In the 21st century, the internet impacts on all aspects of our lives from banking, social communication and business to education and entertainment. The ever-increasing reach of the internet and the increased sophistication of search engines have meant vast amounts of information are readily available for learners. No longer is information stored only on pages bound in books and placed on shelves. Emerging technologies mean new methods of searching, storing, retrieving and disseminating have to be developed and libraries and librarians are being challenged to change existing practices. How are they approaching this?

Initially, reaction followed a policy of “natural selection”. Those librarians with ICT skills, inclinations/attributes were automatically selected to undertake these tasks while traditional librarians continued to do what they had always done. A one hundred and fifty year-old theory could still usefully be harnessed to the library environment. However, the continual advances in IT and the blurring of boundaries between formerly separate species/professions has meant demand and pressure has grown and the natural selection process is no longer adequate to meet demand.

A more radical method has to be explored. The moment in time on the evolutionary scale has come to create a new breed of librarian adapted to the new world. We may have to genetically engineer. By taking the “genes” of the emerging technologist and the genes of a librarian we can create the Emerging Technologies librarian. The effects of this mixing will be a transgenetic-librarian with specially selected, advantageous traits that will enable the profession to survive into a technology-enhanced future.

Roll Over Darwin.
Outline of Interactive Poster

Emerging Technologies Librarian

Key Librarian Genes               Key Technological Genes

(Sticky-notes, with key librarian roles and tasks, will be provided for participants to place on poster)

Librarian skills                  Technological Skills

(Sticky-notes, with key technological roles and tasks, will be provided for participants to place on poster)

Biographies:

Sarah-Jane Saravani – Manager of the Learning Hub at Wintec, which includes library services. Sarah-Jane has an ongoing interest in the impact of technology upon the delivery of library services and staff development. Her current doctoral research is investigating the implications for library staff of implementing the mobile library.

Dr. John Clayton - Manager of the Emerging Technologies Centre responsible for the identification, testing and deployment of learning and teaching technologies placing Wintec at the leading edge of e-learning in vocational education and regional training. John has an extensive history of presenting and publishing on the impact of technology on various learning environments.