



Innovation in (national) Libraries

Focus Group

Hildelies Balk, 17 september 2013

In this presentation

- Research Design and purpose of the Focus Group
- 5 Propositions on concepts
- Factors that determine the capacity for innovation in a (national) library
- Ranking of clusters
- Call for more feedback

Research Design

Design

1. Concepts of innovation theory mapped to concepts public value theory → concepts of innovation relevant to national libraries
2. Literature: set of determining factors for these concepts
3. Field testing:
 - a. Focus group: test and good practice
 - b. Interviews in 3 to 5 national libraries
 - c. [Feedback facility](#) to collect good practice

Outcomes

1. Thesis Executive Master at [TiasNimbas Business School](#) (nov 2013)
2. Model and [facility](#) to build best practice (2014)

The Public Value perspective

- Library does not work for profit but delivers *public value*
- Public Value (Moore 1995):
 - *What the public values*
 - *What adds value to the public sphere*
- Delivery of public value is dependent on legitimacy: users, stakeholders, public at large (*authorizing environment*)
- Changes in environment (national) library → need for innovation
- Innovation in a library should always add to public value!

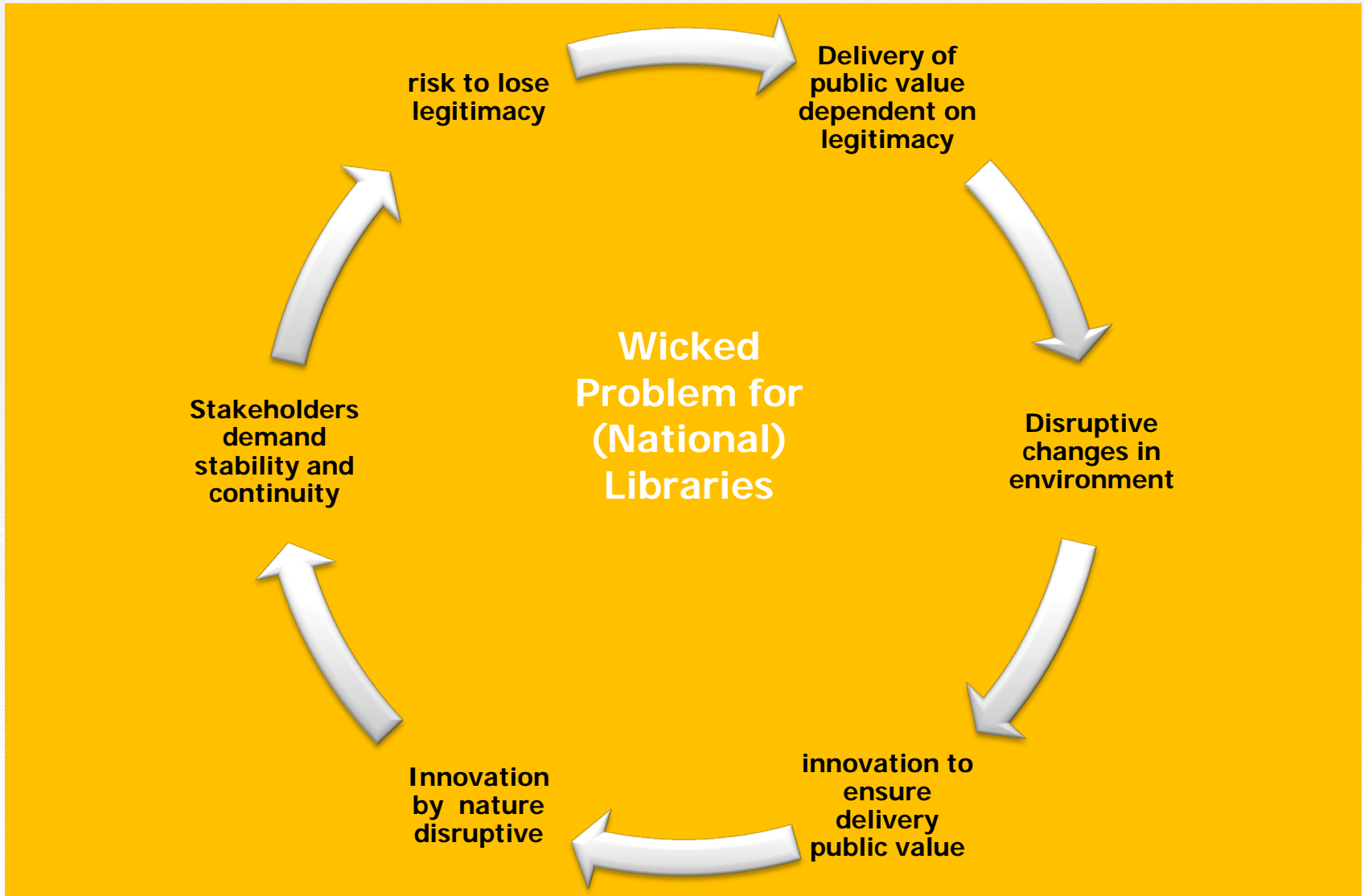
Innovation concepts

- **'Classical'** innovation: focused on new product/service/market approach within single organization. New concepts :
- **Open Innovation** paradigm (Chesbrough 2003):
 - 'not all the smart people work for us' → emphasis on use of external knowledge to innovate
 - develop innovation in networks, spin out what you do not use
- **Innovation with users** and user communities (Von Hippel 2005: Democratizing Innovation) → e.g. open source communities, digital scholarship
- Public Value theory: corresponding concepts:
 - **co-production** with research and industry;
 - **partnerships**/networks/alliances
 - **co-creation** with users

Proposition 1 : Successful innovation

Successful innovation in a (national) library is: the creation or adoption of an idea or behaviour new to the organization with continued and/or added public value as outcome.

- Fully agree
- don't know/can't say
- nonsense!



Proposition 2: Improvement AND Innovation

In order to deliver public value, a national library needs to be able to foster continuous quality and improvement of service as well as radical innovation in parts

- Fully agree
- don't know/can't say
- nonsense!

Proposition 3: Co-production

The co-production of new library systems, services and workflows with partners leads to sharing of innovation risk and adding value to the public sphere

- Fully agree
- don't know/can't say
- nonsense!

Proposition 4: Networks and Alliances

Forming (long term) alliances and networks with other institutions to innovate lead to increased legitimacy, sharing knowledge and cost efficient delivery of public value outcomes

- Fully agree
- don't know/can't say
- nonsense!

Proposition 5: Co-creation

The co-creation of innovation with users enhances legitimacy and relevancy of outcome and adds to public value

- Fully agree
- don't know/can't say
- nonsense!

Factors that determine the capacity for innovation: four clusters

In no particular order:

- Collaboration Capacity
- Leadership and Culture
- Knowledge and Organizational learning
- Organizational Design

Collaboration Capacity

Capacities for co-production and co-creation of innovation

- Partnership capacity : commitment and trust between partners; having a reputation as a trustworthy partner, selecting the right partner; making clear agreements and define clear targets; train employees to work with partners; ability to manage alliances
- Networking capacities: Social intelligence; Cross-cultural competency; curiosity
- Understanding user communities (e.g. open source, digital humanities)
- Best practice project management implemented; skills and authority to accomplish projects; virtual collaboration skills
- Type of collaborator: boundary spanners

Knowledge and organizational learning

Balancing the diffusion of innovation and the exploration of new possibilities; seeing innovation through until the end

Sharing (internal and across organisations)

- Intention: strategy communicated and embraced by all; innovation goals match strategic objectives
- Redundancy: overlap in knowledge between units
- Sharing tacit knowledge: training by doing
- Communities of practice (across organisations)

Organizational learning:

- Careful analysis prior to action and between stages
- Learning from failure (e.g. post-project reviews)

Exploration (external)

- Autonomy of professionals
- Absorptive capacity for external knowledge: total R&d expenditure plus proportion of employees with (scientific-technical) graduate education
- Incentives for innovation such as awards or innovation contests
- Platforms for sharing, centres for research and innovation that can be shared between partners

Leadership and culture (1)

Managing the paradoxical forces of continuity and change

Leadership (CEO, directors individually):

- complexity leadership skills: can steer both stability and radical change; tolerance to ambiguity and uncertainty; 'walking the walk'
- independency, unconventionality
- leaders not only supportive but 'inventors' themselves

Top management team:

- Composition and characteristics of team more important than leaders characteristics individually: amount of education , diversity of background, experience and ties outside library

Leadership and culture (2)

Culture fostered by leadership :

- Inventiveness, curiosity
- Trust, collaboration
- Encouragement of risk-taking and tolerance to failure
- 'Stretch'

Library as a whole

- Tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, diversity
- Able to handle power struggle and politics
- High performance in the past as a barrier
- Related syndrome: 'Not invented here'

Skills at population level :

- Awareness, open mindset; novel and adaptive thinking (beyond rule-based)

Organizational design: structure and resource allocation

fosters continuous quality and improvement of service as well as radical innovation in parts

Structure

- Hierarchical 'machine' bureaucracy: barrier
- Pure adhocracy: only fit for Silicon Valley
- Mix of *adhocracy* and *bureaucracy*, 'Hybrid' organisation
- e.g. 'skunkworks': separate units that innovate outside regular (IT) infrastructure and workflow but foster strong (informal) ties throughout organization to channel integration. Freedom to develop new ideas plus good process for technology transfer

Resource allocation

- Cuts in permanent budget foster innovation
- Innovation budget, transaction budget foster innovation
- 'Slack' resources
- 20% freetime for everyone

Offices

- Open office spaces

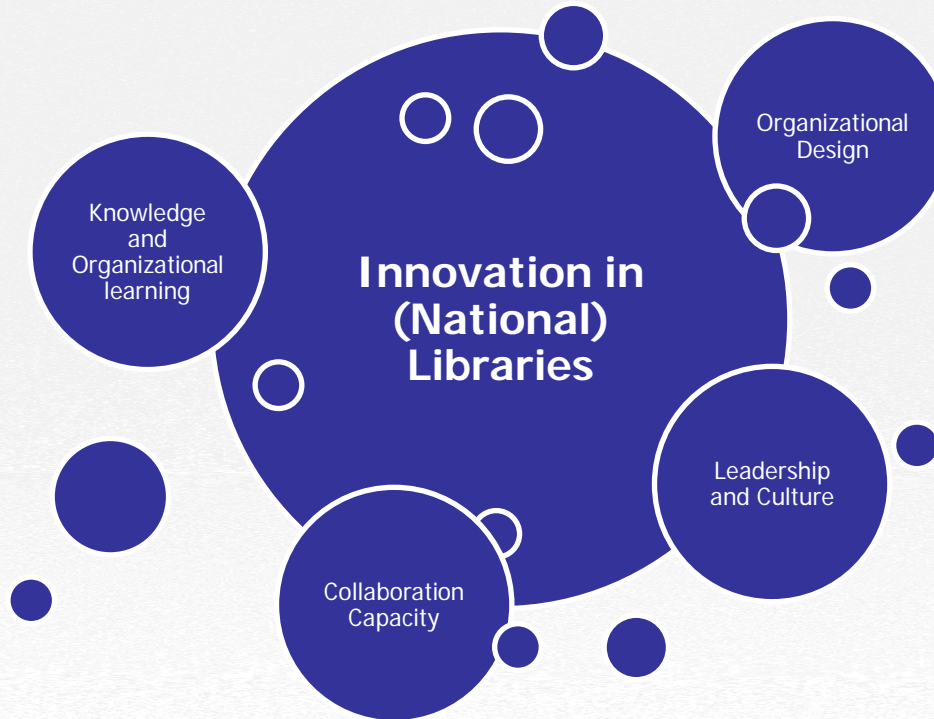
Ranking the clusters: most important

- **Which one is most important for innovation in library**
- Which one is least important
- Which one is easiest to pursue
- Which one is hardest to tackle



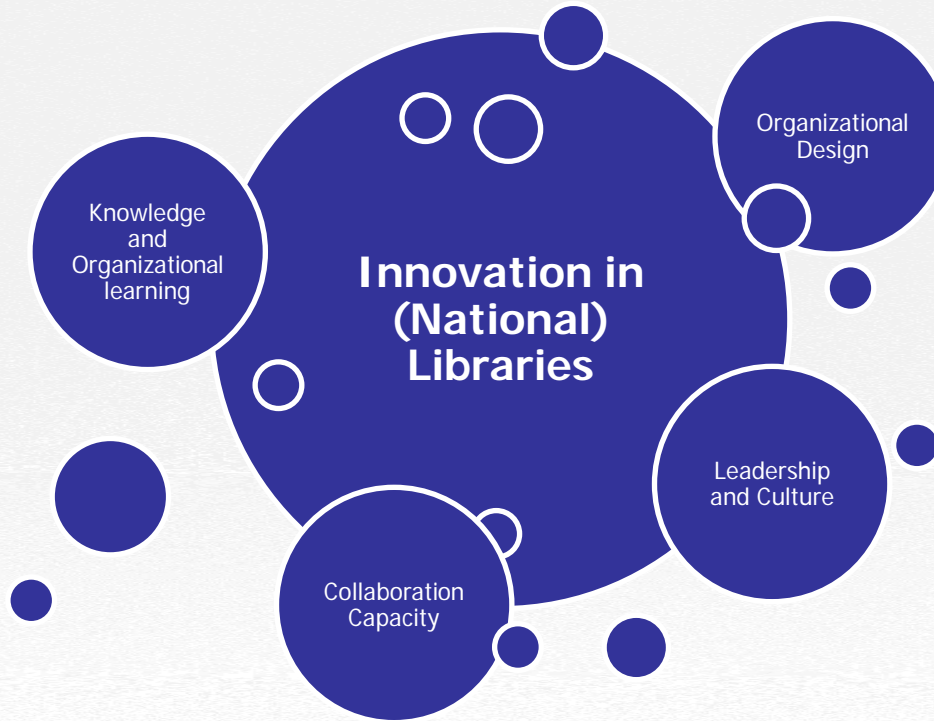
Ranking the clusters: least important

- Which one is most important for innovation in library
- **Which one is least important**
- Which one is easiest to pursue
- Which one is hardest to tackle



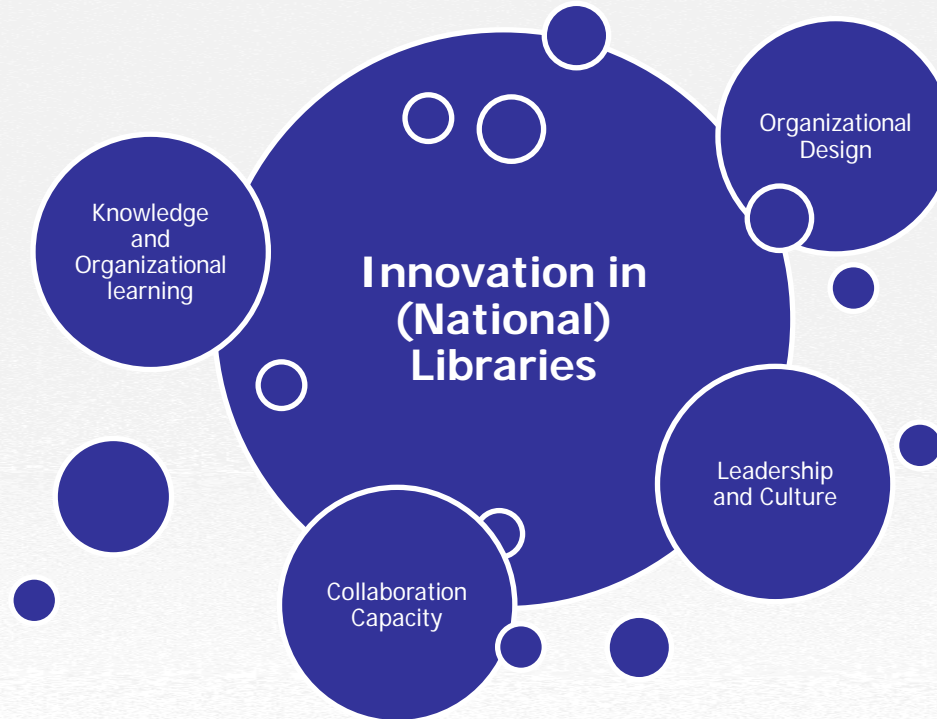
Ranking the clusters: easiest

- Which one is most important for innovation in library
- Which one is least important
- **Which one is easiest to pursue**
- Which one is hardest to tackle



Ranking the clusters: hardest

- Which one is most important for innovation in library
- Which one is least important
- Which one is easiest to pursue
- **Which one is hardest to tackle**



Comments and feedback welcome:
<http://libraryinnofactors.wordpress.com/>