does it matter that contemporary library strategic plans are no longer conforming to a traditional framework? Based upon the evolving environment facing modern libraries, it seems to be, based upon the findings from this study that following such a framework no longer seems relevant or necessary. If the information conveyed in these plans satisfy those that have to make decisions or take actions from it, then that may be good enough. But is it good enough? The idea of a strategic framework is to promote depth and breadth of thinking, as well as consistency in approach. If those responsible for developing strategic plans take short cuts by omitting components that facilitate a robust strategy, then in the end it is the users of the library that are compromised, and when this happens, the library fails in its obligation to society.

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9. Appendices

Appendix A: Public Libraries Strategic Plan List

Auckland Libraries
Christchurch City Libraries
Dunedin Public Libraries
Far North District Council
Gisborne District Council
Hamilton City Libraries
Hauraki District Libraries
Horowhenua Library Trust
Hurunui District Council
Invercargill City Council
Manawatu District Council
National Library of New Zealand
Nelson Public Libraries
Palmerston North City Library
Public Libraries of New Zealand
Puke Ariki – New Plymouth
Rotorua District Library
Taranua District Council
Tauranga City Libraries
Waimakariri District Council
Waimate District Council
Waitomo District Library
Wellington City Libraries
Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Whanganui District Library

Appendix B: Academic Libraries Strategic Plan List

Auckland University of Technology
Massey University
The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
Unitec Institute of Technology

University of Auckland
University of Canterbury
University of Otago
Victoria University of Wellington

Appendix C: Strategic Plan Request Letter

Dear Library Manager,

I am a postgraduate student at Victoria University of Wellington, studying for a Master of Information Studies degree in library science.

As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting a research project to evaluate the content of New Zealand academic and public library strategic plans. The reason I selected this topic is because there has not been any published research conducted within a New Zealand context on assessing the content of library strategic plans (not the process, but the end product). Such studies have been completed overseas, and this provides an opportunity to conduct something similar at a local level. The findings of the research will hope to identify themes that will serve as the basis for libraries to use as a guide in the development of future strategic planning.

The methodological approach will involve a content analysis of the plans against key components of a prescribed strategic planning framework in order to identify key elements and compare them with the framework and against each other. The sample will constitute a wide range of library strategic plans from among academic (universities and polytechnics) and public (district councils) throughout New Zealand.

I am writing to you to request a copy of your institution's library strategic plan or equivalent. This could be in the form of a stand-alone plan, or part of an annual plan/long-term plan from your institution. I would appreciate including a strategic plan from your institution in my sample. This will greatly enhance the representation and robustness of the analysis. In return, I would be glad to send a summary of the results for future reference on completion of this project in Q1 2017.

For your information, my supervisor for this project is Dr Anne Goulding, Professor of Library and Information Management and Director of Research Degree Programmes at Victoria University of Wellington.

If you are able to assist with my request, I would appreciate it if you could please send me an electronic copy of your plan to me by Friday 12th August to enable work on the sample to commence.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact me directly on 0274 977 104.

Thank you and kind regards

Andrew

BCA, BA (Hons)

Andrew Stewart McKay

ID# 300018147

Word Count = 10,560 (excluding bibliography and appendices).