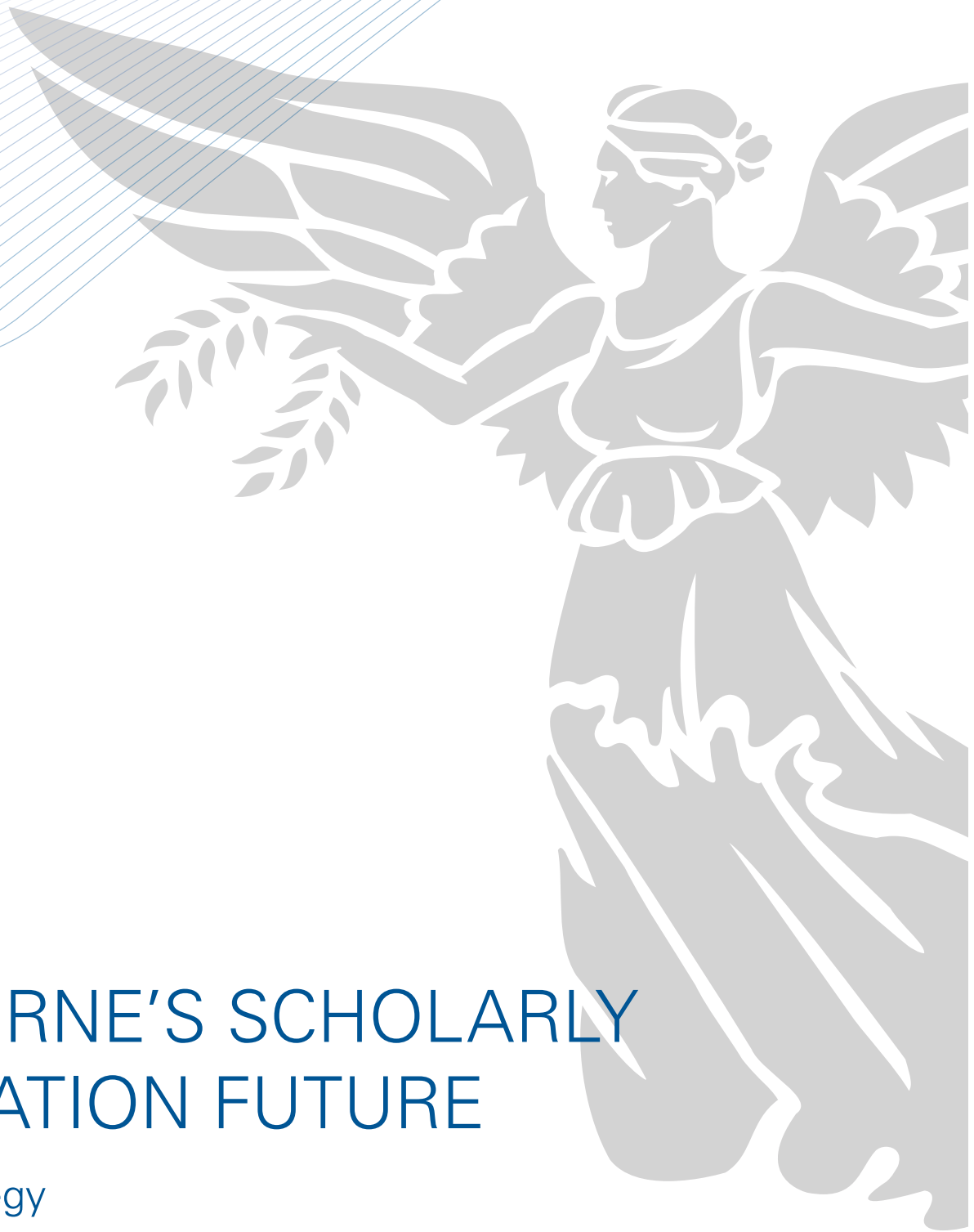




THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



MELBOURNE'S SCHOLARLY INFORMATION FUTURE

A ten-year strategy

July 2008

INTRODUCTION

Universities adjust to their times, yet celebrate continuity. Since its inception in 1853 the University of Melbourne has undergone profound changes in its physical, intellectual and cultural landscapes. Yet core values remain unchanged, such as the belief that universities matter, and the understanding that a great university is founded on the strength and vigour of its scholarly community.

Today the University aspires to be a public-spirited institution, highly regarded for its distinctive contributions to the world in research, teaching and knowledge transfer. Permeating all three of these strands, the quality of Melbourne's scholarly information environment is fundamental to achieving the Growing Esteem vision.

Melbourne has rich collections of printed scholarly publications, cultural materials and archives befitting a university of its age and stature. Yet our ability to collect even a fraction of what is currently published is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of production, by escalating costs and by our ability to manage, make accessible and maintain such collections. And whilst the Internet has the potential to make knowledge more widely available, competitive pressures are encouraging greater protection of intellectual property and copyright. Digital content does not guarantee that access will be free. The vast amount of information becoming available in digital form creates the paradox of overload and challenges our capacity to locate and preserve relevant, high-quality information.

Many universities are grappling with these issues. Each institution is crafting its own solutions based upon its own research and teaching priorities, its history, its current state, its values and philosophy. The familiar and constant models of the past are changing irrevocably, with no consistency emerging thus far.

This Scholarly Information Future Strategy is a result of seizing a rare opportunity – an apposite moment to re-assess and re-imagine our scholarly information environment at a time when disruptive technologies are causing transformational change in society.

In 2008, after engaging with the community in a vigorous discussion, we have chosen a strategy to develop a virtual and physical information environment that makes Melbourne a place that students and academics aspire to be a part of, that supports a vibrant community of scholars.

And whilst we recognise that continuing change is inevitable, requiring us to review this strategy every few years, we know that with this clear vision for our preferred future we can respond positively to emerging opportunities that may be, as yet, undreamt of.



Linda O'Brien
Vice-Principal (Information)

PRINCIPLES

It is clear that we live in a rapidly changing environment, an environment in which globalisation of education and its infrastructure is the norm. From our consultation process it is also evident that we must deal with tensions between emerging client needs, existing values and competing demands, and do so within finite resources.

It is against this backdrop that the following principles are proposed. Each of these principles shape and inform the choices we have proposed.

To deal with a rapidly changing environment we will:

1. Focus on our research strengths, using our information environment to build stronger cross-disciplinary links.

We will develop our information and infrastructure in ways that are useful across disciplines, creating mechanisms to make collaboration easy while supporting our research strengths.

2. Harness the diverse insights and innovative ideas of each new generation of students.

We will involve our students in implementing change, acknowledging that they are both consumers and producers of new media and scholarly information. Informed by the pedagogy of peer support we will engage students in the design, delivery and evaluation of student-facing services to generate more powerful learning outcomes and to nurture student leadership.

3. Work as partners across academic and professional boundaries to achieve our aims.

We will use the expertise that exists across different parts of the organisation rather than replicate professional knowledge and skills in each organisational unit.

4. Make informed choices about the development of our scholarly information and technologies.

Ongoing research and reflection about scholarly information practices will be essential to inform the effective and efficient development of our scholarly information environment.

5. Build our physical learning and teaching environments, including our libraries, to maximise flexibility.

Technology will continue to change the way in which our scholars engage with, use, and create information in their learning, teaching and research. Decisions about buildings, whether new constructions or refurbishment, are for the long term.

To deal with globalisation of education and its infrastructure we will:

6. Leverage the opportunities offered by being part of a global collaborative community.
We will actively seek to participate in collaborative communities and partnerships that enable us to influence and leverage abilities beyond our means as an individual organisation. We will use open standards, open source and other open initiatives to ensure that we can effectively collaborate, 'trade' and re-use the work of whole communities. We will not invest in creating bespoke solutions that we could readily achieve in other ways or where they do not add unique and deep value to our mission.
7. Focus on the quality of our staff and students as a key differentiator in a competitive world.
The high quality of our staff and students is a unique asset which should be recognised, developed and capitalised upon to realise our collective aspirations.
8. Seek to shape national and international agendas, as befits our role as a leading institution.
We will advocate for change to public policy and other relevant agendas, where possible in cooperation with other organisations. This will enable us to more readily advance scholarly information and communication and to achieve our vision.

To deal with the tension between emerging client needs, existing values and competing demands within finite resources we will:

9. Value the diversity of our discipline and individual backgrounds whilst recognising the need to make choices about our common future informed by an understanding of value and cost.
We will look for ways to learn continually from the different views that disciplines and individuals have of our present situation and of future needs. We will use this to inform our choice of initiatives, looking for synergies where these are possible and supporting differences only where they add demonstrable value and richness to the University's overall mission, justifying the investment required.
10. Implement initiatives in ways that ensure we can be innovative, agile, adaptable and flexible.
Whenever possible we will adopt international standards and implement infrastructure in ways that support local innovation, experimentation and prototyping while maximising overall efficiency. We will invest in a cost-effective core, leveraging solutions developed within the University or elsewhere rather than investing in large-scale implementations.
11. Plan and operate in ways that are financially, technologically and environmentally sustainable.
We will minimise the negative environmental impact of our activities and will seek to offset any negative effects that we cannot avoid. We will consider issues of data quality and longevity in choices for new technologies and services. We will not implement major capital initiatives without first identifying a funding stream to operate and maintain them as sustainable services.

ASPIRATIONS

The University of Melbourne is a public-spirited institution whose scholars make distinctive contributions to society by creating and sharing outstanding intellectual works that advance knowledge.

As a University we will support and advance research, learning and teaching, and knowledge transfer by working toward the following aspirations – aspirations which seek to ensure that Melbourne has the capabilities necessary to compete in a globally competitive world and demonstrate unique value.

Research

We live in a world in which research is increasingly interdisciplinary, international and collaborative. Nevertheless, there remain distinct differences in how scholarly information is created and disseminated within academic disciplines. Technological change is rapid, and we have seen tremendous growth in the production of scholarly information in all its forms. The rate of change in research practice shows no sign of abating.

To advance Melbourne's position as a leading research institution we will seek to:

1. Provide an outstanding information environment that facilitates creativity and the development of critical thought and knowledge.
2. Disseminate the University's scholarship widely, inviting local, national and international collaboration and communication.

An **outstanding information environment** is an essential foundation for world-leading research and scholarship. Increasingly our information environment spans institutional and national boundaries, requiring new approaches to scholarly information management and new types of information professionals. We will need the ability to enter partnerships, to collaborate, from a whole-of-University perspective down to the level of the individual researcher.

Melbourne has a unique opportunity to provide an information environment that makes it easy for our scholars to work across disciplinary boundaries, in keeping with the spirit of the Melbourne Model and our commitment to focusing on interdisciplinary research.

In this digital age, sharing our scholarly works – our teaching, our research, our collections – has never been easier. By **disseminating our scholarship widely** the world is now our community; our reach can be broad ranging, can be of greatest impact, touching those who can derive maximum value from it.

Where possible, we will seek to make our research data, teaching materials, creative works and publications available in open and interactive ways, enriching our research and learning, contributing to global knowledge and profiling Melbourne as a leading research university.

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By providing Internet-based communication, collaboration and publishing tools this community can become co-creators and be part of the University, blurring the boundaries between the institution and broader society. This happens now – it will only accelerate.

Achieving these aspirations will contribute to the University attracting the best researchers to Melbourne and enabling them to achieve great research.

By 2015 we will know we're on track if...

- » Strong, mutually beneficial international partnerships enhance the quality of Melbourne's information environment.
- » Research collaboration is easy within and across discipline, institutional and national boundaries.
- » Management and dissemination of research data and digital collections is painless.
- » Our scholars find it easy to disseminate their scholarly works in open ways, increasing their research impact and contributing to global knowledge.
- » Digital versions of our research output are openly available in interactive ways wherever appropriate, bringing these works to life through engagement for mutual benefit.

By 2020 we will know we're on track if...

- » Melbourne is known for the quality of its research information environment.
- » Melbourne is known for the depth of its disciplinary research and its innovative interdisciplinary research, profiled through open access to our scholarly output and recognised through improved international research rankings.

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Learning and teaching

The Melbourne Model defines the shape of Melbourne's curriculum through to 2020. Our undergraduates will be exposed to, and learn about, different domains of knowledge, different methods of inquiry and different 'ways of knowing.' They will have direct exposure to leading research and knowledge transfer projects on campus, as well as opportunities for off-campus experiences such as industry and community work placements and international study. Professional training will be through our postgraduate coursework programs.

To enhance learning and teaching at Melbourne we will seek to:

3. Equip our students with the critical, ethical and practical capabilities to effectively use scholarly information.
4. Equip our staff with the resources, capacity and skills required to create learning experiences of the highest quality.

Scholarly literacy will be integral to our students' ability to work across different domains of knowledge. In a rapidly changing information landscape they will need the knowledge and skills to be discerning information seekers; to find, manage and create scholarship which represents different ways of knowing; to engage with research data, with scholarly and professional publications and with related technologies. The University seeks to expose all undergraduate students to genuine research and knowledge transfer experiences. We will support such experiences using new and innovative digital ways of engaging with scholarly information and technologies, developing our graduates' skills in the recognition and production of various forms of scholarly work.

Creating great learning experiences will rest in part on the virtual and physical environments we create but most importantly on the qualities our academics bring to their teaching. Approaches to teaching and learning in different disciplines will remain diverse and will continue to evolve. Our virtual learning environments will be easy to use, flexible, personalised and resource-rich. We will develop our teaching and learning spaces in ways that support different learning styles, pedagogical methods and information media types. Our staff will have access to a variety of development opportunities, enhancing their ability to create learning experiences of the highest quality using cutting-edge scholarly information and technologies. This will include encouraging the development of communities of practice, co-creation of content and peer review.

Achieving these aspirations will bring our learning and teaching into the 21st century, helping the University to attract and retain the best students.

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By 2015 we will know we're on track if...

- » Scholarly literacy programs are embedded in all new generation degrees and professional postgraduate programs, as appropriate for different disciplines and in ways which recognise and support diverse student needs and equity.
- » Staff have access to communities of practice appropriate to their discipline and to development opportunities that assist them in creating learning experiences of the highest quality using scholarly information and technologies.
- » New learning tools and technologies can be created collaboratively, deployed rapidly and shared appropriately.
- » We leverage the capacity of our information environment to provide access to resources regardless of location, enabling our staff to create flexible, personalised learning experiences for students.

By 2020 we will know we're on track if...

- » Our graduates are discerning information seekers, equipped for lives and careers in which knowledge boundaries are permeable and issues of professional practice often require interdisciplinary understanding and knowledge that is rapidly renewed.
- » Our virtual learning environments are easy to use, flexible, personalised and resource-rich.
- » **Our** teaching and learning spaces support different learning styles, pedagogical methods and information media types.

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Knowledge transfer

Melbourne aspires to be known locally and globally as a University deeply involved in its communities. Through knowledge transfer activities we seek to enrich the Melbourne Experience for students and to contribute to intellectual, social and economic life outside the University.

As a public-spirited institution Melbourne seeks to engage communities in collective experiences, providing opportunities for reflection and conversation, for co-production in which academic forms of knowledge and expertise find new applications, purposes and platforms beyond the typical reach of scholarship. The University is therefore an owner, patron and agent in cultural life, as well as being an educational institution.

To distinguish Melbourne through its knowledge transfer activities we will seek to:

5. Unlock the potential of our unique scholarly collections to stimulate engagement between the University and its communities.

Great universities of the world will be differentiated by the richness of their rare collections -- the print, special and cultural collections and archives which distinguish them as places of deep scholarship. These collections, already unique and valuable, will in the future become an even greater asset, attracting international scholars.

The University of Melbourne has many items of international and national significance. These treasures remain largely hidden, many uncatalogued, many in need of restoration, very few with any public display space and even fewer available as digital objects open to the world. Over the next decade we will aspire to **unlock these treasures** for the benefit of our scholars and the broader community.

Achieving these aspirations will improve our profile, reputation and institutional rankings by delivering better value from existing investments in our collections.

By 2015 we will know we're on track if...

- » Our unique, internationally significant research, special and cultural collections are discoverable.
- » We have working examples of innovative projects that link the scholarly community and the public in the development of collections through contribution of information, oral history and discussion.

By 2020 we will know we're on track if...

- » We are recognised as a leading university, attracting great scholars and building research communities around our special and cultural collections.

Linking the strands

Scholarly information is intrinsic to all aspects of our academic activity: our research, teaching, learning and knowledge transfer. Scholarly collections, technologies and physical spaces facilitate academic work across the strands, providing the potential to link them in new and exciting ways. The pace of external change influences our internal activities. We will need to constantly review and understand how scholarly information practices are evolving.

Overall, we will seek to:

6. Create physical environments that support the development of scholarly communities and facilitate a sense of belonging.
7. Provide an information environment that is distinguished by ease of use, equity of access, quality of content and richness of possibility.
8. Engage in advanced scholarship in information practice, using this to inform the development of our information partnerships, services, systems and infrastructure.

Our physical environments have the potential to foster a vibrant learning community in which our students, our academics, our professional staff share ideas and learn from each other. With more than fifty thousand people being part of our immediate University community it will be necessary to provide library and learning spaces that preserve the sense of human scale and encourage interaction and quiet reflection, yet which realise the benefits of aggregation. The ten-year master plan for the Parkville campus will create a small number of discipline-based precincts, each one distinct, reflecting the different ways in which cognate disciplines engage in research and learning.

Within the precincts, the library will continue to be the focal point of a networked world, providing spaces for independent and collaborative learning and research, with access to scholarly works in appropriate forms and to information professionals. Each library will be distinct, responding to the specifics of its location and clients. Our libraries will be accessible to University and accredited external scholars first, and to other groups by agreement. Access for the general public will be through our digital presence and defined public spaces.

Melbourne will build a new research and cultural library that links the city and the University, creating a magnet for international scholars, particularly in the humanities. Public spaces within the building will invite the community into our scholarship, offering a window on our collections, both physical and digital. For scholars there will be browsable access to research reference works, quiet contemplative study spaces and ready access to our relatively low-use research collections through a rapid retrieval service, with the collections themselves housed in temperature- and humidity-controlled closed-access conditions to ensure their preservation.

Our virtual information environment will recognise that scholars want access to convenient and efficient information services, regardless of the scholar's location. The future landscape will need to include greater access to digital data, full-text digital publications and to tools and technologies which help our scholars to effectively and efficiently find and manage information, in their research, learning and teaching, and to present and publish their work. We will require both physical and virtual collections to support the work of our researchers and students.

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To position Melbourne as a **thought leader in scholarly information practice** we will develop a centre of excellence that explores emerging trends, new information frameworks, business models and tools for the creation, dissemination, access, collection and preservation of scholarly information. The institute will link existing initiatives across the University to capitalise on our collective expertise and innovative ideas. What we learn from this research will be applied in practice – to develop and support policy, training and collaboration around scholarly information and e-research, and to contribute to campus planning and collection management.

Achieving these aspirations will ensure the University maintains a leading role in scholarly information, technologies and resources, continuing to support the work of top researchers, teachers, and students.

By 2015 we will know we're on track if...

- » A precinct development plan is in place and the Baillieu, ERC and Commerce libraries have been redeveloped as the heart of the relevant precincts of the Parkville campus.
- » Students are able to use formal and informal spaces on campus, indoors and out, in ways that blend physical and virtual learning environments for individual and collaborative learning.
- » Adequate physical and digital collections support research, learning and teaching, and knowledge transfer.
- » Cataloguing and search tools make it easy to discover, cite and manage information.
- » Information professionals with discipline knowledge are partners in our research, learning and teaching endeavours, increasing our overall productivity.

By 2020 we will know we're on track if...

- » Our campuses are defined by discipline-based precincts clustered around a library, learning environments and social learning spaces that support the development of outstanding scholarly communities and facilitate a sense of belonging.
- » We have created a link between the city and the University and a magnet for international scholars through a landmark building which appropriately houses and displays many of our research, special and cultural collections, both physical and digital.
- » Our students and staff are able to access scholarly information, technologies and research instruments regardless of location, supporting an integrated approach to engagement in learning, research and knowledge transfer.
- » We have improved the accessibility of our systems and the quality of our support for personal mobile computing. Fewer University-owned access devices are provided on campus.
- » Through the work of its fully developed research institute in scholarly information practice, Melbourne is recognised as an international thought leader in the application of scholarly information and technologies to advance research and scholarship.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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