Communicating an Organisation’s Identity to Library Users:
A Case Study within the New Zealand Community Library Sector

Coralie Owens

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of International Communication
Unitec Institute of Technology, 2013
Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the identity of a community library from the perspectives of the organisation’s management and customers, and then to determine whether the perceived identity aligns with the projected identity of the organisation.

Qualitative methodology was utilised by means of a case study on a New Zealand community library organisation with seven branches. Interviews and focus groups were conducted to gather data over the course of six weeks. Semi-structured interviews occurred with management personnel while three focus groups were conducted with library customers. A secondary source of documentary data collection was also used for the triangulation of data collection methods in order to increase credibility.

Key findings, grouped around three themes of image and identity, customer service and technology, have indicated that the internal organisational identity as communicated by managers differed to various extents between branches, depending on external perceptions held by respondents. Greater organisational identity alignment appeared to exist in branches where individuals felt there was a higher degree of social inclusion with their community library. This research, supported by the literature, found that the organisation’s identity has sustained significant changes as society has changed, from its inception by early settler volunteers as an unstructured community run entity, to the present centralised local governance model which provides services for citizens to meet their social, cultural and information needs. There appears to be a disjuncture between organisational level and branch level. However, the ethos to help build stronger communities has endured.

Participants view branches as comfortable community spaces that provide excellent customer service and resources. However, the findings also revealed that participants were often unaware or uninspired by the array of services offered, for instance, the Maori culture book section, electronic resources and guest speaker events. Participants were mystified as to how they could use many of the library’s online resources. The accessibility of the electronic library interface was considered important, but as the library environment becomes more sophisticated and offers more services, it is evident that communities want to preserve face-to-face customer service in future community library models.
Another key finding that has emerged from this research is the effect of technology. As the library organisation has become technologically advanced, especially in the virtual sense, more focus needs to be placed on educating the customer in order to keep abreast of technology. Participants indicated that the basic role of the library as a provider of information and a public space has remained constant; however, transformations are occurring such as the change in form of the traditional book to the electronic book. Therefore, to avoid becoming obsolete in the future, the library must change along with customer needs.
Declaration

Name of candidate: Coralie Owens

This thesis entitled “Communicating an organisation’s identity to library users: A case study within the New Zealand community library sector” is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements of the Unitec degree of Master of International Communication.

Candidate’s declaration

I confirm that:

- This Thesis represents my own work.
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2009.933

Candidate Signature: ........................................ Date: April 3, 2013

Student number: 1000634
Acknowledgements

There are many colleagues, friends and family I wish to thank for collectively supporting me through the different stages of production in this thesis.

I feel privileged to have been a student of inspirational and learned academic supervisors and lecturers throughout my studies, to reach this point of completing a thesis. I have learnt so much from the wisdom of academics that are so passionate about teaching an array of topics within the social sciences.

First, I am very grateful to Dr Donna Henson, who persuaded me into undertake postgraduate studies and who was initially my primary thesis supervisor, thus, guided and supported me through the conception, planning and first three chapters of this thesis.

I would equally like to thank my current primary supervisor, and Associate Professor Dr Evangelia Papoutsaki, who was my secondary supervisor up until chapter three; and then due to the unforeseen circumstance of my primary supervisor’s emigration, agreed to become my primary supervisor. She has contributed useful comments throughout my research process, and motivated me to keep writing from chapter four to the completion of this thesis.

Moreover, I express my appreciation to Dr Jocelyn Williams and Dr Philip Cass for the helpful suggestions and assistance in structuring this thesis. Additionally, Lisa Ingledew for administrative support; and Munawwar Naqvi for technology support, inclusive of recording equipment in order to facilitate focus groups and interviews.

My gratitude is also extended to focus group participants and interviewees who participated in the research, for without your valuable contributions, this thesis would not be possible.

Finally I would like to thank family members Liam, Sheila and Leah; friends Jaqui, Margaret and Gary, Kelvin, William, Ian, Elna and Hugh, Tony and Jenny, Suzanne, Tania and Phil; and postgraduate colleagues Geraldine, Natasha and Nenni for their support, encouragement and understanding throughout this postgraduate study process.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii
Declaration ........................................................................................................................................ iv
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents .......................................................................................................................... vi
List of Figures and Abbreviations ..................................................................................................... viii
  List of Figures ............................................................................................................................... viii
  Abbreviations ............................................................................................................................... viii
Chapter 1: Overview ....................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Introduction and Rationale ...................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Research Questions ................................................................................................................ 2
  1.3 Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 2
  1.4 Operational Definitions ......................................................................................................... 3
  1.5 The Organisation .................................................................................................................... 4
  1.6 The History of Public Libraries in New Zealand ................................................................. 6
  1.7 Local Community .................................................................................................................. 8
  1.8 Branch A: Community Profile ............................................................................................. 9
  1.9 Branch B: Community Profile ............................................................................................. 10
  1.10 Branch C: Community Profile .......................................................................................... 12
  1.11 Summary of Community Profile ....................................................................................... 13
  1.12 Thesis Outline ..................................................................................................................... 16
Chapter 2: Literature Review ......................................................................................................... 17
  2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 17
  2.2 Methodological Approaches and Theories ........................................................................... 19
  2.3 Branding .................................................................................................................................. 22
  2.4 Corporate Identity .................................................................................................................. 22
  2.5 Organisational Identification ............................................................................................... 29
  2.6 Community Libraries ............................................................................................................. 39
  2.7 Volunteerism ........................................................................................................................... 45
  2.8 Technological Change ............................................................................................................. 49
  2.9 The Future of Libraries .......................................................................................................... 53
Chapter 3: Research Design ........................................................................................................... 54
  3.1 Qualitative Approach ............................................................................................................. 54
3.2 Case Study Methodology ................................................................. 56
3.3 Data Trustworthiness ...................................................................... 57
3.4 Methods of Data Collection ............................................................. 58
3.5 Data Analysis .................................................................................. 65
3.6 Ethical Considerations ..................................................................... 66
3.7 Limitations ...................................................................................... 67
3.8 Summary ......................................................................................... 68

Chapter 4: Findings.................................................................................. 69
4.1 Image and Identity ........................................................................... 69
4.2 Customer Service ............................................................................ 88
4.3 Technology ....................................................................................... 126

Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis ....................................................... 145
5.1 Central Characteristics ..................................................................... 145
5.2 Enduring Characteristics ................................................................. 154
5.3 Distinctive Characteristics ............................................................... 161

Chapter 6: Conclusions ......................................................................... 177
6.1 Key Answers to Research Questions ................................................. 178
6.2 Implications of research ................................................................ 182
6.3 Limitations ..................................................................................... 182
6.4 Future Research ............................................................................. 183
6.5 Concluding Remarks ..................................................................... 184

References ............................................................................................ 185

Appendices ......................................................................................... 201
Appendix A: Profile of Focus Group Candidates ..................................... 201
Appendix B: Background of Interviewees ............................................. 201
Appendix C: Participant Information Request Sheet ............................ 204
Appendix D: Organisational Consent Form ....................................... 205
Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form .......................................... 206
Appendix F: Manager Interview Questions ....................................... 207
Appendix G: Manager and Focus Group Questions ............................. 208
Appendix H: Focus Group Schedule .................................................... 209
List of Figures and Abbreviations

List of Figures

Figure 1: Organisational structure of the UCL ................................................................. 6
Figure 2: Community profiles of Branches A, B and C ...................................................... 14
Figure 3: The organisational identity dynamics model ...................................................... 19
Figure 4: Five identities of the AC$^2$ID test model .......................................................... 21

Abbreviations

APNK Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa
eLGAR Libraries for a Greater Auckland Region
ET Executive Team (Council)
FoL Friends of Libraries
LIANZA Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa
LMS Library Management System (Millennium computer database)
LMT Library Management Team
LTCCP Long-Term Council Community Plan
OPAC Online Public Access Catalogue
PD Position Description (UCLO staff)
RFID Radio Frequency Identification (security system)
UC Unnamed Council
UCLO Unnamed Community Library Organisation
Chapter 1: Overview

1.1 Introduction and Rationale

While there is a plethora of research on conceptualising organisational identity, few studies have examined identity in relation to libraries (e.g. Campbell, 2005; Harris, 1998; Robinson, 2006). Thus, the aim of this research is to explore the identity perceptions held by library users and managers of a local government community library organisation within New Zealand. The research project was conducted by means of an exploratory case study methodology, which incorporated three branches of an organisation over a six month period and had dual objectives. The first one aimed at analysing and discussing key elements of organisational identity as described by library management, a volunteer, and library patrons. They are presented using theory discussed in chapter two, for example, Albert and Whetten’s (1985), model of the defining central, distinctive and enduring features that characterise an organisation. The second objective is to examine whether the organisational identity messages communicated by management align and further reflect the organisation’s mission.

Although not always explicit, every organisation possesses an identity; a phenomenon which ought to be revealed once organisational members ask themselves self-reflective questions such as “Who are we?” “What business are we in?” “Where do we see ourselves in the future?” In other words answers to what is central, enduring and distinctive to an organisation (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Identity researchers have sought to address these questions and more in order to ascertain what characteristics define an organisation’s identity.

Moreover, senior managers formally emphasise organisational identity through mission and vision statements which are expressed visually through company logos, symbols and artefacts. However, the overall identity of an organisation typically results from the juxtaposition of identity beliefs held by organisational members, namely beliefs that form collective attributes which describe what constitute an organisation. Thus, an organisational identity is a socially constructed phenomenon.

A literature review conducted identified a gap clearly exists in the area of organisational
identity research, from both a New Zealand context and a public library user’s perspective. Consequently, the rationale for conducting this research is to contribute to the existing knowledge of organisational identity as it relates to the community library environment within a New Zealand context.

1.2 Research Questions
Collis and Hussey (2003) note it is common for a researcher who utilises a qualitative approach to formulate one or two questions. Therefore, for the purpose of this research project two specific research questions have been formulated:

RQ1: How do organisational members (management and library members) describe the organisational identity of a local government community library?

RQ2: How do organisational members’ perceptions of organisational identity align with the organisation’s stated mission?

In order to answer the research questions, two interview schedules were developed subsequent to a literature review of the chosen topic and inspection of the organisation’s documentation. To illustrate, questions on the focus group interview schedules were itemised under three categories, namely social, cultural and technological needs (refer to interview schedule, appendix five). Further, both focus group and individual interview questions were tailored to suit two distinct groups of organisational stakeholders interviewed in relation to this study.

1.3 Methodology
This research is qualitative in nature and consists of a case study of a community library organisation. The triangulation of multiple methods of data collection was undertaken through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documentation, as befits case study methodology (Silverman, 2000; Yin, 1984). Triangulation was utilised over a single method approach because it was deemed to increase confidence regarding the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) through the provision of a richer and more comprehensive explanation of the complexity of human behaviour from more than one
viewpoint (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2001).

Prior to the interviews and focus groups, two interview schedules with lists of questions focused around perceptions of the organisation’s identity were compiled. In the first stage of data collection five face-to-face semi-structured interviews of approximately 60 minutes in duration were arranged, together with one further electronic mail interview, with key members of the organisation’s management team. Interviews were performed at several venues, as selected by each interviewee. In the second stage, data were collected from focus group participants by means of three focus groups at pre-booked venues, in the vicinity of each of the library branches focused upon in this study.

Additionally, organisational documentation was utilised to clarify issues as appropriate in stage one and two of the study. Data collected from all three collection methods were transcribed verbatim before being coded, then analysed qualitatively using methods such as thematic analysis, in order to answer the research questions of this research project.

1.4 Operational Definitions

An organisation, as Shockley-Zalabak (2006) suggests, is a dynamic system characterised by a division of labour in which purposely constructed and deconstructed social units strive to achieve a common purpose or attain specific goals, which are coordinated through communication under leadership. Therefore, as Shockley-Zalabak notes, an organisation can be viewed as dynamic fusions of human behaviours and technological functions, which together produce a complex interdependence between internal organisational components and the company’s external environment.

For clarity, the organisation being studied is defined as a community library operated by local government. For the purpose of this research organisational identity is viewed from two perspectives; that of the internal group, which comprises of the management, and the external, which includes local community library group users. Organisational identity is defined as the internal beliefs and understandings held by members within an organisation (Lerpold, Ravasi, van Rekom, & Soenen, 2007). In this case, the beliefs and understandings held by the organisation’s managers. On the contrary, the term organisational (or corporate) image describes the external perceptions and portrayals held
communicating an organisation’s identity (lerpold, et al., 2007). in this instance, notions and depictions held by library members within the local community.

local community is defined by means of the citizens who reside within the catchment area of a library branch as designated by the library organisation. a volunteer is described as a member of the local community who performs low level library tasks under the direction of library personnel within a ucl branch. the term interviewee refers to a library manager or volunteer who agreed to be interviewed in this study, whereas the term participant is used to refer to all individuals who contributed data to the case study through attending a focus group session.

1.5 the organisation

at the time of writing, the organisation in this study was one of six public libraries, each operated by individual councils in a new zealand city. collectively this group of libraries champion the largest library consortium in new zealand. this consortium shares a library management system along with capital expenditure and operational costs, for instance, the administration and maintenance associated with a system of such magnitude. under the consortium umbrella certain libraries work together on specific projects, for example, digitalising local history and the installation of a radio frequency identification (rfid) style security system for the purpose of increased bargaining power; moreover to share resources and expertise.

the organisation (referred to hereafter as the unnamed community library (ucl) for confidentiality reasons) operates seven library branches and affords support to a further four volunteer-run libraries within its jurisdiction. due to time constraints, was three of seven library branches (subunits) operated by the ucl that are embedded within three separate communities were the centre of attention. these three branches were selected based on library membership size and geographical location in order to provide a fair representation of the demographic mix of the ucl patronage.

first, branch a is in geographical terms the ucl's southern-most library branch, which holds the median library membership of the three branches studied - 4,995 members as at january 2010. second, branch b is centrally located within the organisation’s catchment
area, and champions the largest UCL membership by way of 10,100 members, as at January 2010. Third, Branch C is geographically the organisation’s most northern Library branch. Furthermore, it is the smallest library branch by means of the physical size of its premises and membership numbers - 1,497 members, as at January 2010.

1.5.1 Mission and Vision
According to Falsey (1989), the mission statement is a communication tool of major importance since its purpose is to communicate to stakeholders two important messages of who the organisation is and what it does. Several mission and vision statements exist for the different directorate and subunit levels within the organisation as well as for the organisation in its entirety. Given that the group of libraries are a subunit of the Customer Services Directorate within the organisation; this thesis focuses solely on the UCL mission and vision statements.

The mission statement of the UCL is “everything we do makes a positive difference to our communities” (Unnamed Council, 2008a) and at Directorate level is “we listen to our customers and learn from them, in order to shape the services they value” (Unnamed Council, 2009c, p. 8). Four specific functions of the organisation are noted in the vision statement in that the “[UCL] help people meet their social and cultural needs for recreation, information and education. [UCLs] are welcoming places for social contact and are the pride of our communities”. Thus, the organisation serves a wide range of roles within the community at large.

1.5.2 Organisational Structure
The UCL operates as a subunit or business unit within a hierarchical Council structure, which is divided into five different levels of authority - Chief Executive Officer; Customer Service Director; Executive Assistant; Regulatory Group Manager; and Libraries Manager. The organisation is grouped into departments by business function, with libraries under the Customer Service division as depicted in the following chart:
The Libraries business unit, or as noted in this thesis the UCL, is one of two community facilities managed by the Council, the other facility being the Leisure Centre. The UCL operates with approximately forty-five full-time personnel and 244 volunteers who together provide overall customer service to an average of 97,692 customers per month (Unnamed Council, 2009c). The UCL is one of the smallest public libraries within New Zealand. Despite this, the Unnamed Council (2009b) states that the library issues over 1.6 million items from its collection per year.

1.6 The History of Public Libraries in New Zealand

Public libraries were established by early European settlers in the 1800s in New Zealand with the first being the Port Nicholson Exchange and Public Library in 1841. This library was of service to settlers in the newly established city of Wellington (Public Libraries of New Zealand, 2010b). However, within a year the library closed, mainly due to the large number of defaults on membership fees, given that initially citizens were required to pay what was considered to be exorbitant subscriptions in order to borrow resources from a public library. Libraries were considered by local communities to be prestigious institutions. Even so, these institutions usually took the form of a small shed (Sheffield, 1995) or reading room appended to a community hall or small public school (McEldowney, 1995).
According to Northey’s (1998) research of provincial libraries in Auckland from 1842-1919, libraries were often located away from the centre of town. Most libraries were established and governed by elite community members such as businessmen and professionals. These libraries would open for approximately two hours once or twice per week, since they relied on the availability of a volunteer librarian to operate, who often acted as an unpaid library committee member as well.

Even with limited access and inadequate resources, community libraries were perceived by citizens to be key community assets. Community libraries provided literature for those who desired intellectual stimulation, or self-improvement with the intention of a better life through self-directed education, given that the education of most settlers did not extend beyond primary school level (Northey, 1998). Other citizens who simply wanted to be informed of overseas news could read local or British newspapers at the library. However, British newspapers usually contained outdated information since delivery by sea took many weeks.

There was a perception that libraries created harmony within communities since they were a place where citizens could obtain respite from the mayhem of pioneer lifestyle, socialise and borrow or swap books (Northey, 1998). In this sense, library space was also used as a venue for soirees as well as a place where groups could facilitate debates and lectures, to assist in the personal development of citizens.

Public libraries were usually financed through annual membership subscriptions of between five shillings and two pounds (Northey, 1999), in conjunction with fundraising events and Government subsidies in some instances. Generally libraries were resourced with donations of books from local citizens. As a result, eclectic library book collections ranging from twelve to over a thousand books emerged in rural communities, although smaller collections were the norm.

The first New Zealand library legislation, the Public Libraries Act 1869, served to promote the public library model already functioning in Britain, USA and Australia (Northey, 1998). This legislation highlighted the need for local and central Governments to support settlers with the establishment of community libraries. Further, the introduction of the central Government Public Libraries Subsidies Act 1877 by O’Rourke, Member of Parliament and
Auckland Provincial Council librarian, reduced subscriptions to a token five shillings or more in order to financially assist libraries situated in dispersed rural communities throughout the country (McEldowney, 2006).

Almost 40 years later (in 1910) the Libraries Association of New Zealand (LANZ) was established for non-profit libraries which served the public (McEldowney, 2006). In the LANZ conference of 1926, attention was drawn to the fact that service to rural New Zealand libraries was virtually non-existent. This situation was endemic in other western nations such as the USA, Great Britain and Australia. By 1930 there were public libraries managed by British-trained librarians that were of a reasonable standard in most New Zealand municipalities. Nevertheless, these libraries were largely under-utilised since membership subscriptions were still enforced.

In 1934 the LANZ received $US5000 funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to conduct a survey on all forms of libraries within New Zealand. As a result, what is commonly known as the Munn-Barr report (1934) was produced based on survey findings, which became a seminal publication in the history of New Zealand library development. The report stated the purpose of the public library was to provide cultural, vocational and recreational functions. The main recommendations of the report concerned municipal and rural library service; moreover, the need for an integrated national library system. In particular, the report pointed out there was a need for co-operation between adjacent local authorities and regional groupings of libraries for services such as inter-loans. Public libraries, with the exception of Dunedin Public Library which became New Zealand’s first membership-free public library in 1908, were recommended to provide a service free-of-charge to help fulfil their original purpose, which was to provide every citizen with the necessary resources for self-development. In sum, the report highlighted the fact that New Zealand public and rural libraries offered a substandard service to citizens in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a point that has markedly improved over the past decades.

1.7 Local Community

Even though the UCL is departmentalised by business function within the context of Council, each of its subsidiary units or library branches are further categorised by geographical region, since each library branch serves a separate local community under
Council jurisdiction. Thus, the following section presents demographic profiles of three local community populations in which UCL branches A, B and C are embedded and focused upon in this project. Demographic profiles include details of gender, age, ethnicity, language, marital status, family status, education, employment, income, and internet connectivity of the population that encompasses each community library branch, each of which is graphically summarised on page sixteen, in order to provide context to the study.

1.8 Branch A: Community Profile

First, according to the following Statistics New Zealand (2010a) data which appears in this section, Branch A is unique within the scope of this study, given that the library branch comprises of more male (50.48%) than female (49.52%) residents. Compared to Branches A and B, the least number of retirees (9.5%) live in this community. In contrast, most residents are of employable age (66.2%), with the remainder (24.3%) being youths under fifteen years of age, by comparison.

The ethnic composition of residents within the Branch A community includes European (81.1%), Maori (8.7%), Pacific Island (3.4 %), and Asian (3.7%). The remainder 13.7 percent of locals originate from alternative cultures. Furthermore, almost one fifth of the community was born abroad (18.9%), with the most common place of birth being the United Kingdom.

Of the three official New Zealand languages, English is more commonly spoken by local citizens (87.6%), however 1.6 percent are able to converse in Maori and 0.4 percent communicate through Sign Language.

Most single residents are in de-facto relationships, for instance, even though 29.2 percent classify their marital status as being single, 29.1 percent are living with a partner. In addition, although 56.8 percent of citizens are currently married, 13.9 percent were previously married. However, these were identified as being separated, divorced or widowed.

Out of the three branches Branch A encompasses the least number of childless families in the local community (35.6%); conversely the greatest number of families includes children
(50.8%), with the remainder of families being single parents with children (13.7%).

Of the three branches, the community of Branch A possesses the highest percentage of citizens with post school qualifications (39.6%), moreover the largest percentage of residents with no formal qualifications (22.5%), within the over fifteen year old age group. The remainder of citizens in the area have achieved secondary school qualifications (37.9%).

Generally citizens within the local community in the fifteen to sixty five year old age group are employed (97.1%). The median income for citizens aged over fifteen years old is $30,600, with 35.9 percent earning under $20,000, and 25.6 percent earning in excess of $50,000. Of the employment categories devised by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (2009), the most common occupational category of citizens in the Branch A community is Manager.

Of the three branches, the uptake of internet connectivity as a communication medium for residents is by far the greatest within the local community of Branch A, as 70 percent of households have an internet link. This percentage is greater than the nearest city region as a whole, which incidentally has a total of 65.5 percent internet accessibility within households.

1.9 Branch B: Community Profile
Second, according to Statistics New Zealand (2010b) data noted in this section, Branch B has the highest female population (54.26%), and conversely, the lowest male population out of the three communities studied. When comparing the three library branches, the greatest number of retirees (33.9%) lives within the community of Branch B, and makes up a third of its population. Approximately half of residents are of employable age (51.4%), and the remainder (14.7%) are children (under fifteen years of age).

The prominent ethnicity groups of the local community comprise of European (81.5%), Maori (5.3%), Pacific Island (2.1%), and Asian (5.5%) citizens. Various other cultures constitute the remainder of the population (12%). Additionally, over one third of the community was born abroad (34.6%); and equivalent to Branch A, the most common place
of birth was the United Kingdom.

Of the three official New Zealand languages, English (86.6%) is most commonly spoken by local citizens in the area. Barely 0.8 percent of people are able to confer in Maori; and just 0.2 percent communicates through Sign Language.

Out of all three branches, the community of Branch B clearly has the lowest number of residents who describe their marital status as single (18.9%); even so 23.6 percent of single residents state they live with a partner. Furthermore, although 56 percent of citizens are currently married; 25.2 percent were previously married but now identify their marital status as being separated, divorced or widowed.

Compared to branch A and C, the greatest number of families within the local community of Branch B are childless (57.8%). Conversely, the least number of single parents have children (12.8%), with the remainder of families comprising of two parents with children (29.3%).

Of the three branches, the community of Branch B possesses the highest percentage of citizens with post school qualifications (39.6%), moreover the largest percentage of residents with no formal qualifications (22.5%), within the over fifteen year old age group. The remainder of citizens in the area have achieved secondary school qualifications (37.9%).

Overall, community citizens over the age of fifteen years old hold median levels of education in comparison to Branches A and C. Most of the population within the area attained school qualifications (37.3%) or post school qualifications (35.1%). The remainder of citizens have no formal qualifications (27.6%).

Generally citizens within the local community in the fifteen to sixty five year old age group are employed (95.6%). The median income for citizens aged over fifteen years old is $20,700, with 49 percent earning under $20,000 and 16.7 percent earning in excess of $50,000 within the three branches. Of the employment categories devised by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (2009), the most common occupational category of citizens in the Branch A community is Manager.
Branch B holds the median for internet connectivity of the three branches as just over half of households within the community possess internet connectivity (54.2%) as a communication medium.

1.10 Branch C: Community Profile

Statistics New Zealand (2010c) data in this section shows that of the three branches, the community of Branch C encompasses the median population of males (47.58%), and likewise females (52.42%). In addition, the community has the median number of retirees (15.4%) and citizens of employment age (60%). However, marginally more youths under 15 years old (24.6%) reside in the community.

The ethnic composition of residents within the Branch C community includes European (70.1%), Maori (28.2%), Pacific Island (5.9%), and Asian (2.4%). The remainder 8.9 percent of locals originate from alternative cultures. Furthermore, of the three branches, Branch C has the least percentage of citizens in its community being born abroad (12.1%), and identical to Branches A and B, the most common place of birth was the United Kingdom.

Of the three official New Zealand languages, English is more commonly spoken by local citizens (86%), a percentage on a par with the previous two branches. However in comparison to the other two branches, a record percentage of citizens within the Branch C community are able to converse in Maori (7.5%) and likewise communicate through Sign Language (0.7%).

In comparison to Branch A and B, Branch C has the highest percentage of single residents (never married) over fifteen years old (31.8%), who classify their marital status as single. However, a third of residents in the area (33.3%) live in de facto relationships. In addition, although 45.2 percent of citizens are married; 23.5 percent were previously married, yet identify their marital status as separated, divorced or widowed.

Out of the three branches, Branch C possesses the median number of childless families in the local community (40.7%). Similarly it possesses the median number of families with
children (36%). However, in contrast Branch C champions almost double the number of single parents with children (23.3%) of either branch A or B.

Of the three branches, the community of Branch A possesses the lowest percentage of citizens with post school qualifications (27.9%), moreover the highest percentage of residents with no formal qualifications (37%), within the over fifteen year old age group. The remainder of citizens in the area have achieved secondary school qualifications (35.1%).

Similar to Branches A and B, most citizens within the local community of Branch C in the fifteen to sixty five year old age group are employed (94.9%). The median income for citizens aged over fifteen years old within this community is $21,300. Of the three branches, citizens in the Branch C community have the highest number of citizens (47.4%) earning under $20,000; on the contrary, the least number of people (10.8%) earn more than $50,000. According to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (2009b), the most common occupational category in the local community is Technicians and Trades Workers.

Internet as a communication medium in the local community of Branch C is the lowest of all three branches, given that just 41.7 percent of households possess internet connectivity.

### 1.11 Summary of Community Profile

Demographic profiles of Branch A, B & C communities have been provided for insight into the identity of customers, who are also focus group participants who use UCL facilities and services. Information from the last New Zealand census of 2006 is included and graphically summarised on page 14 (figure 2) to show that even though different communities have commonalities, overall, all possess their own uniqueness at a local level.
1.11.1 Comparative Data on Key Demographic Indicators for Branch A, B and C Communities

![Community Gender Composition](image1)

![Community Age Groups](image2)

![Ethnicities within each Community](image3)

![Marital Status of each Community](image4)

![Education Status of each Community](image5)

![Community Employment](image6)

![Community Incomes](image7)

![Internet Connectivity within each Community](image8)

*Figure 2: Community profiles of Branches A, B and C (adapted from the 2006 Census, Statistics New Zealand).*
In summary, four-fifths of communities are European, followed by Maori numbering less than 10%, which may explain why focus group respondents were all of European ethnicity. On an individual branch basis, the most prominent feature of Branch A appeared to be the fact that it was slightly male dominant as opposed to the other branches which had predominantly greater female populations. This branch claims a more highly educated community which correlates to greater household incomes with a quarter of residents earning over $50,000. Moreover, most homes had internet access even though fewer citizens in this community were of working age. Overall, ninety-five percent or more of working age citizens were in employment. In contrast, Branch B appeared to have significantly more youth and retirees than the other two branches, and hence, received the lowest incomes. Most who worked were in management roles and half of this community had internet access within their households. Branch C had the lowest European and highest Maori populations, and in contrast to the other two communities, more residents of working age than not. Even though the employment rate was comparable with the other two branches most earned under $50,000. This correlates to education status which was the lowest with significantly more unqualified residents within its community compared to the other two communities and merely 40% of households were equipped with internet connectivity.
1.12 Thesis Outline

Organisational identity studies are typically qualitative in nature and follow a basic research process that involves seven phases – idea generation; literature review; research question; research design; data collection; data analysis; and conclusions (Graziano & Raulin, 2004). Thus, this research study emulates the basic research process through a framework of six chapters.

First, chapter one provides an overview of the research, context to the study, and asks two specific questions on the topic of organisational identity. A general outline of how the data were gathered is also provided. Chapter two provides a composition of key literature, both theory and research, in the form of a literature review on the subject matter of choice, in order to understand what organisational identity is. Subsequently chapter three details an appropriate research design and describes the methodology used in this project. This includes data collection methods with which to address the research question, participant profiles and method of how they were recruited. Ethical considerations arising from the research and limitations encountered by the researcher were also included. The study was then conducted with research participants through the application of the elected research methods (data collection), as developed in the research design phase and the findings were categorised. Next chapter five analyses the data qualitatively, whereby the data was inductively examined in order to develop themes, categories and patterns across the data. Finally, in Chapter six the conclusions that were drawn in order to answer the research questions, and as a consequence, directions for future research are discussed.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of the relevant literature for this research project that provides the platform from which the research question emerged. Existing academic literature within the broader context of business identity studies has been reviewed, of which there is three main strands – corporate identity, organisational identity and visual identity. Particular focus has been placed on organisational identity pertaining to public library institutions.

To start, organisational identity and the closely linked corporate identity are presented and their differences are outlined. Second, identification by means of social identity theory and the closely related social categorisation theory are discussed. Then identity management and change, community libraries, volunteerism, and finally technology change.

2.1.1 Organisational Identity Defined

Within contemporary literature, the term organisational identity is used broadly and loosely to explain the essence of a company (Pratt, 2000) and is most commonly defined using Albert and Whetten’s (1985) landmark model as the central, distinctive and enduring characteristics collectively understood by members of an organisation. First, the central character includes features which are considered to be the predominant qualities of an organisation. Second, distinctive characteristics are those that differentiate the organisation from others in changeable environments; and third, enduring features are those which remain constant over time. In general, scholars describe organisational identity as the set of beliefs held either solely by the organisation (Brown & Starkey, 2000) or collectively shared (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Pratt, 2000), as advocated by senior management (Scott & Lane, 2000), that enable a company to be recognisable and distinguishable from others (Abratt, 1989). Since organisational identity is multidisciplinary in essence, there are numerous ways in which the term organisational identity is expressed, which signifies just how difficult it is for scholars to conceptualise an organisation’s actual identity.
2.1.2 Overview of Theoretical Background

Many identity studies have been conducted and published in the USA and Europe to a lesser degree, utilising the qualitative research tradition, whereupon research methods such as interviews and focus groups are commonly conducted. Since few organisational identity studies have been conducted in New Zealand or the southern hemisphere, references to literature produced in the northern hemisphere have been noted in this study, given that the New Zealand library model emanated from the British model and was influenced through funding and staff training from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Further, the organisation in this case study uses volunteers for many operational tasks and support, for example, *Friends of Libraries* (FoL) groups, as with public libraries in the USA. The academic literature clearly presents different focal points for organisational identity incorporating points of view which have emanated from such diverse fields of study as psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), organisational theory (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006), organisational behaviour (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), marketing (Abratt, 1989), corporate communications (Van Riel, 1995), and strategy (Marwick & Fill, 1997). Nevertheless, the literature clearly presents two main disciplinary strands of inquiry – organisational identity which focuses on organisational behaviour and the closely linked corporate identity concept which is constructed by senior management and centres on marketing.

To date, most of the research conducted on organisational identity has emanated from the seminal works of scholars such as Albert and Whetten (1985), who discusses organisational behaviour; Tajfel & Turner (1979b), whose social identity theory relates to inter-group behaviours; and Ashforth and Mael (1989) who in contrast, consider social identity on an individualistic level within an organisation. This highlights the fact that in general, organisational identity studies have been internally focused and concerned with perceptions of an organisation by its personnel (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Pratt & Foreman, 2000), who are considered to be the main internal stakeholder group within an organisation (He & Balmer, 2005). Hence, there is a tendency for the social construction of common cognitions amongst employees to be highlighted within organisational identity literature (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000; Soenen & Moingeon, 2002). All the same, there are alternative streams of research which have emerged from broader contexts of stakeholder perspective (Scott & Lane, 2000), along with research which specifically focuses on manifestations of organisational identity in the form of brand
image, for example logos and advertising. In the context of library studies, few focus on the topic of organisational identity per se, however research composed of elements of organisational identity exist in various forms, for instance, perceptions of quality and service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) and the changing roles of libraries in the twenty-first century (Brophy, 2001).

2.2 Methodological Approaches and Theories

The concept of organisational identity has evolved to span a broad variety of functionalist, interpretive, psychodynamic and discursive perspectives that often have conflicting ontological and epistemological viewpoints. Hatch and Yanow (2008) point out that the positivistic and constructivist positions are two common methodological approaches utilised in empirical organisational identity research.

As a scientific concept, organisational identity enables scientists to define and characterise various aspects of organisations (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Academics such as Elsbach and Kramer (1996), for instance, employ a positivistic approach in order to focus on either the essential features of an organisation, or the component elements of an organisational phenomenon. On the other hand, the constructivist approach (as illustrated in Hatch & Schultz’s (2002) Organisational Identity Model in figure 3 below), delves into processes by which organisational members collectively construct organisational identities by means of disseminated sense-making activities.

2.2.1 Hatch and Schultz’s Organisational Identity Dynamics Model

![Organisational Identity Dynamics Model](image)

*Figure 3: The organisational identity dynamics model (Hatch & Schultz, 2002).*
Within Hatch and Schultz’s (2002) model, for instance, four processes occur in an attempt to unite identity and culture at the organisational level of analysis. Organisational identity dynamics are depicted through a socially constructed process of countless exchanges of conversation between the ‘we’ (organisational members) and ‘us’ (organisational stakeholders). Thus, in the ‘we’ phase employees socially construct and reconstruct images of realities of internal identity perceptions by means of organisational culture. These images are then linked to the ‘us’ stage via feedback and images of realities that are created and reconstructed by others, via external perceptions of the organisational identity or stakeholder images. Overall, all four processes dynamically interact to construct, maintain and change an organisation’s identity.

### 2.2.2 Soenen and Moingeon’s Five Facets Model

Soenen and Moingeon (2002) developed a model that divides organisational identity into five analytical dimensions, namely professed, projected, experienced, manifested and attributed identities. Albert and Whetten’s (1985) central, distinctive and enduring criteria is then applied to each facet. In the first facet, senior management define professed identity in terms of positioning amongst marketplace competition, core competencies, values and boundaries. Since professed identity is often future-orientated, it usually corresponds to the identity aspirations of an organisation. Second, projected identity, often referred to as “corporate identity”, is the depiction of identity traits expressed through various abstract and tangible signals such as advertising, public relations, and product design. Third, experienced identity includes both conscious and subconscious organisational traits which members believe represent their organisation’s identity. Fourth, manifested identity represents traits that centre on the organisation’s routines, rites and achievements. Fifth, the attributed identity or organisational image corresponds to the identity ascribed to the organisation by its audiences. When linked together these dimensions create what is referred to as “the organisational identity system”.

The model highlights the fact that internal coherence is important to the various aspects of an organisation’s identity. In their view, Soenen and Moingeon (2002) argue that the content and dynamics of an organisational identity system affects the organisation’s performance. Therefore, when strategic goals, collective organisational behaviours and external stakeholder perceptions are synchronised, dynamic equilibrium is achievable.
However, this is not always the case, given that the system operates under its own inertia, which means detachment from strategic organisational needs is possible.

### 2.2.3 AC²ID Test Model

Balmer and Greyser (2002) developed a pragmatic model named the AC²ID Test, as depicted in figure four below, to incorporate multi-disciplinary perspectives of an organisation’s identity. Even though an organisation may consider they have a single identity, different stakeholder groups hold other perceptions, which result in the creation of multiple identities (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; Pratt & Foreman, 2000). The AC²ID Test acronym represents five identities, namely actual (i.e. organisational performance and employee behaviour), communicated (i.e. organisational rhetoric), conceived (i.e. stakeholder perceptions), ideal (i.e. strategy) and desired (i.e. vision) identities.

The premise of the model is that organisations need to manage various identities since a misalignment between two or more of the identities will create dissonance and weaken the organisation. Ineffective publicity of a name change to key stakeholder groups, for example, will create a misalignment between actual and communicated identities. Balmer and Greyser (2002) note their AC²ID Test model is useful at times when senior managers need to research, manage, or analyse their organisation’s identity. Conversely, the model is helpful in times of mergers or acquisitions where identity change and realignment occurs, when a review of organisational identity should ideally be performed.

![Figure 4: Five identities of the AC²ID test model (based on Balmer & Greyster 2002).](image-url)
2.3 Branding

Interrelated with organisational identity is corporate branding which Balmer (1995) also viewed from a multi-disciplinary perspective, as a combination of organisational strategy, culture and corporate communications as opposed to a marketing perspective, where the initial focus is placed on the customer and how value can be added to an organisations’ product or service for strong brand preference and stakeholder loyalty. Similarly, Hatch and Schultz (2001) used the same perspective to observe how the projection of an effective corporate brand affects various actions and decisions that influence the way in which external audiences perceive an organisation. According to Hatch and Schultz, corporate brand is dependent on the alignment of three organisational facets of vision (identity aspirations) - what the managers want their organisation to be, culture – the values and practices of employees, and the impressions and expectations of external others. As a result, Hatch and Schultz developed a Corporate Branding Toolkit which in essence is a set of questions designed to assist senior managers in the analysis of feedback from employees to organisational stakeholders. The aim of the toolkit is to identify potential gaps between vision, culture and image which may negatively affect the organisation’s brand identity, described by Aaker (1996) as the unique set of associations intentionally created by an organisation. Hence, ideally all components ought to align in order to project an appealing brand image, defined by Aaker as the set of external associations connected to an organisation’s name or logo.

2.4 Corporate Identity

Corporate identity is considered to be a juvenile area of academic research (Westcott Alessandri, 2001), conceptualised as the distinctive attributes of an organisation that illustrate what the organisation is (Hong-Wei He & Balmer, 2007). A plethora of corporate identity literature exists from a diversity of disciplines, such as management, marketing and design. As a consequence scholars are unable to reach consensus on a universally accepted definition of the phenomenon (Melewar, 2003). Since the body of knowledge on corporate identity is polemic in nature, literature contributions derive from not only academic, but also practitioner works (Westcott Alessandri, 2001), for instance Wolff Olins, Europe’s largest corporate identity consultancy, which focuses on the visual or graphic design aspects of an organisation’s identity (Balmer, 2001a).
Practitioners address corporate identity in literature works such as graphic design periodicals, advertising magazines, and public relations journals as being tactical and tangible in nature. From this approach focus is placed on the visual arrangement of elements, such as the corporate name, logo, and tagline of an organisation (Westcott Alessandri, 2001). Olins (1989) developed a prominent, although simplistic framework to categorise visual identity into monolithic, endorsed and branded categories. This framework has been widely adopted in visual identity literature. From a corporate design lens Olins defines an organisation’s corporate identity as “the explicit management of all the ways in which the organisation presents itself through experiences and perceptions to all its audiences” (p. xvii). Melwar, Bassett and Simoes (2006) state that corporate identity extends beyond visual identity aspects of company name and logo to internal and external communication. Moreover, corporate identity is primarily concerned with strategy, philosophy, history and the products and services offered by an organisation, and based on its corporate personality.

The International Corporate Identity Group (ICIG), formed to legitimise and promote strategic management of corporate identity within organisations (Balmer & Gray, 2000) agree with Olins but add that “[corporate identity] articulates corporate ethos, aims and values and presents a sense of individuality that can help to differentiate the organisation within its competitive environment” (ICIG Strathclyde Statement 2004, as cited in Cheney, Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh, 2004 p. 127). Olins (1995) argues that when organisations fail to focus on their individuality they make costly mistakes such as unsuitable acquisitions, imitating competitors’ products, and the implementation of uncomplimentary diversifications.

In contrast, the scholarly works of academics define corporate identity by elevating it to a higher level of abstraction. Scholarly writing in publications, such as academic journals, view corporate identity as a strategic management tool, and the corporate identity construct as intangible (Westcott Alessandri, 2001) because of the multitude of sub-constructs which exist from corporate culture, such as philosophy, values, mission, principles and reputation.

Westcott Alessandri (2001) introduced a model to explicate the mechanics of an organisation’s corporate identity in relation to corporate mission (philosophy), image and
reputation. Within the lower half of the model the organisation’s mission embodies two complementary elements of organisational behaviour and visual presentation. Together these two components are the controllable aspects that shape corporate identity and determine how the organisation wishes to present itself to stakeholders, for instance, through interpersonal contact with customers and formal mass communication channels.

On the other hand, the uncontrollable aspects of corporate image and reputation are found in the upper half of the model. Corporate image is the domain of the public's perceptions formed through interactions and experiences with the organisation’s corporate identity (Gray & Balmer, 1998), whilst reputation is the public's continuous perceptions, which are shaped over time (Marwick & Fill, 1997). All facets of the model are interrelated since the mission affects identity, identity influences image, and image constructs reputation through positive or negative perceptions that the public have formed over time.

Similarly, Want (2006) states that corporate identity is one of the five primary components of an organisation’s corporate mission. The other four components comprise of purpose and assumptions (i.e. vision), business goals, behavioural values and standards and policies. Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997) from the French school of thought, argue corporate identity is a conceptual advance over corporate culture because it enables researchers to explain the dynamics of an organisation in depth.

Moingeon and Ramanantsoa (1997) define corporate identity as the pattern of interdependent characteristics of an organisation. These characteristics provide specificity, stability and coherence to the organisation, and thus make the company identifiable, distinct and unique. According to Ravasi and van Rekom, (2003) individuals can only make sense of an organisation’s uniqueness after it has been categorised in terms of its distinctness and belongingness to an industry group, and as soon as it has been compared to other similar organisations for differentiation of product and services. Through a multidisciplinary approach, Melewar (1993) developed a more comprehensive model than Moingeon and Ramanantsoa, in which he categorised corporate identity into seven main dimensions - namely corporate communication, corporate design (visual identity), corporate culture, behaviour, corporate structure, industry identity, and corporate strategy.

In sum, it is agreed that every organisation possesses a corporate identity (Olins, 1995),
regardless of whether one is wanted (Bernstein, 1984) or strategically planned by senior management (Abratt, 1989). If corporate identity is explicitly controlled, it can act as the most powerful vehicle for influencing corporate culture (Olins, 1989), which in turn affects corporate performance, due to the fact that corporate identity reflects how the organisation wishes to be recognized externally within the marketplace as well as internally within the organisation itself. Therefore, senior management holds the ultimate responsibility of aligning corporate identity with an organisation’s core values in order to communicate messages of credibility and authenticity, for the purpose of achieving a positive reputation between internal and external stakeholders (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

2.4.1 Differences between Organisational and Corporate Identities

Even though the terms organisational identity and corporate identity are closely linked and used interchangeably by scholars, there appears to be several differences between the two concepts. From a marketing perspective, He & Balmer (2007) note that the organisational identity concept is characterised by an overtly internal organisational focus in which the primary stakeholder group are employees, whereas corporate identity adopts an overtly managerial and external stakeholder perspective. Balmer (2001a) divides both concepts by explaining that whilst organisational identity answers the question “Who are we?”, corporate identity answers the question “What are we?” Furthermore, Hatch and Schultz (1997) posit that the answer to the self-reflective question “What do we stand for?” embodies an organisation’s vision and mission.

Hatch and Schultz (1997) point out from an organisational behaviour perspective that organisational identity is the collective and shared perceptions, feelings and thoughts of an organisation’s distinct values and characteristics. Conversely, Van Riel (1997) states corporate identity is associated with the presentation of a wide range of functions to the external environment, for example business strategy, and thus has strong links with the vision, mission and strategy of an organisation that has explicitly been crafted by senior management. More recently it has been generally understood that corporate identity is a multidimensional concept that not only comprises of diverse aspects of an organisation as business strategy, but key executive philosophies, organisational behaviour, corporate culture and design, which all interrelate to differentiate one company from another (Melewar, 2003).
Cornelissen (2004) takes a holistic approach and argues corporate identity and organisational identity are two sides to an organisation’s identity which are linked and should not be viewed separately. The former focuses on an organisation’s identity construction in order to differentiate the company’s standing amongst its stakeholders, whereas the latter is concerned with people within the organisation who possess shared values, identification and a sense of belonging. Hence organisational identity is established through deeper patterns of meaning and sense-making of members within an organisation.

Overall, organisational literature to date has focused on the relationship between employees and their organisation in the form of identification (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994) and commitment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Alternatively corporate identity, especially marketing literature has focused on how upper management formulates and conveys organisational vision and strategy to external audiences (Abratt, 1989) through products, services, behaviour and environment (Olins, 1989).

2.4.2 Previous Corporate Identity Research

The term corporate identity has been around since the 1950s; however early literature does not focus on identity formation per se, but centres on the image component which describes the topic as a visual representation of an organisation, described as corporate image (Abratt, 1989; Kennedy, 1977; Stuart & Kerr, 1999). Olins, (1995) argues scholars and practitioners continue to confuse and misuse corporate identity with other corporate-level terminology, such as corporate personality; corporate brand; corporate communications and corporate reputation, by using the terms interchangeably. However, it is generally accepted that corporate image is the view stakeholders retain of an organisation, whereas corporate identity is the total of many forms of expression received by stakeholders in regards to a company (van Riel, 1995).

Corporate identity has evolved as both a concept and part of a management process from four models: Kennedy’s model (1977); Dowling (1986) and Abratt’s macro models (1989), and Stuart’s model (1994, updated in 1998). Dowling and Abratt’s models incorporated constructs such as corporate personality, identity and image, albeit, Dowling’s model went one step further through the integration of constructs like culture from the organisational
Kennedy and Dowling focused on the utility aspect of corporate identity and were mainly concerned with how a corporate image was formed (van Riel, 1995). In contrast, Abratt’s model has taken a new approach, by utilising Olin’s concept of corporate personality to view corporate identity as a communication system (Abratt 1989). Interestingly, Stuart (1999) has included the best features and research of many models and scholars to design her definitive model of the corporate identity management process.

Firstly, Kennedy’s (1977) empirical research on corporate identity focuses on the formation of the organisation’s corporate image. The research was the first to identify the influence of organisational behaviour, which in turn, initiated the multi-disciplinary approach to corporate identity and its management within an organisation (Bick, Jacobson & Abratt, 2003). Kennedy claims that organisational image fluctuates between being authentic and inventive, but favours the former description, in as much as it is easier to create an image from the existence of firm organisational policies, and that the company’s image would have more endurance. Furthermore Kennedy argues employees are important elements in forming and communicating an organisation’s image because they are both an active source and transmitter of information, thus breaking away from the conventional approach (Abratt, 1989). Kennedy suggests all internal and external stakeholders are affected by the image that an organisation and its employees communicate.

Dowling’s (1986) model was the second to surface and focused on the corporate image formation process, but avoids any direct reference to corporate identity (Balmer 2001b). The model explains that an organisation communicates its corporate image by way of employees to external groups who encode factual practices and imaginary or attributed virtues. Practices become encoded through the net result of interactions between employees’ beliefs, ideology, feelings and impressions (van Rekom, 1997). These practices and virtues are transmitted by way of interpersonal communication and mass media communication, to external stakeholders who thereafter decode the information being transmitted to form a perception of the organisation. Stuart (1999) argues that the model lacks support nowadays as it is similar to Kennedy’s (1977) model apart from the additional internal, interpersonal and marketing media communication features which Dowling (1986) failed to comprehensively explain. However Dowling (1986) made an interesting point that a role of the mass media is to communicate how an organisation wishes to be perceived by its stakeholders. Further, organisational culture was introduced
as a required element in the formation of corporate image. Other scholars such as Hatch and Schultz (1997) disagree because they viewed culture as a context that influences stakeholders and then image in this process.

Thirdly, Abratt’s (1989) conceptual and prescriptive model signified a shift in thinking with the introduction of the corporate personality (inclusive of strategic management), and the idea that management needed to develop a corporate philosophy that encompassed the organisation’s core values and statements (Stuart 1999). Abratt envisioned corporate identity as a communication system and described it as an assembly of visual cues - physical and behavioural by which an audience could recognize the company and distinguish it from others (Abratt, 1989). Van Riel (1995) held a similar view and defined corporate identity as a calculated self-promotion to stakeholders using behavioural, communication and symbolism cues. However, since then scholars have proposed that corporate identity is an idiom of corporate personality that supports corporate strategy (Van Riel, 1995). Abratt (1989) explained a distinct characteristic of the model incorporated corporate image and identity interfaces to separate corporate identity from corporate image, because these terms were being used interchangeably. Furthermore Stuart (1999) argued that Abratt’s (1989) model conveyed ‘the corporate image management process’ when a more appropriate label was ‘the corporate identity management process’ because images cannot be managed to provide stakeholders with a sustained positive image, whereas identity can.

Finally, Stuart’s (1998) model was a progression from Abratt’s (1989) model with the main differences being the addition of corporate culture and symbols under the corporate identity section, and the adoption of Kennedy’s (1977) perspective that employees are major internal stakeholders. Emphasis is placed on the importance of marketing communications and the notion that effective corporate identity management is achievable through the cohesion of internal and external communication (Stuart & Kerr, 1999). Corporate strategy is deemed to be important as it is depicted as an arrow between corporate personality and corporate identity, meaning the organisation consciously constructs their corporate identity. Furthermore, another aspect of Stuart’s model is the perceptions held by stakeholders on an organisation. Marwick and Fill (1997) agree with Stuart’s point that stakeholders form images from the flow of corporate communications which links corporate identity with corporate image.
Nowadays the scope of corporate identity has extended to include other fields. According to Bick, Jacobson and Abratt (2003), corporate identity closely links with business, management and organisational communication by encompassing the marketing, corporate strategy, corporate management, and organisational behaviour fields. Notable scholars who have contributed to this area of research include Abratt (1989), Hatch and Schulz (1997), Olins (1989), Marwick and Fill (1997), Stuart (1999), Balmer (2001a), van Rekom (1997), and van Reil (1995).

**2.5 Organisational Identification**

Organisational identification is a central concept in organisational behaviour and management research given that it is viewed as being a key psychological state that reflects the underlying bond which employees have with their organisation (Edwards, 2005), and hence, is seen as a means in which to explain and predict many important attitudes and behaviours that occur within an organisation. Much literature posits that processes of organisational identity are akin to staff performance and fundamental in ensuring all staff work towards the interests of the organisation through being cooperative with other members, exercise good decision-making within the organisation’s strategic interests and become long-term employees (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, et al., 1994; Elsbach, 1999; van Dick, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Essentially the concept is a form of social identification whereby individuals use a social category for self-definition, for instance, by reference to oneself in terms of organisational membership (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) or group membership, through the depersonalisation of the self and one’s self-interests.

In effect, depersonalisation of the self changes the level and content of self-perception and behaviour in relation to group behaviour, which is described by Turner (1999) as subjective stereotyping with regards to an individual’s social categorisation. As a result, a transformation occurs when individuals refer to themselves collectively as a ‘we’ group, through cooperative orientation and shared group interests, in contrast to others. Thus, changes in peoples attitudes and behaviours towards each other occur within the group context to enable a salient, shared social identity and group membership that is more inclusive than differing personal identities (Turner, 1999).
A large body of literature exists on the organisational identification construct, together with related concepts and behaviours such as commitment (van Dick, 2001) and loyalty (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Nevertheless, the vast majority of this research has been conducted in the laboratory, and thus, has not been operationalised and tested in an organisational environment (Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Much of this literature has drawn upon two related yet distinct theories, namely social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorisation theory (SCT) (Turner, 1985; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987a).

The plethora of organisational identification literature presents the argument that a major factor in helping to ensure that organisational members work towards the interests of the organisation is through being loyal and committed, co-operating with other staff, and making beneficial decisions in line with the organisation’s strategic interests (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, et al., 1994). Therefore, the more an individual identifies with their organisation, the greater likelihood of constructive behaviour and contentment, which in turn ought to produce beneficial results of greater productivity.

Organisational identification occurs when employees form a psychological attachment to their organisation and thereby adopt the company’s defining characteristics as qualities that describe themselves. Hence an employee will feel a sense of unity with an organisation of which they are a member (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), to the extent that the organisation’s successes and failures are personalised (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). On the other hand, people external to an organisation are inclined to identify with an organisation when they perceive their individual attributes overlap with organisational attributes (Dutton, et al., 1994). Generally, organisational identification is a way to provide cohesion throughout an organisation by way of a collective vision amongst employees. A shared vision, in turn, facilitates co-ordinated action towards the organisation’s common goals. Cohesion is especially important for the success of organisations that have subunits in geographically dispersed areas (Reade, 2001).

Within organisational subunits, group commitment, otherwise known as ingroup identification, is defined as “the extent to which group members feel strong ties with their group” (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1999, p. 85). Ellemers, Spears and Doosje (2002) argue that group commitment and features of social context are both essential determinants
of core identity concerns. Thus, within an organisational subunit or group, individuals differ in relation to the number of importance they place on group membership, which then becomes variable and dependent on the social context and situation encountered (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999).

Ellemers et al. (1999) explains that those who feel highly committed to a group (high identifiers) are likely to be more diligent and thus strive to protect the groups image. When people strongly identify with a specific social group, their self-definition is enacted along the lines of the group’s values, norms, and beliefs. Conversely, others who are less committed to a group (low identifiers) are thought to be more opportunistic and concerned with their individual identities and goals above those of the group, but will align with the group in situations which ought to enhance their personal identity.

2.5.1 Social Identity Theory

Organisational identity has been categorised within the constructs of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Kruger, 2000; Mead, 1934), a theory that was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. However, SIT has been adapted to the organisational context, whereby it focuses on the process of individual identification with an organisation (Foreman & Whetten, 2002). According to Hogg and Terry (2000), individuals shape their identity in part from their membership to organisations or organisational subunits. SIT asserts that the act of an individual receiving membership to a group creates ingroup or self-categorisation enhancement. This leads to the individual seeking positive self-esteem by positively differentiating their ingroup on some valued dimension through using behaviour that displays favouritism of the ingroup at the expense of an outgroup. In general, SIT was originally viewed as a multifaceted construct that implied individuals identify with organisations through the use of cognitive, affective and evaluative behaviours (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). One important implication of SIT is the fact that the approach has the ability to predict the specific responses of individuals who are placed in various circumstances. Organisational identity dynamics are therefore examined insofar as socio-cognitive processes such as categorisation and self-enhancement, and patterns of shared meaning, which occur within the inter-group context, are explored.
Communicating an Organisation’s Identity

SIT involves three psychological processes, namely social categorisation, social identity and social comparison. First, SIT theory scholars argue that people classify themselves and others based on a variety of social or demographic categories - for example, gender, race, ethnicity, religion and occupation - rather than as individuals (Doosje, et al., 1999). Through this method of social classification, individuals are provided with a means of defining themselves by way of a sense of unity or identification with a particular group. When people engage in social categorisation they have a desire to feel proud of their groups, and thus their social identities become salient.

Second, social identity is part of the self-concept that reflects the groups to which a person feels a sense of pride in belonging to; and third, social comparison, occurs when people compare their own group (ingroup) to other relevant groups (outgroups). If comparisons are positive, then people are satisfied. On the other hand, if comparisons are unfavourable, there are three broad strategies developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) that may counteract a poor social identity, namely social mobility, social competition and social creativity.

First, a person can abandon their ingroup and attempt to join a better outgroup; attempt to identify less with the ingroup and more with other superior groups of which the person is involved with; or else focus more on personal identity and less on social identity, and thus improve their social identity standing. Second, individuals may engage in the social competition strategy whereby a person may try to improve the status of their group if it is deemed to be inferior; otherwise the person may attack the outgroup in some manner. According to Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears and Doosje (1999), social identity threat is a core concept and empirical research that has mainly focused on threats to the value of group identity and distinctiveness along with various strategies which enable individuals to cope with these types of threat. Four major threats are categorisation threat, distinctiveness threat, threats to the value of social identity and acceptance threat. Hence social competition is a major factor in intergroup conflict. The final strategy is social creativity whereby a person will think of ways to elevate the group in status, which leads to a more positive feeling about their group.

2.5.2 Social Identity Theory within the organisational context

Scholars Ashford and Mael (1989) introduced Social Identity Theory (SIT) to the
organisational context, because the theory was useful in explaining processes underlying group behaviour, inter-group relationships and social phenomena, such as stereotypes. Today SIT is popular in organisational studies since it is arguably the pre-eminent theory of identity dynamics within an inter-group context.

2.5.3 Self-Categorisation Theory

Hogg and Terry (2000) focus on an important extension of social identity theory (SIT) called self-categorisation theory (SCT), which places more emphasis on the intra-group issues of an organisation. According to this theory, if an individual categorises oneself as belonging to a particular group, their perception of being similar to the group model is heightened. Therefore, group members adopt typical group characteristics and enact group identity, especially if the group is salient. Since the underlying motive for self-categorisation is the need to reduce certainty (M. Hogg & Grieve, 1999), this process depersonalises group members which helps to provide certainty in regards to who they are and how they ought to behave in the context of group behaviour. As a result Hogg and Terry argue that group dynamics within organisations can only be understood through understanding the depersonalisation of the self-process which in turn produces group behaviour.

Another stream of organisational identity research evolved from the seminal work of social psychologist Mead (1934), who viewed identity as a social process. Within the process, individual self-concept is linked to a group (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008) in as much as it describes the complex relationship between the collective self and social group. The cognitive-motivational processes, for example, affect and are affected by group, inter-group and societal processes. These processes influence how people behave and think about themselves and others in ways characteristic of these groups, which in turn are shaped specifically by the social context.

Mead revealed the concept of identity as a relational construct, possessing two distinct phases of the self: ‘I’ and ‘me’. Both phases are simultaneously distinguishable and interdependent. First, they can be distinguished since the ‘me’ is the self a person is aware of, whereas the ‘I’ is “something that is not given in the ‘me’” (p. 175). Second, they are interdependent as the ‘I’ is “the answer which the individual makes to the attitude which
others take toward him when he assumes an attitude toward them” (p. 177).

2.5.4 Multiple Identities of the Organisation

Organisational identity scholars have recognized that an organisation may operate with multiple identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Postmodern theories of organisational identity discuss the simultaneous management of multiple identities associated with an organisation. In particular, Dukerich, Golden and Shortell (2002) and Foreman and Whetten (2002) examined the identification levels organisational members held with multiple organisations; while Pratt and Foreman (2000) analysed how managers dealt with multiple organisational identities. The later researchers argue that managers tend to favour a plurality of identities when the identities are thought to hold future value, are supported by powerful stakeholders, and when the organisation is not facing strict resource constraints. Moreover, managers tend to favour linking these identities when they are compatible and diffused across the entire organisation, and when the interdependence among relevant stakeholders is high.

2.5.5 Dual Organisational Identification

Vora and Kostova (2007) developed a model to conceptualise the dual organisational identification (DOI) construct in the context of multinational enterprises; however, stated their model could also be applied to any domestic organisation. They found dual organisational identification occurs when an employee identifies with two organisational entities simultaneously (Vora & Kostova, 2007), for instance, in an organisational context, a subunit along with the organisation as a whole. Thus an individual has a sense of unity with both entities as opposed to alternating between them, however, psychological attachment and commitment appears to be stronger at the subunit level (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) since it is a smaller and more distinctive social group. Vora and Kostova (2007) suggest three ways DOI can be configured, namely distinct, compound or nested.

First, in the case of distinct DOI, an individual cognitively perceives two organisational entities as being separate from each other to the extent that they ought to operate with different values and goals. Second, an individual views compound DOI as two entities that overlap, and share several goals and values. For an individual, this overlap creates ease of
identification whilst concurrently makes differentiation more complex. Third, nested DOI occurs when an individual views one entity as overarching another; hence there is little or no differentiation made between the identification of the subordinate and superordinate entities.

2.5.6 Organisational Behaviour

The concept of organisational identity is embedded in organisational behaviour and has its foundations in the seminal work of behaviourist scholars Albert and Whetten (1985). Through using a mixture of realist and constructivist research methodologies, Albert and Whetten developed an organisational identity theory similar to Mead’s (1934) SIT. However, the adoption of a theory focused at the individual level of analysis proved to be problematic in that Albert and Whetten did not make explicit how the organisational equivalents of Mead’s ‘I’ and ‘me’ were involved in identity formation. Furthermore, Hatch and Schultz (2002) pointed out, a credibility issue that had occurred in the research as a consequence of a generalisation formed from a theory which is borrowed from the individual level of analysis, then applied to the organisational level.

Originally, organisational identity focused on identification and was defined as the convergent set of central, enduring and distinctive attributes of an organisation (Albert & Whetten, 1985) which were assumed to be stable and resistant to change because they historically linked back to the time that an organisation was founded. However, given that identity is a socially constructed and self-referential construct, some researchers have since defined an organisation’s identity as an unstable notion. Thus, this theory has been further developed since more recently researchers have recognized that some organisational identities are more flexible, contain less centrality and an even lesser number of distinctiveness than in the original conceptualisation (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000; Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Pratt & Foreman, 2000) as a result of how they react to environmental changes. The extent to which an organisation’s identity is enduring has also been in dispute since it is thought to be too rigid an interpretation of the concept (Balmer, 2001a; Gioia, et al., 2000; Gioia & Thomas, 1996).

Gioia, et al. (2000) state that what stakeholders perceive to be the durability of an organisation’s identity is actually an illusion “contained in the labels used by
organisational members to express who or what they believe the organisation to be” (p. 64). They argue that an organisation’s identity and image continuously interrelate over time, and as a consequence, an adaptively unstable organisational identity is created, which is an organisational strength, of benefit in circumstances where rapid environmental changes ought to be accommodated.

These scholars developed a process model of identity–image interdependence which asks a series of questions to ascertain if the way in which an organisation sees itself aligns with how others see the organisation. If both perceptions of the organisation’s identity are consistent, a change is not required. Gioia, et al. (2000) advance that identity is linked to an organisation’s image, which remains fluid so as to react to environmental forces. Therefore all organisational change that occurs with image is reciprocated in identity.

Another scholar Balmer (2001a) also questioned the enduring characteristic of an organisation’s identity and instead posited it ought to be better defined as evolving since identity characteristics are flexible, not fixed. Consequently, Albert and Whetten later acknowledged an organisation’s identity may change, but argued subsequent changes progress slowly, over long periods of time, and thus have minimal flexibility.

2.5.7 Metaphorical Perspective

Within behaviour and management literature, there is a marked increase in interest from academics to make sense of organisational reality through the utility of metaphors and analogies. There are a number of distinctive metaphors commonly used within organisational scholarship, such as comparing an organisation to an organism (Cornelissen & Elving, 2003) a machine, a data processing system or a human being, to name a few. Metaphors are useful in organisation theory to communicate the unfamiliar in a more recognisable form (Inns, 2002), given that they provide a succinct way to describe the cognitive and perceptual characteristics of an issue (Cleary & Packard, 1992). Through the conveyance of information from a familiar domain (source) to a new domain (target), metaphors are well suited to capture and express the flow of experiences in research (Tsoukas, 1991).

According to Tsoukas (1991), live metaphors, for example organisational identity, are
particularly useful for conceptual development within organisational science because they are able to be a substitution for literal expressions. Alternatively, Tsoukas advances that dead metaphors, for instance, the concepts of organisation and strategy, have become such familiar terms that we now use them literally. Whereas dormant metaphors, for example, organisational structure, are quasi-literal and helpful when viewing a topic in an alternative way; moreover, they have the capability of being transformed to either dead or live metaphors. In general, social scientists use metaphors as symbolic constructs to create alternative ways of thinking in order to explicate various complex aspects of organisational phenomena (Weik, 1989).

Cornelissen and Harris (2001) view corporate identity from three metaphorical perspectives, namely, as an expression of corporate personality, organisational reality and as the variety of ways in which an organisation expresses itself. This viewpoint argues that it is possible for senior managers or consultants alike to construct, transform and restructure a corporate identity without necessarily referring back to the central values or identities of the organisation.

2.5.8 Narrative Perspective

In recent years the use of narrative approaches in organisational theory has rapidly expanded in areas such as communication, identity and identification. According to Rhodes and Brown (Rhodes & Brown, 2005) the search for identity through narration can be divided into five main areas of research - sensemaking, communication, politics and power, learning and change, and identity and identification. However, a key limitation of the narrative approach is the ongoing meta-theoretical perspective that science and stories or conversations are separate domains of research, for in the context of organisational identity, the former seeks scientific truth - albeit narrative is omnipresent in scientific texts (Czarniawska, 1999) - while the latter explores the meaning of the organisational experience (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Brown, Humphreys and Gurney (2005) posit that organisational identities are narrative constructs, and thus, organisations ought to be “characterised by multiple identity narratives which evolve, compete, overlap, intertwine, distance and often contest each others hegemonic reach” (p. 312).
2.5.9 Organisational Identity and Change

A relevant area of organisational identity research is organisational change since a number of studies, for instance, Gioia and Thomas (1996) and Brown and Starkey (2000), have highlighted the integral role of organisational identity when promoting or delaying strategic change within organisations. Empirical research has led some scholars to believe that organisational members view the central and distinctive characteristics of their organisation as evolving (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Fiol, 2002) rather than enduring as in Albert and Whetten’s (1985) seminal organisational model.

Of significance is the empirical research of Dutton and Dukerich (1991) who examined how the New York port regional transportation agency attempted to adapt to environmental changes; in particular, how the organisation dealt with the many homeless people who loitered outside its premises. Through a case study, Dutton and Dukerich explored the role of identity and image of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey from an internal perspective. The research revealed that a strong relationship exists between organisational identity and the way organisational members believe others see their organisation, namely the construed external image (Dutton, et al., 1994). Moreover, how these members’ perceptions interacted to influence their cognition and behaviour, together with strategic organisational actions, in an attempt to re-align its change in image with strong identity (Gioia, et al., 2000).

2.5.10 External Stakeholder Perspective

From the external perspective, Simoes, Dibb and Fisk (2005) explain that what stakeholders actually think of an organisation is of vital importance, since the impressions held by others outside of the organisation determine either a positive or negative response to the companies’ products and services. A study by Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2005) revealed in order to achieve favourable publicity it is necessary to disseminate and align the core ideology and communication processes of an organisation.

* * *

Since the identity of a community library organisation is the focus of this research the section that follows presents literature on community libraries. Under this heading sub-
sections are discussed which include the roles community library roles, the library as a meeting place, volunteerism, technological change within the library environment, and the future of community libraries.

2.6 Community Libraries

Public libraries are embedded in the heart of their communities (Public Libraries of New Zealand, 2010a). According to the NZ Libraries website (2008), “New Zealand public libraries contribute to the development of an enriched, literate and learning society”, through the provision of four main roles. The first role is to support pleasurable reading; second, to aid people to find answers to questions; third, to help people feel connected and a part of their community; and fourth, to provide opportunities for people to attain the life skills needed to partake in a knowledge society and economy (New Zealand Public Libraries, 2008; Sutherland, 2012). This is achieved through the provision of services to members such as the lending and reference services of books, magazines, videos and DVDs; designated study areas; internet and electronic resources; along with story reading time slots and activities for children. Additionally, non-members such as tourists are permitted to use a limited number of services offered by community libraries to fulfil their information requirements whilst in transit.

Society has continued to experience rapid technological changes within the information sphere to which libraries belong. Since the 1990s the role of community libraries has changed in response to technological developments such as the introduction of personal computers and the internet (Nicol & Johnson, 2008; Pradt Lougee, 2002). Subsequently an information explosion has occurred.

According to Nicol and Johnson (2008), USA citizens increasingly support online services provided by public libraries in preference to online services offered by the private sector, due to the ease of use and efficiency of library websites. Conversely, online information offered by companies and corporations within the private sector is viewed by the public as being slow to retrieve from web pages that are difficult to navigate, since website content generally lacks categorization and indexing. Nicol and Johnson stated that underpinning the disparity in online services was the notion that businesses were profit driven; thus websites were designed with the absence of categorisation and indexing in order to
encourage people to browse, and then purchase product. Since the public library is classified as a non-profit organisation, websites are deemed to hold a more objective focus, and therefore more emphasis is placed on proficient information retrieval.

In changing with the times, the library landscape has become increasingly complex (Bertot, 2009) to include digital sources of information alongside printed sources. Through a case study of learning and information services (LIS) departments within four British universities, Wilson and Halpin (2006) discuss the convergence of the physical library with the unrelenting advancement of the digital library, which in effect has resulted in the emergence of the hybrid library, referred to metaphorically by Black (2011) as bricks and clicks. Wilson and Halpin examine how rapid growth in information communication technology (ICT) has had a major effect on (LIS), to the extent that the roles, duties and identities of library staff have transformed. Customer service has also been affected since greater use of technology creates less opportunity to interact via face-to-face communication (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006).

Along with the introduction of public access technology (PAT) services, Nicol & Johnson (2008) note library personnel are required to learn new technologies and skills in order to provide quality online services to the public through digital referencing and websites. Further, public libraries require much funding in order to provide services which meet the demands of users within the twenty-first century (Rooney-Browne & McMenemy, 2010). Funding strategies like the commercialisation of public library space through commercial imperatives such as the sponsorship of library events, impart biases and changes to the basic values of public library service. Much funding for modern technologies to meet the demands of technology advanced users brings about more challenges, including finding time for library staff to up-skill and support online computer services. Thus, new services are perhaps introduced to the detriment of established library services.

The boundary between traditional library and computing disciplines has become blurred through creating the assimilation of both disciplines, and changing contemporary library staff into hybrid information professionals. However as a result of this process, potential opportunities and threats arise for libraries. Opportunities exist for a library to provide a greater community contribution through the dissemination of increased quantities of information when in collaboration with other libraries, without the risk of losing its distinct
identity. Nicol and Johnson (2008), suggest online organisations, akin to The Internet Public Library (IPL) which formed in 1995 through the University of Michigan’s School of Information, could be a way in which library volunteers perform new roles in the future, in line with technology changes. The IPL operates by means of the general public sending questions to its website, whereby volunteers select and answer questions on topics in relation to their field of expertise. The remaining unanswered queries are then escalated to library professionals, who reply within one week of the question having been posted to the website.

On the other hand, a threat of loosing public support exists since the publics’ traditional perceptions are that a library symbolises “trust, and is a locus of community culture, values and identity” (Benton Foundation, 1996, p. 192). These perceptions are changing because, according to Rooney-Browne and McMenemy (2010), the dawn of the twenty-first Century has presented a depressed economic climate due to global market recession. As a result, cost-saving strategies must be implemented. In this economic climate public libraries face growing commercial competition from international bookstore corporations (e.g. Borders and Barnes and Noble) coupled with online bookstores (e.g. Amazon). Public libraries are expected to provide more services to meet the demands of library users inclusive of modern technology requiring much funding. As a solution, the commercialisation of public library space is a cost-saving strategy which is becoming more popular. However, this brings challenges of bias and changes the basic values of the public library service. This is especially evident in situations where partnerships have introduced commercial imperatives to the public service, such as business sponsorship of library events. Thus, a change in the distinction between consumerism and citizenship occurs which brings an identity change to the way public libraries are perceived.

2.6.1 Library Roles

Public libraries are generally viewed as socially inclusive institutions central to community development since services are equally provided to all citizens irrespective of age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, nationality, language or social standing. On a global level, the role of New Zealand public libraries are akin to many others throughout the world given that since November 4, 1946 the country has held membership to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) - a specialised United
Nations agency along with 193 other members and six associate members internationally (Rowley, 1997). UNESCO published a public library manifesto for members in recognition of the vital role free public library services perform in society with regards to knowledge-sharing and dissemination within local communities. In particular, the manifesto states that a public library is the local gateway to knowledge. It caters for lifelong learning, democratic decision-making and cultural development at both individual and social group levels (The public library service, 2001). Moreover, the manifesto advocates that it is a basic human right for public library services to be open to everyone, not solely mainstream community members, especially in regards to the access and understanding of information.

Harris (1998) conducted exploratory research using focus groups of library users and non-users along with library staff interviews in England, Scotland and Wales, to determine from a community development perspective and how communities viewed the social benefits of public libraries. From this perspective, public libraries are dynamic organisms embedded into different communities; however it became apparent that contextual issues altered the identity of each library to some extent. Each local community holds a unique identity based on its local history, and thus it was thought that the library ought to be a key contributor to cultural heritage initiatives.

The public library was seen by focus group participants in Harris’s (1998) research to be a trusted public institution that held a wealth of resources available to the individual and collective alike and was viewed as a traditional book-lending service as well as having an educational role. It was revealed that libraries occupied a unique position in the community whereby they hold greater opportunities to play leading roles through forging partnerships with various community stakeholders. Overall, people's perceptions of their community and library appeared to be more local and detailed than that implied by the local authority. Even so, libraries were not perceived by library staff or community members to be socially inclusive community institutions or linked with economic development within communities.

Evolving commercial competition from international bookstore corporations (e.g. Borders and Barnes and Noble) and online bookstores (e.g. Amazon), together with social change has meant that reading for leisure is challenged by alternative relaxation pursuits (Childs,
However, despite public libraries coexisting with commercial businesses that are popular amongst citizens of local communities, for instance, internet cafes, coffee shops, online and retail bookstores, taverns, sports clubs (Black, 2011; Childs, 2006), libraries feature at the heart of their communities, to provide accessible space, resources and various services which are in principle free-of-charge to all citizens. Some research suggests certain social conditions, for example, lack of access to new technology, ethnic minority groups, health issues, ageism, poverty, isolation, geographical location, library policies and operational issues can lead to social exclusion for some citizens, hence the non-utilisation of library services (Lockyer-Benze, 2004).

From a New Zealand bicultural context, there has always been disjuncture between Maori and European cultures within New Zealand. Maori language was originally oral and story-based within rural tribes. In other words, it was a high-context culture as described by Hall (1976), and thus, the public library service developed from a mid-nineteenth century mainstream Anglo-American model (Dewe, 2006; Muddiman, et al., 2000), which served no purpose in their lives. However, early missionaries from low-context cultures soon developed orthography for Maori language and in 1987, when Maori was declared by Government to be an official language of New Zealand, the Maori transcriptions of early missionaries became of significant library archive importance (Szekeley, 2002).

Literature on the library as a place suggests that from inception people have conceptualised public libraries as being a home away from home or a third place, subsequent to residence and place of work (Oldenburg, 2001). In this context, Black (2011) points out various enduring characteristics of identity that have attributed to the notion of the public library serving as a third place. These include being accessible, unpretentious, familiar unbiased communal spaces, safe and comfortable environments for individuals, encourage social interaction to a certain extent, and provide respite from the daily routines of life. The provision of a shared space for people to meet and interact is considered to be an important social function of the library (Neal, 1997). Even so, limited research exists from the perspective of the public library performing the role of a meeting place within the community. Recent researchers have studied how public libraries can affect the lives of their users, accommodate social inclusion, and are essential in the creation of integrated local communities (Benton Foundation, 1997). However, traditionally public libraries are perceived to be associated with individualism or individual development, since the act of
reading is considered to be a personal, rather than collective experience (Muddiman, 1999).

### 2.6.2 Library as a Meeting Place

The notion that the public library is both a meeting place for citizens and an agent for
democracy within the community stems from Habermas’s (1989) theories of the public
sphere being an arena for undistorted communication, free of the state and the market.
Audunson (2004) conducted research on the library’s role as a meeting place. This scholar
developed a conceptual framework based on Goffmann’s (1971) front-stage versus back-
stage dichotomy, named the high-intensive versus low-intensive dichotomy. The
framework suggests a low-intensive arena, such as the public library space, may be a
central point in which to facilitate meetings between people who do not ordinarily meet,
such as people with different values, interests, social status, ethnicity and generations.
Moreover, Campbell (2005) states the opportunity for people to interact in order to share
experiences and learn from others in the community develops a sense of belonging
amongst citizens. This in turn enhances citizenship through people feeling a greater
connection with their community, which in turn forms part of their social life.

Thussu (2006) mentions the public sphere has evolved through the globalisation of media
and communication. Convergence of telecommunications and computing technologies
such as the Internet has given rise to a global public sphere. In this realm people are no
longer limited to local meeting places and can meet in the virtual world through many
international networks. Thus, since public libraries have adopted new technologies, people
can connect with both local communities and virtually in the digital world simultaneously
(Audunson, 2004).

### 2.6.3 Marketing of Libraries

Community libraries are information agencies that are considered public agencies which fit
into the *public agency model* in the sense that they are primarily funded by ratepayers and
provide the majority of services at no additional charge to members (Allen, 2003). Neal
points out community libraries hold a unique position in the marketplace, since they have a
monopoly in the services they provide for communities, through the advantage of being
financed by either local Government (through ratepayers) or central Government. As a
result, Council is conscious to be frugal with ratepayers’ money, hence, it is commonplace
for organisations to plan prospective brand positioning, such as their decisions on which products to offer library members, as part of their five-year strategic planning (Neal, 1997). A brand is developed subsequent to positioning and strategic planning processes. Kotler (1994) provides the following product-based definition of brand:

A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitors (p. 444).

Brand identity is a key element of business and marketing strategy that is designed to support the vision and development that an organisation intends to communicate to library users (Walton, 2008). Brand becomes a significant strategy to ensure that the service is recognised by customers. Scott and Lane (Scott & Lane, 2000) view organisational identity within the context of manager-stakeholder relationships, in particular, the linkages between impression management activity and organisational identity. They argue that “organisational identity is best understood as contested and negotiated through iterative interactions between managers and stakeholders” (p. 444), through focusing on the construction of organisational identity.

### 2.7 Volunteerism

Much interest exists amongst social scientists and Government policy makers in relation to how the impending retirement from the workforce of the baby boom generation (1946 to 1955) will affect society. Of concern is whether or not baby boomers are likely to volunteer their services in some capacity past retirement. Based on empirical evidence, Putnam (2000) argues voluntary organisational membership has been steadily declining for over half a century. Putnam posits that the erosion of social capital defined as features of community life such as networks, norms and trust that contribute to communities working in unison to pursue common objectives (Putnam, 1995), coupled with low levels of religious participation of the baby boomer cohort, will ultimately lead to a reduction in future volunteerism, compared to the contributions of retirees from the current silent generation (1936 to 1945) and long civic (1926 to 1935) generations.

On the other hand, research by Einolf (2009) predicts that since there has been a rising trend in volunteerism amongst older citizens of society for a number of decades, it is
probable that baby boomers will volunteer more than previous generations. Freedman (1999) and Foster-Bey, Grimm Jnr., and Dietz (2007) agree and point out that baby boomers currently contribute high levels of volunteerism while in paid employment. Other factors such as higher education, involvement in political activism and social engagement (Williamson, Bannister, & Sullivan, 2010) and the trend of older parents with under 18 year olds at home (Foster-Bey, et al., 2007) indicate the potential for greater numbers of volunteers provided that adequate structures, incentives, and recruitment efforts are in place. Even so, the sheer numbers of baby boomers alone ought to ensure the upward trend of volunteerism amongst retirees continues. According to Salt (2003) and Foster-Bey et al (2007), baby boomers are not only better educated, they are more technologically minded and wealthier than their predecessors, and thus, their preferred areas of volunteerism have changed from religious and mundane activities of previous generations, to managing and coaching roles in civic, political, educational and youth fields. Given that baby boomers are well-informed (Williamson, et al., 2010) through being great consumers of information in all media forms (McKay, 1997), they ought to transform library volunteerism in the same manner that they have led other social reforms, for example, the gender revolution.

Volunteers play an integral role within the domain of community service, through engaging in the civic life of their community. Organisations operating with volunteers enable people to meet face to face across class and social boundaries, and thus, perform an important sociological role which helps prevent social fragmentation (Putnam, 2000). Nicol and Johnson (2008), state volunteers have had a major social impact on libraries throughout U.S. history, and according to Evans (2009), they continue to be prevalent within USA public and school libraries. In fact, a 1996 USA survey reported that 50.2 % of County Governments utilised volunteers within public libraries (Lane & Schultz, 1996). Even so, according to Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), the library volunteer role is categorised as being socially tainted since most volunteers carry out basic menial tasks which paid employees do not wish to perform and are stigmatised as dirty work (Kreiner, Ashforth, & Sluss, 2006).

Volunteerism is viewed as a reciprocal process that benefits the individual volunteer along with the organisation, and much of the literature on volunteerism has focused on understanding behavioural factors such as the underlying motivational drive which inspires
individuals to volunteer. Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen and Miene (1998), point out that since many volunteers possess altruistic values, helping others is a significant motivational factor in which to undertake voluntary work. Clary, Snyder and colleagues developed the multifactor model, in the 1990s as a functional analysis of motivation theory. The model was then applied to volunteerism with the intention of revealing the reasons and purposes that underpin the psychological phenomena of volunteering (Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992; Clary, et al., 1998). Empirical research conducted by Clary, et al. (1992) identified six primary functions or motivations served through volunteerism: values (the deep-set beliefs of the importance of helping others), understanding (participation in activities which satisfy the desire to learn), career (seeking opportunities to learn skills transferable to paid employment), social, esteem, and protective (escaping from negative virtues or feelings). Thus, altruism is an intrinsic motivational factor for volunteers involved in civic service (Oman, Thoresen, & McMahon, 1999).

Hwang, Grabb, and Curtis (2005) agree that altruism is a motivational factor for Americans involved in voluntary work, however, found that Canadians tended to partake in voluntary activities for personal rather than humanitarian reasons. Through role identity Lee, Piliavin, and Call (1999) explain that when individuals frequently engage in a socially valued activity such as volunteering, a key element of their personal identity develops, and these people will most likely seek opportunities in which to volunteer at a future point in time.

The landmark research of Wilson and Musick (1997b) and Wilson (2000) posits that for members of the workforce, the nature of the vocation of which individuals are engaged in could influence volunteer behaviour outside of employment hours. Wilson and Musick (1997b) found that people employed in professional or managerial occupations have a greater tendency to volunteer compared to those in clerical, sales or blue-collar occupations. Rotolo and Wison (2004) suggests this is partly due to the greater likelihood of professional or managerial employees being sought after as volunteers, along with society’s expectation that a person who has prestigious employment status ought to be actively involved in contributing to community service work and non-profit organisations.

Similarly, a study conducted in the USA by Webb and Abzug (2008) contributed to
volunteerism literature through revealing that along with managers and professionals, military personnel were most likely to volunteer their services. Further, in the UK, Davis and Smith (1999) found that volunteer youths in part-time employment were more inclined to volunteer than their full-time or unemployed counterparts. Overall, the findings indicated that occupational categories and cultures ought to positively influence individual motivation to volunteer.

A national American survey reported that higher proportions of women over men volunteered their services (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1996), whereas, the demographic findings of Webb and Abzug’s (2008) pointed out that higher proportions of men and individuals with children became volunteers. Moreover, the likelihood of volunteering increased when factors such as the level of education, time spent at religious services and age of the youngest dependent child, were raised. Furthermore, there was little evidence to suggest that volunteerism increased as citizens aged. In fact Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1996) found volunteerism gradually declined in the fifty-five and over age group unless individuals were specifically invited to volunteer. However, of individuals who were approached to volunteer, the highest rate of volunteerism was in the sixty-five to seventy-four year old age group.

Overall, volunteers are perceived as a substantial economic benefit for non-profit organisations through their contributions of manpower, experience and skills in challenging fiscal times where operational costs continually increase, while funding continually decreases (Freund, 2005). Further, they allow organisations to increase the levels of services offered to the public, albeit to the detriment of paid positions and positive interpersonal relationships with staff (Brudney & Gazley, 2002). Additionally, closer ties ought to develop between non-profit organisations and the communities into which they are embedded, since volunteers are generally members of the communities they serve. Therefore, the careful cultivation of a volunteer workforce is invaluable for the survival of community services.

2.7.1 Volunteer Management Programme

According to Warburton, Oppenheimer, and Zappala (2004), a volunteer management programme typically includes the administration of such factors as demographics,
motivation and management of various work tasks, along with recognition and rewards for volunteers. Work tasks range from assisting with routine library duties and services (le Roux & Hendrikz, 2006) to being utilised in *Friends Libraries* programmes (Evans, 2009; Freund, 2005). Some organisations fail to manage volunteers effectively through being reluctant to invest in volunteer training, recognition and management.

The philosophy of a volunteer management programme ought to align with the overarching mission of a library organisation. According to Evans (2009), committed volunteers form the backbone of a successful long-term volunteer programme. These volunteers possess a keen interest in libraries, and receive a sense of accomplishment from performing meaningful tasks, which ought to be noted in a *job description* (JD). In exchange for their labour, committed volunteers expect to gain gratification, knowledge, and practical skills, as with paid staff. Thus library volunteers require a well-planned volunteer management programme that supports the organisation’s mission.

### 2.7.2 Friends of Libraries

*Friends of Libraries* is a private non-profit organisation that consists of volunteers who have a major stake in the library and are thus considered to be majority shareholders. These organisations are spread worldwide with the majority situated from where they originated in the USA, and also in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand (Ferguson, 2003). Members of *Friends of Libraries* recognize the civic value of the library in the community and understand the needs of the public library through being dedicated clients who take library membership one step further. In partnership with libraries, their role is to enhance a library's public image within local communities, and to support the library with the provision of advocacy when called upon by the library manager, for instance, to lobby local Government on library issues. They can contribute to supporting the library in economic terms by identifying funding opportunities. Despite their input, Ferguson (2003) notes it is uncommon for New Zealand libraries to provide opportunities for *Friends of Libraries* to contribute to library decision-making.

### 2.8 Technological Change

Many public libraries, now consider the provision of computers and internet connectivity
to be an essential library service for the local communities of which they serve (Bertot, 2009). Libraries are thus faced with constant transformation as library user needs and methods of information access evolve during the digital age. For instance, according to Dorner, Liew and Yeo (2005), library users increasingly obtain New Zealand cultural heritage resources in digital formats by way of the internet, to the extent that access is almost on a par with visits to the library.

Government strategies such as New Zealand’s Digital Strategy 2.0 as well as the National Library of New Zealand help fund certain library projects. The Digital Strategy 2.0 - a social inclusion policy - was launched in 2008 by central Government to advance New Zealand as a digital leader internationally through promoting the importance of Information Communication Technology (Local Government New Zealand, 2007). In particular, an efficient broadband infrastructure for economic and social development of New Zealand communities as knowledge becomes an economic commodity in the information age. Successively, the ICT initiatives underway are expected to shape a strong national identity for businesses to compete internationally (Worth, 2009).

Another scheme is the Government’s acceptance of a joint bid from Telecom New Zealand and Vodafone for the NZD285 million Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) tender (Beehive, 2011). The RBI is intended to advance the construction of infrastructure, such as fibre networks and cellphone towers, in order to improve access to either faster fixed line, wireless or satellite broadband services and mobile coverage by 2016 for rural New Zealand. Thus, it is projected that eighty-six percent of rural businesses and households will have faster internet speeds of over five megabytes-per-second, along with eighty-six percent of rural schools being connected to broadband speeds in excess of 100 megabytes-per-second.

The role of the UCL coupled with the ways in which the organisation serves its communities is to some extent resultant of both national and international influences (Dewe, 2006). Within the public library context, a Government initiative, namely the Aotearoa People’s Network (APNK) project (based on the United Kingdom Peoples Network), is designed to help bridge the digital divide within New Zealand society (The Aotearoa People’s Network website, 2009). This is achieved through the provision of online social and learning opportunities for the public in mainly rural communities.
The Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa links into the overarching central Government Digital Strategy 2.0, which was launched in 2008 to promote the importance of ICT for the economic and social development of New Zealand communities (Local Government New Zealand, 2007), fulfilling three strands of the strategy. First, connectivity as free access to broadband internet services, either through the PCs provided or via the Wifi connection for individuals with laptops, is supplied within community libraries. Second, building confidence in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) through offering libraries as comfortable learning environments; and third, content via APN computers within libraries where people can create and store their stories and histories online (Local Government New Zealand, n.d.). Overall the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa is perceived by the public as being part of the logical evolution of library services in the context of the library being a gateway to information (Research First Limited, 2008).

With Government funding of $4.6 million (Research First Limited, 2008) the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project aims to provide every New Zealander the opportunity to create, access and experience digital content. This is achievable through sub-projects such as Kete, responsible for the digital collection of community stories, which are stored in a database for library users to access online, via a free website or through community library branches (Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa, 2011). Therefore, community libraries facilitate a key role of empowering anyone who has access to a public library the necessary computers, training and right to use digital and online information in the digital age.

Two independent reports were commissioned by the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa, namely the Aotearoa People’s Network Impact Evaluation 2008 (Research First Limited, 2008), and the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa: One such report was an impact evaluation (Aotearoa People's Network Kaharoa, 2011), designed to ascertain the overall effectiveness of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project with regards to libraries, maraes and local communities. Both reports applied case-study methodology incorporating multiple data collection methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches such as interviews, online survey, focus groups, documentation and observations to comprehensively appraise the intentional and unintentional effects of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project.
Positive report findings were that libraries involved in the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* project had increased digital inclusion within their local communities and alleviated isolation through being connected to current worldwide digital information. New customers were primarily attracted to the library in order to utilise the library space as a meeting place to enhance social relationships with friends and family, by means of the physical and on-line approach. Other reasons the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* was utilised was for educational and employment opportunities, to practice computer skills learnt elsewhere, personal banking, business transactions and participation in the democratic process by means of seeking Council and Government information online. As a result, library foot-traffic has also increased since new and diverse demographic groups of local communities, who were traditionally non-library users, now frequent public libraries (also refer to Biswas & Findsen, 2009).

Negative report findings were that the actual demand from the public for *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* usage outweighed the projected demand, and as a consequence, there are insufficient numbers of PCs in every library that joined the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* project. While staff appreciated *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* training in the professional development sense, they felt they received inadequate training to support the public with *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* issues. Staff were also concerned that their performance of traditional librarian roles were being undermined with the introduction of information technology into job descriptions.

Additionally, since incorporating the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* into the open plan library space, staff have had to manage behaviour issues such as excessive noise levels from the new type of library user, who is attracted to the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa*, yet is naïve of traditional library culture (Research First Limited, 2008). Other hindrances of the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* being integrated into the existing library space was a lack of privacy, and also crowding and intimidation as a result of group work, whereby several people congregate around one PC.

According to (Wamba & Chatfield, 2009) *Radio Frequency Identification* (RFID) is an innovative trend in wireless automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) technology that is expected to transform organisational systems by replacing visible automatic
identification systems such as barcodes. Within a library context, the Radio Frequency Identification is utilised as a security system which consists of small tags embedded within library items, for instance, the inside cover of books. Enclosed in each tag are both an antenna and a memory storage chip with rewritable information about the tagged item. Wamba and Chatfield note that RFID is a straightforward concept whereby bidirectional communication is established via radio frequencies the moment a tagged item comes into the vicinity of a Radio Frequency Identification receiver. The receiver then retrieves and transmits the unique item identification to Radio Frequency Identification computer middleware, for further processing to occur.

2.8.1 Web 2.0
Web 2.0 is an umbrella term used to define the new wave of interactive technologies being adopted by libraries as a more sophisticated way of reaching people within their communities. Such technologies include chat reference, blogs, RSS feeds, social networking, Flikr, MySpace and Facebook. A Library Research Service study conducted in the USA by Lietzau (2009) revealed larger public libraries that served communities of 25,000 citizens or more tended to be early adopters of web 2.0 technology. Since these public libraries serve larger populations they have more staff resources and better funding available which in turn eases the implementation of new technologies into the library environment.

2.9 The Future of Libraries
Dalton, Elkin and Hannaford (2006) argue that a transformation will occur in the future whereby the role of the library will be an information provider to the community. This ought to be achieved through the formation of strategic alliances with other organisations along with mergers between other Council services. However, Pomerantz and Marchionini (2007) see future trends better servicing the social needs of the community through utilising the public library as a space for individual and collaborative work, along with social activity. Thus, less emphasis will be placed on using library space for the storage of books and other library resources as more library collections are digitalised and accessed within the realm of the virtual library environment.
Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter presents how the project was designed and conducted in order to answer the research questions. Methodology focuses on the practicalities of achieving the objective of the research study (Clark & Causer, 1991); hence serves as a framework for the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2004). The steps taken link empirical data to the research questions and then to its conclusions (Yin, 2003). In this chapter a number of issues are explained, including the research approach (qualitative case study typology) and methods of data collection (in-depth face-to-face interviews, focus groups and documentation). The methods used to analyse the data generated are presented; and given that the nature of this research project includes employees and customers of an organisation, ethical issues that were taken into consideration are pointed out. Limitations such as low participant response that were encountered within the study are explained in the last section of this chapter.

3.1 Qualitative Approach

In undertaking this research, one of the initial decisions made was which research approach to take. Two broad but distinct methodological approaches are commonly used within social science scholarly research, namely the qualitative and quantitative approaches, a combination of which is often used in studies. Each approach possesses strengths and weaknesses. Bryman (2004) points out three main differences that were considered for this study before a final approach was decided upon.

First, how theory and research are linked within each approach is determined; either deductively or inductively. Bryman (2004) states qualitative research “predominantly emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories” (p. 20). Maxwell (2005) argues the strengths of qualitative research primarily derives from utilising the exploratory and inductive approach, as opposed to the confirmatory and deductive nature of the quantitative approach. As a result, theory as an outcome of inductive research was deemed more suitable for this study.

Second, epistemological considerations were taken into account. Bryman (2004) asserts qualitative research “has rejected the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and
of positivism in particular in preference for an emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world” (p. 20). As context-specific meanings and the processes through which they are created are focused upon through this approach, an interpretive epistemological orientation was deemed suitable for an organisational identity project.

Third, the ontological considerations of qualitative research, which as Bryman (2004) explains “embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation” (p. 20), were considered. As this project explores organisational members’ perceptions, the ontological assumption is that reality is subjective, plural and does not exist apart from one’s interpretation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Therefore a constructivist orientation was deemed to be appropriate for this project since the phenomenon of an organisation’s identity is a social construction.

Other factors pertaining to differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches were considered prior to the selection of the types of research methods and analysis methods used in this study. According to Van Maanen (1979), qualitative research is defined as “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Since the qualitative approach focuses specifically on situations or individuals and notes particular words, as opposed to numbers which are the focal point of a quantitative deductive approach, research methods and analysis methods typically associated with qualitative research were chosen. Therefore, in the context of this study, experiences of participants are able to be interpreted and sense can be made of phenomena in relation to the meaning individuals convey rather than merely quantifying people’s reactions to an experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

A literature review revealed most research on organisational identity has been conducted using qualitative strategies. For example, Pratt (2000) conducted an ethnographic study of Amway distributors to obtain a deep understanding of organisational identity dynamics, whilst Margolis and Hansen (2002) qualitatively explored perceptions of organisational identity, utilizing an inductive and emergent method, through a case study of a budget airline during a merger. Moreover, in the context of libraries, where limited research exists on organisational identity, Lincoln (2002) points out qualitative approaches “illuminate aspects
Communicating an Organisation’s Identity

of libraries, library services, and library users’ perspectives in ways we have not had access to in previous research” (p. 4).

As the type of research conducted in this study is qualitative in nature, an exploratory, inductive and emergent design was utilised. According to Antes (2009), exploratory research is defined as the unidentified key issues that the study intends to address. Furthermore, Collis and Hussey (2003) state exploratory research is selected when few studies exist on a topic to which the researcher can refer to.

In summary, Creswell (2007) describes the qualitative process of research “as flowing from philosophical assumptions, to world views and through a theoretical lens, and on to the procedures…” (p. 37), which effectively creates a framework for the approach to inquiry (procedures) involved in researching the meaning individuals attribute to a social phenomenon. Thus, a solely qualitative approach from philosophical issues to the means of organising the research methods and analysis was deemed to be suitable for this research study.

3.2 Case Study Methodology

In this project a case study methodology has been selected in order to study the social phenomenon of organisational identity within the bounded context of an organisation. Gillham (2001) defines a case as a unit of human phenomena that exists within the real world, in real-time and can only be studied or understood in context. A case study allows a thorough analysis of the individual case (UCL) through gathering data onsite and talking directly to individuals within the natural organisational setting (Creswell, 2007).

A major reason why the case study approach was singled out to be most appropriate for this study was due to the fact that case studies are able to offer a holistic view of aspects of management. Hence case studies are most appropriate when examining an eclectic area of a company’s mission such as organisational identity (Gummesson, 1991).

A case study is appropriate to this research as it is flexible in nature with few restraints placed on the data collection process (Bryman, 2004), thus typically contains a combination of data collection methods such as interviews, observations, questionnaires and
documentation (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case studies often produce findings unique to the organisational context under review. A suitable context within which to explore the research questions was provided through the adoption of a case study design that enabled the unique features of the case to be explained.

Case studies have been viewed negatively since they often predominantly utilise qualitative data collection methods which are considered to lack the accuracy, objectivity and rigor that by contrast, traditional quantitative methods possess (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). However, Yin (1994) notes faults also exist with quantitative data collection methods. An experiment, for instance, purposely separates a phenomenon from its context to enable attention to be focused on a few variables. Moreover, Yin states even though a quantitative survey method has the ability to address both phenomenon and context, a limitation exists in the number of variables that are able to be analysed, through the number of questions asked to respondent ratio. Overall a case study approach asserts the ability to process a variety of evidence such as documentation, archival records, artefacts, observations and interviews in the examination of contemporary events. Thus, a case study is deemed to be the most appropriate strategy to manage all contextual circumstances considered to be of importance in this study.

Case studies are viewed as a methodological tool for three types of research: descriptive, explorative and explanatory (Yin, 1994). In this case the research is explorative with the intention of delving into an organisation’s identity. As a result, patterns and ideas are sought throughout the course of the study as opposed to testing a hypothesis (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Overall, the case study design serves to help avoid a situation wherein the evidence fails to address the initial research questions, and ought to ensure that the phenomenon studied is reported as specifically as possible.

3.3 Data Trustworthiness

It is important for any qualitative researcher to establish and assess the quality of research by incorporating credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability criteria, for the purpose of a more objective and robust study (Bryman, 2004; Perakyla, 1997; Yin, 2003).

First, a central criticism of qualitative research is that several accounts of social reality may exist that the researcher may not accurately understand or capture, which may be
Communicating an Organisation’s Identity

problematic and lessen the dependability of a case study (Bryman, 2004). Thus within the data collection phase of this study, triangulation of multiple data methods was a tactic used to increase credibility. A further initiative was to offer participants the opportunity to read the final thesis draft of the case study.

Second, according to Yin (2003), transferability or external validity is a major issue in case studies since critics point out that it is a poor basis from which to make generalisations to a greater population. Typical qualitative research studies focus on a small number of individuals to reveal depth, contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world being studied (Bryman, 2004). Therefore to increase the transferability of this case study, an in-depth description of the organisational context has been provided.

Third, tape recordings and verbatim transcripts were utilised to greatly enhance the dependability of this research study. Perakyla (1997), notes tapes and transcripts provide a highly detailed representation of social interaction which eliminates many of the problems encountered by other qualitative research methods such as the reliability challenges that an ethnographer encounters through possible inaccuracies within field notes. Dependability was further enhanced through a written assurance that the confidentiality of the organisation and all research participants was protected which gave the managers the freedom to offer an honest opinion.

Fourth, even though complete objectivity is elusive (Bryman, 2004), the researcher is confident that if this study was performed again following the same comprehensive procedures as set out in this study, then comparable findings and conclusions ought to be drawn. Further, the researcher was meticulous in all aspects of data management within the research study. This included interview and focus group timelines, records of contacts and the recording and verbatim transcription of all individual interviews and focus groups. Overall, the four trustworthiness criteria have been adhered to throughout the data collection, data analysis and compositional phases in order to increase the reliability of this research study.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

This section of the study presents how relevant evidence on the subject of the research
question was generated (Bouma & Atkinson, 1995). For the purpose of this research two primary qualitative interview methods of data collection have been selected – in-depth interviews of senior managers, along with focus groups of library users of three UCL branches.

A significant advantage of case study strategy, as opposed to other research methods, exists in the ability to orchestrate triangulation through utilising multiple sources of evidence (Bryman, 2004; Rowley, 2004; Yin, 2003). In this case, a secondary method of data collection - organisational documentation - was referred to as necessary for the purpose of clarification, in order to gain additional perspectives and insights on key issues (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Multiple techniques permit the researcher to build stronger assertions about interpretations (Yin, 1994). Findings and conclusions with an increased level of credibility could be drawn, through the use of three eclectic data collection methods. As a result, formal theories could develop from the case study and contribute to the organisational identity field of research (Balmer, 2001a), on which limited empirical research exists (Margolis & Hansen, 2002).

Even though case studies may well involve single or multiple cases and could contain both qualitative and quantitative data (Yin, 1984), the study solely utilised two primary qualitative interview techniques, within a single case. This is due to the fact that qualitative interview techniques are deemed to be more open in nature since qualitative data collection allows the researcher to gain access to the perspectives of participants in order to reveal meanings through the adoption of an unstructured approach to data collection (Bryman, 2004). Hence, the data collection techniques ought to provide rich narrative, anecdotal data (Cornelissen, 2004) of library user experiences to help formulate perceptions of the organisation’s actual identity. In sum, case studies are ideally suited to multiple methods of data collection (Silverman, 2000; Yin, 1984) as is the case in this study. As a result, findings and conclusions are likely to display more credibility (Bryman, 2004), since multiple data collection techniques have been utilised rather than a single source of evidence (Yin, 2003) within the data collection phase of this study.

### 3.4.1 Interview Schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule which incorporates a list of open-ended questions
(refer appendix 7) was formulated based on the aims of the research, and utilised as a researcher tool in both primary methods of data collection. As all interviews and focus groups were conducted by the researcher, the interview schedule acted as an invaluable tool for the delivery of consistent information to ensure data were comparable (Kumar, 1998).

The interview schedule was divided into three specific topic areas that originated from theoretical and research literature on organisational identity; also elements of the company’s vision statement, namely social needs, technology and events. The use of a semi-structured, open-ended interview format allowed issues to be explored further as they arose through formulating subsequent unscripted questions, and thus gain new insights and deeper understandings of topics from the viewpoint of the participants (Merriam, 2009).

A semi-structured format is useful in the sense that it accommodates probing which in turn encourages focus group interaction. It also provides opportunities to gain immediate clarification in situations where ambiguous responses to questions are presented. Overall, the flexible format made allowances for a combination of standard format to produce comparable data in conjunction with the opportunity to explore interviewee responses in depth (Jones, 1991).

3.4.2 Sample

A purposive sample of interview participants consisting of a list of six managers in key organisational roles within the UCL was utilised in this research project. The list was drawn up during a research planning meeting with a manager at the organisation, prior to the data collection phase of the study. According to Bryman (2004), purposive sampling is frequently used in interviews in order to provide relevant information to answer the research questions. Of the six managers who were invited to participate in the study, five managers agreed to be interviewed; and one manager declined due to a hectic work schedule. In addition, a library volunteer who was willing to offer an alternative perspective of the UCLs identity was recruited to participate in an interview, and therefore increase the richness of data. Although interviewees worked in different sections of the organisation, all interviewees in the final sample were highly experienced and knowledgeable in their particular roles.
The sample of focus group candidates consisted of volunteers unknown to the researcher, who agreed to participate in a focus group session held at either branch A, B, or C of the UCL (refer appendix one for participant profiles). The total number of focus group candidates was ten - eight females and two males - aged thirty years old to retirement. All participants were UCL members with the exception of one, who did not fit the criteria for free membership. Nevertheless, this participant made use of certain library services that are available to the general public, and loaned books indirectly, through a parent who held a UCL membership.

An important aspect of focus groups is group composition, characterised by homogeneity, as well as sufficient variation amongst participants to allow for alternative points of view (Tajfel, 1978). The particular candidates used in this case study shared a commonality in that they were all members of the public who regularly utilised library services at one or more of the branches featured in the case study. Focus group participants were representative of all three community profiles, especially in factors such as being predominantly of female gender and European ethnicity, with the greatest percentage of population being in the 15 to 64 year old age group followed by retirees, who were mainly married and held school or post school qualifications. The table in appendix one detail characteristics of each focus group candidate.

3.4.3 Interviews
Six manager interviews were conducted over a six week period between June and July 2009. Interviews are a common qualitative research technique for collecting data in organisational studies and are appropriate when a study is primarily concerned with what a particular phenomenon means to interviewees; moreover, when individual perceptions of a process are to be studied (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987b).

Kumar (1998) states a major advantage of using a structured interview technique is to provide consistent information which guarantees equivalent data. Conversely, Kumar states an unstructured interview has the advantage of spontaneity whereby the researcher has the flexibility to delve deeply into topics of interest in order to extract a wealth of rich data. Thus, the researcher chose to take advantage of the strengths of both methods and opted to conduct semi-structured interviews. In addition the interviewer formulated further questions
as they came to hand during focus groups and face-to-face interviews. A disadvantage of the open-ended question approach is the fact that the interviewer could introduce bias into the study through an increased freedom to formulate questions ad hoc. Nevertheless, semi-structured interviews or in-depth interviewing techniques were utilised to provide greater flexibility and richness of data for the purpose of this study.

In the first phase of the study, the aim was to gain an in-depth understanding of perceptions of organisational identity from managers (and one library volunteer) within the organisation through semi structured interviews. Gillham (2001) states, if done well, semi-structured interviews ought to produce the richest form of data within a case study. Overall the preference was to conduct five semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face, interviews and one semi-structured interview with a manager via electronic mail. Furthermore, a library volunteer with library membership was added to the original list of interviewees, since a library volunteer and member ought to hold valuable insights of both internal and external organisational perspectives; adding another dimension to the research.

Questions from a list of specific topics were covered from an interview schedule along with follow-up questions not included in the guide, to further delve into points revealed during the discussion. Bryman (2004) notes the semi-structured form of interview provides greater flexibility of raising further points to investigate when an issue requires additional exploration. Further, the interviewee possesses a great deal of scope on how to respond to questions posed.

For the purpose of the research, interviews were of approximately 60 minutes in duration. Most participants were from manager level and above since Cornelissen (2004) notes senior management are the obvious choice of organisational members to ask identity questions of because they ultimately form the mission and vision documents that are disseminated throughout an organisation. Face-to-face interviews were arranged in accordance with the scheduling needs of interviewees. These interviews took place at various organisational settings, as selected by participants, ranging from an informal café setting to formal meeting rooms; whichever location the interviewee felt at ease with or deemed to be the most suitable. As a result, flexibility on the part of the interviewer was necessary to accommodate the wishes of interviewees since the study was conducted in a real-life context.
3.4.4 Focus Groups

Along with manager interviews, three focus groups were conducted within a six week period on 13\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} of June (focus group A and B respectively), and 24\textsuperscript{th} July (focus group C), 2009. Silverman (2004) asserts the versatile nature of the focus group method has given rise to its popularity within the social sciences realm of research. Within the context of library science literature, focus groups have become increasingly common since the late 1990s in order to discover opinions, attitudes and behaviours held by library users; and are considered invaluable for the purpose of planning, implementing and improving library services (Fagerheim & Weingart, 2005). Cornelissen (2004) states the main advantage for conducting a focus group over other methods of data collection within organisational identity studies is that a broader group of organisational members are able to discuss their views on the organisation and provide explanations for their perceptions.

According to Walden (2006) a focus group is an open, in-depth discussion with a small group of individuals that is led by a facilitator, who explores a predefined topic of shared interest, in a non-threatening, semi-structured setting. A focus group may consist of a single group of participants who attend a one-off meeting, as in the case of this study, through to many groups meeting on numerous occasions. However, Walden notes the norm for completely researching a topic is between two and fourteen focus groups. The participant response rate for focus groups was lower than originally desired, however, as few as two participants may form a focus group or as many as twelve (Bryman, 2004) or fourteen (Walden, 2006). Even so, as a general rule between four and eight is typically the norm (Silverman, 2004). Participants may be members of pre-existing groups, for instance, family members, clubs or organisational departments. Conversely participants may be amassed for the specific purpose of a research project as in the case of this organisational identity study.

In the second phase of the research, data was collected from external stakeholders, namely library members, by means of three focus groups selected from the organisation’s library branches. Given time constraints, the researcher considered three focus groups would suffice. Each of the three library branch focus groups within the study was strategically selected to incorporate both the diversity of library members and their local communities.

The focus groups conducted in June 2009 consisted of library users who frequented either library branch A, B or C (refer appendix one for participants profiles). Each focus group
consisted of an average of three respondents, and was conducted at the premises of one of the three selected library branches. The duration of focus group sessions was approximately one hour apiece. For the purpose of this study, a one hour focus group discussion was deemed to be sufficient as, according to Gillham (2001), a one hour tape recorded interview equates to approximately ten hours of transcription and analysis. Focus group participants were recruited by means of A4 sized advertisement notices displayed in perspex frames at the customer service counters in each of the three library branches studied. As this method produced few responses, the interviewer, with the permission of each branch manager, approached library patrons in-store to recruit further participants.

Gillham (2001) states it is beneficial to tape record interviews for the purpose of listening to the interview a multitude of times, to produce greater discernment. Therefore, all focus group interviews were audio tape recorded, replayed, and then later transcribed in preparation for data analysis.

3.4.5 Documentation
Atkinson and Coffey (1997) suggest documentary records are a version of social reality that exists within an organisation. Thus to answer the research questions in full, it was vital to make reference to appropriate textual information produced by the organisation.

Contemporary organisations depend on paperwork to record and archive information in written and electronic form (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997). Hence documentation has pervasive significance within contemporary organisations. Therefore, the researcher examined existing documents produced by the library organisation for two reasons. The first reason was to provide insight into the organisation’s culture, processes and procedures; the second was to discover how the company presents and promotes itself to its external stakeholders.

Documentary evidence in the form of written reports, publications, website pages, official statistics and other organisational documentation was utilised in this project. Since these documents were produced for a specific audience and purpose (Yin, 2003) other than evidence for this case study, they are likely to contain bias, because as Bryman (2004) notes, people who write documents usually have a particular viewpoint to convey. Therefore, documentary evidence in this project is used as a secondary data collection method for the
enhancement and credibility of the primary sources of data (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997; Yin, 2003), and to provide descriptive and historical context to the research study (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997).

3.5 Data Analysis
All data gathered from interviews and focus groups underwent a qualitative typology of data analysis, which entailed an exploration of the data to identify patterns and categories. To a large extent, qualitative data analysis within this research project began with the detection of salient themes and patterns (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) gathered from information collected during the data collection phase. Kvale (1996) describes the analysis phase of research as developing the meanings of interviews. This reveals what personal understandings interviewees hold of the phenomena; along with the contribution of new perspectives by the researcher. Moreover, five main approaches—condensation, categorisation, narrative, interpretation and ad hoc methods - offered by Kvale are utilised in the analysis stage of this research project.

As case study research strategy accommodates numerous levels of analysis (Yin, 1994), the data collected were analysed on two levels to answer the research questions of this project. The first level was at the organisational management level, and the second level was at the library user level.

First, since all researchers are required to organise, manage and retrieve the most meaningful pieces of data to analyse, each interview and focus group transcript was examined line by line (Allan, 1991). Data were reduced through the abridgement of wordy meanings and rephrasing of long statements (Kvale, 1996) which were built into themes. Second, according to Bryman (2004) an essential stage of the qualitative research process is coding vast quantities of unstructured, textual data, produced from the data collection phase that are not straightforward to analyse. Data was categorised through the construction of a coding system, whereby labels were assigned to the data based on the observation of recurring events, thus reducing the bulk of the data sets into categories that arose ad hoc during the analysis; essentially decontextualising the data. Third, narrative structuring was performed whereby coherent stories were created to reveal meaning from the various happenings recorded in interview and focus group sessions. Fourth, deeper meaning was sought by
delving deeper into the meanings of text to work out structures and meanings which were not immediately evident. The segmented data was then re-contextualised into broader frames of reference in order to view the data from a new perspective. Finally, other ad hoc analysis tactics to gain further in-depth interpretations of phenomenon were utilised such as clustering and making contrasts and comparisons.

As a result, the data were gathered and analysed for the purpose of creating links to explain themes and events which became focal points within the thesis (Allan, 1991). Hence overall four key categories and concepts emerged from the data that were of interest to the project – image and identity, community service, communication and technology.

Quotations from participants have been incorporated into the analysis chapter as examples to portray issues or themes central to the analysis. Additionally library documentation was utilised to clarify issues as appropriate in stage one and two of the analysis.

**3.6 Ethical Considerations**

There were some ethical considerations to take into account in relation to this research study. Nowadays it is considered a general practice for all research participants to give their informed consent to participate in a study; thus in this case study, all participants signed a consent form. This procedure was performed prior to the initiation of all interview and focus group sessions. An information sheet which outlined the main aspects of the proposed research process accompanied the consent form; a verbal explanation of the research project was also presented prior to each interview and focus group. The consent form covered ethical issues such as assurance of participant anonymity; how the researcher intended to use the data collected; that participation was solely on a voluntary basis; and details of the Unitec Research Ethics Committee should there be any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct with reference to the research study. Furthermore, a clause that states a participant may withdraw from the study within two weeks of the interview having taken place was also included.

Additionally all participants were informed of the fact that each interview and focus group was to be taped and that audio and video recordings of interviews and focus group sessions were to be fully transcribed immediately after the data collection phase of the research.
project. Hard copies of all original recordings are stored in a locked filing cabinet whilst all transcriptions are saved on a password protected computer. On the whole, every effort was made by the researcher to safeguard all participants, the researcher and Unitec against unethical research conduct.

3.7 Limitations

All studies, no matter how well designed or conducted have limitations, hence some challenges were encountered whilst undertaking this research project. First, time restrictions meant it was not possible to conduct focus groups of all seven branches of the UCL. Therefore, three library branches were selected which were representative of the diversity of library membership numbers and branch locations, in order to complete this study.

Second, owing to the terms of the organisation’s privacy policy, access to library membership contact details was not permitted. Thus, the recruitment of library member candidates for focus groups proved to be a challenge. As a result, focus group candidates consisted of library users who entered the library within four weeks prior to respective focus groups.

Third, the study was heavily dependent on the voluntary contributions of research candidates. Participants were required to be available at specific time, on a pre-determined day, as focus group session venues were pre-booked. Further, candidates were required to talk freely on topics of libraries, organisational perception and membership, whilst receiving few personal benefits in return. As a consequence, the eighteen to thirty year old age group is not represented in this research study, attributable to the fact that library patrons in this age group category were unavailable or disinclined to attend a focus group session.

Finally, the involvement of non-users of library services was beyond the scope of this research study, however if included would have added another dimension and fully represented the local communities within the context of this case study. In addition, the depth of understanding of the organisation’s identity would have increased, thus perhaps produced more meaningful findings and conclusions.

Due to the nature of case studies, insights from this single exploratory case study may not be
generalised because the data collected in this unique organisational setting may not apply to other organisational contexts. However, an understanding of how, where when and why conditions under which particular findings occur ought to be revealed (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and thus develop and expand organisational identity theory.

3.8 Summary

In summary, this research study has followed a framework developed by Yin (2003), who asserts five elements typically constitute well-constructed case study design. The five elements are questions, propositions, units of analysis, connection of data to propositions, and criteria for the analysis of findings. The former three components indicate what data ought to be collected and may be located in the current chapter, together with chapters one and two of this thesis. The latter two components are subsequent steps undertaken after all data have been collected and consists of findings, discussion and analysis and conclusions in chapters four, five and six of this research project. Thus in the next chapter (four), findings from the analysis of interviews and focus groups in conjunction with organisational documentation and existing organisational identity literature are presented. The findings have been grouped around emerging themes of identity; customer service; and technology.
Chapter 4: Findings

Three data collection methods of semi-structured interviews with six organisational managers (one via email), focus groups at three library branches, and organisational documentation were utilised in this study to gain internal and external perspectives of the organisation’s identity. Following a thematic analysis, findings are grouped under three distinctive themes of image and identity, customer service, and technology. The emergent themes will provide a framework of analysis and discussion in chapter five and contribute towards answering the main research questions.

4.1 Image and Identity

Image and identity was the first aggregate theme to emerge from transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions since this was the most visible and tangible aspect of organisational identity for people to discuss. Moreover, much documentation was readily available on the internally controlled corporate communication aspect of corporate identity (Van Riel, 1995). This included communicating the vision and mission shaped by senior management for the purpose of creating a favourable image amongst customers and other stakeholders (Olins, 1989). Under this major theme of image and identity participants talked about a number of issues which have been clustered together and feature in this section as sub-themes. These included the major turning point of an identity change within the organisation’s development, differing internal and external perspectives that produced a juxtaposition between single and multiple identities, the organisation’s positioning within the community, corporate identity elements of funding, strategy and branding, artefacts, membership and identification amongst other sub-themes. These themes provide some answers from a corporate and visual identity perspective to research question one – how organisational members describe the organisational identity of the UCL.

4.1.1 Change of Identity

As longstanding library members who had all lived in their particular communities for many years, participants A2, B3 and interviewee E1 had witnessed the UCL change identity. These library users remembered the previous library system prior to the Council taking control of the funding and operation of UCL branches. When initially set up, each
Community library existed as a small room (within the community centre in the case of community A), funded and operated by donations of books, money and voluntary time solely by each community, and was administered by means of a manual library management card filing system.

Participants A2 and B3 pointed out that originally the book collections were small and mainly consisted of paperbacks of an old-fashioned, fiction genre, such as Agatha Christie crime novels. Interestingly, interviewee E1 noted Branch A was initially open for book lending merely two afternoons per week; however over the years accessibility has increased to six days per week. Participant B4 had noticed a great deal of change in the eleven years since first becoming a library member in the sense that these days there is greater diversification of library resources and services available to patrons. As he stated, “I quite enjoy looking around the library because there’s that many different sorts of things. Like there’s the musical tapes and videos … computers … CDs” (B4, branch B, June 20, 2009). Participant B3 pointed out the library has always been a cornerstone service for the community and was in operation prior to the construction of other facilities such as the community centre and community hall.

In sum, respondents from all three focus groups came to a consensus that the library was the heart of the local community and an essential element of community life. However, respondents A2 and C2 pointed out that logically, the community centre ought to be viewed as the ‘heart of the community’, yet this was not the case. Further, respondent C3 metaphorically stated “It would take the guts out of the town if we didn’t have it” (C3, focus group C, June 27, 2009).

4.1.2 Single Identity

Manager D3 stated the name of the UCL was the first factor that denoted the organisation held a single identity. Interviewee D2 felt that individual library branches were not considerably unique because the patrons who used them were not noticeably different since all people “want to be successful and loved and all those things; and to get good value for money” (D2, in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009). Manager D3 agreed that customers were not always markedly different, for customers shared many commonalities on a library branch level, such as similar Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa usage.
Moreover, in essence the collections and services provided to each library branch were standardised, however, there were slightly different approaches to the presentation of collections and delivery of services from branch to branch. Overall D3 felt the organisation was united in the sense that the diversity of individual branches was governed on a more centralised level to provide a certain form of consistent identity. Further, the single identity of the UCL ought to get stronger with future internal restructuring as the organisation evolved along with changes in society and technology, despite the fact that it was envisaged that people would attempt to hold onto the current organisational identity of which they were familiar.

4.1.3 Multiple Identities

From a multiple identity perspective, managers D2, D3 and D4 asserted that the UCL was constructed of a multiplicity of geographically dispersed identities shaped by the seven local communities of which each library branch was embedded within. The intimate atmosphere of library branch C, for instance, embedded within the lowest populated township, as opposed to other larger and less personal branches in denser populated areas. Thus, as manager D3 pointed out, each library held a slightly unique identity which was reflective of the community it was positioned within to some extent.

Manager D4 argued the distinctiveness of each branch was one of the biggest challenges for the UCL. Since each branch had their own individuality, there were many specific and unique characteristics of individual libraries. Moreover, staff and to a greater extent volunteers, identified more closely with their local library branch in preference to the UCL as a whole. Interviewee D5 acknowledged:

> There’s probably some opportunities for us to tailor a bit more to the unique needs of our communities because they have different needs. I’m not too sure how we’re going to deliver that but, probably we’ve got to be a bit conscious of one size does not fit all. (in-depth interview, 23 July, 2009)

Similarly, manager D2 who had previously worked in a Service Development Co-ordinator role within the organisation, pointed out a quandary she faced in her former position was the fact that the UCL possessed an overall identity, yet simultaneously held multiple
identities in the sense that each library branch served individual communities. As she stated “I found it quite challenging to push the fact that we were one library system, when [we] had library branches that operated as individual community libraries; each with their own unique identity” (D2, in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009).

Therefore, D2 observed a tension existed between the library organisation operating with one identity for all areas and each branch operating individually within the community. However managers, staff and volunteers were mindful of the organisational and branch identity juxtaposition that existed and that ultimately customer service ought to focus on the needs of customers within their local community.

Planned library restructuring was of great concern to manager D4. Since manager D4 perceived that the UCL consisted of not one but multiple identities, she felt there was a foreseeable challenge in the sense that the UCL ought to continue to meet the needs of individual communities under a new Council system. As D4 explained:

> If we are [restructured] I think there is a real danger of losing that local flavour to our libraries. I think that we need to work really hard to ensure that those customers at the local level continue to receive that level of customer service that’s tailored and focused to their needs. So that will be a huge challenge as we move into the future (D4, in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009).

### 4.1.4 Perspectives of the UCL

The Council’s annual plan 2008/9 (Unnamed Council, 2008d) stated that under the Local Government Act 2002, it was required to support the social and cultural wellbeing of communities within its jurisdiction. Furthermore, the Council ought to consider what communities actually want, hence libraries operate “… in response to customer demand and to contribute to building stronger communities” (Unnamed Council, 2008, p.72). From a structural point of view, managers pointed out that the UCL was one element or business unit of the Customer Services Directorate of Council. Through a functional regulatory lens, interviewee D5 who was director of this directorate, stated in his view the organisation’s identity was that of a representative of Council.

From an external perspective, most focus group participants were not concerned with
details of who operated the library. Even so, every focus group respondent correctly identified the local Government entity ultimately responsible for the operation of the UCL. Moreover, one participant A2 argued the operation of the UCL was a complex issue in practice, due to the fact that the library was a combination of the organisation and its members. This participant expressed the view that:

We [members] run it in as much as our demand is considered when they [UCL] decide their mix of books and things like that, but they run it in as much as they have to organise it … fund it, out of our money of course. (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009)

Further, another participant B4 asserted that public libraries were ultimately run by central Government; and as a result, must receive a small number of revenue from Government; thus inferred the Government have some say on library administration.

**4.1.5 Funding**

A paradox was revealed, in that even though participants understood the UCL was mainly funded by ratepayers’ contributions, they generally perceived the core library services to be free. Participants unanimously agreed that while it was an acceptable practice for the Council to charge for some services, for instance, loans of DVDs, music CDs PS2 games, CD Roms, and the Express Select Collection (newly released, popular book and magazine titles available immediately for a one week period), the lending of books, which was perceived to be the library’s core service, ought to remain a free service to all library members. As one participant stated, “if I had to buy every book I’ve read I’d be very poor” (A2).

Managers pointed out that the UCL was like any other business in terms of having to compete for financial assistance along with other Council operations. However, most focus group participants were not concerned with details of the mechanics of how library was run. What participants were interested in was the notion that when they visited a library branch, much of what they wanted was there. Therefore participants perceived somebody within the organisation must be taking into consideration the wants and needs of library users.
4.1.6 Strategy

The Executive Team (ET) within Council, of which D1 was part of, was responsible for creating the strategic direction of the UCL. Since the Local Government Act 2002 required the Council to take into consideration the views of local community members, a report from the opinions of the public and various agencies (Unnamed Council, 2008c) was published. The outcomes from the report were incorporated into the Council’s strategic vision framework in order to plan for future community development. Based on this information the Library Management Team (LMT) created the UCL draft five-year strategic vision and strategic plan or Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). Next, a consultation process occurred with employees who were invited to provide feedback. Manager D1 stated that volunteers were excluded from the internal consultation process since they were considered to be community members, not staff, however had an opportunity to provide feedback through customer satisfaction surveys or Long-Term Council Community Plan focus groups under the Local Government Act 2002. As soon as the strategic vision and strategic plans were finalised, then published in the form of a keys to enrichment pamphlet, they became readily available to UCL employees, volunteers and the public.

Library Management Team members were responsible for overseeing the implementation of the strategic plan. Hence, the strategic plan was translated into a work plan for managers and staff to act upon. Encompassed within the work plan were streams of tasks that either directly or indirectly interfaced with UCL customers. Hence, the mechanics of the strategic vision and strategic plan were communicated to the community in part, through the work plan. According to D1, one of the ways in which the UCL vision and mission directly translated to customers was through the installation of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa, which emanated from an entry in the work plan.

On the other hand, an indirect translation of how the UCL vision was communicated to patrons was through the performance targets of individual staff members. As an example, on a weekly basis, a staff member in branch A was required to index a predetermined number of local newspapers for the organisation’s online index, in order to fulfil an individual performance target. As a result, the public could access historical community resources, such as newspaper articles or advertisements from the local history online index, through logging onto the local history online website.
One manager D1 stated, ideally, individual staff members ought to fully understand elements of the organisational strategy, such as the vision, mission and values; moreover, comprehend how their role translates such elements to the customer. However, D1 was not convinced this was actually the case as she stated:

I wouldn’t be surprised if there aren’t a fair number of staff members who think “We’ve got that vision. There it is on the shelf. What does it mean to me?” So I think there is a bit of a gap, or certainly some strengthening that could happen in terms of what that means, where we are trying to get to, and what difference does that make to the library operations and what individual staff do every day. (in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009)

Thus, at staff level, D1 felt there was “quite a bit of room for improvement” to revisit the vision and implementation of the work plan with staff. Some managers perceived that many staff neglected the keys to enrichment document, and thus, felt that staff did not understand how it correlated to their roles. Conversely, D1 noted that since managers worked at management level, whereby their roles included organisational strategy and planning, the work plan was particularly useful as a continual point of reference.

4.1.7 Staff Identity

Lack of a corporate uniform hindered the visual identification of staff and volunteers from the general public. Moreover, distinguishing the individual roles of staff members proved to be a challenge for the majority of focus group participants. Focus group B participants, for instance, were unclear as to who were librarians, assistant librarians and volunteers; despite the fact that all staff and volunteers wore a name badge stating their first name and position held within the organisation. As participant B3 stated, “perhaps they do have it on their name-tag or something but I’ve never observed it, or I’ve never absorbed it, should I say” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009).

From a volunteer perspective, E1 also felt customers did not pay attention to name tags per se, and pointed out, “we all look the same; [customers] don’t really pay any attention to name tags in particular” (in-depth interview, 13 August, 2009). Hence, E1 felt the only way a customer could distinguish a volunteer from a staff member was via discourse, in
particular, the amount of library and organisational knowledge each held.

The disparity between differing levels of staff and volunteer knowledge was highlighted when volunteers at the lowest organisational level were compelled to refer customers to staff members because they lacked the information or authority to solve a customer query. Generally volunteers would have to say “look you need to talk to a librarian about this, I can’t help you any further” (in-depth interview, 13 August, 2009), at some stage during the discourse.

4.1.8 Manager Perceptions of Identity

Perceptions of why people visited a UCL branch varied between managers. Generally managers were of the opinion that library branches were all inclusive, existing for everyone to use. People could visit a library branch individually or with others, and relax or walk around in a pleasant environment with no pressure to do anything. A UCL library branch was viewed by managers as a hospitable setting for people who wanted to be in the company of people but did not want to socialise.

Interviewee D1 expressed the view that a UCL branch was a place that patrons could visit and feel was theirs, similar to a second home, where “they’re not obligated to do anything or be anything. It doesn’t cost them money. They can just come and hang out, as well as use the services and resources (D1, in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009).

Manager D2 felt a library branch was a place where customers could seek information in the form of e-resource databases for research; otherwise it was a place to borrow books. In addition, a library branch was viewed as a venue to take children for the school holidays; or else to visit with pre-schoolers in order to participate in a library event, such as Storytime, and socialise with other mums.

Nonetheless, it was apparent that this was not the case with some sectors of the community who did not visit community libraries. According to interviewee D1, UCL branches experienced low usage by non-European community members. Branch A, for example, had minimal visits from citizens of Maori ethnicity; although a small population of Maori living near a local marae were situated a short distance from the library. Therefore, library
services catered for mainly European customers within the community and were not promoted amongst minority ethnicities.

4.1.9 Location

Focus group participants stated their library branches were positioned in highly visible and convenient locations, with branches A and C being on main highways. However, participant C1 noted there were a limited number of sites to choose from in a small community, hence most facilities are traditionally located around the main road. All Branch C participants agreed that their local library branch was ideally positioned, hence was well patronised by the local community and transient customers alike. Similarly, branch A was positioned on a main highway, although in contrast, branch B was positioned on a side street away from the main highway, albeit in a high traffic area opposite the town’s supermarket, which was deemed to be a suitable location by focus group B participants.

4.1.10 Branch Layout

According to manager D3, each UCL branch layout was determined through a consultative approach between the Collections Manager, Branch Manager or Head Librarian, and most likely one other person. The inclusion of branch level personnel was of importance to the library branch planning process because these personnel were responsible for the presentation of collections within their branches. The Collections Manager oversaw the types of fittings that were utilised along with the positioning of books and other resources on shelves in all branches. Together these personnel decided how the usage of space, fixtures and fittings within each branch ought to be arranged in order to best display collections.

How the collections were arranged on shelves within each library branch was deemed to be of prime importance. According to D3, the principal reason for shelf layout planning was to avoid overcrowded shelves, for paradoxically, when lesser numbers of books were placed on shelves, more were borrowed. Therefore, offering customers greater choice equated to a reduction in customer borrowing. Alternatively, when open space was created between segments of books, there was room for some books to be featured on display.
stands. As a result, borrowing also increased.

Library branch personnel planned the finer points of item presentation in order to promote maximum borrowing of collections. New, interesting or topical books that were presented in display stands at the ends of shelves akin to retail marketing concepts. A particular topic, for instance something about the Greeks (the country, cooking, language, songs and movies) encouraged customer interest, because as D3 pointed out, a customer will read the book, and may perhaps like to listen to the music or see a related DVD. As a result, collection borrowing increased when library layouts were planned in relation to how the organisation ought to better serve the library customer.

4.1.10.1 Circulation desk

In each library branch, an expansive circulation or service desk was positioned in a prominent location near the main entrance way. As these service desks stood out visually, manager D3 felt some customers were accustomed to the fact that for many years the circulation desk was the only place to check out a book, when earlier in the year, express checkout machines were installed allowing customers to check out their own books. Managers felt many library patrons gravitated towards the service desk to receive personalised customer service out of habit, when in some instances they could have served themselves via the express check-outs. Other customers seemed oblivious to the existence of express check-outs. Therefore managers indicated a change to the nature of the circulation desk was a likely project for the future.

Managers were generally of the opinion that some staff held a sense of comfort from being positioned behind the large circulation desks, which acted as physical barriers between staff and customers. They thought if each service desk was downsized and relocated to a less prominent position in the library that received less foot traffic, similar to what two other public library organisations in the region had implemented, staff would circulate and intermingle with patrons in the public library space more readily.
4.1.11 Branch Atmosphere

According to interviewees D3 and D5, the atmosphere of individual library branches differed to a large extent. Manager D3 felt that each branch “pretty much reflects the type of community that actually lives in that area” (in-depth interview, 15 July, 2009). Disparities in demographics such as the socio-economic situation of each library community, along with the differences in library architecture, for example, building ages and sizes were viewed by managers to have an influence on the ambience and character of each branch. To highlight, D5 pointed out the largest and most contemporary library building was situated in a prosperous area, had plenty of natural light, and a feeling of spaciousness. Conversely, Branch C was located in a less affluent rural community. The building was aged, not purpose-built, and thus, was noted to feel very cramped. Even so, it reportedly held a more intimate atmosphere and a greater sense of community spirit, driven by local support, for instance, the friends of libraries group.

A lack of space had become more of a concern in library branches since the provision of a free wireless broadband service, supplied by Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa, became available to citizens in possession of laptops. Manager D2 stated most branches were “packed to the gills with books and things” (in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009), with limited space made available for library patrons to sit and read. However, since new clientele had taken full advantage of wireless internet, complaints had been voiced regarding the lack of seats available. Therefore, D2 felt space had become a “precious commodity” (in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009), within all library branches.

4.1.12 Environment

Some participants noted that UCL branches were a pleasant and welcoming environment in which to relax and read the newspapers or magazines, whilst at the same time, be in the proximity of people. Participant B4 stated “it’s just a good place to go and get away from the noise and the crowds” (B4, focus group B, June 20, 2009). Correspondingly, participant C3 observed that often people were in the library branch to read the newspapers or browse for books in a bright and warm environment when the weather was bleak. Further, participant B3 explained that the library was a place to go for a break, to read the daily newspaper or a magazine, when disenchanted with housework.
According to participant B3, the library staff assisted customers to feel comfortable within a library branch. Participants in focus group C agreed that the pleasant atmosphere within UCL library branches was the creation of staff rather than the size or appearance of library premises. They argued that when the proposed relocation and increase in size of their library branch occurs, the atmosphere would not change. However, participants in library branch A did not agree.

Participant E1 found branch A possessed a friendly, warm and comfortable atmosphere, although to a lesser degree than when the library was smaller, operated by community volunteers and positioned in a room within the community centre. As participant E1 explained of the previous library branch setup, “you couldn’t walk into that room without being greeted by someone because they couldn’t miss you, could they?” (E1, in-depth interview, August 13, 2009).

Even though the current library branch was larger than the former setup, participant A1 perceived the premises to be relatively small, in comparison to other UCL branches visited. Nevertheless, participant A1 felt branch A was a much better branch in terms of the resources-to-space ratio. Participant A1 felt the smaller size was advantageous in the sense that it did not take much time to navigate around the internal layout. Participant A1 noted the library branch space was well organised, for instance, teenagers have a place where they can congregate at the back of the library and also primary school children spend time in the children's area after school. Further, participant A1 agreed with E1 that the atmosphere of the library branch appeared to be reasonably comfortable.

Participant A2 felt ambivalent in relation to the environment of library branch A. Whilst he liked the appearance of open space with desks and tables to work at, along with places to sit down and read, his preference was for more shelving and books; from floor to ceiling. Participant A2 believed his preference to be atypical to the majority of patrons, thus assumed most people would enjoy the open plan interior of the library branch. Participant A3 felt the use of space within the library branch was mediocre, and thought more desks ought to be accommodated; albeit where they could be placed was a quandary.

Participant A1, who formerly visited Branch B during weekends to the area, noted the layout to be similarly well organised as that of Branch A in the sense that resources were
easy to locate, and separate sections were allocated to youths. Participant B1 preferred to access the internet within library branch B as opposed to a nearby internet café. According to Participant B1, the computer area had a nice layout, was quieter and generally better than the local internet café, which mainly catered for children and focused on computer gaming activities. Participant B3 often called into the library branch to briefly read a magazine in a comfortable chair, but noted there is “often not enough of them because other people have had the same idea and got there before you” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009). According to C3 library branch C was in the midst of a close knit community and stated:

I think it’s always welcoming and I think the fact that it’s free as well. People can come in here and they can just read the paper for an hour if they want to. It hasn’t cost them anything and it’s warm and it’s dry and it’s buzzing. I mean there’s a lovely … nice feel to it, definitely. Even people who say, “Well I don’t like books and I don’t like reading.” You can draw them in because there are other things for them to do. There’s the computer, there’s a newspaper, there’s DVDs and magazines (C3, focus group C, June 27, 2009).

Participants viewed the UCL to be a reasonably safe environment for library users, in particular children, however, interviewee E1 felt generally a library “… is not actually a safe place, it’s just … perceived as a safe place” (E1, in-depth interview, August 13, 2009). Since the UCL is a public space open to all, this interviewee emphasised some library patrons were too lax in the sense that they left their children at the library unsupervised for long periods of time. Thus, children were vulnerable to danger because there had been an incident of a male exposing himself to children through the library windows at a neighbouring public library.

4.1.13 Visual Identity

Some managers indicated there was a lack of clarity in regards to guidelines as to what the actual visual identity of the UCL was. The assortment of corporate colours used in the printing of pamphlets highlighted this point. The *keys to enrichment* pamphlet, for instance, which covered the organisation’s five year plan, was printed using green and yellow colours derived from National Library branding not used on organisational documentation elsewhere. The colours used differed from other organisational
documentation available to the public, such as the dark blue and red of the *your library* pamphlet. As a consequence, the organisation intended to redesign the latter pamphlet with similar colours to the *keys to enrichment* pamphlet at some stage in the future.

Interviewee D1 felt the organisation had made attempts to become more unified in terms of its corporate identity. Further, director D5 stated that the UCL embraced the Council branding standard to convey consistency; and moreover, ensure external stakeholders were aware of the fact that the UCL embodied the Council. Council identity guidelines were readily available in the form of a *brand manual* for managers and staff to follow.

### 4.1.14 Signage

According to manager D4 signage was an important component of visual identity because it acted as a communication tool. Hence, the UCL was working towards implementing a standardised signage system throughout library branches. However, interviewee E1 felt the UCL took a passive approach to visually communicating its identity through the use of signage. She pointed out library branch A in particular did not display large exterior signage to advertise the organisation, moreover the types of services of which the library branch offered to the public. Alternatively the library branch was viewed by E1 as a building that sat amongst the community that was readily available for people use who had knowledge of its existence.

#### 4.1.14.1 External signage

According to D1 the exterior signage positioned over the entranceway of Branch A was “very discreet,” and thus made the branch difficult to locate (in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009). The new UCL Manager, for example, drove straight past the library branch on her first unaccompanied visit to the branch. Therefore it was evident to D1 that the branch name was written in undersized letters; hindered further through being a colour that was not particularly distinct from the rest of the building.

It was not always the case that branch A had undersized font displayed on the external signage. Previously the branch name appeared painted on the exterior wall in large letters. Unfortunately the original signage was painted over when the library was re-painted, and
then substituted with a small font replacement. Consequently, Manager D1 was optimistic that money would be available to redo the external signage.

According to D1, customers’ perceptions of the visual identity of the UCL were created before physically entering a library branch. For that reason, an organisational policy existed that stated no posters or other miscellaneous advertisements were to appear in foyer library windows. As a result, people walking along the street ought not to perceive the library as being ‘a jumble of information’. Moreover, passers-by should obtain a lucid view of what was happening inside the library.

4.1.14.2 Internal signage

Each UCL branch was directed by Council head office to use official bilingual signage written in English with Maori wording underneath for major library signage. Manager D2 stated that these signs were customised to each branch by means of a distinctive native plant assigned to each of the seven library branches, which featured on all branch signage. The use of plant symbols created tension between staff and managers because even though senior managers arranged for the use of these native plant symbols to be validated by Tana Te Whenua, some librarians disagreed with the selection of plants, and thus, did not support organisational signage. Instead, they created and used their own branch styles over the official signage protocol that was professionally produced by external Council contractors.

Since branches were required to produce branch level signage in some instances, UCL policies on signage were not always adhered to. According to D2, the reason was that staff in each branch thought they knew how to produce the best signage that would work for them. As Manager D2 stated:

I don’t have a problem with it in Childrens Services, where the entire Childrens Services things are branded differently, because they are quite different. But stuff that’s generally about the libraries should all be a similar style; should be identifiable as coming from the same branding family, but it doesn’t. (D2, in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009).

Thus, organisational signage protocol appeared to be inconsistent throughout branches, leading to the assumption by D2 that the UCL did not possess a solitary visual identity.
4.1.15 Membership

Initially, all library members who joined the UCL were issued with a library card at no charge to the patron, however, if lost there was a five dollar replacement charge. This was an organisational artefact, unique to each library patron that visually identified library members by name, signature and unique barcode number. The library card had two purposes. First, it acted as tangible proof of membership. Second, it was a way of keeping track of resources when off-site, through a mandatory organisational procedure of scanning the unique barcode on each library card into the Library Management System, prior to resources being checked out of a library branch. Therefore, a library card was deemed to be an important organisational artefact that was used for identification and to link loaned library resources to UCL members.

Library membership of participants varied significantly from two or three years to thirty or forty years, however overall, the average was fifteen years. A major motivation for participants to join the UCL was the fact that there was no direct charge to lend a book, therefore it was perceived to be a free service. Additional reasons why participants became UCL members ranged from information needs such as the necessity to lend a manual for car repairs to enculturation, through books being part of family culture. Most participants enjoyed reading and have made use of libraries since childhood because as participant A2 stated, “if parents are seen to be doing things that are pro-educational, pro-informational, then it will spin off to their children (focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Regarding initial visits, all focus group C participants recalled that joining their library branch was a pleasant experience. In particular they noted the introduction to the library branch was informative, and that the staff member who signed them up with membership was friendly and made them feel welcome immediately. Participant C1 felt the introduction was more intimate than one formerly received from a larger library branch elsewhere.
4.1.15.1 *Reciprocal library memberships*

On an inter-organisational level, D1 explained that reciprocal library membership agreements existed with two library organisations adjacent to the UCL catchment area. However, this membership benefit was not widely known, as it was merely reported in newspapers a couple of times when the agreements were originally established. Other than reading the original newspaper articles, members could only find out about the agreements through conversations with staff. Overall, reciprocal membership agreements were perceived by managers to be advantageous in the sense that UCL members were permitted to join neighbouring library organisations, on a gratis membership basis, in order to access a greater range of resources.

Several participants had already taken advantage of the additional UCL membership benefit joining another public library which the Council had a dual membership agreement with. Participant A1, for instance, had regularly commuted fifteen minutes to her nearest UCL library branch over the past seven years because her nearest library was under a different Council jurisdiction. However, since the reciprocal library membership agreements came into effect, her nearest library became merely a five minute journey in the opposite direction. As a result, the new reciprocal policy provided more flexibility and increased membership choices.

4.1.15.2 *Identification with multiple organisations*

Even though most participants took advantage of the fact that they could use multiple library branches of the UCL, all identified with the library branch closest to their residence and the branch where they initially joined the UCL as a library member because this is where they felt a greater sense of belonging and community spirit.

A few focus group participants identified with library organisations other than the UCL, and held multiple public library memberships. These participants continued their memberships to public libraries in cities such as Whangarei and Melbourne, where they formerly resided and still felt a community connection. They did not relinquish membership to these libraries because they still made use of the libraries whenever they had cause to travel to these cities for holidays or to visit friends and family. Further, Participant B2 often used her local church library to borrow general books.
4.1.16 Partnerships

Overall, the Council utilised a participatory approach with public, private and community partners through a Partnering Policy (Unnamed Council, 2009b) to achieve the community outcomes of the organisation’s vision document (Unnamed Council, 2008c). The Council’s partnership policy, as stated in the LTTCP 2009/2019 document, defined a partnership as “… a process of working together to achieve common outcomes, delivering value effectively to the community” (UC, 2009, p. 130).

Mutually beneficial relationships had been established between the UCL and other external organisations in the form of memoranda of understanding and partnerships. Whilst memoranda of understanding involved central Government or Government agencies and became more apparent in the community development area, partnerships operated in the functional area of the organisation. In terms of library collections for instance, D3 pointed out the library consortium partnership allowed the UCL to retain autonomy over its items yet view and order items from other consortium partners’ collections. Thus co-operation between the UCL and the consortium illustrated a practical relationship with an external stakeholder that provided additional UCL membership benefits.

4.1.17 Collaboration

Cross-functional teams collaborated within Council in support of library projects, especially when planning for the improvement of library services. As an example, a key focus documented within the Council 2008/9 Annual Plan was to replace and expand Branch C (UC, 2008, p. 72). Director D5 explained that a project of such magnitude that involved relocating Branch C to larger, modern purpose-built premises, required initial negotiations with the Long-Term Council Community Plan team for funding approval, of which $2,166,000 was granted under the ten year capital expenditure programme (Unnamed Council, 2009b). Assistance was later sought from the Strategy and Policy Team in order to find a suitable site, on which to build a larger library building.
In general, the main theme of image and identity is a major turning point in the history of the UCL. Control shifted from local communities to Council, resulting in a change of image and identity. Originally library branches operated autonomously in make-shift buildings within local communities. They were solely run and funded by volunteers using a manual Library Management System. Collectively, in recent years these branches have been transformed into one sophisticated, centralised public library operation that is now a subunit of Council and administered by paid library professionals, with community volunteers relegated to the performance of low-level background tasks. Visually there is a lack of image clarity with regards to internal and external signage, as individual branches try to hold on to the old less structured community image, instead of embracing the standardised council corporate image.

Through this transformation an enduring characteristic of UCL identity is the fact that interviewees and focus group participants both perceive that the UCL is the cornerstone of the community. This is mainly due to factors such as continued support from library members within local communities and partnerships and collaboration to support new library projects to cater for the changing needs of communities.

The following section discusses a major component of the organisation’s identity, namely customer service. It focuses on the internal perceptions of interviewees and external perceptions focus group participants. Other main themes in the subsequent section include the unique aspect of the high use of volunteers, the social needs of customers, library events, collections and library consortium membership. Internal and external communication is discussed next, and finally customer feedback findings are discussed.
4.2 Customer Service

Customer service was the second major theme to emerge from transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions. This encompasses behavioural aspects of employees which are an element of organisational identity, specifically, uncontrolled communication through library staff interacting with customers (Moingeon & Ramanantsoa, 1997). This section is linked to image and identity since it describes how staff and volunteers communicate UCL corporate identity to external stakeholders by means of customer service. Under this key theme, participants talked about a number of issues, which have been clustered together and feature in this section as sub-themes, for instance, how staff and volunteers are selected, trained and appraised, what services and facilities are provided for customers and how the organisation communicates with customers. As with the previous section of image and identity, this section contributes to question one – how organisational members describe the organisational identity of the UCL.

4.2.1 Internal Perceptions

An assortment of forty five full-time and part-time staff were employed at the UCL by the overarching Council organisation along with approximately 244 volunteers (Unnamed Council, 2009c) as previously mentioned in chapter one. These staff and volunteers were mainly positioned within seven UCL branches. Staff reported to the branch or area manager designated to their particular branch, and ultimately to the Human Resources Department of Council, while volunteers took directives from staff and managers at branch level and were the overall responsibility of Libraries Manager D4.

4.2.1.1 Staff recruitment

The competencies, skills, experience and attitudes required of paid UCL staff members differed considerably from those of a community member helping out at a library branch as a volunteer. Interviewee D2 stated that since the UCL operated with a large number of volunteers, the level of qualification for staff members who held junior positions tended to be slightly higher than in other libraries. Accordingly, it was revealed that school-leavers were not sought after for library assistant positions even though they may perhaps hold such a position in a library organisation elsewhere. Therefore, the UCL usually sought personnel in their twenties or older, whereas another library organisation may employ a
According to D2 the UCL preferred to select staff who had studied for the initial library qualification of The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand level five diploma, a Bachelor of Applied Science or a Bachelor of Library Information studies. Alternatively, the UCL would employ a person from another discipline such as a teacher. Therefore, potential employees ought to have undertaken some form of theoretical library study before they were considered suitable for a library position within the organisation.

4.2.1.2 Staff roles

Interviewee D1 stated that every staff member held a documented *position description* (PD) of their role to clarify levels of education and experience as well as individual responsibility and areas of authority. These had been generically written by a person at senior management level. A reasonable amount of institutional knowledge was included in each *position description* in order for an employee to clearly understand the expected requirements of their job. Since every *position description* was rewritten last year, role requirements were deemed to be comprehensive from a management point of view, the point of view of an employee, and anyone who intended to apply for a library position in the future.

However, according to D2, even though *position descriptions* were specifically written for every staff position, roles were flexible in the sense that they may well be adapted. A major reason for some flexibility of scope in *position descriptions* was attributable to the low numbers of paid staff that were available to perform specialised roles. Therefore, as D2 pointed out, “if someone comes in as a library assistant or a librarian and doesn’t have specific childrens’ responsibilities or reference responsibilities, they can pick that up on the way if they do show an interest in it” (in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009).

4.2.1.3 Staff training

It was clear in manager interviews that upskilling staff through training was an extremely important component of the culture of both the UCL and the Council. Hence, most staff training was performed within the hours of work or else compensated by means of time in
lieu. Even though D5 was the overseer for training of UCL staff, because the UCL operated as a subunit of a local Government body, organisational and job specific training for personnel was ultimately the responsibility of the Council Human Resource Department, which was located centrally at the Head Office.

Managers were strongly of the belief that staff training was a “worthwhile investment” even though it was considered to be “costly and time-consuming” (D7, email interview, 12 August, 2009) for the organisation. According to interviewees, all full-time and part-time library staff received a mixture of organisational training and third party training, made possible through the allocation of a training budget. Generic organisational training included learning about the culture of the organisation along with standard and specialised training designed specifically for library staff. Specialised UCL training was mandatory since “every library is slightly different, so if you’ve worked in another library system, it doesn’t mean that you’re going to understand how [the UCL] works” (D2, in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009).

Most managers could describe a typical UCL induction process that included computer training on the Millennium Library Management System, as well as basic ‘reference’ instruction to enable staff to answer customer queries. Information on the organisation’s policies and procedures, such as health and safety was supplied, along with a general branch orientation and details in regards to daily housekeeping tasks. Subsequently, staff employed in specific library roles, such as reference, inter-library loan, indexing and childrens’ librarian, received additional specialised training. A childrens’ librarian, for example, was trained on how to present weekly Storytime and Rhymetime sessions to the public. Further, there were ongoing learning and development initiatives provided for staff.

4.2.1.4 Staff performance appraisals

According to manager D1, staff underwent a yearly performance appraisal, which consisted of three sections. One section concerned individual staff performance objectives. Each staff member’s performance objectives were different and determined by the roles they performed within their position descriptions. Nevertheless, all staff performance appraisals partially included generic performance objectives based on their daily customer service and operational library duties. A second section dealt with staff competencies of
which there were four - written and verbal communication, work efficiency and customer service. Thus, competencies supported how staff performed within their roles. The third section focused on values of which the organisation had six values, two for example, were to have fun and for colleagues to support one another. Hence, D1 viewed values as inherent aspects of the organisation that were not straightforward to define.

4.2.2 External Perceptions
From an external community perspective, librarians were described by focus group participants as an invaluable community asset and were thought to know practically everything about library resources and how to find information. Without exception, all focus group participants were complimentary in regards to staff customer service, hence, could not provide examples of negative customer service experienced at UCL branches. As respondent A3 said, “I’ve never, ever had any complaints about staff … they’ve always been very helpful” (A3, focus group A, June 13, 2009). One participant, who relied heavily on staff in branch B to perform a majority of library procedures, expressed the view that staff were always very helpful and did not seem to get irritable with having to deal with awkward customers. In sum, focus group participants unanimously found library staff to be friendly, welcoming, helpful, and genuinely nice people.

Comments from participants indicated library members felt a sense of belonging to the UCL because they felt welcome by full-time staff, and to lesser degrees from part-time staff and volunteers respectively. Participant A1 noted that all staff and volunteers at the branch knew who she was and that it felt nice to be greeted when entering the branch. Participant A1 thought the fact that her daughter along with other children were often recognized and greeted by name was commendable. For other focus group participants with children, the fact that staff understood childrens’ behaviour was of importance. “I think they’re very tolerant of kids, because try as you might, you can’t always keep them quiet or stop them from running around” (A3, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participant C3 thought the team of staff and volunteers worked really hard to make library customers feel welcome. Others felt reciprocal recognition between staff or volunteers and library members was established very quickly upon joining the UCL. Further, A2 felt the part-time staff enjoyed being at work and communicating with library customers. Overall,
participants held the opinion of participant C2 in that “staff are fantastic. [I] always feel welcome when [I] walk in. Staff create a good atmosphere within the branch. I always feel comfortable … [and] I really look forward to coming here” (C2, focus group C, 24 July, 2009).

All participants perceived the community library to be an invaluable asset and service for their community. Participant C3 felt the organisation helped to build stronger communities through education and social contact and using it as a venue for related activities such as the book group or a writers group. Focus group C participants along with interviewee E1 believed that if branch C did not exist they would have to travel further afield by car to another public library branch to reach the books they needed or wanted.

Some participants perceived the community library as a means of obtaining recently published books free of charge, brought to their attention through media advertising channels such as radio, the NZ Herald newspaper, and a Paper Plus book and stationary catalogue. As one participant pointed out:

> I think it’s great that I can hear an author talking or hear about a book on the radio and then I can either come in or go online and get it … I may not be able to get it that morning but I can get it a few days later. (C3, branch C, June 27, 2009)

### 4.3.2.1 Interpersonal relationships between staff and customers

The extent of interpersonal relationships between staff and library members varied a great deal. Nonetheless, participants commented that they had a personal connection with staff within their local UCL branch, over staff in other UCL branches or library organisations.

For participant C3 who was a journalist, good interpersonal relationships with Library staff and volunteers was important for gathering community stories for the local newspaper, hence fulfilling a community-building role. Other participants knew librarians and volunteers from other community organisations to which they belonged to, such as the local Catholic Church. Therefore these participants would always have a conversation with staff members or volunteers when visiting their library branch.

By and large, most participants felt encouraged to have a chat with a staff member who
appeared friendly; and who vaguely recognized them. As participant C1 noted “It’s nice to have a little chat with whoever’s serving you … to have a bit of contact with the [staff] … otherwise you don’t benefit from the fact that they’re such nice people” (C1, focus group C, 24 July, 2009).

Two participants communicated with staff only when they needed information or to pay for a service. First, B4 did not communicate with staff unless assistance was required in order to locate information, since he felt he had little in common with library personnel. Second, B1 usually communicated with staff in instances where she either had computer issues or was required to go to the service counter to pay for material printed from the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa. In contrast, participant A3 used non-verbal communication to acknowledge staff that did not know her socially and viewed an exchange of smiles as a pleasant gesture. In sum, these three participants felt the library was not the place to visit to indulge in conversation with staff unless the conversation was of a professional nature, such as to provide an answer to a customer query.

4.3.2.2 Staff and volunteer helpfulness

All participants had required assistance from staff or volunteers on various occasions. Participants felt the assistance they received reflected that staff were well trained, possessed a wealth of knowledge and were deemed to be friendly and helpful at all times. Participant E1 felt able to ask questions of librarians in branch A with ease, whereas she did not feel the same level of comfort when asking questions at another library organisation of which she was also a member.

Participants felt the personal customer service approach offered by library staff and volunteers was invaluable because as B2 pointed out, “if you’ve got a question you need to be able to ask it; you can’t ask a machine. The machine won’t smile at you and say hello and make you feel welcome, whereas a person does” (B2, focus group B, 20 June, 2009). Moreover participant B1 noted that sometimes an issue arose whilst using the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa internet. Reading online help files to attempt to solve problems on her own did not always provide a solution, especially since each Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa session lasted just 30 minutes. Therefore B1 had asked staff members for assistance and felt the personal contact with staff was valuable.
Participants viewed the library staff as extremely knowledgeable people who knew just about everything. Staff were perceived as being readily available to customers who needed help. A few participants relied on staff to locate or order books and DVDs as they were not familiar with the online catalogue and reservation systems. As participant B3 who was retired stated:

I like the help staff give me primarily because if I want something I do not hesitate to ask for help and they’re always very helpful. Sometimes I might know the name of the book but not the author and that doesn’t faze them…[they will] find it for me. I mean there’s an advantage of being old and doddery (B3, focus group B, 20 June, 2009).

Overall, all participants perceived library staff as very helpful and readily available to help customers if the need arose.

* * *

Overall UCL staff were more mature, better qualified and experienced than those of other library organisations owing to a large number of community volunteers who assisted with customer service and low-level tasks at each branch. Due to low numbers, staff held position descriptions with roles which had the flexibility to include other specialist library duties for librarians who had the inclination to diversify. Staff training and upskilling were valued within organisational culture even though they were costly and time-consuming. Staff underwent annual performance appraisals to measure individual and organisational team member performance. Staff performance was assessed in relation to four organisational competencies of written and verbal communication, work efficiency and customer service along with six organisational values. This was to ensure the delivery of optimal customer service.
4.2.3 Volunteerism

Managers unanimously felt that a distinctive element of UCL identity was due to the fact that it was the only New Zealand library organisation to heavily draw upon volunteers. Their purpose was to provide frontline service and basic branch-level tasks, for shifts of up to three hours per week. Volunteers were considered by managers to be “quite separate from staff”, and they have continued to work in library branches through a “historical arrangement” between the communities and Council, since Council took over the operation of community libraries (D4, in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009). Volunteers assisted paid staff through performing low-level tasks and limited customer service duties on a rostered basis at their local library branch.

4.2.3.1 Reasons to volunteer

Comments by interviewees indicated there were several reasons that motivated volunteers to donate their skills and services to the UCL. The majority of volunteers tended to be cohorts of the older or retired age of individuals who felt they had something to contribute to their communities. Managers D1 and D4 asserted volunteers sacrificed their time, expertise and an income to help out at a library branch for reasons of personal fulfilment and social contact. Interviewee E1, who as previously mentioned was a long-serving library volunteer who home-schooled two children, agreed. Additionally, her reasons included doing something useful, social interaction in a pleasant work environment, and the flexibility to change or cancel a rostered day if the need arose. Participants in focus group C noted there was a sound base of volunteers at their branch who were attracted to the library as an extension of the community activities they were also involved with.

In addition, D4 mentioned some volunteers were keen to volunteer at their local library branch in order to gain work experience. Given that some volunteers had been out of the workforce for varying periods of time, basic work experience skills could be learnt at UCL branches which ought to be transferable to other organisations. Thus, voluntary library work acted as a stepping stone towards paid employment for some. Conversely, the UCL did not identify what skills and expertise volunteers possessed which could contribute to branch level operations, for example, event management, artistic display, book reviewing and genealogy research (Unnamed Council, 2008a).
4.2.3.2 Volunteer recruitment

The interview data suggested it was not necessary for the UCL to be proactive in terms of volunteer recruitment. As D2 commented, volunteers were self-selected in the sense that many approached the library and offered their time and skills to the UCL for no remuneration. Further, documents-based evidence revealed a general lack of consistency and accountability in the recruitment of UCL volunteers (Unnamed Community Library, 2009a).

Although managers D2 and D3 thought there were no formal interviews for volunteer positions, and it was generally thought by managers that procedures varied between branches. Library branch manager D1 stated she conducted interviews for potential volunteers at branch A. The recruitment process started with the completion of an application form, which was forwarded to the library branch manager or area manager. A police check was not required which was a surprising finding given that close contact with children and the general public is a major component of the position. Components such as a sufficient level of intelligence, skills, experience and interests ascertained whether a volunteer would be invited to join the staff and volunteer team for a six week trial. Finally, it was up to branch manager discretion whether a volunteer was accepted as a permanent library volunteer or not.

4.2.3.3 Volunteer roles

Interviewee D1 explained that unlike staff, volunteers did not receive a formal documented position description of their role within the organisation. The responsibilities of volunteers were seen by all interviewees to consist of low-level circulation duties which were considerably fewer than paid staff. Tasks differed from one volunteer to another to suit individual profiles, in-line with the various ages, competencies and aptitudes of volunteers, to ensure volunteers were not faced with a situation they could not cope with. These duties included checking-in borrowed items via the Library Management System, shelf-tidying, mending resources, covering and processing books and magazines; namely the mundane, daily duties of library operation.

Volunteers also provided much of the frontline customer service because, as D3 asserted: It doesn’t [require] a library qualification to serve a customer; to check out a
book…Some people don’t need much [instruction] to understand what’s happening on a computer and they’ve figured it out before I’ve figured it out. There [are] others, especially if you look at the senior volunteers, who’ll find it’s just not fun dealing with computers, and they are quite happy just to shelve books, and you still have to explain how [to] do that. (In-depth interview, 15 July, 2009).

Nonetheless, according to D2, managers and staff were required to be mindful that volunteers were not accountable for any customer service that required decision-making such as whether someone should be a library member or not, or waiver a fine for a legitimate reason, as this ought to be the responsibility of a staff member. In sum, a finding from the *Value Management of Volunteers Report* (2009a) highlighted that when volunteers were relied upon too heavily to provide frontline customer service in conjunction with the *Library Management System*, organisational service levels were compromised.

**4.2.3.4 Volunteer training**

Volunteer training differed immensely from that of paid staff in the sense that no formal Council organisational training was in place for unpaid personnel. Library volunteers along with volunteers in other Council subunits, such as Information Centres and Emergency Fire Departments, were excluded from the Human Resource Department’s scope of management and formal developmental responsibilities. Essentially, D1 stated there was a lack of investment in volunteers in terms of the development of proficiencies, for instance, upskilling them to support the organisation’s competencies and values. The *Value Management of Volunteers report* (2009a) highlighted the fact that volunteers were generally oblivious of organisational philosophies or values and were exempt from the ongoing performance assessments and management that staff received. As a result, volunteers were considered handicapped in the sense that they were deficient of the resources, effort, encouragement and training that staff received.

Despite the absence of generic Council training, on-the-job training was received by volunteers, although instruction was restricted to what was necessary for the performance of selected low-level tasks. According to interviewee D2 volunteers undertook basic circulation training as part of the on-the-job instruction, otherwise, volunteers were
instructed on task-specific skills for the particular area that they were deemed to work in, for example, how to shelve returned items, cover new books or repair damaged items.

Volunteer training was viewed to be more complex than staff training. According to D3, there were two main reasons for this. First, there was a lack of contact time with volunteers since they usually worked approximately three hours per week; and second, the majority of volunteers were of an older age group. Some had worked for the UCL for over 25 years, and thus encountered difficulty retaining information and learning new routines given the continually changing library environment. Therefore, managers were mindful that although volunteers were an asset and essential to the operation of the UCL, the development of volunteers was not straightforward. Accordingly, the managers interviewed agreed there was certainly more opportunity for formalised training and development of volunteers.

Paradoxically, volunteers were simultaneously viewed by managers as a hindrance and an asset, yet the findings of an internal UCL Value Management of Volunteers (2009a) report revealed volunteers were valued and appreciated by staff. The report further stated that volunteers took less time to manage than originally perceived, even though a volunteer management programme was not in place to monitor volunteer performance.

From an external perspective volunteers appeared to be interwoven within the social network of their community through performing a civic service. Most participants thought by incorporating volunteers within the system, the UCL position was strengthened within the community. As participant C1 stated “I know quite a few more people within the community through getting to know volunteers” (focus group C, July 24, 2009). Yet, because volunteers did not receive the training, support and regular meetings that the organisation readily provided to staff, they were considered an obstacle to library service delivery in that:

It’s a challenge enough for the organisation to encourage the embodiment of values and competencies, let alone the particular expertise and being proactive and offering services with staff, who have that encouragement and effort and resources put in to them in terms of their learning and development and their performance appraisal. [It] helps I think, through the year for people to think, “I’m going to be appraised on my performance for the whole year. I’m going to try really hard.” So
it’s hard enough to get that message and the corporate identity or organisational identity across [to] staff who have all those expectations, let alone a volunteer (D1, in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009).

As a consequence, D1 felt that a predicament existed for the organisation on how volunteers ought to deliver excellent customer service and support, devoid of the inherent details staff possessed through undertaking organisational development training. Participants recognized that volunteers assisted staff members in the daily operation of UCL library branches, and as C2 mentioned, “like the staff, the volunteers are really nice” (C2, focus group C, July 24, 2009). However C2 stated “If a Volunteer who I don’t know is at the service counter, depending on the mood I’m in, I would probably use the self-checkout” (C2, focus group C, July 24, 2009).

**4.2.3.5 Friends of Libraries**

Focus group C was the only UCL branch to have community assistance from a *Friends of Libraries* group. According to participant C3, this group was based on the international non-profit *Friends of Libraries*, a group formed to support libraries within local communities. Collectively, the purpose of the group was to take commitment to local library branch membership one step further through providing a large community base for staff and volunteers to draw upon at times when advocacy and lobbying support for library issues was required. Participant C3 pointed out library development and focus, for example, the upgrading of library branch C premises to a new and larger sized building on a par with other UCL branches; and where it ought to be positioned within the township, was currently centre of attention for the group.

Overall, a unique aspect of UCL identity was the extensive use of volunteers used to assist with basic frontline customer service and basic library tasks. Interestingly, the organisation clearly differentiated volunteers from staff. Volunteers were considered to be both an asset and a hindrance, but according to an internal report on volunteers, took less

---

2 For a small contribution (approximately five dollars per year) *Friends of Libraries* members received a book bag and newsletter subscription.
time to manage than originally perceived by management. Even though volunteers assisted librarians with their day-to-day tasks, they received no formal recruitment, training or communication, and were unaware of the ethos of the organisation. Volunteers were not held accountable for their roles since a volunteer management programme was non-existent to monitor performance. Despite these shortcomings, volunteers were revered by focus group participants and managers in the sense that they were seen to strengthen the standing of the UCL within local communities because of their social connections, hence bridge the gap between the organisation and its external environment.

4.2.4 Social Needs
Books were part of family culture for the majority of respondents, who were long-time library users that enjoyed reading and had used libraries since childhood, both within New Zealand and overseas. As participant A2 stated, “they’ve always been there and they’ve always been part of my life” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009). Participants grew up in families where books were readily available, easily accessed, and shared amongst family members. The exception was participant B4, who joined the library as an adult to seek information, for the purpose of borrowing a book to fix a car. Participant A2 felt parents moulded children for the next generation; and thus, “if parents are seen to be doing things that are pro-educational, pro-informational then it will spin off to their children” (focus group A, June 13, 2009). In principle, participants stressed libraries were such an integral part of their lives that they could not imagine life without community libraries.

4.2.5 Education
Libraries were perceived as a starting point for much exploration of information as well as a key source of education for communities that ought to be inclusive of all community members and free to gain information or use as a leisure-time activity. Therefore, as participant A2 stated “I think we’re denying proper education to our future generations by not collectively bearing the cost” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009). For the majority of participants, it was generally felt that a visit to the local library branch was an important part of the week; and that the resources participants accessed elevated the quality of their lives. Thus, as participant A2 pointed out:
If we’re to be an educated, thinking, community, then we need information. That includes
fiction as well, because fiction tells us about life. It normally caricatures it somewhat, but it still enables you to live other peoples lives (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

The local community library branch is strategically important as an occupational resource for three UCL library members in order to access information. First, participant A1 worked as a Primary School Teacher and used the library branch as a research tool to collect educational material on topics studied in the classroom. Second, participant C2 is an author by occupation who writes in a fictional genre, and uses libraries non-fiction section to research historical events in order to add authenticity and depth to her stories. Third, C3 is employed as a journalist for a local newspaper and uses the local library branch as a source of stories, thus stated, “my relationship with the library staff and Volunteers [are] quite important to me” (C3, focus group C, June 27, 2009).

Participant E1 home schooled two children and therefore drew heavily upon recommended non-fiction childrens’ books as vital educational resources. Whereas participants A3 and C3 took their children to the library in order to gather supplementary resources for school research projects. As participant A2 stated:

It’s very important as an educational resource because the only difference between New Zealand and all our commercial competitors these days is our expertise. Otherwise we don’t have demographic advantages. So unless we keep one step ahead we’re rapidly going to become a third world country. The Library information and education are what keeps us ahead…so it’s absolutely essential (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Further, librarians were proactive in promoting the UCL to children within local community primary schools. Participant A1, for instance, mentioned library staff visited the primary school where she used to teach to discuss topics the children were studying in class. This initiative and support produced a positive feeling as well as encouraged a sense of community belonging between members of both non-profit community organisations. Similarly, participants in focus group C stated that staff and volunteers were involved in other community activities, and therefore participants believed that in a sense the library was a catalyst for uniting communities.
4.2.6 Social Interaction

Comments by the participants indicated the UCL provided opportunities for social interaction, and thus, fulfilled various social needs of library members and non-members alike. For mothers who had given up careers to care for their children, the library was a suitable place in which to socialise with adults. Additional benefits were that children and babies were welcome and encouraged to develop socialisation skills in an organisation where it was not obligatory to spend money. As one participant A3 pointed out the UCL was:

A lifeline to the outside world…. After I started having kids and I was fairly isolated, it was the one place I could go to, because I couldn’t afford to do things like shopping or whatever. So for me [a trip to branch A] was a way of getting out for a couple of hours during the week, with the baby in the pram. It was keeping in touch with the outside world really (A3, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participant E1 agreed that sometimes as a stay-at-home mother she craved human contact. A trip to the local library to talk to a librarian about anything at all might be her only human contact beyond the family.

For teenagers, the library was a good place to meet especially in the case of branches A and B which had incorporated a teenage area into the branch layouts. During school holiday time, the first destination grandparents took visiting grandchildren in their care was the library. Socialisation for under five-year-olds was catered for with programmes such as Rhymetime and Storytime. Participant A1 noted Storytime was “an important part of our week. We go there to meet up with other people, with mums and children, and to listen to the stories. So it’s part of a socialisation process and fun” (A1, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participant A2 noted the demographic of the community was changing, resulting in an older population. A2 argued the worst disease of old age was loneliness. He thought the library could be extended as a centre for retired citizens, with an area set aside for older people to read and exchange ideas. The library was an ideal community place where many elderly community members that had time available could socialise. Thus the UCL ought to offer more social opportunities for retired people.
4.2.7 Meeting Place

Most focus group participants viewed the library as a convenient and free venue where community members could organise independent social meetings. Branch A participants noted that a number of community groups or past members of community groups made use of branch A to meet and seek information that would be of assistance to their group. Participant E1 stated, … “we’ve chosen to meet here and I have chosen to meet other people at the library on occasion because it’s a central point where you can meet that’s comfortable and warm, especially in the winter, and friendly” (E1, interview, August 13, 2009). For participant C3, library visits took some time since she always met people she knew whenever she visited branch C.

Library branches were seen as a safe and relaxing place to spend time whilst waiting for an appointment or as a meeting point where children may wait after school hours for a parent to collect them. Participant B4 pointed out that free or affordable social venues are limited within the community. “There isn’t a lot to do out there apart from going to the pub. That can be expensive and also I’ve sort of got a bit over it …. ” (B4, focus group B, June 20, 2009).

4.2.8 Library Events

Various library events were held throughout the year to help people meet their social needs through providing opportunities for social interaction (Unnamed Council, 2008b). The UCL was involved with events at national, community, organisational and branch levels, for example, book clubs, guest speakers, art exhibitions and national and community festivals, in order to attract a diverse range of people to library branches.

Before a library event was initiated, manager D2 explained it ought to meet positioning statement criteria, as noted in the keys to enrichment (Unnamed Council, 2008b) document. Thus, the rationale behind every proposal submitted for an event linked back to a specific positioning statement, which in turn linked back to the UCL vision and mission statements.

Book related events such as author visits and book clubs were not attended by focus group A and B participants. In contrast, focus group C participants were avid supporters of their library branch book clubs (participant C1 had just joined); yet less supportive of author
visits. Further, participant C2 had been a member of the *Writers Club* that formerly took place at library branch C.

These participants noted there were several benefits of belonging to a library Book Club. The principle benefit was reading a broader selection of books that were recommended during monthly meetings. Participant C1, for instance had read four books in a month from authors she would not have considered simply because they were mentioned during the course of a monthly meeting. Similarly, since joining the Book club, participant C2 read more widely through adding novels to her mainly non-fiction preferences of history, biography and travel books. Overall, focus group C participants enjoyed meeting people in a friendly environment where they could enjoy lively conversation regarding literary works. They described the Book Club as “a nice little social [event], meeting a few new people and talking about the books, which is good” (C3, focus group C, June 27, 2009). As a consequence, participant C1 felt “stimulated by like-minded company” (C1, focus group C, June 27, 2009).

Generally, participants were unaware of most guest speaker events that were held at the library branches. Of the few who were aware through library promotion, one participant B1 was not interested in attending any events and two participants had attended talks by guest speakers, one apiece. Participant A1 thought there were not many author talks and those that were hosted were planned to coincide with NZ Post Book Week. The author talk A1 attended was by a local picture book author who talked about how and why she wrote stories, where her ideas came from, along with details of her latest published book. As Participant A1 attended with a class of school children, the author talk was a catalyst for a classroom discussion later on. On the other hand, Participant B3 attended the guest speaker event of a Maori artwork forger who was jailed for painting forgeries such as Goldie paintings. Participants found the events they had attended to be fascinating and very interesting.

Branch C held a poetry reading night which was viewed as a suitable event for a library branch given that an appropriate atmosphere was created through being surrounded by books. Further, “if you’re not quite sure if you’re going to get many people attend, it doesn’t matter so much in a small building” (C3, focus group, July 24, 2009).
Participant B2 had attended a couple of art exhibitions held in the teenage area of Branch B. As participant B2 created artworks herself, she was interested to learn the techniques of other artists. Moreover, as one of the exhibitors was a personal friend, she attended in a supportive role.

4.2.8.1 Children’s events

Events that participants A1, A3 and E1 had attended with their children included theme parties, for example, Halloween, book character Clifford, teddy bear picnics, and a party for the launch of a Harry Potter book. Additionally, competitions like the Mayor Reading Awards and colouring competitions were held.

Of all library events, Storytime appeared to be the most favoured library event which adults and children alike enjoyed since it was of a participatory nature consisting of songs, drama and stories, and well organised. Storytime was viewed as “a fantastic way of getting kids into the library” (A1, focus group A, June 13, 2009), and was popular since it was a free service and catered for approximately thirty children at each session. Moreover, Storytime was seen as an enjoyable way to introduce the library culture to the next generation of children within families.

The summer reading programmes were seen as an invaluable motivational tool designed for children to help children continue reading through the summer holiday. From a teacher perspective, A1 noted, children tended to lose their reading skills over the summer break. Participants felt the reading programme was excellent in the sense that it provided children with reading material, advice and encouragement to focus and practice on the development of their reading skills. Overall, it was clear to participants that most childrens’ events were designed to encourage children to read books which aligns with an element of the organisation’s positioning statement of helping to develop a reading society (Unnamed Council, 2008b).

4.2.8.2 Collaborative community events

As well as UCL and Council events there were collaborative community events that the library was involved with, for example, the Scarecrow and Jandal festivals. Participant B1
felt library branches did a “pretty good job” of being involved in different activities for the range of customers, from young children to teenagers to the elderly, within the community.

Further, members of the public and other organisations were able to use library branch premises at no charge to promote their services. As A1 stated, it was a perfect venue in which to promote and attract an audience. However, A2 questioned the appropriateness of the library being the correct vehicle for the promotion of private business.

Focus group participants were asked if there were any events that they thought the library should host. Participants commonly noted that the library ought to host book related events, such as author talks, short story and poetry readings by distinguished local personalities, otherwise interesting individuals who were accomplished in the art of public readings. However, participant A2 felt poetry readings would entertain “… a very narrow audience, especially in this day and age” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Further, C2 expressed the view that more opportunities to meet popular authors ought to be promoted locally; otherwise a long commute to the nearest city is required. She further suggested perhaps the UCL could join forces with a local bookstore to jointly sponsor events centred on famous authors.

Participant A2 and B1 thought events which opened the library up to the community as well as occasions that promoted its services ought to be held. A suggestion of A2 was a computer training event for retired citizens, inclusive of refreshments such as a cup of tea.

In sum, it was clear that library events aligned with the vision and positioning statements, however, with the exception of children’s events, there was a general lack of community support. This emanated from the fact that participants had no knowledge of what was happening, had forgotten about an event or simply had no interest in attending. Of all three libraries, the smallest and most remote library branch C offered the greatest support for library events. Otherwise, events of interest to individuals were viewed as being scheduled at inconvenient times or clashed with other activities. Nevertheless, participants felt library branches ought to host events as it was “good to get the community together and get involved in activities that you have in common with the rest of the community” (B1, focus group B, June 20, 2009), a point that aligns with helping people to meet their social needs
as noted in the organisation’s vision statement.

4.2.9 Library Collections

On the whole, focus group participants had borrowed a range of different items from library collections, for example books, audio books (CD and cassette), magazines, newspapers, DVDs, videos, Music CDs. While the primary library resource borrowed by all focus group participants was books, other resources that appeared to be popular with participants included magazines, express select (books and magazines), DVDs, CDs and childrens’ jigsaw puzzles.

Participants observed that certain genres of books, for example adventure and sea stories, which participants found hard to source in bookshops, were readily available through the libraries. Nevertheless, some participants remarked that at times there was a long wait for popular book titles. “Sometimes it’s a long wait. By the time it comes, I’ve forgotten that I’ve ever ordered it” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009). Participants were aware they could bypass the waiting list service and lend a popular title through the express select service for a charge of five dollars per week; yet paradoxically all participants were reluctant to pay a minimal charge for the use of this provision.

For participants who were not computer literate, librarians were found to be approachable and informative when asked to locate library books through the Library Management System (LMS). As focus group member B3 explained “I do go to the Helpdesk a lot and ask have you got this book…? And is it available? Or have you got it ordered? Or some such thing.” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009). Generally it was the older participants who asked questions of staff and volunteers as opposed to using the online self help methods provided, for example, the organisation’s website and Online Public Access Catalogue.

Books, and to a lesser extent magazines were not only used by participants as a leisure time activity, but for educational and research purposes as well. Participants with school-age children drew heavily on childrens’ books as an essential didactic resource for home schooling and childrens’ homework projects; while other participants borrowed childrens’ books to assist with their childrens literacy. In addition, one participant A1 who taught at a
local primary school obtained educational material as an extra resource to what was available through the school.

Further, participants found the library the starting point for research into an array of other activities, for instance, hobbies, car maintenance, technical projects, consumer purchases and international politics.

4.2.9.1 Availability of collections

Generally participants in focus group C had noticed an improvement in the range of resources stocked over the past two to three years. Such improvements included newer books, a better selection of authors and a greater range of magazines. Since a wider range of interests are now catered for, participants have ceased travelling to other UCL branches further afield in order to browse larger library collections.

A paradox existed in terms of library collections. Participants noted that the collections within library branches were well stocked. “There’s a good chance that you’ll get a book in here that you won’t get in a bookshop” (B4, branch B, June 20, 2009). Further, participant E1 was impressed with the library collection since every time over the past two years she had found books that perfectly met the information requirements for her daughter’s home-schooling unit studies.

Conversely, participants B3 and B4 in focus group B perceived the library branch to lack shelf space. This perception formed when participants attempted to lend titles from the book collection that they had previously borrowed and wanted to re-read, but could no longer locate on the shelves or library catalogue.

Participants indicated they were aware that there was a limit to the number of books that can fit onto the shelves; and periodically old and unpopular titles must be deleted to make room for new books. Yet, this procedure disappointed the participants who felt the turnover of books occurred too quickly. Further, one participant B4 compared branch B to another library in the region that he was a member of and felt it would be possible to rearrange shelving to accommodate a larger book collection.
4.2.9.2 Cultural collections

Some participants viewed the library as an important cultural centre, but in a European context. Since most participants were descendants of European settlers, they felt that more books on European culture were necessary in order to teach their children of their ancestry. Further, most participants were uninterested in the local history section of their community, with the exception of C2, who as a novelist, had used the section a great deal for research.

Focus group participants noticed the Maori section of the collection was well stocked when they had walked past, however, they held no interest in browsing or borrowing items from the section. The main reasons specified for the lack of interest in the Maori section were because participants had no Maori connections or that they had never had the need to peruse the Maori section. An exception was participant C2 who had cause to utilise the Maori collection for Treaty of Waitangi information and to research place names and their meanings for her novels.

4.2.9.3 Identification of books

The way in which the UCL identified the genre of fictional books on shelves appealed to participant A3. A particular symbol representative of a genre, for instance, romance or crime, was placed on the lower spine of fictional novels for instant recognition and to aid customers with their book selections. As participant A3 said:

That is really useful because when you’re looking for a particular genre, you don’t want to be picking up books that have interesting titles but it’s not what you think it is. It saves a bit of time. I like that feature” (A3, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

4.2.9.4 Multimedia items

The UCL was perceived to have kept abreast of modern entertainment trends through providing a variety of multimedia products, for instance, DVDs, CD Roms, CDs, PC, PS2, PS3 and Xbox gaming software for library members to hire. Of the products offered DVDs and CDs were found to be the most popular items for focus group participants to hire.
4.2.9.5 Audio books

Participant A1 and B2 thought the audio book collection was a prime example of how the UCL was all inclusive, catering for the marginalised library members with reading issues by providing books on tape, along with large-print books. Audio books were more generally seen as a service provided for the elderly, who perhaps had impaired eyesight or found holding a book difficult, yet had time available to sit and listen to a book being read.

However, audio books appeared to have a much wider scope since they were popular amongst some participants in focus groups A and C. Participant A1 along with C3 were in the forty-six to fifty year old age group and felt they were not aged. Both participants enjoyed listening to audio books while engaging in other activities. Participant A1 preferred to exercise to audio book readings rather than music; whereas C3 stated “I do a fair bit of driving, so they’re really good to listen to in the car” (C3, focus group, July 24, 2009).

Participant A2 who was retired also hired audio books from the library since less are played on the radio nowadays. Listening to audio tapes was considered a continuation of when his generation listened to book readings on the radio as a collective family experience. Further, participant A2 equated reading as being practically on a par with audio books in the sense that both were subconscious activities that use the imagination, as opposed to a video which continuously prompts the imagination.

4.2.9.6 Inter-loans

Generally there was a sense of co-operation between branches and library organisations within the region with regards to the inter-loans of collections. The UCL operated a free inter-branch loan system within the organisation through a Council courier service that circulated around library branches daily. Interviewee D5 stated public library collections located throughout the region could be readily shared through an inter-library loan system. Library members had the option to view and order items held at other public libraries through the library consortium Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC); an option that was available through the Millennium Library Management System. However, each inter-library loan item incurred a courier charge payable by the UCL member who had requested the loan from further afield.
Most focus group participants felt that the inter-library loan fees were too expensive and thus, restricted book borrowing. Focus group A participants pointed out that the technical side of the UCL collections was deficient and therefore emphasised inter-library loans were a necessity. The five dollar inter-library loan charge was considered too expensive for the transfer of books and focus group A participants felt this service should be offered free to all patrons. As participant A2 stated, “I hate paying five dollars if I want to use the National Library … it stops me taking books from the National Library or one of the other major Libraries….” (A2, branch A, June 13, 2009). Therefore participants argued the inter-library loan fee should be collectively shared given that education should be free.

4.2.10 Library Consortium

Some participants were not aware of the UCL being part of a library consortium – a collaboration of library branches of several local authorities within the region – and how this affected their library usage. In particular they did not understand the UCL shares a catalogue (OPAC) and Library Management System known as Millennium with other public libraries, thus had extra benefits of online catalogue viewing and ordering from other public library collections. Conversely, other participants such as participant A3, who were aware of the library consortium, noted that this access feature was “a very useful tool” (branch A, June 13, 2009) for searching and ordering resources. From an organisational point of view, this was a way to provide more services at minimal cost.

4.2.11 Internal Communication

On an organisational level, an Executive Team weekly newsletter was sent in electronic format to all staff of the UCL and other departments within Council alike. Through this email, key messages, of which the Executive Team felt were of importance and that staff ought to have knowledge of, were communicated. Further, the newsletter was used for staff recognition. Thus, staff who demonstrated behaviour that supported the organisation’s delivery of mission vision and goals was recognized in the newsletter.

On a Directorate level, an internal newsletter was sent monthly to UCL staff and other staff within business units of the Customer Services Directorate. The purpose of this newsletter was to inform teams of initiatives that were taking place within the Directorate and to
explain the reasons why they were happening. Akin to the Executive Team newsletter, this newsletter was also seen as a means of recognising outstanding staff contributions; and further, as a motivational tool for staff.

4.2.11.1 Staff meetings
Meetings were seen as another effective form of staff communication by managers. According to manager D4, the CEO of Council facilitated a meeting every two or three months from head office. All staff were invited to attend, regardless of their seniority within the organisation. This meeting gave employees an update of Council-wide activities.

Top-down communication occurred from senior managers through team meetings, held once a fortnight. Information from Executive Team meetings, for instance, flowed downwards throughout levels of the organisation by way of team meetings. According to Manger D2, top-down communication was not always successful because some managers communicated a lot of information whilst others filtered the information. Additionally, Director D5 mentioned he held two-weekly face-to-face meetings with managers to keep them up-to-date with information, monitor progress on team objectives, and deal with any issues that arose as a result.

Officially, the agenda and minutes from all Library Management Team meetings were distributed to staff through Library Management Team leaders in fortnightly staff meetings. However, manager D2 had doubts as to whether this process happened. She felt in some cases team leaders sent Library Management Team meeting minutes to their staff via an email, otherwise they expected staff to be proactive and search for them in the minutes folder on the organisation’s intranet.

4.2.11.2 Intranet
Senior management generally used the intranet as a written channel of communication with which to disseminate general Council information affecting all Directorates, such as the Executive Team newsletter and the findings of an annual customer satisfaction survey. The UCL managers utilised the Council intranet as a channel for cross-organisational
communication rather than to communicate information to UCL staff. Manager D2 stated it was hoped that the organisation’s Information Systems Team, who were working on the intranet redevelopment project, would create an intranet workspace specifically for the UCL to use for communication to staff, and as a collaborative workspace, for the improved management of organisational documentation.

4.2.11.3 Internal volunteer communication

All interviewees agreed that communication between managers/staff and volunteers were of an unstructured nature. Manager D1 stated she was unaware of “any [UCL] wide communication process or channel or agreement about communications with volunteers” (in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009). Moreover, E1 noted most internal communication from UCL managers and staff to volunteers tended to be of an informal nature. Thus, communication involving volunteers was ad hoc and varied from branch to branch.

According to interviewee E1, written communication between UCL employees and volunteers consisted of entries in comments books (or day books) set aside for volunteers. Manager D4 stated that all decisions that affected the service that the volunteers provided were recorded in the day books. The comments books were originally designed for two-way communication. However, manager D1 perceived ninety-nine percent of the entries were from staff and one percent from volunteers. Thus, the comments books were not a preferred means of written communication for most volunteers.

Interviewee E1 noted that another form of written communication that was received by volunteers included occasional unofficial emails from library branch staff. Managers noted that a volunteer newsletter, written by a librarian and library assistant from two separate branches, was phased out the preceding year. However, interviewee D1 asserted that most information of relevance to volunteers was also appropriate for UCL customers, therefore could be found written on the organisation’s internet blog, Facebook page or website. As with staff, there was an expectation for volunteers to seek organisational updates.

According to interviewee D4, in each library branch there was a staff member allocated to manage volunteers. Thus, the staff member assigned the task of volunteer management was ultimately responsible for ensuring that the volunteers were kept up-to-date with
necessary communications, in order to uphold the organisation’s vision. Other communication included ad hoc verbal communication and periodical meetings whereby staff would inform volunteers of certain organisational issues. D2 stated volunteers could present their opinions and have questions answered in these semi-formal style of meetings.

From a volunteer perspective E1 perceived that there were different layers of information distributed to organisational managers, staff and volunteers. E1 mentioned that even though volunteers held positive working relationships with staff, it was generally felt by volunteers that discussions on organisational topics were limited, since staff were not permitted to discuss certain issues with volunteers. Further, organisational information located on the organisation’s intranet was restricted to employees who had been issued with a login, thus much organisational information was considered classified. In summary, as the volunteers were positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy within the organisation, the information they received was considered to be highly filtered.

### 4.2.11.4 Inter-branch communication

Communication between library branches and library areas within the UCL catchment area was not always constant. According to D2 “if something’s happening, for example, at Branch B, they won’t always advertise it at [an adjacent branch], because the people at Branch B don’t think to do that”. Although D4 felt the mindset of staff was slowly changing, the encouragement of inter-branch communication was definitely a challenge within the organisation.

### 4.2.12 External Communication

Managers agreed staff held a pivotal role in terms of communicating information to library customers. The UCL performed many services for different sectors of the community and provided a variety of ways in which they could access information - from a website to face-to-face communication with librarians and volunteers. Nevertheless, manager D2 was of the opinion that the UCL was “quite bad at communicating, but if we communicated it all, I think people would be overwhelmed” (in-depth interview, 15 July, 2009). Further, it was felt that if customers were provided with information in regards to a service for which they did not have an immediate use, they would fail to remember its existence. Therefore,
to inform library users of library services in their entirety was seen to be really difficult, which was why managers expected librarians would always be required.

4.12.1 Channels of communication

Not one focus group participant received or preferred to receive postal communication from the UCL. However, participants were divided in regards to their preferences of other channels of communication in order to receive information regarding the range of UCL and services. Participant B3 who was retired explained “With my memory it [information] wouldn’t last so I’d ask each time I need to know” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009).

The main instance whereby communication from the UCL was initiated with library members was to draw attention to the status of requested or borrowed resources. Thus, three formal communication channels were used – email, telephone and post.

Participants C2 and E3 had supplied their email address to the UCL and thus used the optional electronic mail notification service provided by the UCL through the library consortium. Both participants found this service to be a useful communication method at times when ordered items were due for collection; conversely as a courtesy reminder that items return date was imminent.

Some focus group participants, for instance B3 and C1, utilised the automated telephone service. For participant B3 the telephone service was a necessity due to the lack of a PC and email address. According to participant B3 notification that an ordered item was awaiting collection came in the form of “a disembodied voice coming over the phone” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009). Participant B3 thought the telephone service was good even though she had often collected books from her local library branch before receiving the telephone notification message.

4.12.2 Communication to library users

Participant A1 felt that other than the primary school, the library branch was the place to communicate information to a large group of people who lived within the local community. However, participant A2 disagreed and felt the community centre ought to be the hub from
which to disseminate community information. Various channels of communication were utilised when informing the local community of library information. Manager D1 stated two channels of communication were used to inform library users of organisational policy changes, such as the recent UCL reciprocal membership agreements that had been arranged with two neighbouring library organisations. The first channel utilised mass communication via a community newspaper. The second channel was on an interpersonal level whereby staff informed library customers of changes face-to-face, on a need-to-know basis, during a library visit.

Interviewee D1 explained a typical scenario where face-to-face communication ought to be most appropriate was where a customer had searched the entire OPAC database for a book that was unavailable at the UCL, yet was obtainable from a library with which the organisation had a reciprocal agreement. Thus, given this situation, staff ought to be prompted to inform customers of their eligibility for additional memberships to two other library organisations within the region.

**4.2.12.3 Newsletter**

Focus group A participants suggested a newsletter that included press releases and other UCL information regarding services ought to be broadcast every month or two as one of the channels of communication to library members. Participants came to a consensus that a newsletter ought to contain general information for all UCL branches, followed by specific articles for individual library branches. Participants were aware that some library members may not approve of receiving a newsletter via email, but felt an unsubscribe link on the email could be included for these individuals.

On the other hand, focus group B participants had no interest in receiving a newsletter. They argued they would forget information on a newsletter and felt more comfortable receiving information from library staff on a need-to-know basis, even if it meant repeatedly asking the same question on subsequent visits. Participant B2 stated “we get so much of that sort of stuff from so many people it just becomes overload, information overload I’m afraid” (B2, focus group B, June 20, 2009). This participant read UCL advertisements placed in the local newspaper and felt this was the most effective way of communicating information to the local community.
4.2.12.4 Library advertising

According to manager D1 printed literature on library information and services available for the public was scarce. Nevertheless, three rack cards and two pamphlets existed, that included an overall guide to the UCL, catalogue and personal information, and how to pay library charges online via a credit card. Further, a bookmark advertising an AirPAC service, and a door hanger that promoted childrens services were also available for library patrons, however information on other services, such as electronic resources, was nonexistent. It was apparent that a corporate style guide was not used in UCL marketing material. To highlight, the Council logo was used on all rack cards and pamphlets, yet varied in dimensions, from one by two-and-a-half centimetres to two centimetres by five centimetres; and also featured in four diverse positions. Further, the UCL brand name appeared on one rack card only, yet the UCL website appeared on all advertising, from one to four times, with various degrees of prominence. Thus, library advertising appeared to be produced in an inconsistent manner.

Participant A1 had received an information pamphlet of the services offered when joining the UCL in 2001; though did not take much notice of the leaflet details. Conversely A2, who joined the UCL under the previous volunteer-run regime, had never received an information pamphlet.

Participant A1 noted that a lot of advertising material in connection to library information and events for patrons was placed on the circulation desk. The Storytime event, for instance was advertised through flyers at various locations within the branch. A2 pointed out those library members who used the automatic check-out would never see the advertising at the circulation desk. Moreover, A2 suggested a bulletin board situated at the entrance to the library branch ought to be an ideal position for UCL advertising material.

---

3 A list of items within the library collection appeared on one side of the rack card. The free internet service was noted on the reverse side.

4 AirPAC is a service provided to mobile library-users who operate a Smartphone. The AirPAC service enables a library member to login to the UCL website and Online Public Access Catalogue via their smartphone in order to access online self-service features.
4.2.12.5 Promotion of library events

Over the past year, the organisation’s Communications Department had become more proactive in the promotion of library events to local communities (D1, in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009). Closer working relationships between the UCL and Communications subunits of Council had led to a more structured approach to advertising upcoming events. New advertising initiatives, such as utilising the Google calendar as an events calendar (D2, in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009) had been introduced. Conversely, the traditional radio advertising along with media releases for newspapers were also organised for events such as school holiday programmes.

Director D5 asserted print media (newspapers) were the most effective channel of communication with respect to promoting library events. Interviewees D4 and D5 pointed out that the Communications Department periodically placed a one-page Council newsletter within a major community newspaper, that regularly featured three or four library events. Within the newsletter a large amount of space was often allocated to the library branches because they were considered to be “very active in community activities” (D4, in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009). Therefore overall, as a result of increased inter-departmental communication, the general public had become more informed of library events that had been organised for their communities.

Some participants felt a successful event ought to comprise of something creative or out of the ordinary, whilst others thought events should have a library theme. Participants were aware that library branches held a multiplicity of events, such as, Justice of the Peace visits, art exhibitions, genealogy, poetry readings, guest speakers and themed events for children. Of the branch level events, some participants were aware that individual library branches participated in local community events, for instance, branch A supported the Scarecrow Festival and the Christmas Parade. However, participants considered they were largely uninformed of the events organised and hosted by individual library branches or by the organisation as whole.

One exception was participant B2 who had seen events of interest advertised within the library and community newspaper, for instance an Alison Holst event; however she was unable to attend. Another exception was participant A2 who had taken his grandchildren to a story morning that was in connection with a community festival. He was informed of
the event through a staff member who said “did you know that tomorrow there’s a story morning?” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009) as he exited the library branch one day.

On a national level, the New Zealand Post Childrens Book Awards celebrations was the only event focus group participants were aware of that was promoted by the UCL. Yet, on an organisational level, events such as the childrens’ Storytime and Rhymetime appeared to be well-known and popular weekly events. Some participants were aware of other organisational events such as the Mayor Reading Awards and the school holiday and summer reading programmes, however did not make use of these childrens events and services. Other participants were totally unaware of events that targeted library subgroups, for example, the Read to Succeed teenage reading challenge programme.

4.2.12.6 Technological communication

The technological communication systems in place were viewed as an invaluable resource by UCL managers. This was because the sheer volume of different messages being processed through the Council information system on a daily basis was immense. Different types of messages included notification that an ordered item was ready for collection from a library branch, courtesy messages, which were a new message type, and overdue notices of which there were three categories.

Managers noted there were typically three channels of communication between the UCL and library members as a result of overdue notices for borrowed library items. According to D3, the first channel was by electronic mail and was preferred as this incurred a negligible cost. The second was via an automated telephone call, which was the next preferred approach, because although there was slightly more cost involved, this channel was still relatively effective. The third was through postal mail, and although customers could indicate this option on their customer record, it was considered to be a costly operation for the UCL after postage and handling were taken into consideration. Manager D3 perceived the messaging system used to communicate with UCL members as being

---

5 Reading incentives aimed to help children maintain and improve their reading skills.

6 The telephony system measured the time that the customer had spent listening to a message.
“one of the most complicated processes,” yet one that “work[ed] on a daily basis,” (in-depth interview, 15 July, 2009) given that customers possessed the flexibility to choose their preferred channel of communication.

4.2.12.7 Improved service through new technology

New technologies had been introduced to create greater efficiencies in customer service and communication. A new customer courtesy email service, for instance, informed customers who had supplied an email address as part of their personal information, that their borrowed items were pending return. Historically, according to D3, the UCL practice was to communicate with members after borrowed items had not been returned by the due dates. Thus, an overdue email notice would be sent stating “You were supposed to bring these [items] back a week ago, so you have a fine” (D3, in-depth interview, 15 July, 2009). However, with the new initiative, library members now received computer generated courtesy emails with notification prior to the due dates of their borrowed items.

The courtesy email was a recent library consortium project that was trialled by another public library, in order to observe how such a form of customer notification would affect library processes. Moreover, to ascertain how the notification service would be received by library customers. Since customer feedback indicated that the notice of prevailing overdue items was generally appreciated by customers, the trial courtesy email project was replicated throughout the consortium, by means of the Millennium Library Management System.

The process was straightforward and inexpensive to administer. As D3 explained, a database query was run daily to gather all items borrowed by customers who were due to return them in three days. If a customer was amongst this group and had an email address supplied in their customer record, the Millennium Library Management System would automatically send them a computer generated courtesy email, titled from their particular library organisation. On the contrary, if a customer did not have an email address stored within their membership details, no notification would be sent.
4.2.12.8 Community group communication

The UCL was motivated to constantly increase membership numbers. According to D1, community librarians or relevant UCL personnel visited community groups such as U3A, Probus and the local flower arranging group, in the role of guest speaker, in order to provide library information; moreover, to recruit new members.

Typically a librarian presentation to a community group followed a specific format. To commence with an introduction made reference to “what [library branches] are, what we offer, and how do you become a member?” (D1, in-depth interview, 2009). Subsequently, each presentation was tailored to the specific needs of the particular group. If a presentation was for a local flower arranging group, for example, the presenter took along a selection of books on the topic of flower arranging; alternatively, a list of other material indicative of what the UCL collection could offer the group. Therefore staff representatives of the organisation ventured to community groups as a public relations exercise in order to promote the public library and its services; moreover to reach potential library members.

4.2.13 Customer Feedback

The UCL constantly sought customer feedback on their performance in order to identify weaknesses and areas where customer service ought to be improved upon. Thus, the customer survey was the main method utilised to facilitate customer feedback.

An annual customer telephone survey was undertaken by Council in order to provide an indication of the level of satisfaction customers had experienced with Library services and other Council services. Director D5 advanced that the feedback from last year’s survey indicated that UCL customers were generally very satisfied with the range of services offered, since they received their highest rating to date, of 84%.

On the other hand, from a library member perspective, participants A1 and A2 observed that the UCL does not overtly seek feedback from external library member stakeholders on

7 Volunteers were defined as a group of customers.
what resources the library should hold, such as what books should be present in the collection. As A2, who had been a UCL member for nine years, remarked “I’ve never been asked what I would like there, or there’s never been forms or things to say … if there have (there may have been), but they were so obscure, the casual user wouldn’t find them” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participants A1 and A2 perceived that due to computerisation, records must be kept and analysis performed of what comes into the branch and what goes out, since many of the resources they wanted were in stock. However, both participants felt that if a resource is not in the collection, you cannot borrow it. Thus, they felt the UCL does not hold accurate information of what patrons really want stocked in the library. Both participants felt library members ought to have the opportunity to provide feedback via a questionnaire positioned at the front desk.

Conversely, in Branch B customer feedback was sought by means of a suggestion book. Participant B3 visited the library on many occasions to read the newspaper and became frustrated when the daily newspaper was unavailable. She had made use of this communication tool to request an extra Herald newspaper be made available, or else a time limit placed on readers of the sole edition.

According to D5, the Council was in the process of modernising their customer feedback approach. Thus, future surveys ought to move away from telephone surveys in favour of e-panel feedback, in order to establish the levels of customer satisfaction regarding library services. This undertaking was viewed as a cross-departmental task for the UCL, held in conjunction with the Strategy and Policy Team.

Additionally, on a regional scale, a customer service survey project initiated by the library consortium called The Best Customer Experience had recently been completed. The scope of this project included all public libraries across the greater region and consisted of a mystery shopper visiting twenty seven library branches, and then reporting on her experiences. Manager D4 noted two findings of interest from the report. The first finding

---

8 The findings of The Best Customer Experience Project report were provided to library managers and the
was the lack of basic customer service skills, such as greeting customers on entering a library branch. The second there was disparity between the levels of service staff believed they were delivering, compared to the customers’ actual experiences. Thus, staff believed they were providing excellent customer service; although the feedback indicated that generally, staff did not rate highly in this department across the region.

Managers stated that some of the results of general customer surveys were fed back into the Library Management Team. These results were mainly operational decisions that the UCL could actually make within their annual budget allocation. Alternatively, on a Council level, the Council *Long-Term Council Community Plan* draft plan was distributed to the public for consultation. Accordingly, an opportunity was provided for the community to respond to either what was included or excluded from the *Long-Term Council Community Plan*. Therefore the public received an opportunity to provide input into what their needs were on a higher level.

### 4.2.13.1 Frequency of communication

Some participants felt they were overloaded with organisational information and could not keep up-to-date with changes within the library such as the introduction of new technology. As a participant stated, “I need a refresher course every time I come into the library to keep up with all the stuff” (B4, focus group B, June 20, 2009).

Conversely other participants were happy to receive information directly from library staff when they required it. One participant B3 believed due to old age, the retention of information was an issue. Information would intermittently be forgotten, especially if it was not of particular interest at that time. Therefore the participant preferred to ask staff the same question repeatedly on subsequent visits.

Participant C3 noted the library was a valuable source of information about all sorts of things such as citizen rights and information regarding referendums along with general Council information. However, of concern to participants was the lack of communication from the UCL on what services were available to library customers. Even though

---

consortium board. However, they were not available publicly at the time of conducting this research project.
participants stated the UCL communicated information of its services and events through various channels, from face-to-face to organisational documentation, library members generally felt there were inconsistencies in communication which “seems to be a glaring problem” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participant A2, for example, pointed out the UCL had not publicised that new computer technology was available at all branches, yet felt that it was important to inform the public of new library developments. Further, participant B1 suggested facilitating a library event that promoted library services to library users would appear to be a good start to communication. On the other hand, participant A1 argued that the organisation was good at communicating children related information during the Storytime event. Nevertheless, participant A2 interpreted this to mean “if you’re in the loop you know and if you’re outside [the loop] you don’t” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participants in focus group B generally felt less communication was received as a result of the installation of two self-check machines in the branch. Since patrons were able to select and check-out most books without the necessity to converse with library personnel, a suggestion of participant A2 was to programme self-check machines with informational messages. These messages could appear as soon as a library member card was scanned. Another suggestion was to place a bulletin board displaying current information in a prominent foyer position.

The manager of Branch C had an effective interpersonal relationship with participant C3 who was a journalist for the local community newspaper. The branch manager would telephone C3 of upcoming events. Participant C3 would attempt to cover as many library events as possible since she felt they were important for the community, and therefore ought to be publicised.

Inconsistencies in communication regarding organisational information inclusive of library services and developments seemed to be problematic for some focus group participants who did not have effective interpersonal relationships with library staff. Further, participants generally felt that as the library environment became more technology-based to increase self-help opportunities for customers, dialogue with staff was diminishing. Hence, because face-to-face communication was a key communication channel along with
a small number of articles in community newspapers, customers were becoming less informed of library developments.

*   *   *

The following section presents the last major component of the organisation’s identity, namely technology. It focuses on recent technological advances within the UCL such as the introduction of a Radio Frequency Identification (RFiD) security system, which integrates with both the modernised Library Management System and self-check machines. Also discussed are the Aotearoa People’s Network Kahora (APNK) computer service which is available to all library patrons, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) together with other online services, computer training for staff and customers, technology change, and the future of technology.
4.3 Technology

Technology was the third cumulative theme to emerge from transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions and revealed a surprising finding in the sense that although the UCL operated in rural New Zealand, it was arguably one of the most technologically advanced public library in New Zealand. This finding is important as it links to the future direction of the UCL and how the organisation plans to keep abreast with technology. Under this major theme, participants talked about a number of issues, for instance, how collaboration and partnerships has been fundamental in sharing costs to allow sophisticated computer technology systems such as a Radio Frequency Identification security system which incorporates a self-scanning book check-out system. Also how more of the community is socially included through the Aotearoa People’s Network Kahoroa partnership with Government which provides free use of computers and an internet and wifi broadband service for local communities whose households do not have modern broadband internet network systems. Therefore this section provides answers from a technological and developmental prospect to research question one – how organisational members describe the organisational identity of the UCL and points to the future direction of the organisation.

Director D5 felt the UCL fulfilled one element of the mission statement – making a positive difference to communities (Unnamed Council, 2008a) – through making optimal use of technology, as it was developed. Whilst some of the Council’s innovative technology was adopted, such as the telephony and intranet systems, other technology was unique to the UCL; hence was not used elsewhere within the Council. The Radio Frequency Identification security system was a prime example of a stand-a-lone acquisition designed exclusively for the protection of UCL collections, which was not integrated into other business units of Council. Thus, as a result, the Radio Frequency Identification security system received no maintenance or support from Council.

4.3.1 Radio Frequency Identification Security System

A key library project noted in the Council’s Annual Plan 2008/9 was to install a security system in all seven UCL library branches. Managers explained this was because the UCL was outmoded in terms of being the sole library organisation within the greater region
devoid of an anti-theft system for its collections. Due to the cost of a modern technology based security system, a business case had been presented to Council for the project to be funded by means of a budget allocation in the Long Term Council Community Plan. Manager D3 stated the project had been achieved last year, as planned, through the introduction of a *Radio Frequency Identification* security system.

Ultimately D3 was responsible for the *Radio Frequency Identification* security system project. The project started with an elaborative process of investigations inclusive of discussions with staff and analysing other library systems. Next, liaisons with vendors and consultants were carried out in collaboration with other libraries that had also decided to upgrade their security system. Finally, a security system that best suited the needs and requirements of the UCL was selected and then installed by four temporary project staff along with some organisational personnel during the majority of 2008. The project was considered a success because missing books had noticeably been reduced in all branches since the security system was installed.

### 4.3.2 Library Management System

The UCL operated a modernised *library administration system* (LMS) in line with global technological advancements within the library field. Interviewees E1 and D3 stated that a library management software upgrade had occurred in the form of the introduction of *Millennium* - an integrated American *Library Management System* (LMS). *Millennium* operated throughout the UCL and other public libraries within the library consortium. The *Library Management System* provided such benefits as a standard online interface that allowed customers to view items in any regional public library collection. Thus, the new system provided greater functionality by means of a suitable platform that could accommodate new services requested by UCL members.

The library consortium was established to share the costs associated with providing a comprehensive *Library Management System* to the city’s public libraries. The *Millennium* was an expensive *Library Management System* to purchase and was sought after by the UCL and other public libraries within the region. As D3 mentioned, *Millennium’s* popularity stemmed from its reputation of being the most suitable and widely used global library information system. Hence, the implementation costs associated with upgrading to
such a Library Management System were expensive. The library consortium has since broadened its main function to focus on library technology development in general.

Interviewees held contrasting views on the usefulness of a centralised Library Management System. On one hand, D3 felt it was definitely advantageous from the financial perspective to share the operational and developmental costs\(^9\) of the expensive Millennium Library Management System amongst the library consortium. Based on membership and item numbers, the UCL was considered the second smallest organisation within the region, and thus contributed a lesser number to the overall Library Management System expenses. Furthermore, from the geographical perspective, UCL customers who travelled between the UCL and an adjoining Council jurisdiction for employment purposes for instance, could possess dual membership; hence access a greater range of resources.

Conversely, interviewee D4 felt from a customer service perspective that the Millennium Library Management System was “not as user friendly as it could be” (in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009). According to D4, one of the disadvantages of having a combined Library Management System with other regional public libraries was the lack of flexibility to tailor the system to meet the needs of UCL customers. Therefore, as the Millennium Library Management System was unable to be customised by individual library organisations, it was perceived by some managers to be not particularly user-friendly.

4.3.3 Introduction of Technology for Library Users

The introduction of computers including up-to-date hardware, software applications, and internet access was considered by managers to be of major importance. Manager D3 pointed out ten to twenty years ago, prior to the introduction of computers to the library landscape, the main source of information was sought through the printed form of books, magazines and other publications. However, since a great deal of information nowadays is available electronically, internet connectivity has become a highly valued library service.

\(^9\) Operational cost components included software licensing; maintenance for telecommunication lines and servers, along with a staffed support office. These costs were allocated to each consortium library proportionally with regards to usage and other ratios.
New technologies for library users eventuated as a result of reaction to the changing needs of customers, for instance, the preference to access information online, and planning. Interviewees D1 and D5 stated that planning for new library technologies was last performed in 2008 in accordance with the Council’s Long-Term Council Community Plan. Thus, Council was responsible for the funding of technological projects featured in the Long-Term Council Community Plan.

The planning of Long-Term Council Community Plan submissions involved a meeting of UCL managers whereby an environmental scan and thoughts on what new technology may be relevant for the UCL was carried out. Some supposition was involved, especially when planning towards the end of the ten year timeframe because “it’s very hard to foresee even five years down the track, how the technologies will be able to support our service delivery, and what new services will be able to be delivered through technologies” (D1, in-depth interview, 15 June, 2009).

According to interviewee E1, some of the technology needs of the community [Branch B] have been addressed by the UCL. One major issue was the lack of access to high speed broadband internet access within sectors of the community. Participant E1 had observed that since the introduction of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa (APNK) programme in the first half of 2009, whereby the sector of the local community without computers and/or internet access have now been catered for. Participant B1, for instance, stated two major reasons for using the library was for internet access and in order to use her email account in order to search for employment online.

4.3.3.1 User friendly technology

The majority of focus group participants found UCL technology to be user friendly; although they were aware that some patrons of the retired cohort were anxious with regards to using new library technology. Participant C1 stated “I do know older people who are quite fearful of modern technology” (C1, focus group, July 24, 2009). Nevertheless she

---

10 The Long-Term Council Community Plan was a ten year plan for the period 2009/10 through to 2019/20.
felt the UCL was taking steps to help library members feel less intimidated by new technology systems, such as the self-check machines. Participant C1 had observed that older library members were beginning to feel more comfortable with checking out their own books through the self-issue system.

4.3.3.2 Age as a barrier

Half of participants agreed that age was a barrier to the degree of which library customers could comprehend new technology. Participants B3 and B4, who had very limited computer skills, were awe-stricken by how quickly young people adopted new technology. They expressed how younger generations were “incredibly talented” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009) at all sorts of internet skills, such as performing tasks on the Bebo social networking site, because “young people have been brought up [with] them” (B4, focus group B, June 20, 2009).

Volunteer E1 felt nonchalant as to whether customers positively or negatively embraced new technology within the library environment, whereas library user B1 expressed the view that by using the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa everyday she is embracing the new technology offered by the UCL in a positive way. Overall, focus group C participants felt the additional technology in the branch was definitely a positive advancement, especially for the youth within the local community, and emphasised it was essential for young people to use new systems.

4.3.4 Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa Service

The Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa was an example of a project that was reactive to the changing needs of customers. Managers identified that large sectors of the community did not have internet access in their households. The main reasons were that they either did not own a computer, could not afford internet access charges or internet infrastructure was not yet available in rural areas. Interviewees stated that prior to the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa, the public could make use of Council computers which were provided at UCL branches; although they were charged for the service. Therefore, managers decided the increasing needs of customers ought to be well catered for through joining the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa, which offered modern computer equipment along
with the usage of free internet (including WiFi connectivity during library hours) and multimedia products to customers.

Managers underestimated the demand for free internet access within UCL communities. They were reasonably confident that there would be a demand for free internet; however, the high level of usage exceeded every manager’s expectations. For instance, interviewee D1 pointed out branch A operated at a thirty percent usage over total potential capacity ratio, with peak usage at different times of the day, for instance, after school. On the other hand, Branch C ran at a maximum ninety percent usage over total capacity ratio. Accordingly, manager D1 felt the disparity of results was perhaps a reflection of the affluence of each area.

Overall, managers felt joining the Aotearoa People Network Kaharoa was a positive move in terms of cost saving and providing a better computer service to communities. A better service was achieved primarily because the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa had installed more computers and equipment in UCL branches. Branch C, for instance, previously had one public computer under Council management. Since joining the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa, two additional computers had been installed. Technologies Manager D3 stated this improvement was well received by the community; and was reflected in the computer usage which had increased five-fold. However, as D3 explained, three computers along with desks and one printer created a “significant footprint within the library” (in-depth interview, 15 July, 2009) considering library space is precious.

A new group of clientele had been introduced to the library environment as a result of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa initiative. This outcome was welcomed by managers. Director D5 hoped there would be a spin-off effect in the sense that these customers would “pick up a book as well” (in-depth interview, 23 July 2009) during their library visit.

A misconception existed amongst focus group participants as to who was responsible for the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa computer equipment and software upgrade

11 A ten percent down-time was factored into ratio’s to allow for the change of computer users between half hour Internet sessions.
carried out in library branches in the first half of the year. There was abounding confusion with regards to who provided and funded the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* and why internet access had changed from a user-pays service to a non-charged service in recent months. Not one focus group participant was aware that the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* was a Government incentive, designed to support lifelong learning and social inclusion. In fact all perceived it to be a UCL computer upgrade project. To illustrate, one respondent B3 had assumed the service was now provided free of charge through the generosity of the latest mayor in office.

Participant B3 pointed out the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* computers were solely IBM compatible when she would have preferred to have AppleMac computers installed. This participant did not own an AppleMac, however she did have access to one that her daughter owned and was of the opinion they were more suitable for multimedia applications, for example to watch television programme Coronation Street online.

Most participants had not taken advantage of the free computer hardware, software and broadband internet connectivity, provided through the Aeotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa. Alternatively participants preferred to access the internet from within their households. However there were two exceptions. Participant B1 used the internet at branch B when visiting her mother, whilst focus group C and E1 participants accessed the library internet on occasion when their household internet connection broke down.

Two participants, B3 and B4, were computer illiterate hence did not understand how to access the internet. Both participants had never had the inclination to own a PC and attributed their ages (over fifty-one years old) and not being brought up with computers as major factors to their computer illiteracy. Furthermore B3 described herself as being technology phobic; an issue which she felt hindered her ability to learn about computer applications. Even so, both participants stated they were prepared to attempt to learn how to use a PC and access the internet if courses were to be offered by the UCL, and pointed out they were satisfied to pay a reasonable price to attend computer lessons.

All focus group participants perceived the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* service as being well patronised within the library branches by the local community. Despite the fact that most participants did not use this service personally, they were of the opinion that it...
was “a godsend to a lot of people” (B3, focus group B, June 20, 2009). Generally, participants shared the view of E1 “… we’ve had a whole batch of people come into the Library who never did before” (E1, in-depth interview, August 13, 2009). Thus, comments of participants indicated the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa was considered to be a good service that the community was making much use of.

4.3.4.1 Webcams
Webcams were installed on each PC as part of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project, but just one participant A2 understood how to use this form of multimedia technology. A couple of participants had Apple Macs that came complete with webcams in their households yet had no know-how to activate them. Participant A2 felt the webcam provision was unnecessary for patrons and a coffee machine would be of greater benefit. On the other hand, participant B1 had observed a lot of different age groups using webcams in branch B, but had not personally used them.

4.3.5 Self-Check Machines
Self-check machines were an example of how technology can provide an electronic interface between the organisation and its customers by integrating two existing technologies - Radio Frequency Identification to scan books, and the Library Management System to record books against customers’ accounts. According to D3, the provision to permit customers to self-issue books and magazines borrowed from the standard library collection had a twofold consequence. On one hand it provided the customer with a certain amount of autonomy. On the other hand it freed up staff to work on other high-level tasks, for instance, readers advisory, reference queries and assisting people with Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa issues. Some participants thought that because volunteers seemed to work hard performing everyday library tasks, library members ought to be considerate and ease their workloads by using the easy to operate check-out system rather than the service counter. However, most participants shared the view of participant A1 who stated “I would be just as happy if it wasn’t there …. ” (focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Interviewee D7 felt the self-check machines were considered to be user friendly because they had on-screen instructions to guide customers through the checkout procedure.
However, even though participants found the machines straightforward to use, all participants agreed that if given the choice, they would prefer a staff member to check-out their books rather than use a self-issue system. Participant A1 stated her raison d’être was due to the fact that “we use machines so much that you can end up being very isolated if you’re always using the machine. So it’s nice to have that interaction with the librarian” (A1, focus group A, June 13, 2009). Nevertheless, when visiting a UCL library branch in the next town, participant C2 preferred to use a self-check machine as opposed to the service desk because she was not acquainted with any of the librarians there, thus felt reluctant to converse with them.

4.3.6 Online Public Access Catalogue

Interviewee E1 was unsure whether technology such as the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) - a database accessible to both staff and customers which replaced the manual card catalogue system in libraries (Curren, Murray, & Christian, 2007) - was user-friendly or not. According to E1, library personnel had become accustomed to using the online catalogue since staff and volunteers worked with OPAC on a daily basis within the library environment. Thus, library personnel viewed OPAC to be an easy-to-use library tool.

However, the way in which OPAC operated was slightly specialized and there were “no real instructions for using it” on the catalogue webpage (E1, in-depth interview, 13 August, 2009). As an example, E1 argued that the word subject was defined differently within the context of library terminology. From a library perspective, subject referred to a particular list of headings and was viewed as a keyword. Whereas, from a layman’s perspective, subject meant the topic on which a person sought information. Hence, OPAC technology was not considered to be user-friendly from the library-user perspective.

Participants in focus groups A and C, who all made use of the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) remotely via the UCL website, stated it was “definitely a good cataloguing system” (A3, focus group A, June 13, 2009). Participants of these two focus groups solely accessed the online catalogue from their households to locate and order UCL resources. The main reason given for OPAC usage was a lack of time to search the catalogue during library branch visits.
Focus group A participants felt a very important and user-friendly feature of the catalogue system was that items could be viewed and ordered from all of the UCL branches; additionally from any library consortium branch. Focus group C participants agreed and often browsed the OPAC. However, participant C2 was unaware that collections of the entire library consortium could be viewed and ordered by UCL members.

An issue mentioned by participant A3 was that a certain number of serendipity existed when searching for resources via the online catalogue. This participant, for example, pointed out a tactile search of the shelves for books produced better results. Thus it was often the case that useful and interesting titles she had not thought to peruse were discovered in this manner. Alternatively, if participant C3 thought a book review heard on the radio sounded appealing, she would immediately order the book through the UCL OPAC website link.

Participants from focus group B did not view or order books through the online catalogue. The main reason stated was that participants lacked computer proficiency to perform this task. Participant B2 had used the online catalogue to view books on specific subjects, nevertheless had not learnt how to order books because she did not realise library members could order books online. Thus, all focus group B participants browsed library resources within library branches and always ordered books through a library staff member. On the other hand, participants with children found the online catalogue system an important time-saving feature whereby they have the convenience of searching for a list of books or topics at home at any time.

4.3.7 Website Technology

Focus group participants were satisfied with the user friendliness of the UCL website with the exception of one participant. Participant A2 felt the UCL website design needed to be improved given that the organisation relied on people connecting to the website or website links to learn about library information. According to manager D2, who was on the Web Steering Team, the UCL webpages were in the process of being redeveloped by the Council IS team, responsible for the organisation’s website development.
The icon links that represented the six nearest public libraries positioned at the top right-hand corner of the home page were an example of links that most focus group participants did not realise they could activate. Overall, participants were not aware that after clicking on another library organisation link, and following the same procedure as with their library website, they could have access to an extensive range of additional resources.

**4.3.7.1 Online databases**

None of the participants from the three focus groups made use of the UCL collection of online databases (e-resources) with the exception of interviewee E1, who had made use of the online databases on occasion, when studying library papers through a technical institute. The main reasons pointed out were that participants lacked the need or were not interested in using databases or online referencing.

**4.3.8 Staff Computer Training**

According to D3 there were two types of computer training available to staff. The first type of training was exclusive to the UCL, for instance, the *Library Management System.* The second type was the standard Council training for desktop computers. This included computer training on the Microsoft Office suite of software programmes (such as Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint), internet browsing, and other functions. The Council facilitated computer training in a large computer room that was arranged similarly to a computer classroom and located at head office.

In each branch there was one individual who knew more than the average staff member was required to know about the computer system in order to perform their daily tasks. This staff member was referred to as a *super-user,* hence was granted more access rights on the computer system.

If a staff member encountered a computer quandary, they would approach the branch

---

12 Volunteers could also receive limited library management system training for the purpose of checking in library items and basic front desk customer service.
super-user for assistance, in order to see whether the issue could be solved at a branch level. If the problem could not be solved at branch level, depending on the nature of the query whether it concerned information or technology, the super-user would liaise with D5. Otherwise the super-user ought to contact the computer Help Desk for assistance.

4.3.8.1 Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa computer training

According to interviewee D2, a condition of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa partnership was for staff to fulfil a predetermined number of modules in a computer training certificate course. The course was over and above the usual tasks and training requirements of staff; nevertheless was considered essential in order to supply a basic level of computer support for members of the public who use the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa. As the course consisted of online, self-paced modules provided through a technical institute, staff appeared to be at various stages of completion of the compulsory units. In the foreseeable future, D2 advised the Government funded computer training course would be offered free to volunteers along with the general public.

In fact Manager D1 said that one obligation of joining the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa partnership is to support customers in the use of the network; however she felt how that is fulfilled is open to interpretation. This manager acknowledged there was a requirement for a formal computer training programme to be offered to library users, especially since the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa was introduced. However, this was viewed to be not feasible in the near future due to a lack of staff resources to perform training. It was hoped that the Library Management Team would acquire the means to resource a training programme that included the use of hardware and software features of the People’s Network, in conjunction with using the library in general at some stage in the future.

The absence of computer training for library users was an issue raised by participants in focus groups A and B. In particular, these participants felt there was a greater requirement for the UCL to provide training since the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project came complete with new computers and hardware for multimedia applications and internet functionality, and also because of the constantly evolving nature of computer technology. Participant B3 noted that computer training was available to her elsewhere through the
Senior Net organisation; however that organisation did not cater for the Apple Mac training that she specifically required. Nevertheless, participant B3 along with B4 and A2 asserted that the UCL ought to provide free internet training; otherwise, as B3 and B4 suggested, at a reasonable price that was value for money.

Focus group participants in the over fifty-one age groups asserted many elderly people within communities were afraid of technology; albeit would like to overcome this obstacle and learn how to operate a PC; particularly to access the internet for information, along with social and entertainment activities. Although participants A2 and B3 were aware that there was a community organisation, namely Senior Net, that was dedicated to teaching computer skills to people aged 50 years and over, they felt computer training in local library branches would provide better social interaction in a more homely environment. Thus, participant A2 suggested “classes or friendly get-togethers where technology is made to look non-formidable …” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009), ought to be a new library service offered by library branches.

Further, as children are taught information computing technology (ICT) at school, participants suggested children train the elder citizens in basic computer skills and internet functions. Hence, publicised social events by way of a cup of tea around the computer were deemed to be a pleasant approach for computer training of the elderly.

Focus group participants discussed a number of computer programmes they would like to learn. Of the applications, some required training on the electronic library catalogue system (OPAC) and library databases of which the UCL subscribed to. Others required training on how to effectively navigate the internet, principally via the Google search engine. Skype and Bebo were mentioned by those participants who were interested in social networking and eager to communicate online with family and friends. Participant A1 pointed out her Apple Mac laptop came complete with a webcam that she did not understand how to use; thus would welcome Skype training.

4.3.9 Technology Change
UCL Library patrons had generally noticed positive changes since the introduction of the Government’s Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa scheme. Library users B1 and B4...
highlighted the fact that computer usage is now free of charge, even for non-members, whereas previously, when public computers were supplied by Council, users were charged one dollar for fifteen minutes and two dollars for half an hour of computer time. Moreover, Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa computers and printers were newer than the hardware previously provided by the UCL. More hardware and software applications had become available, such as webcams and Skype. Generally participants in all three focus groups noticed that an improved computer service was now available at their local library branch even though most stated it was unlikely they would have cause to use them.

4.3.10 Future Technology

Participant A1 raised the issue of the possible future impact that electronic books, such as Kindle - a wireless electronic reading device marketed by Amazon - may have on libraries. Having recently viewed an anecdote of a media celebrity that promoted the product as an easy and comfortable device to take to bed and read as one would a book, participant A1 was keen to personally test the product. Participant A1 felt there would be enormous potential for the use of electronic books in the UCL but was unsure how this advancement would impact on libraries.

Another participant A2 was concerned such a technological advancement in libraries was certain to incur a financial cost, for instance, the introduction of a charge to download electronic books. Participant A2 felt electronic books ought to be cheaper for publishers to produce compared with the costs involved with printing hard copies of literature; however, believed such innovations would be more expensive to access than the current hard copy book lending system. Nevertheless, Participant A2 was an advocate of daily newspapers and magazine subscriptions being downloaded directly to a portable reading device for library customers. In sum, participants from focus group A agreed with participant A2 in the electronic versus hard copy of literature debate:

I think it’s been pretty well shown that books are not going to go away. The printed word is still with us. I mean the number of people I know that are very technologically literate that print everything out to read it as a preference, it’s amazing. So books aren’t going to go away” (focus group A, June 13, 2009).

Participant A1 felt the layout of the library branch ought to change to accommodate new
computer technology, for example, webcam communication and multimedia entertainment. Incorporating sound-proof booths for personal Skype conversations or a chat room was thought to be necessary to combat increased noise levels created through making way for a cluster of computers along with wifi connectivity in current open-plan library designs. This was seen to be more problematic since the introduction of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa which enticed a new, more vibrant type of customer to library branches. From an internal perspective, interviewee D5 noted that the role of the UCL had remained constant over time. It was the same role as it had always been, to provide information to customers. However, the form in which that information was made available to patrons was changing from the traditional book to an electronic resource.

A Council vision report based on what communities sought from local Government in the future revealed that high-tech libraries inclusive of more electronic resources with the availability of downloadable books (Unnamed Council, 2008c) were specific user requests. Further, citizens also desired local history to be archived and accessible.

4.3.11 Summary of Findings

In summary, on an organisational level the UCL was seen as having a *single identity* since all who took part in this study correctly identified the UCL as being a subunit of Council, hence corporate identity was well communicated by the Communications division of Council. Library collections and services were standardised throughout all seven library branches. Internal policies, procedures and staff training and development were centralised and developed along with other Council subunits at head office, together with organisational communication and the planning of most library events and other library services. However, at branch level a *single identity* framework appeared to be problematic, because the UCL was viewed as being constructed of a multiplicity of identities, each shaped by community characteristics that created differentiation and a unique atmosphere amongst branches. Staff, volunteers, and library members identified more closely with their individual branch as opposed to the overall identity which created some tension within the organisation. Overall, managers preferred one identity, but were aware that ultimately the organisation needed to operate with some flexibility, in order to satisfy the unique demographic profiles of communities which library branches were embedded into.

A consistent finding across interviews and all three focus groups was the view that the
UCL is the cornerstone of local communities, providing an invaluable not-for-profit civic service to help fulfil peoples’ educational and leisure needs. This was primarily achieved through lending an array of books and other items which library users did not have the means to purchase from retail outlets. Being a mainstay of community life is a major characteristic of the organisation’s identity that has endured the test of time, since the consensus from interviewees and focus group participants alike, was that the UCL has always been perceived as the heart of local communities. Nevertheless, even though the UCL was open to all, it was evident some sectors of the community experienced social exclusion, for instance, ethnic minorities. All participants zealously felt that if the organisation ceased to exist, the loss of library services to local communities would have the catastrophic effect of a reduced quality of life for many citizens.

The UCL has experienced a positive change in image and visual identity over recent years, especially in regards to library space, since library branches have been funded, managed, and staffed by Council. However, some disparity and tension exists between library volunteers and Council personnel from the transfer of community locus of control to local government. Nowadays a multitude of library services and resources in various formats are available in comfortable and contemporary purpose-built premises that are kept track of via high-tech computer technology systems. The introduction of new technology to the UCL environment has produced more self-help opportunities and freed staff to be more productive in other areas. However, this has negatively affected the interpersonal communication aspect of customer service through fewer opportunities for social interaction with staff.

The UCL focused on delivering quality customer service to communities through employing highly qualified and skilled staff and investing time and money into staff training and development. Systems were also in place to monitor staff performance in relation to their individual role objectives and delivery of customer service.

On the other hand, no structured training or development opportunities were offered to volunteers who assisted staff by performing low-level operational tasks, and who outnumbered them on a nine to one ratio. Volunteers often interacted directly with customers and any inconsistencies in service were overlooked by participants because they understood volunteers were not staff and were performing a civic service for their
community. Managers stated the use of volunteers created a distinctive identity in the sense that it was viewed as the only New Zealand public library to heavily draw upon volunteers to perform basic operational library functions at branch level.

According to managers, clientele, collections and services were seen to be more or less uniform throughout all library branches. There were many commonalities between branches, for instance, *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* usage, book collections, and internal open plan layout with designated areas for children, teenagers and computer users. The collections and services supplied to each library branch were essentially the same, although slightly different approaches were utilised in the presentation of collections and delivery of services.

Internal communication was structured with regular staff meetings and information was readily available on the staff intranet. Communication between UCL personnel and volunteers was minimal and face-to-face due to volunteers not being considered part of the organisation, for instance, they had no access to organisational information via the intranet and were excluded from staff meetings. However, branches did operate a comments book where information relating to volunteer customer service was recorded.

Both managers and focus group participants agreed that the organisation could improve its external communication processes. Steps were underway to streamline mass communication with this task being transferred to the Council Communications subunit. Participants felt more information regarding their local library branch or new library developments ought to be communicated via a noticeboard in each branch foyer along with a monthly electronic newsletter. However, the UCL had a policy which prohibited the latter. Otherwise library members were happy to seek information via interpersonal communication with library personnel when questions arose.

The UCL fulfilled the social needs of the community in a number of ways, for example, by providing a family orientated, social space for friends and families of the community to meet. Library branches offered extensive library collections for people to seek and share information, or simply enjoy as part of a leisure time activity. Library events were held on a regular basis. However, these had limited customer appeal with the exception of children’s events and collaborative community events. The introduction of free use of
Communicating an Organisation’s Identity

computers and wifi to the UCL environment via the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa initiative had introduced a new type of customer who preferred to socialise using multimedia technology (e.g. Skype and Facebook) and access library information electronically in the virtual rather than physical world.

In regards to localisation versus centralisation the findings indicated a tangible disjuncture between the way in which the library organisation is identified at branch and organisational levels. Nevertheless, the organisation was seen by some managers to have a contradictory image as the identity differed between branch level and organisational level. The organisation appeared to be united in the sense that the diversity of individual branches was governed on a more centralised level to provide a certain amount of consistent identity. Yet this localisation versus centralisation phenomenon created tension between the organisation operating with one identity for all branches and each branch operating individually within their respective communities.

From a management perspective, making optimal use of technology as it became available was one way to fulfil an element of the mission statement and improve communities in a positive way. A distinctive characteristic of the UCL was that even though most library branches were located in rural townships, the organisation was clearly up-to-date with library technology from an internal perspective operating with an international Library Management System and state of the art radio-frequency security system, and also an external perspective with self-service book check-outs and free internet and wi-fi access available for library users.

Overall, the key findings were that disjuncture existed given that the UCL operated with both a single identity and multiple identities. This was attributable to individual branches adapting to each community in to which they were embedded. As mentioned, the organisation has always been perceived as a cornerstone of local communities; however, certain sectors of the community appear to be socially excluded. Hence, the UCL continually adapts library services in line with the ever-changing social needs of the people it serves. Interestingly, from inception to Council operation of library branches in recent years, volunteers have always been a unique element of UCL operation and identity, a major characteristic which differentiates the organisation from other New Zealand public libraries. As a result, the organisation has developed into a well-resourced and
technologically advanced community asset.

* * *

The following chapter will discuss the main findings in relation to the research questions of how organisational managers and library members describe UCL identity, and how their perceptions of identity align with the mission statement. The thematic analysis and discussion approach is utilised.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Analysis

This chapter develops from key findings identified at the end of chapter four in the areas of identity, customer service and technology. It is divided into three sections using Albert and Whetten's (1985) tripartite identity model noted previously in chapter two. This model is commonly used as a basis for many organisational identity studies to reveal the central characteristics or predominant qualities of an organisation, distinctive characteristics which differentiate the organisation from others especially in changeable environments, and enduring characteristics which remain constant over time and are rooted within the history and heritage of an organisation. In relation to this case study, these three identity components integrate in order to produce an ever evolving UCL identity, in line with the changing social needs of local communities. The discussion focuses on how managers and library customers perceived the identity of the UCL.

5.1 Central Characteristics

There are three main areas central to UCL identity which will be discussed in the following section. First, the tensions which exist between single versus multiple identities. Second, the tensions that occur between each community's favoured localisation versus the organisation’s centralisation of library services. Third, the fact that the organisation is customer service orientated is discussed; and finally, how UCL services are communicated internally and externally.

Of prominence was the fact that internal and external perceptions of organisational identity were comparable, but differed in complexity. From an external outlook, focus group participants generally perceived the central characteristics of UCL identity in simple terms, as a free and technologically advanced book lending service for the benefit of all citizens. The high use of technology was an unforeseen finding, especially since most UCL branches were located in poorer rural communities. In these areas most incomes were well below $50,000 per annum (Statistics New Zealand, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), and contemporary telecommunications infrastructure (i.e. fibre optic broadband networks) was sporadic and not as prevalent as in metropolitan areas. Moreover, UCL branches were seen as pleasant environments complemented by staff who were friendly and competent.
Communicating an Organisation’s Identity

146

librarians. Volunteers were seen to be a strong link in integrating the UCL with local communities. Branches were positioned at the heart of local communities, and provided for by means of local Government rates along with central Government contributions.

Consistent with corporate identity literature, all manager interviewees appeared to be clear in their minds about what constitutes the central characteristics of the organisation’s identity, to the extent that most managers could readily recite the mission statement, which Falsey (1989) highlights is of major importance since the mission communicates to stakeholders two important messages of who the organisation is and what it does.

The ethos of management was seen to be imbued with the mission, vision and positioning statements, which were all documented in the form of a public pamphlet, namely the 2006-2011 strategic plan (UCL 2008b). However, this philosophy did not necessarily transfer downwards through the organisational hierarchy to frontline staff. Employees at lower levels were believed by interviewees to put less value on organisational strategy, given that staff were not consciously aware of how the organisation’s strategic plan could be directly transferable to their daily tasks.

Overall the organisational identity views of manager interviewees were more complex than those of focus group participants, with strong focus placed on customer service outcomes. Moreover, interviewees took a somewhat philosophical stance, for every manager was united in the notion that the organisation’s identity ought to reflect the first part of the UCL vision statement (rather than mission statement), in that “libraries help people meet their social and cultural needs for recreation, information and education”. Furthermore, collectively, all involved in the study acceded that UCL branches “are welcoming places for social contact and are the pride of our communities” (Unnamed Council, 2008b).

5.1.2 Single Identity versus Multiple Identities

The central characteristics or essence of UCL identity appeared to reveal tensions between perceptions of single versus multiple identities and centralisation versus localisation of library branches. A major pattern that became apparent was the juxtaposition of the UCL communicating a single corporate identity, while each library branch communicated individual adaptations of the organisation’s identity, in order to blend and harmonise with
the local communities to which they were of service. The managers interviewed acknowledged that these multiple individual identities at branch level create what Humphreys and Brown (2002) refer to as oppositional identity duality, which as a result created tensions between the localisation of services responsive to local needs and the centralisation of services typical of local Government institutions. This meant it was a challenge to promote the fact that the UCL was a singular Council-operated library system, given that in reality branches “operated as individual community libraries, each with their own unique identity” (D2, in-depth interview, 9 July, 2009).

The UCL is akin to many organisations that operate subsidiary branches in different geographical areas in the sense that dual organisational identification (Vora & Kostova, 2007) has developed whereby staff identification occurs simultaneously with both individual branches and the organisation as a whole. Thus, staff feel a sense of unity with two entities instead of a single overall corporate identity. From a visual identity perspective, according to Olins (1989) corporate identity model, this decentralisation is indicative of an endorsed organisational structure in which each branch operates with individual branch names along with the overarching Council name and identity. However, manager interviewees advised the organisational structure ideally ought to reflect what Olins defines as a monolithic or centralised structure. Through this type of structure an explicit and cohesive identity develops which is arguably the most effective way in which to create employee loyalty and develop the UCL as a brand to be controlled by Council. This results in one identity for the organisation as a whole, inclusive of a sole name and set of standards and procedures that all employees comprehend. With all staff and branches operating in unity, customers ought to receive a clearer idea of what to expect in terms of product and service, which in turn would satisfy the needs of customers to a greater extent, as well as increase customer loyalty.

However, the multiple identity claims (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; Pratt & Foreman, 2000) that currently exist to some extent complicates organisational identification in the sense that each identity operates inclusive of its own set of norms and expectations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), which is how UCL branches are operating to varying extents. Conflicts and contradictions, such as library signage inconsistencies throughout library branches, are evident as staff emphasise different levels of compliance to the various aspects of individual branch identities in conjunction with the overall UCL identity. This
in effect has led to the communication of an incongruent organisational identity to external stakeholders which was especially noticeable to a few focus group participants who made regular visits to more than one library branch.

Spatial fragmentation through branches being dispersed over a large geographical area of Council jurisdiction could partially explain why dual identities at branch and organisational levels have occurred in this case study. In particular branches A and C, which were located in the north and west of the Council district some distance from head office, had more unique identities than branch B which was close to head office. Hence, branch B had a more controlled identity in line with the UCL corporate identity. Moreover, endemic from settler days is the fact that libraries were originally created by communities rather than local authorities (Dewe, 2006), which contributes to the inherently autonomous nature of community library operation, and also explains why the organisation attempts to be all things to all people, which according to Dewe is a prescription for failure.

Some managers agreed with focus group C participants in that perceptions of separatism through spatial fragmentation is ingrained in UCL history, having eventuated from many years of rural community isolation, and is one explanation for the current manifestation of a multiplicity of individual branch identities. However, nowadays the development of multiple identities within the organisation of this case study contradicts much literature which implicitly assumes that the identity dynamics of organisations with multiple identities are shaped by senior management (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; Pratt & Foreman, 2000) and not by lower levels of the organisational structure. From this perspective, carefully crafted cues of organisational identity are communicated downwards through the hierarchy to lower-level organisational members, in this case library branch employees. In turn, branch employees filter, interpret, and then act upon these signals in the interest of the organisation, except from their branch level standpoint. Thus, this creates an additional organisational identity. Over time, if mismanaged, these multiple branch identities create tensions because it is possible that some mis-representation of the actual organisational identity could occur.

Since the 1970s, some researchers have been defining an organisation’s identity by means of corporate visual identity (Melewar & Saunders, 1998) inclusive of corporate name, logo and other symbolism (Melewar, et al., 2006) since according to Olins (1989), graphic
symbolism is the easiest way through which to present organisational identity. Subsequently, one explanation for the UCL being perceived by organisational interviewees and focus group participants as possessing a dual organisational identity may lie in visual corporate communications, of which the element of signage particularly depicts image and identity (Dewe, 2006) to external stakeholders, especially at branch level.

Moreover, UCL documentation adopts the corporate marketing logo of the overarching Council, which Dewe (2006) suggests it is often an obligatory act rather than through choice. This logo is used in conjunction with each individual UCL subunit brand name which features on external signage and official documentation in accordance with Council style guides. Concurrently, a number of ad hoc internal signage techniques intermingle with corporate style signage from branch to branch. Therefore, internal signage is another example of how the Council’s corporate style guide conflicts with localised library branch perceptions of what ought to be communicated to their audiences. Managers and staff adapt corporate level signage to suit their local branch needs which produces a miscellany of signs throughout UCL branches. As a consequence, the organisation appears to visually communicate up to eight identities at any given time.

Aside from the fact that participants were unfamiliar with the central characteristics of the UCL, the organisation’s identity in terms of the observable peripheral elements of corporate identity could be described with ease, although on a superficial level. Participants, for instance, were familiar with the public identity or external communication conveyed by the organisation through signs and symbols representative of visual identity, which according to Hong-Wei and Balmer (2007), provide the UCL with an opportunity to communicate to citizens its corporate brand or what the organisation is ultimately about. These were inclusive of graphic design elements of brand name, corporate logo and signage, in conjunction with self-presentation aspects in the vein of corporate communications and employee behaviour, along with aesthetics in the form of appealing library décor and furnishings. At the time of writing the exception is Branch C, which was preparing to relocate to purpose-built premises. All of which seem to link back to a well-planned corporate strategy.

All the same, from an organisational behaviour perspective, organisational identity is a socially constructed phenomenon, shaped and influenced through relationships,
experiences, participation and discourse, which in effect can lead to a transformation of identity (Campbell, 2005). From this perspective, it appears that despite efforts by management, branch employees who in a sense act as brand ambassadors for the UCL, are inclined to form adaptations of identity cues at lower organisational levels, which may be attempts for staff to better assimilate with the communities of which they serve. However, from a postmodern perspective, Pratt and Foreman (2000) state multiple organisational identities prove to be problematic in the face of ever-changing external environments and ought to be managed as a means to cope with identity differentiation in order to provide future value.

5.1.3 Localisation versus Centralisation

A contextual issue in this study, also noted by Harris (1998) in his exploratory research on community perceptions of public libraries, appears to lie in the fact that people’s perceptions of social services tend to be more localised as opposed to centralised. Thus, in relation to this case study, focus group participants preferred to receive personalised invitations of upcoming events from their local library branch rather than through current mass radio and print media advertising, organised centrally through the Council’s Communications subunit. Nevertheless, at branch level, staff encountered some opportunity to personalise invitations to forthcoming library events through face-to-face communication or non-verbally through displaying pamphlets at the front desk, for example. However, since an organisational policy vetoes the use of email for the sending of social messages to library customers en masse, a rift was apparent in the sense that “if you’re in the loop you know [about library events] and if you’re outside [the loop] you don’t” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009). As a result, an underlying feeling of social exclusion appeared to be evident for some focus group participants. Conversely, social inclusion was experienced by others who seemed to have cultivated stronger interpersonal relationships with frontline UCL staff.

5.1.4 Customer Service

An interesting contributing factor of how quality customer service is achieved came up in organisational documentation analysis. Part of the constructive culture of the UCL could stem from the fact that all actions and rhetoric of organisational personnel, from the
overarching Council CEO downwards to frontline library assistants and volunteers, are required to be of a positive nature. This was in the sense that it is imperative that all personnel refrain from engaging in negative discourse in relation to the organisation. Since this appeared to be a contractual condition of employment and volunteerism, those who work for the organisation tend to be a highly committed and homogeneous stakeholder group, and thus, are high identifiers (Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1999) of the organisation. This in turn suggests the outcome of constructive employee and volunteer behaviour aligns with the Council mission of “everything we do makes a positive difference for our communities” (Unnamed Council, 2008a), which ultimately contributes to the creation of a positive people-orientated climate within the organisation, as experienced by participants and interviewees.

Communicating excellent customer service originated from senior management level, then filtered down to staff through comprehensive staff training, regular group meetings and individual staff performance targets and assessments. The reinforcement of key customer service messages was communicated through written documentation using minutes of meetings, web pages and staff folders on the staff intranet. As a result, the delivery of excellent customer service is deeply ingrained within the organisational culture. This is a key element of identity which appears to reverberate internally throughout the organisation and is favourably acknowledged by the customers they serve.

However, volunteers who also provide customer service to a lesser extent are excluded from receiving structured customer service training as a rule. Alternatively, volunteers receive impromptu face-to-face communication and on-the-job training when and wherever necessary. This is seen to be both a more time and cost effective way through which to inform and train over 400 volunteers that work in UCL branches. Since volunteers are excluded from all staff meetings, the delivery of updated organisational information appears to be sporadic in nature. Communication to volunteers is mainly informal, either interpersonally through branch staff or via entries in volunteer comments books located in each library branch, unless it is in relation to an organisational project. Therefore, in relation to volunteerism, a prominent contributing factor in the provision of excellent customer service is due to the altruistic personality types and positive attitudes of community members who volunteer their services over and above structured organisational training or access to internal communication channels such as staff meetings and intranet
An area for improvement that was highlighted by interview results was that the UCL would likely benefit from initiating a volunteer programme (see Brudney & Gazley, 2002; Freund, 2005) to better communicate organisational policies and procedures. In addition, making use of the pool of skills and talent that volunteers possess as a result of qualifications or bygone career paths may well fast track UCL projects that are pending owing to a lack of manpower, such as the fulfilment of the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* terms and conditions to provide computer training or the facilitation of library events.

### 5.1.5 Internal and External Communication of UCL Services

Communication channels used to advertise the range of library services did not always prove to be effective because they were not preferential customer mediums. Focus group participants felt the necessity for more information to find out what auxiliary library services were provided by the UCL. They were generally of the opinion that there were inconsistencies in communication on the range of services available, together with new developments and changes to the library environment, which as one participant stated “seems to be a glaring problem” (A2, focus group A, June 13, 2009). The issue did not appear to be a result of the quantity of organisational information provided en masse by the Council’s Communications subunit, communicated through various official documents, from Council plans and annual reports to pamphlets and newspaper articles. It appeared to be largely due to participants’ failure to notice this information because of the general sense of information overload the individuals were experiencing through living in the information society (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006) of today. This point indicates that customer relations are not as healthy as management believe, since it is apparent that two elements within the organisation’s mission statement of listening to and learning from customers have been disregarded in this instance by the utilisation of ineffective channels of communication in the process of reporting organisational information to customers.

Overall, the preferred methods of communication differed somewhat from current practice. Focus group participants wanted more face-to-face dialogue with staff and volunteers, periodic emails and a bulletin board positioned in each library branch foyer, and not centralised communication orchestrated through the Council’s communications department.
The abundance of leaflets scattered throughout branches, such as the *keys to enrichment* pamphlet, which details the 2006-2011 plan inclusive of the mission, vision and positioning statements of the organisation were generally overlooked by customers because they were not the target audience for this information.

An area for improvement from both the focus group and interview results arose on account of various inconsistencies in the organisational communication of exactly what resources and services are available for library users, both in the physical and digital sense. Moreover, a lack of information on how to use some new resources, for instance, the applications that are available through the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* appeared to be problematic. This is seen by focus group participants to have a negative impact on library users who feel their lives could be enriched with more knowledge and training of new services as they become available.

Two components of Soenen and Moingeon’s (2002) five facets model are of use to answer the second part of the research question of how organisational members’ perceptions of organisational identity align with the organisation’s stated mission. Facet one - professed identity, for instance, focuses on manager perceptions to define identity in terms of the organisation’s internal framework: *Our Common Purpose* (Unnamed Council, 2009c), which encompasses such components as vision, mission, goals, values enablers and competencies. In particular, the mission element of the organisation is “Everything we do makes a positive difference for our communities”.

In effect, the mission statement acts as a communication tool (Bartkus, Glassman, & McAfee, 2000) and is designed to inform audiences of who it is and what it does (Falsey, 1989). In this case study, the mission statement communicates a first-person-plural point of view. This view indicates teamwork, and expresses goodwill towards the target stakeholder group of communities, in order to create an admirable image for the organisation (Stallworth Williams, 2008).

Despite the fact that the mission statement appears too long in this case study, it still plays a role. As Bartkus et al. (2000) argue, it ought to be advantageous to communicate a more realistic scope by simply defining the organisation’s service along with a future goal. The mission allows an organisation to articulate a strong vision (Analoui & Karami, 2003) as in
the case of the UCL, where managers referred to the vision statement daily as a guide for planning and decision-making.

Referring back to Soenen and Moingeon’s (2002) model, facet five - the attributed identity, more commonly known as organisational image, is utilised to reveal how participants view organisational identity from an external, library user approach. Overall, focus group participants’ perceptions seemed to align with the customer service theme, since all were in agreement that excellent customer service was delivered throughout branches. However, as Dutton and Dukerich (1991) documented in their study of the New York Port Authority, the internal views of organisational identity and external appraisals of image are closely linked. This indicates tensions may arise through disjuncture from the localisation of services responsive to local needs as opposed to the centralisation of services typical of local Government institutions like the UCL. Thus, a mismatch between UCLs centralised model of library operation and individual communities has created the general perception that each library branch operates with oppositional identity duality (Humphreys & Brown, 2002).

The planned restructuring of regional public libraries was of great concern to manager D4. Since manager D4 perceived that the UCL consisted of not one but multiple identities, she felt there was a foreseeable challenge in the sense that the UCL ought to continue to meet the needs of individual communities under the new Council system. As D4 explained:

   If we are [restructured] I think there is a real danger of losing that local flavour to our Libraries. I think that we need to work really hard to ensure that those customers at the local level continue to receive that level of customer service that’s tailored and focused to their needs. So that will be a huge challenge as we move into the future. (D4, in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009).

5.2 Enduring Characteristics

There are four main areas where the UCL displays enduring characteristics which will be discussed in the following section. The first sub-theme discusses how the social needs of library customers within local communities are catered for. The second, sub-theme discusses how the UCL accommodates social inclusion. The third sub-theme, explains how some sections of the community experience social exclusion, and finally the section
ends by discussing the underlying theme of ageism.

5.2.1 Social Needs

An underlying theme that came from the emotional responses of most participants in focus group discussions appears to be a strong sense of community spirit, which according to Balmer (2001b) ought to instil an ethereal dimension to the corporate brand element of corporate identity. Furthermore, with reference to Balmer’s mnemonic cultural, intricate, tangible, ethereal and commitment (C²ITE) corporate brand model, the effects of the implicit organisational commitment dimension from all personnel appears to ultimately result in customer loyalty which lies at the basis of a robust community spirit.

All organisational managers were of the opinion that the social needs of community members are accommodated in part through the hosting of library events. Book clubs and children’s activities, such as Storytime and Wriggle and Rhyme, proved to be very popular amongst focus group participants with children and grandchildren, given they are seen as an enjoyable and participatory way in which to introduce literacy to children; as well as to provide socialisation opportunities for mothers and children within local communities, all at no extra cost. However, there is little community support for most other library extension activities. This may suggest the target market for UCL events is contained within two social groups – children, within an educational and developmental sense, and traditional library users, who read for leisure and wish to explore ideas through interaction with others. Further, the population is aging and the baby boomer generation is starting to retire. However, events targeted at this cohort, who participants stated were often lonely and visited the library for recreation, were not planned. Nevertheless, the organisation continues to facilitate various events, some of which are seen to be unrelated to core library services and were reportedly unpopular with library users. This appeared to be because events were interpreted by management as being a tangible way to help fulfil the social dimension of the vision statement, which is ultimately an integral aspect of the organisation’s projected identity, despite the fact that some focus group participants failed to see how the hosting of events ought to be a social role of the library. Alternatively, most focus group participants thought it more relevant for the Council’s community centre subunit to facilitate many of the events hosted by library branches.
5.2.2 Social Inclusion

Generally, focus group participants and organisational interviewees both felt the UCL fulfils a basic human need in accommodating social inclusion (Benton Foundation, 1997) by simply providing a neutral communal meeting place for a wide cross-section of the community who may feel socially isolated and yearn for companionship (Williamson, et al., 2010). In fact, some focus group participants reported having first-hand experience of this social phenomenon by means of changes to their social circumstances, such as entering retirement, motherhood or disability. According to Campbell (2005), the opportunity for people to interact in order to share experiences and learn from others within their locality develops a sense of belonging amongst citizens. This in turn enhances citizenship through people feeling a greater connection with their community, and forming part of their social life, as indicated by focus group participants.

Some aspects of focus group participants’ perceptions in connection to library space could be construed as part of the organisation’s role is to facilitate a modern day public sphere (Habermas, 1989). In a sense, library branches are viewed as a neutral social space for citizens to meet, where information disseminates by means of communications between cross-sections of the diverse community (Audunson, 2004), for instance, staff and volunteers, friends and acquaintances, or serendipitously amid the general public at will, either informally or formally through organised events. In this sense, the UCL as a public library has maintained its traditional role as being an agent for democracy and enlightenment, through its provision of a meeting place for all groups within the multicultural communities it serves.

Additionally, the library is seen by some participants and interviewees to be a meeting place in the virtual context of a global public sphere (Thussu, 2006) within the digital information society of today, by means of the Government Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa initiative. However, because this initiative is financed using Government funds, this library is not truly a public arena independent of Government. Even so, the UCL could be seen to fulfil part of the vision statement, to facilitate the community’s need for social contact in the virtual sense, by bridging the gap between physical and geographical spaces through the provision of Web 2.0 applications; for example, a library blog, Facebook group, Flickr and Twitter accounts (Unnamed Council, 2009c). Furthermore, citizens may connect and debate in online forums, for instance, through the provision of
social networking applications and in doing so, receive greater accessibility to information independent of Government and business interests.

Nevertheless, the more senior and technology-phobic of focus group participants, who were brought up in the silent and civic generations without the aid of computers, felt new technology acted as a barrier and that they were unable to easily adapt to a computerised library environment. Regardless of this personal barrier, they were open to the idea of being trained in computer applications and library technologies if presented with the opportunity. However, this training which ought to be provided under the conditions of the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* agreement was not envisaged in the near future due to a lack of staff resources. According to research, computer training roles are ideally suited to the baby boomer generation of volunteers starting to retire who are generally better educated and technologically skilled compared to previous generations (Foster-Bey, et al., 2007; Salt, 2003; Williamson, et al., 2010). Baby boomers seek to manage, mentor and coach, particularly in the educational and youth sectors (Foster-Bey, et al., 2007; Salt, 2003), in order to make the best use of various accrued skills and thus it is felt that routine menial tasks which are currently the only option for UCL volunteers are inappropriate for baby boomers.

Despite the lack of staff resources to facilitate *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* computer training, participants felt the library was an ideal setting in which to learn new skills, and indicated they would prefer the library environment over other training sites specifically deployed to train senior citizens, for instance SeniorNet – a nationwide network dedicated to training the over 50s age group in computing. Aside from pleasant surroundings, another reason why patrons were keen to learn computer skills at the library as opposed to other organisations was the perception that staff were always friendly, patient, knowledgeable and extremely helpful, thus the confidence that library staff ought to provide superior training. Participants shared the belief that they would feel less anxious to confront their technology fears in a more familiar and relaxed atmosphere where their encounters with staff was already proven to be supportive of their needs.

**5.2.3 Social Exclusion**

Even though the ethos of public libraries is that they are open to all, social exclusion was
apparent in findings, for instance, members of a local Maori marae within the proximity of Branch B, and Asian ethnic groups throughout all branches. A degree of ethnocentrism was identified in community library culture because as two organisational managers pointed out, many library services are targeted to fulfil the needs of the demographic profile of participants in this case study (European New Zealanders) who are also representative of the general population.

Managers could not offer reasons for this phenomenon as no organisational research had been conducted. However, this finding suggests the public library is not regarded as a meeting place for social activity by high-context cultures within New Zealand’s multicultural society. With regards to the Maori culture, studies dating back to the 1960s, such as one by the New Zealand Library Association Maori Service Committee (1963) have consistently found problems relating to the knowledge of, and access to, library services amongst the Maori population, particularly Maori youth. One reason for this is the fact that the marae is the heart of Maori communities rather than public library institutions. Being a high-context culture, information is traditionally communicated in a story-based oratory manner (Devito, O'Rourke, & O'Neill, 2000) on a Maori marae, and not largely through written form from a library institution as in a low-context European culture. Other issues included the desire to have solely Maori libraries, along with the need for more targeted promotion of libraries within their communities.

Given that the public library service developed from a mid-nineteenth Century mainstream Anglo-American model (Dewe, 2006), inclusive of a middle-class audience who possess English values (Muddiman, et al., 2000), it seemed reasonable to focus group participants that services had continued to accommodate the dominant culture, as mentioned in chapter one, consisting of eighty-one percent European population in Branches A and B and a lesser seventy percent in the more rural Branch C (Statistics New Zealand, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). In fact focus group participants (none of who identified themselves as Maori) showed little interest, if any, with regards to New Zealand heritage or cultural resources overall. Instead their preference was for European culture and heritage which related to their family ancestries and personal identities, as opposed to the native Maori culture of New Zealand.

Historically there has always been a disjuncture between Maori and European cultures
within New Zealand. Maori language was originally oral and story based within rural tribes, in other words a high-context culture (Hall, 1976), and thus, the European concept of a library served no purpose. However, in the nineteenth century early missionaries soon developed orthography for Maori language and in 1987, when Maori was declared by Government to be an official language of New Zealand, transcriptions of Maori by early missionaries were of national archive importance (Szekeley, 2002). Organisational interviewees stated that their attempts to promote New Zealand’s biculturalism through the lending of Maori cultural resources, for example, prominent displays of Maori books within all library branches, had no marked effect on the lending of this genre of the collection. This indicated what is important to Europeans is quite different from what is important to Maori and other minority cultures.

On an international level, New Zealand holds membership to UNESCO, and follows its manifesto and guidelines for development (The public library service, 2001), which advocates that it is a basic human right for public library services to be open to everyone, and is not solely directed at mainstream members of the community, especially in regards to the access and understanding of information. Thus, it was of concern to some managers that wider community consultation has not yet been conducted due to a lack of resources, to ascertain why some minority groups within local communities seem to feel a sense of alienation. One of the four main roles of a community library is to help people feel connected and a part of their community (New Zealand Public Libraries, 2008), and thus, the non-utilisation of library services (Lockyer-Benzie, 2004) disadvantages the underprivileged sectors of society, originally the target group of public libraries. There was some conjecture by managers that this social exclusion is due to such factors as physical disability, cultural or linguistic challenges, as well as organisational or environmental barriers. Nevertheless, the extent of social exclusion is uncertain. Therefore, collaboration and wider consultation with other agencies and community groups is clearly required to ascertain the extent of social exclusion and to surmount possible obstacles to ensure library services provide equal opportunity to marginalized members of communities and conform with the role of the community library.

5.2.3.1 Ageism

The underlying theme of ageism was perceived to have an impact on the organisation’s
identity in two ways. First, from an internal organisational perspective, it is evident that frontline staff and volunteers who provide frontline customer service in library branches are more mature in age than their colleagues who serve customers in other public libraries within the region. The nurturing feeling participants felt from staff could have been due to the fact that library branch personnel are more qualified and experienced as a result of being at least twenty years old, whereas other New Zealand libraries may employ school leavers from the age of seventeen years old, albeit in a junior role of assistance to librarians such as ‘shelvers’. Since experience develops with age, this finding points to a possible association between an older workforce and what focus group participants consider to be a higher level of customer service delivery. The employment of more experienced and mature staff was made possible through savings on salary and wages, by drawing on the large pool of voluntary labour available from communities to perform menial library tasks, such as the scanning and replacement of returned materials to shelves. This distinctive characteristic of the use of volunteers in UCL branches frees up staff to concentrate on more complex tasks and specialty areas of library operation as well as focus on customer service.

Second, the onslaught of the baby boomer generation retirement means populations are ageing within communities in line with trends of the general population in Western societies of the twenty-first Century (Dewe, 2006). Therefore, it is likely that customer interests and needs will respectively change to accommodate the age-related challenges of library users that will be brought forth, such as degenerative physical disabilities.

With respect to volunteerism, manager interviewees along with the sole volunteer interviewee pointed out a majority of UCL volunteers belong to the civic generation and to a lesser extent, the baby boomer generation. Within the demographic category of age, the findings of this study reflect the findings of research conducted by Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1996) and Putnam (2000), whereby the highest rate of volunteerism was of the 65-74 female age group belonging to the silent generation, who having lived through world war two were used to pulling together for a common cause, had time on their hands and wanted to give back to their community.

Unlike the results of studies by Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1996) as well as Warburton, et al. (2004), the proactive recruitment of community members for volunteer roles is deemed
to be an unnecessary undertaking for the UCL, for as organisational interviewees noted, a volunteer waiting list was in existence with a generous supply of potential candidates who felt a desire to give something back to their communities. Even so, the retention of volunteers of the baby boomer generation onwards could be a challenge for the UCL since as Foster-Bey et al. (2007) found, the education and youth services that attract volunteers of this generation are markedly different from previous generations, where the focus was on religious, civic and political based volunteerism. However, managers felt that permitting volunteers to perform educational and youth activities within the UCL could compromise their excellent customer service delivery, even though it was evident more staff were needed to perform educational programmes such as obligatory Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa computer training. Thus, even though the volunteer interviewee welcomed the idea of greater responsibilities through performing more meaningful work in line with her education level and skill set, managers could not foresee this being part of the UCL employment model in the future, which could lead to volunteer attrition.

5.3 Distinctive Characteristics

There are three main areas in which the UCL distinguishes itself from other New Zealand public libraries which will be discussed in the following section. First, the utilisation of over 400 community volunteers for basic library operation. Second, how the organisation embraces change. Third, the fact that the organisation is arguably the most technologically advanced (The public library service, 2001) rural library institution within New Zealand.

5.3.1 Volunteerism

This study highlights the central value of volunteerism within the UCL. Again the volunteerism theme is entwined within the organisation’s identity, this time in the strong sense of community spirit experienced by participants when visiting a library branch. This appears to have been enriched through the deployment of an organisational subgroup of library volunteers, who, according to managers, provide an enormous amount of manpower free of charge. Freund (2005) advances that the sense of spirit occurs because volunteers value the organisation’s mission statement and actively want to assist the organisation in serving their local communities. Yet historically, libraries were created in hard economic times (Northey, 1998) similar to current conditions, and thus, the utilisation of volunteers
means substantial monetary savings to the organisation and ultimately ratepayers, who might be required to provide more financial support in the absence of a volunteer cohort. However, the fact that volunteers are seen as a free source of labour is often argued within volunteer literature, from the stance that if managers address the time and resources required to recruit, train, and manage volunteers (Freund, 2005), then there is an intangible cost ascribed to the deployment of a sizeable UCL volunteer workforce. It was surprising to find that volunteers outnumber employees by a 4 to 1 ratio. Moreover, the organisation did not often implement a formal recruitment process, a finding that is contrary to most literature (e.g. Freund 2005). This was due to the continual stream of prospective volunteers, who appeared to be self-selected as a result of word of mouth communication through informal community networks. In fact there were so many citizens eager to perform civic service at their local library branches that waiting lists were operative; another unexpected finding that contested most literature.

Behavioural factors which motivate community members to volunteer at the UCL are consistent with much literature on volunteerism, for example, the multifactor model, developed by Clary, Snyder and colleagues. Clary, et al. (1992) identify six primary functions or motivations served through volunteerism: values (deep-set beliefs of the importance of helping others), understanding (participation in activities which satisfy the desire to learn), career (seeking opportunities to learn skills transferable to paid employment), social, esteem, and protective (escaping from negative virtues or feelings). The sole UCL volunteer interviewee agreed that all but the final function of escapism applied specifically to her personal motivations. Collectively, interviewees were generally of the opinion that the principal reasons to volunteer at a UCL branch were values, especially in terms of the ethic of service (Grimm Jnr., Dietz, Foster-Bey, Reingold, & Nesbit, 2006) in caring enough to contribute to, and ultimately improve the community in which they live. In addition, for those of a working age, career appeared to be a motivational factor in terms of attaining transferable skills in preparation for paid employment.

Volunteerism is an enduring characteristic of the UCL and also distinguishes it as the only public library in New Zealand to incorporate volunteers into their library model. First, interviewees note the UCL is the only public library within New Zealand to operate with voluntary labour; a unique feature that exists through a “historical arrangement”
between local communities and Council (D4, in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009). Ideally this finding also intertwines with the central and enduring characteristics of this section, owing to the fact that volunteers have always featured as a core element of library branches since the mid 1800s and remain an integral component of everyday library operation. Hence, volunteers are considered to largely contribute to the spirit of UCL libraries, a feature that has endured for over 150 years and is viewed as unique in today’s public library, even though prior to the Council takeover last century, library volunteerism was the norm. However, this study revealed the UCL management has made an exception to the standard national public library operation for the continuity of a community tradition. The community actively participates in the operation of their institution, and since managers perceived volunteerism to be a unique feature of the organisation, it has been noted as a distinctive characteristic.

The findings revealed that participants held very positive and accepting views of the heavy dependence on a large unqualified volunteer workforce with limited librarian experience, who outnumbered paid staff tenfold. They understood that the disproportionate volunteer levels compared to paid staff were both necessary in financial terms to keep ratepayer contributions down; and also to avoid a shortfall in customer service that would otherwise occur in relation to the array of services offered and the diversity of UCL clientele served. This finding contradicts that of Robinson (2006), who argues that while it is difficult to get library professionals to work in rural libraries, assigning unqualified staff to perform professional library functions inevitably devalues librarianship in the eyes of the public, from being viewed as a professional occupation within the information sector, to a job that requires no formal training or qualifications. Moreover, since public opinion influences public policy, a flow-on effect of less funding from local authority budgets could occur, which in effect may result in the allocation of less resources and the mis-management of library collections by unqualified staff in the future. Even so, Evans (2009) states that in the USA, decreasing public library budgets due to slow economic recovery from global recession means volunteers are performing ever increasing roles within library operation.

As previously mentioned, volunteers have been a distinctive component of the UCL since its inception in much the same way as they have featured at the foundation of many public libraries in the USA (Freund, 2005). However, the UCL appears have branches located in towns where a strong sense community spirit is customary since an abundance of
prospective volunteers take the initiative to be involved to the extent that waiting lists are in operation. On the other hand, it is commonplace in the USA for public libraries to carefully plan recruitment drives that are considered expensive but necessary in order to send messages to various target audiences in search of volunteers (Evans, 2009; Freund, 2005). Otherwise Freund (2005) states that volunteers appear in the form of Friends of Libraries (FoL) groups, which volunteer in different, but complementary and corroborative roles to volunteers, for instance, organising book sales, advocacy and fundraising operations. Interestingly, the UCL purports just one individual FoL group in association with branch C. Even though this group uses the FoL title, it is very loosely based on the American FoL concept, and not affiliated in any sense with the international movement. Moreover, some members of this group double as UCL volunteers as well. The group operates solely in an advocacy role to represent the local community and support branch C in local Government issues, for instance, lobbying Council for a larger, contemporary library building. The volunteer interview is less structured and the level of trust afforded by the UCL to a prospective volunteer appears to be much higher in comparison to a USA library, as surprisingly no background checks are performed, which according to Evans (2009), is a requirement in USA libraries which run programmes for children.

Volunteers are not considered to be free labour in the USA as appears to be the perception by interviewee managers in this research. This is because the financial cost ascribed to activities such as recruitment, training and supervision, together with the establishment and maintenance of a volunteer programme in order to make the best use of labour is quantified. Conversely, while the UCL has a staff member to manage volunteers in each branch, no structured volunteer planning or programmes appeared to be evident.

Yet even though it is evident that collectively, volunteers dominate the UCL workforce, the volunteer cohort is devoid of organisational status, and consequently, labelled with a certain social stigmatisation amongst organisational manager interviewees. It is also apparent that volunteers are marginalised to the extent of exclusion from employee development opportunities and fundamental staff resources, for instance, communication channels such as the organisation’s intranet site.

Furthermore, there appears to be indications of a subservient relationship between employees and volunteers, especially since the role of volunteers appeared to be socially
tainted and servile (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) in comparison to the staff roles. Thus, a group of over 400 library volunteers were considered to carry out the stigmatised dirty work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner, et al., 2006) of the organisation described by interviewees as menial library tasks which include cleaning fixtures and fittings, book covering, scanning returned resources into stock and restacking books on shelves, necessary for the efficient operation of each library branch. Managers noted these undesirable tasks were ordinarily assigned to ‘shelvers’ or junior library assistants in other public libraries, since this position is considered to be the lowest role of librarianship.

The frontline workforce clearly contained two groups which managers classified as staff and volunteers. In accordance with social identity and self-categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979a), a basic assumption is that people tend to think of themselves in terms of the groups and the organisations to which they belong, and as a result, may form a psychological attachment which could predict organisational behaviour. This social identification or self-categorisation process influences an individual’s self-concept and relations with others, especially in relation to ingroup and outgroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Within the UCL, it was clear from interviewees that people are categorised into an ingroup of employees and an outgroup of volunteers. Thus, a socio-cognitive process of categorisation appears to create positive group distinctiveness amongst employees (M. A. Hogg & Terry, 2000) which supports the self esteem and self-enhancement of individuals amid employees within the ingroup, but reduce the sense of belonging and loyalty to the organisation for the outgroup of volunteers.

The categorisation finding was interesting since the salient ingroup (employees) often compared itself with the outgroup (volunteers). Positive group distinctiveness existed since inter-group comparisons were made throughout manager interviews which enabled them to affirm the value of their group in relation to the volunteer group. This resulted in the ingroup being viewed in a more favourable light by managers. Interestingly, the sole volunteer interviewee had once aspired to progress from the outgroup to the ingroup and become a paid staff member. The volunteer engaged the strategy of individual mobility (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) through independently undertaking a library qualification. However, her attempt to dis-identify with the out-group and re-identify with the ingroup in order to improve personal status and self esteem had proved to be futile.
On the other hand, the volunteer cohort was considered by organisational interviewees to be of great value to the organisation and local communities and viewed as a vital link between communities and the organisation. As a result, volunteers seemingly held an instrumental role in helping to make UCL the heart of each community.

A lack of interest in company strategy was more applicable to volunteers over staff given that under the premise of intergroup relations and prejudice (Turner, 1999), this cohort was possibly seen as an identity threat to the value of the employee cohort (ingroup). As manager D4 stated, they were considered to be “quite separate from staff” (in-depth interview, 29 July, 2009), through being inherited as a result of the transfer of library operation from local communities to the Council. As a result, volunteers (outgroup) were viewed by UCL managers as being solely external, as opposed to internal organisational members; in other words, members of the community and customer stakeholder groups, rather than the staff cohort.

On the other hand, focus group participants did not view volunteer group membership in such simplistic terms, for their view of volunteers was that they acted as members of both the organisation and local community groups, especially in Branch C. This was viewed as the most cohesive since the majority of volunteers were active members of the International Friends of Libraries (FoL) group, which amongst other objectives, lobbies Council on library issues as both representatives of the community and the UCL. Thus, in terms of the organisational communication network concept (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006), focus group participants view the volunteer cohort as bridging the interface between the organisation and local communities. Effectively, the development of stronger ties between the UCL and local communities has brought about a richer social dimension to each library branch.

Even so, from an internal perspective, organisational managers indicated their view of volunteers as an ‘encumbrance’ negatively creating social comparison (Branscombe, et al., 1999) between the ingroup (employees) and the outgroup (volunteers) which results in volunteers being seen as the object of an identity threat based on two main competency related dimensions of staff performance and status. Clearly, volunteers were an anomaly and not seen to complement the New Zealand public library model, for as much as they were seen by interviewees to provide a great deal of invaluable, charitable customer
service, managers felt it was practically impossible to teach organisational values and competencies to volunteers. It was a constant challenge for staff, who have the advantage of regular encouragement, effort and resources in terms of their learning and development, along with performance appraisals, to personify the inherent aspects of the UCL’s identity. The social identity threat to the ingroup was sufficient to create ingroup favouritism and outgroup derogation (Branscombe, et al., 1999), the latter by means of volunteers being privy to very little of the UCL culture, staff benefits and internal communication of which the desirable ingroup of staff could readily access.

According to Kreiner, et al. (2006), an explanation for the lack of reference to the strategic plan when performing daily tasks may well be that managers could possibly perceive the work of frontline staff and volunteers as peripheral rather than pivotal to the organisation’s mission and identity. Conversely management view their own efforts to be highly central to the mission and identity of the organisation. Overall, manager interviewees expressed the opinion that staff and volunteers have little regard for the strategic plan, the reason being that they worked at an operational level as opposed to a strategic level within the organisation. Therefore, staff and volunteers are expected to interpret the strategic plan with a certain amount of ambiguity, even though aspects of the plan are clearly laid out in the *keys to enrichment* pamphlet (Unnamed Council, 2008b), which is readily available to staff and the public. On the other hand, it was indicated that the strategic plan was a working document that managers in their daily roles make regular reference to; for the purpose of ensuring that the inception of every new project aligns with one or more of the organisation’s central characteristics.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979a) suggests this core identity concern within the UCL subgroup of Council could be explained using group commitment of individuals and social context (Ellemers, et al., 1999). According to Ellemers et al. (1999), group identification acts as a powerful influence over social perceptions. Since managers are positioned at the top of the organisational structure they ought to be viewed as high identifiers who display optimal commitment to the UCL through striving to protect the group’s image. However, this in turn exposes a weakness in high identifiers who demonstrate a greater tendency for categorization and stereotypical differentiation between themselves and low identifiers as a means of representing their social world within the context of the organisation.
Manager interviewees appeared to look upon volunteers as low identifiers, positioned at the base of the organisational hierarchy structure, who in contrast to high identifiers, are less inclined to behave in terms of their group membership (Ellemers, et al., 1999). Contributing factors to the volunteer stereotype include being unpaid, unqualified, aged organisational members who work a mere few hours per week and as a result are forgetful. Whilst they are an essential component of daily library branch operation, managers considered their status to be unofficial organisational members who portray less commitment to the UCL. Thus volunteers are seen by management to create a juxtaposition of being both a necessity and a hindrance.

Even though it is evident that collectively volunteers provide an immense service for no remuneration, there is a perception amongst management that some volunteers are opportunistic in the sense that they are largely concerned with their individual identities and goals above those of the UCL. Volunteers are seen by management to align with the organisation in situations which ought to enhance their personal identity. Oman, et al. (1999) agree and highlight the intrinsic motives of volunteers, such as displays of altruism through civic engagement or giving something back to their community, provides a greater sense of self-esteem. Alternatively, the motivation to volunteer may also be extrinsic, for instance, self-improvement through gaining transferable work skills for future employment. However, research by Clary, et al. (1992) suggests that the stimulus for selfless service is not so simplistic, and advance six primary reasons for volunteerism including personal values (the deep-set beliefs of the importance of helping others), understanding (participation in activities which satisfy the desire to learn), career (seeking opportunities to learn skills transferable to paid employment), social, esteem, and protective (escaping from negative virtues or feelings).

5.3.2 Changeable Characteristics

A changeable characteristic of the UCL that emerged from findings under the change and identity theme is that the library is viewed as a fluid institution that is adaptable to its environment and the needs of customers. This in turn means the UCL takes the form of a dynamic community asset, which focus group participants appear to significantly value as an essential component of their everyday lives, and hence their personal and social
identities.

Two changeable characteristics of the UCL appear to be visual identity aspects of library buildings and space, and the library collections of books and other items which library branches accommodate. Related to each of these features appear to be two organisational projects, namely, the introduction of the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* to the library environment, and the modernisation of collections, from the printed tactile form to the digital virtual form. UCL documentation implies library operation is a costly enterprise, and thus, ought to be strategically and intricately managed (Dalton, et al., 2006), given that the UCL operates within a limited budget that is allotted by Council. Public libraries are obliged to keep abreast of library change to avoid becoming obsolete in the near future (Dewe, 2006). Therefore, new approaches to help fund and maintain innovative library developments are necessary, namely the formation of various partnerships such as the *Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa* Government incentive. Further approaches include membership to consortia and collaboration with other subunits of Council, for instance, the premises of Branch B serving as a dual-use facility in order to share capital costs (Dewe, 2006), in conjunction with a Council Customer Centre.

### 5.3.3 Identity Change

The upgrading of premises to create more space which in turn enhances the library environment and atmosphere was of prime importance to the director, managers and focus group C participants. From a corporate identity point of view this aligned with two aspects of the mission and vision statements, namely community libraries being welcoming places for social contact and the pride of communities.

At the corporate level, the operation of the UCL appeared to be no different from public libraries of other western countries noted in literature, in the sense that the dawn of the twenty-first Century has presented a depressed economic climate as a result of global market recession (Rooney-Browne & McMenemy, 2010). Evolving commercial competition from international bookstore corporations (e.g. Borders and Barnes and Noble) coupled with online bookstores (e.g. Amazon), along with social change has meant that reading as a leisure pursuit is challenged by alternative relaxation activities (Childs, 2006) such as multimedia gaming. This exemplifies the necessity for innovative change in
corporate strategy which the UCL has embraced through the formation of cooperatives with other central and local Government agencies along with commercial business partnerships that are prevalent within the modern public library landscape. However, unlike private enterprises which follow the capitalist model and exist to produce profits, the public library is a non-profit community organisation that provides a wide range of resources and services for education, information, recreation and socialisation within society.

However, the upshot of the cost-saving strategies, especially the commercialisation of public library space (Rooney-Browne & McMenemy, 2010), bring challenges of bias and changes to the basic values of the public library service, which in turn reflects a change of organisational identity. Rooney-Browne and McMenemy note this is especially evident in situations where partnerships have introduced commercial imperatives to the public service, such as business sponsorship of library events, and thus, the distinction between consumerism and citizenship appears to be ambiguous to some extent.

Nevertheless, successful partnerships have brought about an image transformation in the sense that the UCL has become more welcoming through offering the public a greater range of services, from high-tech multimedia facilities to comfortable rejuvenated interior design and furnishings (Childs, 2006). According to both organisational managers and focus group interviewees, this seems to have attracted a greater quantity and more diverse type of customer to the library. The Council has upgraded UCL buildings to the extent of being architecturally designed, award-winning facilities, with one building receiving a prestigious prize in the community and cultural category of the annual New Zealand Architecture Awards (New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated, 2010). This diversity in design denotes that library branches reflect the unique communities that they serve. Hence, from a visual identity perspective, library branches reflect the communities in which they are embedded. Hence this uniqueness non-verbally communicates that the UCL has multiple identities rather than one single identity.

Another contributing factor affecting UCL operation and ultimately organisational identity is the fact that community libraries are faced with ongoing transformation as the needs and means of access to information for library users evolves. The introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) to the UCL environment via the Government funded
Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project was viewed by organisational manager interviewees as a prime example of how the organisation is actually fluid and susceptible to prevailing interpretive currents (Corley, et al., 2006), whilst also aligning with the mission statement and meeting certain vision statement criteria within the framework of the organisation’s business plan.

Organisational interviewees felt an integral strength of the organisation lay in its ability to respond to local community needs. This appears to be achieved through the assertion of strong leadership, for instance, being proactive in decision-making processes and taking advantage of innovative initiatives. All involved in this study agreed that fluidity is a constructive organisational attribute because it affords the organisation the flexibility to be reactive to community needs and transform over a relatively short period of time, hence keep local communities abreast of technological progress for economic advantage both locally and internationally. Moreover, to compete for customers with commercial businesses offering similar products and services in order to gain access to information, for instance, retail and online bookshops, cellphone applications and download services and internet cafés (Childs, 2006) offering a wifi service.

Sense-making is essentially retrospective with evidence of heritage located everywhere (Gioia, Corley, & Fabbri, 2002). One distinctive element of UCL identity that has made a transition from the historical identity to the present identity, and arguably the prospective identity of the UCL, is the use of volunteers. The valued sense of continuity of volunteers in the transition from community operation to local Government operation appears to have been relatively smooth given that in the past volunteers held total control of library operations, whereas now they perform a limited role in preparing the organisation towards a different, technologically innovative future library environment

It is argued by some researchers, such as Balmer (2001a) and Gioia (1998) that identity does not necessarily remain static over time. Gioia, et al. (2000) argued the point that organisational identity is adaptive as opposed to enduring. On an operational level, this could be understood of the UCL, for it was revealed that the community libraries in this study had relinquished their locus of control to Council as a trade-off to enable growth in the form of more library resources, along with greater diversification of products and services, delivered from contemporary purpose-built premises. This was a positive
outcome in the sense that today UCL branches are well-resourced, and in return, well-patronised by local communities, as monitored by management.

A timely transformation had occurred in the sense that the UCL had become more responsive to community needs and requests especially in the realm of new technology. This was identified as being driven by UCL managers’ motivations to keep abreast of technological advances and to stay informed of current library research, as well as to conduct organisation driven research using such methods as customer surveys, and consultation processes; in conjunction with library consortium market research and networking with other library organisations within New Zealand.

However, the change of UCL structure meant volunteer status and roles had diminished immensely from performing all facets of library management and operation, to the constraint of merely providing low-level operational library tasks, such as backroom duties, re-stacking bookshelves and providing minimal customer service.

Of interest was the fact that narratives of some focus group participants, who were long-standing members within their local communities, were relatively identical to the findings revealed in Northey’s (1998) thesis, which was based on Auckland provincial libraries from 1842 to 1919. These participants had witnessed their community libraries change in identity from unstructured community run entities to structured subunits of local Government. Since these participants remembered previous community library systems resultant of those which early European settlers had established in the mid 1800s (Northey, 1998), as detailed in chapter one, their narratives were useful to provide context and also to reveal the enduring aspects of the organisation’s identity, which have remained constant over time.

The historical findings closely follow Albert and Whetten’s (1985) definition of organisational identity of that which is central, enduring, and distinctive about the organisation’s character, as collectively understood by organisational members. The first change was that libraries had larger, more suitable premises that felt light, warm and inviting. An exception was branch C which was awaiting relocation since it was the final Council library upgrade project to be undertaken. Second, library branches were repositioned on or in the vicinity of a main road within the townships they served in order
to hold greater prominence within communities. Managers were not aware of any organisational identity analysis being performed during the change process. Instead the change process was viewed from a marketing perspective focusing on customer service. Organisational identity analysis using a tool such as the Balmer and Greysters (2002) AC²ID Test Model could have identified the misalignments that occurred between the actual and communicated identities during the change process and aided local versus central organisational identity tensions.

5.3.4 Information Communication Technology

The second distinctive characteristic of the UCL appeared to be the fact that the organisation embraces new technology with the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) and automation into the library environment, for the purpose of offering more self-help opportunities for customers. More autonomy for customers appeared to be a direct result of the overall Council Directorate mission, of which the UCL is a subunit within, which states “we listen to our customers and learn from them, in order to shape the services they value” (Unnamed Council, 2009c). Most manager interviewees felt one element of the mission statement – making a positive difference – was fulfilled through making optimal use of technology, as it was developed. It was also seen to be a way in which the organisation could introduce new services, for instance the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa, in order to better reflect societal shifts and technological advances.

However, as Rooney-Browne and McMenemy (2010) points out, modern technology in public libraries requires much funding in order to provide services which meet the demands of users within the twenty-first century. Focus group and interview results held an underlying cynical view that the introduction of automation was in fact an exercise in which to make available staff and volunteers to perform operational library tasks other than frontline customer service, and ultimately save money. As a result, interpersonal relationships between staff or volunteers and customers is discouraged to some extent, in the sense that the use of new technology promotes less face-to-face communication, which results in a change to the types of interpersonal relationships of which citizens form (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006). A common perception amid focus group participants indicated that whilst they were content with some self-help features, for instance, 24 hour remote
access to OPAC from the comfort of their homes. Their preference was ultimately for the traditional human interaction element of customer service above other recent developments such as automated book check-out machines and computer generated telephone messages. This suggests that the behaviour of staff and volunteers in front-line positions creates a positive customer experience, which measures up to customer expectations as well as organisational service delivery performance levels; as noted in the organisation’s business plan (Unnamed Council, 2009c). In turn, positive staff and volunteer behaviour, through the delivery of quality customer service, fulfils part of the vision statement since it communicates to the general public that “[UCL branches] are welcoming places for social contact…” (Unnamed Council, 2008b) which is one element of organisational identity where customer perspectives align with the mission statements of the organisation and answers part of the research question.

5.3.5 Computer Resources

How to effectively use the library computer resources to their full extent appeared to be ambiguous to some participants who considered more information and training was required in order to access electronic databases, social networking applications and navigate the internet in general. This was resultant, in part, of library managers failing to provide a formal computer training programme to customers through lack of staff resources, even though managers were well aware that by not doing so was in breach of one obligation of their Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa agreement.

A recurring theme in library literature assumes that public libraries will eventually become obsolete through such factors as rapid technological advances occurring within the digital age (Estabrook, 1997). Organisational managers initially anticipated that the drive to introduce new technologies to the UCL environment ought to have a detrimental effect on the number of library patrons using physical library spaces. However, to management’s surprise the opposite has been the case. In fact, the introduction of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa alone, inclusive of a wifi facility, has introduced a new type of customer into the UCL whose primary interest lies in online social networking and various multimedia technologies available within branches. Contrary to these presumptions, research by Pomerantz and Marchionini’s (2007) that focuses on the physical – conceptual continuum (the occupation of physical and digital resources within library spaces) posits
that future trends will focus more on making better use of the public library as a space for individual and collaborative work, along with social activity; and likewise, will place less emphasis on using library space for the storage of books and other library resources as the digitalisation of collections progresses. Focus group participants agreed, metaphorically expressing the view that the library institution is the heart of the local community; moreover, it was the unanimous opinion of participants that if the local library ceased to exist, “it would take the guts out of the town” (C3, focus group C, June 27, 2009).

The social needs of a new sector of the community is experiencing social inclusion through feeling welcome in the library environment whilst having these requirements met, which in turn links to the organisation’s vision statement and ultimately the mission statement. The introduction of new computer technologies to the library landscape was envisaged by manager interviewees to have a detrimental effect on the number of library patrons using physical library spaces. To management’s surprise, the opposite has been the case given that foot traffic has actually increased. Moreover, the introduction of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa alone has brought a new type of customer into the UCL whose primary interest lies in the organisation’s adoption of online social networking and multimedia technologies.

When looking at the larger picture on a national level, the introduction of the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa fulfils the social inclusion policy of The Digital Strategy 2.0 (Local Government New Zealand, 2007). This strategy promotes the importance of Information Communication Technology for the economic and social development of local communities as with communities of this study. In fact poor levels of internet connectivity in community households of branch A were sixty-five percent, branch B were fifty-four percent and branch C were forty percent (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). Therefore, collaboration with government on the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa project was seen as a critical component of modern citizenship in overcoming digital exclusion amongst these local communities.

* * *

In summary, based on Albert and Whetten’s (1985) model, the three key themes of what
are central, enduring and distinctive identity characteristics of the UCL have been selected to answer the research question in the final chapter.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

The purpose of this project was to study the organisational identity of a library organisation within New Zealand, and then to ascertain what aspects of the identity communicated to library members was in alignment with the organisation’s mission statement. In order to achieve this, two research questions were formulated:

RQ1: How do organisational members (management and library members) describe the organisational identity of a local government community library?

RQ2: How do organisational members’ perceptions of organisational identity align with the organisation’s stated mission?

Since organisational identity is considered by scholars to be a social construct, a qualitative methodological approach was undertaken to answer the aforementioned questions. Data was gathered from in-depth interviews of organisational managers and one volunteer, along with three customer focus groups. All contributors to this study held UCL membership, with the exception of one focus group B participant. Organisational documentation was also utilised to provide triangulation of data collection for greater credibility. Organisational identity research theories such as Soenen and Moingeon’s (2002) five facets model and Vora and Kostova’s (2007) dual organisational identification model were applied to key findings in the preceding chapter to analyse the organisation’s identity.

The findings from this study suggest that there are several ways to view the UCLs actual identity. On one hand, an issue that stands out is the fact that managers measure organisational identity through the closely linked corporate identity lens in the sense that substantive elements are assessed on a strategic and operational level based on reports and research. Managers also view the UCL through a marketing lens as a brand (Balmer, 1995). Strong focus is placed on customer service to develop a strong brand in order to attract new customers and retain customer loyalty. On the other hand, library users assess the organisation’s identity cognitively on a more personal level, in the context of the standard of library collections and technologies that are provided for their use, along with the library atmosphere and individual customer service experiences, especially the way in
which library services are delivered.

This chapter draws conclusions from the data by answering both research questions. Implications for researchers are then provided, and finally, suggestions for future research are presented.

**6.1 Key Answers to Research Questions**

The central characteristics of the UCL under the first theme of image and identity in the discussion chapter indicate that on the surface, the way in which managers and customers described UCL identity were similar; however, they differed in complexity. This was because managers characterised organisation from a corporate identity level. Prime focus was placed on delivering an excellent library service to local communities to the extent that personnel were internally monitored to ensure service delivery targets were met, however, there was no training or monitoring of the immense volunteer workforce who also performed customer service.

On the other hand, library members described the organisation in terms of their personal experiences and how they felt about the library services they received at an individual branch. Customers described the library as a *free* public facility, given that all participants were aware that it was a user-pays society and that the library was primarily funded directly through their Council rates contributions, or indirectly from Government via their taxes or partnership funding. This finding is supported by international research (e.g. Audunson, 2004; Black, 2011), which also revealed the same perception.

In essence, UCL branches were described by library members to have safe, welcoming and comfortable environments in which to relax and read or use the internet, whilst being in the proximity of people. Libraries were characterised as bright, warm places to visit and browse for books when seeking information or entertainment, on days when the weather was bleak. They were also characterised as places to drop in for respite from daily routines or to meet with others any time during the day. The welcoming atmosphere was thought to be created by staff and volunteers and was not the result of upgraded premises or furnishings within the library environment.
Both managers and customers could see there was juxtaposition between the UCL communicating a single corporate identity, while each individual branch communicated an adaptation of the corporate identity to better assimilate with each unique community it was embedded into. This created multiple individual identities referred to by Humphreys and Brown (2002) as oppositional identity duality. While library members preferred the localisation of library services, it was considered to be an ongoing challenge for managers to centralise services in line with Council policy.

Library users have a diverse and extensive range of needs since they comprise of the public at large. On an organisational level, managers were cognizant of many user requirements through various methods of feedback, from an annual customer survey to research by managers. On a branch level, staff and branch managers received customer feedback through suggestion boxes, observations and listening to what customers had to say on the various services offered by the UCL. Hence, new services were provided in a timely manner, shaped and modified in response to user feedback. Even so, some participants felt their input on improving current services and the communication of library services to customers in general, was not taken into consideration. Further, a weakness is highlighted with the fact that the UCL attempts to be all things to all people, however does not have the staff resources to gather information or implement many initiatives to better cater for the needs of marginalised members of the community, for instance, minority cultures and disabled patrons. Therefore, in line with social inclusion research by Muddiman et al. (2000), library services tend to focus on the mainstream middle-class European members of society (refer to figure 2), which make up the majority of UCL customers, and not marginalised members of society or minority cultures.

The enduring or evolving characteristics of the discussion chapter indicate that overall, the organisational identity has a strong sense of community spirit and library branches remain the cornerstones of local rural communities. This seemed to emanate through the use of hundreds of local volunteers who play a role in bridging the gap between the organisation and local communities. This unique attribute has endured since the early settlers formed the first community library within the Council’s jurisdiction in the mid-1800s. This is also a distinctive characteristic since volunteers are not used to such an extent in other New Zealand public library models. In line with the community spirit, there were no shortage of volunteers and no need for volunteer recruitment as most branches had a waiting list in
operation. However, volunteers were considered quite separate from staff, received minimal organisational communication and performed low-level tasks. Surprisingly, no volunteer management programme was in operation in any branch.

Library branches were described as a valuable community space for people to meet, however a disconnection appeared in the sense that there was little community support for library events organised by the UCL with the exception of book clubs, children’s activities and community events, which proved to be very popular. Again, there was a lack of research on what events would appeal to community members, especially how to better include marginalised members of the community, for instance older generations who are affected by loneliness.

The distinctive characteristics of technology from the last theme in the discussion chapter indicates that the UCL was experiencing a transformation with the fusion of two different environments - the physical space via unique branch premises and the virtual space through digital technologies such as the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), e-resources and the recent Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa venture with central Government. In effect, UCL libraries were described as a single access point whereby a selection of multiple sources of physical and digital materials combine to meet a myriad of diverse customer needs and expectations within local communities.

Even though most UCL branches are located in rural areas, they are described by managers as technologically advanced because they use the latest Radio Frequency Identification (RFiD) security, self-check machines for patrons to self-issue books, and offer free use of modern computers with the latest software programmes. The latter was made possible through a partnership funding project with central government namely the Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa. This UCL initiative has accelerated the interconnectedness between patrons and the new virtual world of information communication technology, as well as introduces a new type of customer to the library environment.

Lack of training and information for users on how to use Aotearoa People’s Network Kaharoa technology to full advantage was not only disappointing for some focus group participants but viewed as a failing of management. A solution could be to delegate roles such as computer training programmes to volunteers of the baby boomer generation who
are now starting to retire. This seems appropriate since volunteers appeared to be underutilised, which could be attributed to the absence of a volunteer programme (Warburton, et al., 2004). Many volunteers were highly educated and possess technological expertise such as interviewee E1, hence, ought to be discontent with performing mundane library tasks in the same capacity as the silent generation (1936-1945) before them (Williamson, et al., 2010). Baby boomers are considered to possess attributes of both the silent generation before and generation x after, for instance, the tactile appeal of books is just as important to them as the virtual access to online information, which ought to facilitate a cross-generational flow of information that could enhance a library computer training programme from a social inclusion perspective.

In answer to the second research question of how members perceive the identity in relation to the stated mission, an interesting finding indicated that the mission and vision appeared to be transposed. Managers used the organisation’s vision statement rather than the mission statement as a management tool. This could have been because the mission statement – “everything we do makes a positive difference to our communities” (Unnamed Council, 2008a) – does not communicate to stakeholders who the organisation is or what it does; moreover, the mission has an overextended scope (Falsey, 1989). Conversely, the vision statement – “Libraries help people meet their social and cultural needs for recreation, information and education. [UCL branches] are welcoming places for social contact and are the pride of our communities” (Unnamed Council, 2008b) - communicates these two messages succinctly and organisational members perceptions were in alignment.

The APNK and RFiD projects were prime examples of how the mission statement is overextended. On one level the use of new technology makes a positive difference to communities by modernising library branches. However, on another level, library members perceive this advancement to be detrimental in the sense that through becoming more self-sufficient, less interpersonal communication with librarians and volunteers is received. This was perceived to make a negative difference, hence was detrimental to the sense of community spirit, especially since most considered the library was the heart of their community.

One major challenge for managers that was also pointed out by library members who visited multiple branches was inconsistencies in visual image and identity throughout UCL
branches. Ad hoc signage that ignored corporate style guides and in some instances were hand-written were described by managers as an attempt to blend in with local communities. Another example highlighted by library members was the lack of a corporate uniform. This hindered the visual identification of staff from volunteers and the public at large, even though staff wore name badges. As a result, an incongruent organisational identity was communicated which managers felt needed to be addressed.

6.2 Implications of research

This thesis could be a useful tool for management in that it views library services from an organisational identity perspective rather than through one element of organisational identity - customer service. This could bring a fresh perspective for future strategic planning of library services, given that identity is essentially what an organisation is - i.e. its strategy, history, philosophy, products and services, and formal and informal communication components (Melewar, et al., 2006). Practitioners of the public library sector in general could use the identity models described in this thesis as a strategic resource in their organisations.

6.3 Limitations

As with most research, this study is limited in several ways. The first limitation relates to the research design. Longitudinal data collection and analysis could have better suited this study and given a richer understanding of the multiple facets of the organisation’s identity, especially since a one-off study does not account for temporal aspects; for example, social trends or factors which influence customer perceptions within the community that unfold over time. Second, the study focused on the New Zealand community library sector and could have been broadened to other library institutions nationally or internationally. Third, this case study was primarily interested in the perceptions of two groups of stakeholders of a library organisation - management who construct corporate identity and library users who are the end users of library services offered. Therefore, the opinions of librarians who are ultimately trained to deliver high levels of front-line customer service and have the advantage of being fully immersed in the culture and climate of the organisation are omitted. Fourth, the low response rate to the request of focus group participants are also a limitation to the study. Consequently the sample size was smaller than desired and may
not represent the organisation as a whole. Finally, insights from a three month exploratory case study of two groups of stakeholders from a single library organisation may be difficult to use as a generalisation for other libraries; yet the findings can be transferable to other library organisations.

6.4 Future Research
Since UCL identity is somewhat fluid in nature in response to the ever-evolving needs of UCL customers in local communities, it would be interesting to conduct a follow-up study in two years to investigate what central, distinctive and enduring aspects of identity will change over time. Further research in this area will be of value since managers stated the organisation is planning to amalgamate with other public libraries within the region in the near future. If amalgamation is successful a restructure is likely to occur, inclusive of another change in locus of control and library operations for the UCL. This may elevate the centralisation versus localisation tensions within the organisation which are residual from when Council took over library operations from local communities. This is because many people prefer to hold onto the familiar community-orientated library culture rather than embrace change to a strongly controlled and impersonal corporate library model, as this study revealed.

Another point of interest would be to conduct future research with non-library users to determine why certain non-European minority cultures within local communities experienced social exclusion through not making use of the facilities and services that UCL branches offer. Moreover, how the organisation could better serve the needs of more culturally diverse communities resultant of ever evolving population demographics within New Zealand.

Finally, a related topic of interest is how the UCLs role and value to communities will transform in terms of making optimal use of digital library technologies as they become available. In particular, what changes will occur to better fulfil the social needs of communities in the areas of social inclusiveness and well-being, the provision of leisure-time activities, and access to information within today’s digital age. This will be of interest because some research points to the notion that the public libraries are destined to become obsolete in the near future. Thus, the printed form of book is predicted to make
way for the digital form, meaning literature will commonly be accessed remotely through virtual libraries rather than a visit to the local library. In turn, this could lead to a weakening of local communities since libraries also serve as a meeting place for people. However, Pomerantz and Marchionini (2007) predict future trends will focus on making better use of the public library as a space for individual and collaborative work, along with social activity, in preference to the storage of books and other library resources, as the digitalisation of collections progresses.

6.5 **Concluding Remarks**

This case study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on public library studies; however, unlike other library studies which are customer service focused, this study conveys an organisational identity perspective. The findings from this study may assist library institutions to take into consideration key identity elements of what is central, enduring and distinctive to their organisation before developing new approaches to strategic planning. Moreover, understand that the communicated organisational identity and mission statement is not always congruent with community member perceptions, and thus, measures ought to be taken such as an identity audit to maintain alignment.
References


Black, A. (2011). We don't do public libraries like we used to: Attitudes to public library buildings in the UK at the start of the 21st Century. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 43*(1), 30-45.

doi:10.1177/0961000610390991


Commun. an Organisation’s Identity


Ferguson, D. (2003). Friend or foe? The role of friends of the library groups in community development. *Australasian Public Libraries and Information*


Sage Publications.


Lincoln, Y. S. (2002). Insights into library services and users from qualitative...
research. *Library and Information Science Research, 24*(1), 3-16.


Communicating an Organisation’s Identity 198


van Maaenen (1979).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate:</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Group:</th>
<th>Family Status:</th>
<th>Education:</th>
<th>Membership Start date:</th>
<th>Library visits per month:</th>
<th>Library services used:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>Married Children</td>
<td>Postgraduate diplomas</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>- Books: Requests, reference, research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>Married Children</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>- Books: Borrowing, research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>Single Children</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>Non-member</td>
<td>20+</td>
<td>- Books: Reading on premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>51-65</td>
<td>Married Children</td>
<td>Nursing diploma</td>
<td>Circa 1979</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>- Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Over 66</td>
<td>Married Children, Grandchildren</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>Circa 1959</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>- Books: Borrowing, Reading magazines, DVDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Over 66</td>
<td>Married Children, Grandchildren</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Reading the newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>Married Children, Grandchildren</td>
<td>University degree</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>- Books:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>48-50</td>
<td>Married Children</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- Books:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix A: Profile of Focus Group Candidates

Appendices
Appendix B: Background of Interviewees

In June and July 2009, the researcher conducted six individual semi-structured interviews with management at the UCL (one via email), and additionally one semi-structured interview in August 2009 with a library volunteer, as explained in chapter three. The managers occupied most of the key positions within the UCL. With the exception of the director and one volunteer, the interviewees were members of the Library Management Team, responsible for making contributions to the strategic development of the UCL. Thus, the perceptions of interview participants are representative of the organisation as a whole.

Library branch manager D1 was female managed the library branch where she was based and for one other branch. D1 had been awarded an associateship to the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA).

D2 was female and held the recently established position of Service Development Coordinator. Her role entailed the development of programmes and services for customers, ensuring policies and guidelines were in place for electronic library communication to external stakeholders, inclusive of website content, blog, Flickr, and Twitter.

D3 was male and held the position of Libraries Technology Manager and was the UCL representative for technology issues. He produced much of the organisation’s data analysis and ensured all technology within the UCL was fully operational. Furthermore, D3 researched technology developments and how they could affect the UCL as he was responsible for the coordination and management of technology projects.

D4 was female and manager of all seven library branches. She was recently appointed and was responsible for overall library operation including staff management, policies and procedures.

13 The Library Management Team consisted of eight members: The UCL Manager, three Area Managers, and managers in specialist positions, namely from the collections, reference technology, and service development areas of the library organisation.
Interviewee D5 was male and was the most senior manager interviewed. He had held the position of Director of Service within the Executive Team of Council since September 2008. In this role D5 was responsible for the operation of community libraries in conjunction with leisure centres, visitor information centres, Council customer and visitor reception, Council call centre, resource and building consents, bylaws, monitoring and compliance, community development and emergency management, all within the Council’s catchment area. D5 has nineteen years of local government experience, gained from various positions in three Councils, from development planning and resource management to customer service management roles.

D6 was female and Coordinator of Reference and Information Access for a number of years. This role entailed staff training and management of reference and information service. She was also a UCL management representative in the library consortium Online Services Team.

E1 was female and a library volunteer and mother who home-schooled two children. With seventeen years experience as a volunteer she was one of the most knowledgeable in her role. She had witnessed Branch A transform from a small, volunteer-run room stocked with donated books and positioned within the community centre, to a Council operated centre relocated to highly visible premises specifically designed for library purposes.
Appendix C: Participant Information Request Sheet

Volunteers for Research Study Required

My name is Coralie Owens and I am currently completing a Master of International Communication degree at Unitec. In order to finish my studies, I am required to conduct a research study and write a thesis.

The research

› My selected research, authorised by [Unnamed Community Library], looks at organisational identity. In particular, how organisational identity is communicated to, and perceived by library users.

What is involved?

› I am calling for library members to volunteer to participate in a 1.5 hour focus group (11.30-1.00pm) on Saturday, 27 June, at the library building.

› As identity reflects how an organisation is recognised, I am interested in peoples’ perceptions of an organisation’s identity. For instance, what does being a library member mean to you. Therefore a discussion will take place on topics such as library services, events, technology and changes.

› Morning tea will be provided for you during the focus group discussion.

Confidentiality

› Please be assured that your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. The results from my study could be published in an academic journal, however this will not affect your anonymity in this project at any stage.

Calling for volunteers

› If you or anyone you know are over 18 years old and interested in participating in the focus group, please give your contact details to a library staff member.

Researcher contact details

Coralie Owens: Master of International Communication student Unitec
Ph: 021 137 3065
Email: owensc01@hotmail.com
Unitec Research Ethics registration: 2009.933
Appendix D: Organisational Consent Form

Consent Form

Research: Communicating an organisation’s identity

✓ I have had the research project explained to me and I understand that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from Unitec’s Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

✓ I understand that by giving permission for the research to be conducted within this organisation, individual participation remains voluntary.

✓ I understand that I can withdraw my consent for the researcher to access this organisation, prior to Unitec’s Research Ethics Committee granting research approval.

✓ I understand that the organisation’s participation will be confidential and no direct identifiable information concerning individual participants will be accessible to persons other than the researcher and the supervisor. I further understand that research data will be stored securely on a password-protected computer at Unitec for a period of five years.

✓ I understand that research results may be published at a future date and that in this occurrence, the anonymity of the organisation and the participants of the study will be ensured.

✓ I understand that I have the option to access the completed research document.

✓ I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent for this organisation to be part of the research project.

Signature: ..................................................  Date: ..................
(on behalf of the organisation)

Project Researcher: .................................  Date:  ....................

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 809 933

Any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research may be addressed by contacting UREC (Ph: the secretary 83-3-4221, ext 7248). Any issues raised will be fully investigated and treated as confidential. You will also be provided with the outcome of the investigation.
Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form

Research: Communicating an organisation’s identity

✓ I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understood the information sheet issued to me.

✓ I understand that I am contributing to this research study on a voluntary basis and that I may withdraw within two weeks of the focus-group having taken place.

✓ I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me, and that the only persons who will know what I have said will be the researcher and the supervisor. I also understand that all information I offer will be stored securely on a password-protected computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years.

✓ I understand that the discussion between the focus group and researcher will be taped, and then transcribed at a later date.

✓ I understand that I may read the transcription before the research analysis has been performed. Further, I have the option to also read the completed research document.

✓ I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: ………………………… Date: …………………

Project Researcher: ………………………........ Date: …………………

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2009.933

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (date) to (date). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7248). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix F: Manager Interview Questions

‘How organisational identity is communicated to, and perceived by library users: A case study within the New Zealand community library sector’.

‘How do organisational members (management and library members) describe the organisational identity of Rodney District Community Libraries?’

What training do staff, managers and library volunteers undertake?
How is employee and volunteer training designed to best cater for the library patrons?
In what way does paid employee training differ to volunteer employees?

How involved are staff (internal) volunteers (internal and external), and library members (external) in shaping the library services offered?
What internal communication do managers and library volunteers receive?
How do managers/staff position their service to the community?
What challenges are faced by staff when communicating organisational identity?
Explain how the changing library environment is reflected in the mission statement?
Explain how the channels of communication to library members are appropriate?
How is library technology user friendly to library users?
Appendix G: Manager and Focus Group Questions

‘How organisational identity is communicated to, and perceived by library users: A case study within the New Zealand community library sector’.

Organisational identity is based on stakeholders’ perceptions - that which is central, distinctive and enduring to an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Therefore the interview questions posed to participants in this research will target identity, being the primary driving force of an organisation. An open-ended inductive approach will be applied by the researcher to answer the specific research questions on identity perceptions.

As library identity is based on members’ perceptions, in order to answer the questions above; the study will be divided into different sections such as location, content, services technology and contribution to communicating identity. Thus, sub-questions have been formulated to guide my research approach as follows:

1. **Introduction – user perceptions** *(Ice breaker questions)*
   - Who runs the library?
   - How did you as a library member first become introduced to the library branch?
   - What overall perception do you have of the library branch?
   - What does the library mean to you, as a library member?
     - Explain your experience of your first library visit?
     - In your opinion, how is the library part of the community landscape?
     - What features of the library appeal to you?
   - What other aspects of the local library branch make you feel comfortable? *(N.b: Question to give context)*
   - Have your perceptions of the library branch changed during your membership?

2. **Social needs**
   - As a library member, how does the library meet your social and cultural needs? *(E.g. Maori collection and local history)*
   - In your opinion, how does the library help build stronger communities?

3. **Technology**
   - What technology do you access from the library?
     E.g. PCs, Internet, CDs, CD ROMs, DVDs, eResources
   - Explain how you have embraced new technology used in the library branch either positively or negatively?
   - Explain the reasons you prefer self-service over a personalised service or visa versa?

4. **Events**
   - What events organised by the Rodney Libraries have you attended?
   - Explain what Rodney Libraries events are successful, and describe how they are they successful?

All interviews will be video recorded and morning tea will be provided for all focus group participants.
**Appendix H: Focus Group Schedule**

**Preparations**

Finalise details
- Confirm participants (preferably 6)
- Location
- Time when the discussion will start
- Number of people attending
- Morning tea food order and refreshments
- Consent forms are signed

**On the day**

Ensure that location is arranged appropriately
- Seating – everyone can see each other
  - Draw a seating plan of participants
  - Food and refreshments laid out
- Test video recording equipment
  - Sound is at an acceptable level
  - Picture is clear
- Writing materials
- Visual stimulants
  - Library card, rules

**Initial briefing (15 mins)**

As group is assembling, offer refreshments
- Participant introductions – allow participants to introduce themselves
  - Demographic profile (age, gender, education, number of year’s membership, frequency of visits)
- Read out confidentiality statement
  - E.g. opinions expressed will be treated in confidence for the purpose of evaluating user perceptions of organisational identity of Rodney Libraries and the production of the researcher’s thesis. All responses will remain anonymous.
- Question time
- Check that there are no objections to the use of the video recorder, then switch it on

**Discussion (45-60 mins)**

Revisit research objective and purpose of the meeting
- Clarify role and importance of the group for the research
  - E.g. I appreciate you all making time to talk about the library’s identity with me this morning/afternoon. Today I would like to concentrate on discussing your perceptions of the library, such as .......There are no right or wrong answers as we will be talking about user perceptions – what the library means to you and your community. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and feel so that I can get a deeper meaning of identity from your perspectives.
- Simple opening/ice-breaker - start with questions that focus on service
- Progress with deeper line of questioning on whether the library is meeting people’s social and cultural needs

**Conclusion (15 mins)**

Summary of session
- Summarise comments from participants
- Thank the group for their time and tell them that the discussion has been most valuable to the research study
Communicating an Organisation’s Identity 210