



WHEN CRISES CONVERGE: LEADING AND MANAGING
ACADEMIC LIBRARIES DURING TIMES OF CRISES

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Stellenbosch Symposium
12 October 2021

CONVERGENCE

Convergence is when two or more things come together to form a new whole



TYPES OF CONVERGENCE

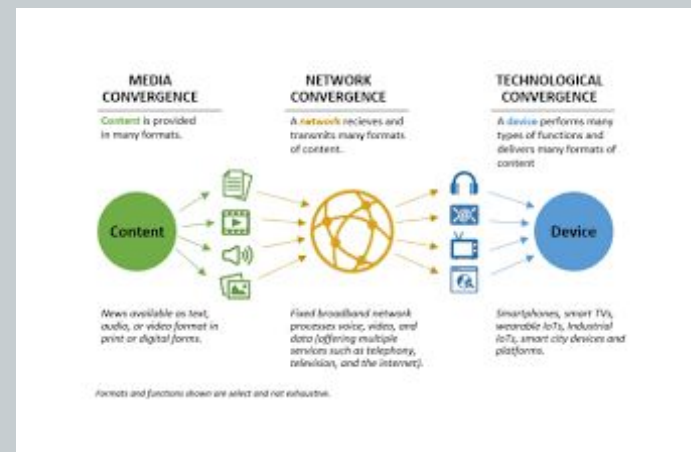
Technological – a common platform to deliver voice, data and video services

Cultural – acculturation and assimilation

Services – delivery of multiple services to the end users over the same medium/network

Economic

Political





21ST CENTURY ACADEMIC LIBRARY...

The successful library of the future
“will be the one that has found new
ways of meeting its stakeholders'
needs”.

Anderson, R. 2008 in Nutefall, J.E. and Chadwell, F.A. 2012. Preparing for the 21st century: Academic library realignment. *New Library World*, V.113 (3/4), pp.162-173

STRIVING FOR SUCCESS

Review & realign

- ▣ Continued relevance, demonstrated value and sustainability

Deconstruct the library and library practice to bring new perspectives towards:

- ▣ *Library design, user needs and active learning*
- ▣ *Balancing content and space*
- ▣ *Knowledge creation, curation and sharing*
- ▣ *Unique collections and digital resources*
- ▣ *Integration between core practices and new trends*

SUSTAINED INNOVATION

*DOING THINGS BETTER FOR EXISTING
USERS!*

USER EXPERIENCE

- Exceptional undergraduate learning experience
- Enhanced teaching support
- Dynamic research support

LIBRARY AS “DESIRED PLACE”

- Access and linkages
- Uses and activities
- Sociability
- Comfort and image

LIBRARY AS A POLITICAL SPACE

- Social justice and the development agenda

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

*CREATING A NEW FOOTHOLD IN
MARKETS/ AREAS WHERE NONE
EXISTED*

(Clayton Christensen)

Library as champion

- Open Access
- Research data management
- Research visibility

Library as publisher

- Open monographs and textbooks

Library as infuser in research, teaching and learning

- Scholarly and digital capabilities
- Student success
- Curriculum transformation
- Integrate special collections into research and teaching
- Optimising technology for T&L innovation

Library as partner/collaborator

- Institutional stakeholders
- National, regional and international

CONTEXT IS LIKE SHIFTING SANDS!

Higher Education

- Changing landscape
 - Globalisation of education and the demand for graduates as responsive citizens
- Transformation – historical narratives, social justice
- Static/shrinking budgets
- User needs, learning styles, changing pedagogies, modes of delivery, expectations & perceptions

Institutional

- Positionality
- Institutional asset
- Value proposition
- Return on Investment

Evolving academic library

- 1990s
- Connected environment
 - From driver to enabler
- Shift in org. structures, culture, work processes, services & staff development
- Change and innovation
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Leadership and management

Business Interruption

- Expect the unexpected!
 - Student protests
 - COVID-19
 - Natural disasters
 - Changing world of work

A LIBRARY BY ITS VERY NATURE IS A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AGENT

Core values of Librarianship

- Access
- Confidentiality/Privacy
- Democracy
- Diversity
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Preservation
- The Public Good
- Professionalism
- Service
- Social Responsibility

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>

Principles of Social Justice

- **Access** (greater equality of access to goods and services)
- **Equity** (overcoming unfairness caused by unequal access to economic resources and power)
- **Rights** (equal effective legal, industrial and political rights)
- **Participation** (expanded opportunities for real participation in the decisions which govern their lives)

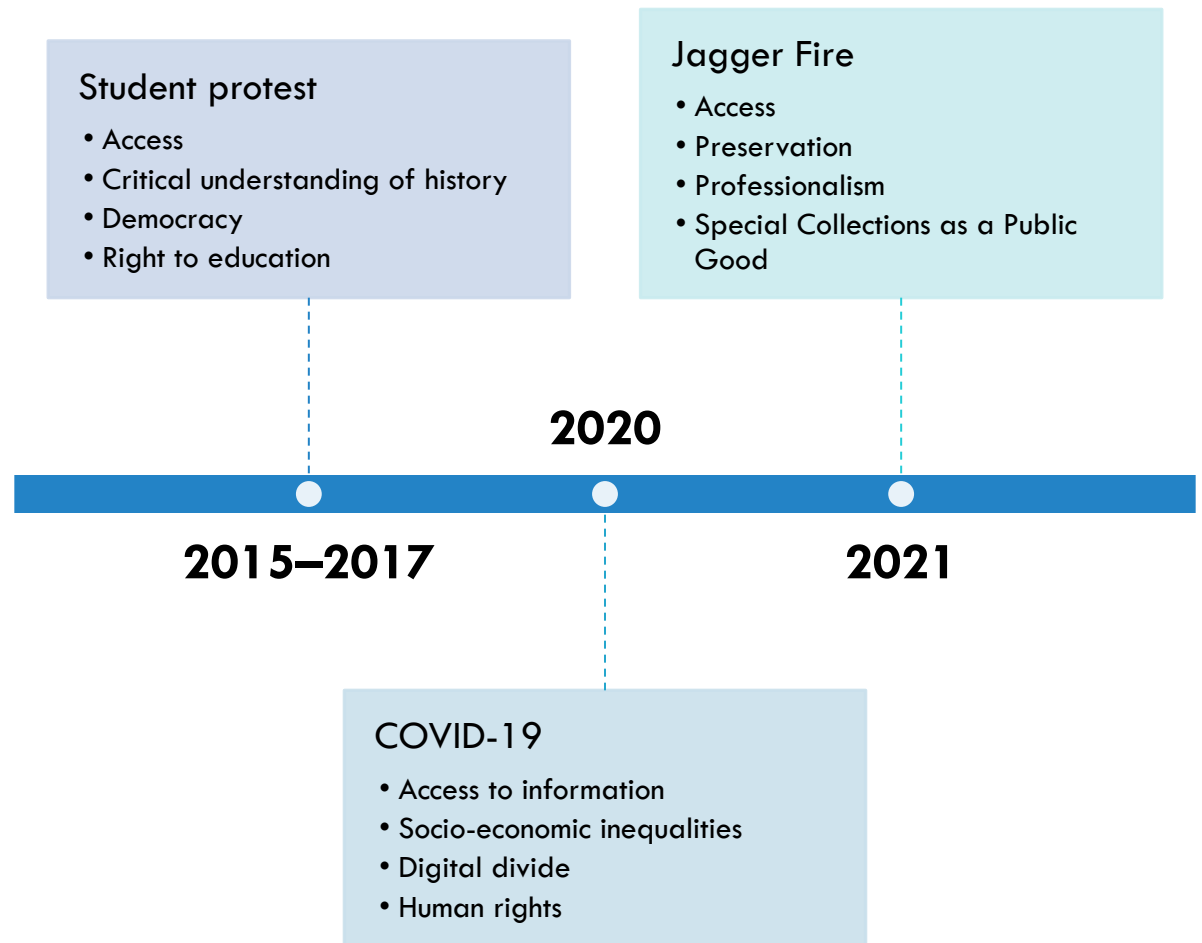
Four cornerstones to “seed” democracy

- Critical thinking
- Creative expression through art
- A critical understanding of history
- Multilingualism

Kader Asmal. 2004. Conference on Human Rights and Democracy Education in the Curriculum, 29/03/2004. Ministry of Education.

<http://www.polity.org.za/article/asmal-conference-on-human-rights-and-democracy-education-in-the-curriculum-29032004-2004-03-29>

CRISES OF NOTE



BUSINESS CONTINUITY



Systems Approach

View the library as a dynamic and inter-related set of parts

Organise human and material resources

Realise overall objectives

Optimal efficiency

Digitalisation

Guiding principles



Expectations

Executives/Managers

- Good governance and fiscal responsibility
- Decisive and informed decision-making
- Flow of information

General staff

- Big picture thinking
- Understanding of their role
- Skills and competencies

BUSINESS INTERRUPTION: POTENTIAL RISKS AND EXPECTATIONS

Structure fires

Water damage

Loss of electricity or running water

Equipment failure

Third-party disruptions

Crime or vandalism

Natural disasters

Appropriate actions and systems

Strategies to mitigate risk

- Risk and Compliance Office
- Insurance against business interruption

Adopting contingencies

- Anticipate challenges and adopt protective measures



Financial

Return on investment (R190m)

Appropriate structure/ staff/services/skills

Selection of and optimal use of technology and resources

Managing risk



Infrastructure

Library as physical place and digital space

Integrated systems



Staff development for institutional transformation and success

Retention and development

New roles, new competencies

Diffusion of leadership

Learning organization

Transformation dialogues and learning journeys

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY



Self reflection

Honesty

Acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses

Self image - how do we view ourselves?

Language - how do we describe and locate ourselves?

Internal capabilities & resources



Decisive and diffused leadership

Focus on the goal

Bring in the experts

Stakeholder relations

Integrated approach and team mindset

Values



Affirmation of our role in the academy

Covid-19 - Student survey

Jagger fire – acknowledgement of librarians in building & managing collections

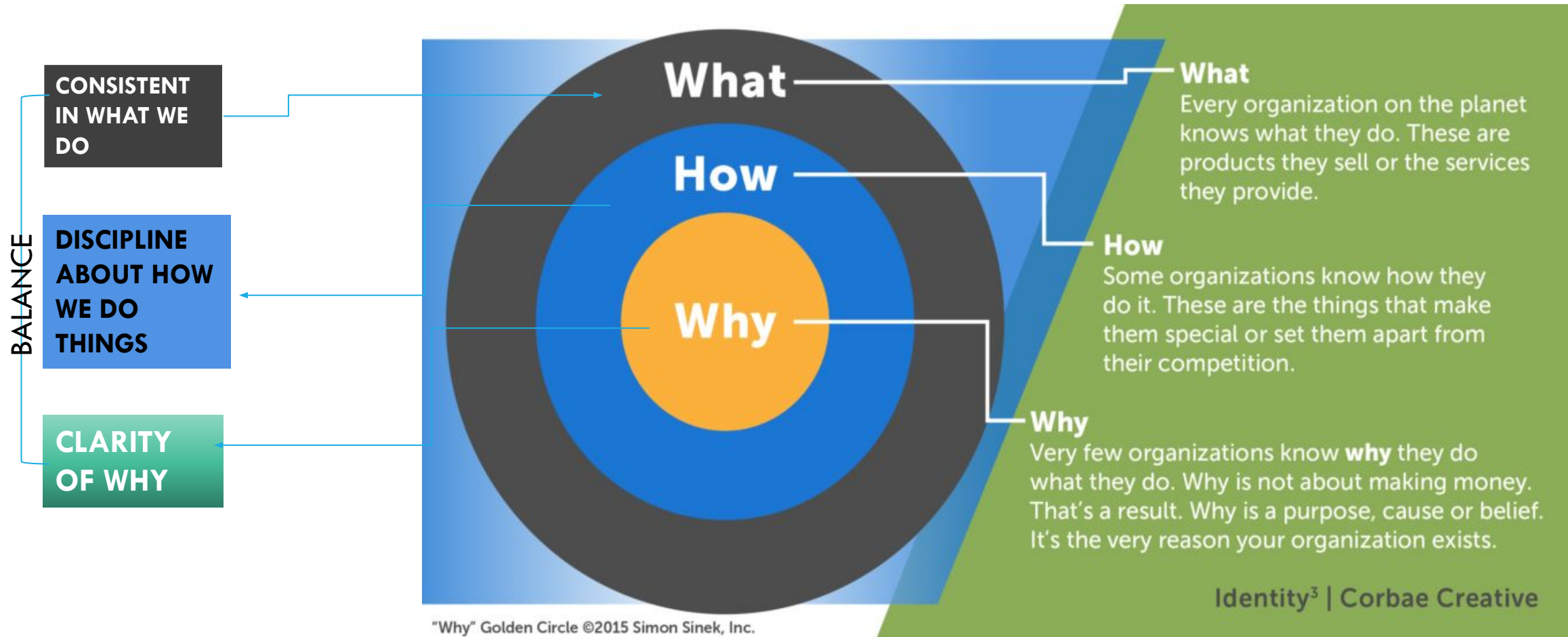
Professional responsiveness:

Acquisition of materials for academic support

Digitalisation and reconciliation

TURNING POINT – PERCEPTION VS REALITY

EXISTENTIAL QUESTION: CLARITY OF PURPOSE AND ROLE?



DIGITALISATION

Digitalisation is all about

using technology to improve how work gets done, transform how customers and companies engage the library and interact^s, and create^s new (digital) revenue streams

workflows and services for continued relevance. It is premised on streamlining organizational structures and re-directing staff to new ways of thinking, being and doing.



A PEOPLE-CENTRIC AND ADAPTIVE ORGANISATION

If purpose is the heart and
process is the backbone, then
the people of your business
are its soul.

Simon Sinek



Context



Responsiveness to change



Support of University Management



Strategic thinking, planning & implementation



Identifies, initiates and nurtures strategic collaborations and partnerships



Defines the organisational culture



Communication strategy

External & internal factors
 Alignment
 Value proposition
 Benchmarking/evaluation

Internal and external
Changed world and way of work

Diversity as an asset
Creating a conducive and inclusive environment for people to develop their potential
 Facilitates crucial and critical conversations
 Values driven practice
 Celebrate success

Internal and external
 Centralized, clarity of message, spokesperson
Digital marketing

RESPONSIBLE & PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP



INSTITUTIONAL REPUTATION

Goodwill, collaborations, sponsorships

#Unleash



AFFIRMATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE PROJECT

Value of the Library

Collaboration beyond UCT

Academic innovation (how knowledge creation and dissemination influence the future of higher education)



NATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

National and institutional collections

Disaster preparedness and risk management

Rapid response and resource sharing

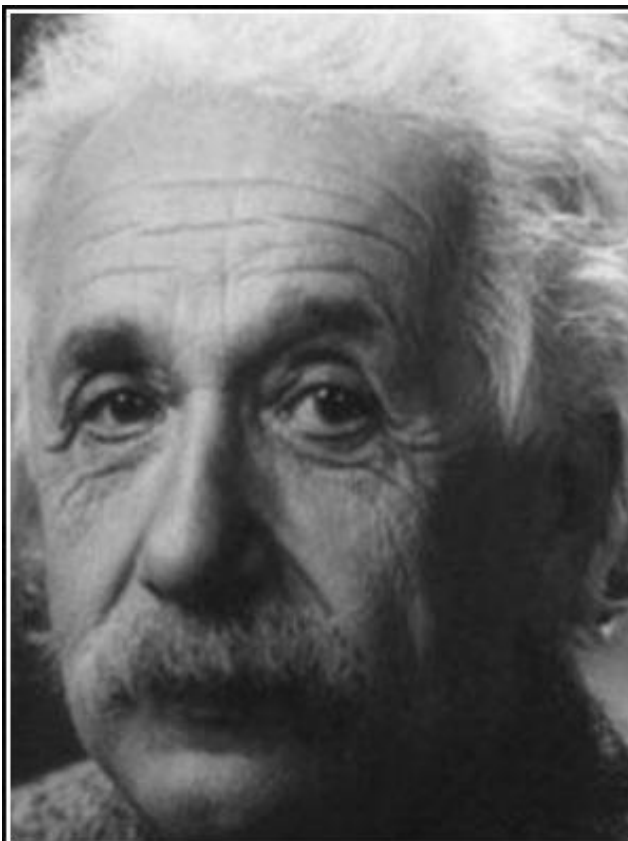
Investment and career pathing

- Scarcity of skills, shrinking expertise and institutional capabilities



BECOME A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

LEVERAGE THE MOMENT!



In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity.

— *Albert Einstein* —

AZ QUOTES