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Innovation and entrepreneurship in information organizations

Learning objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Explain why innovation is important for information organizations, and understand the range of different types of, and approaches to, innovation.
- Understand the potential relevance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial action to information organizations.
- Reflect on the notion of creativity and consider its place in information organizations.
- Discuss the difference between a perspective based on change management and one based on entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.
- Reflect on the challenges and opportunities for promoting innovation in information organizations.

1.1 Introduction

Information organizations of all kinds (such as libraries, publishers, subscription agents, and information and advice services) have changed significantly in recent years. Achieving these changes has involved high levels of innovation. Some of these innovations are driven directly by the opportunities provided by new technology innovations from other organizations, coupled with changes in consumer expectations and behaviours (e.g. access to full text of journals through Google as a search engine). Others are facilitated by information technology, but driven by policy and marketplace

change (e.g. self-issue of books, institutional repositories). Other innovations are not particularly affected by technology platforms, but represent, for example, innovations in community involvement, such as new services for disadvantaged groups and the organization of bibliotherapy reading groups.

Despite there being a hive of activity, and regular reporting on achievements in the popular and professional press (the outcomes of innovation processes), there has been little discussion of innovation and its processes in the information management professional or academic literature. This means that there is limited opportunity to learn from one another's successes and mistakes, and that there is little evidence that information innovators are reflecting sufficiently on their innovation processes, and striving to enhance their own capacity and that of their organizations to innovate. Some commentators suggest that this means that (academic) libraries, for example, are too often making changes for change's sake, without proper evaluation of the impact and value of the change, and specifically without sufficient consideration as to how an innovation (even a small innovation) will help the library to fulfil its mission of supporting learning and research across the university community. Even more importantly, information organizations without an innovation lens on their strategies and projects risk overlooking the wider organizational perspective. An innovation strategy would, for example, contribute to the selection, co-ordination and planning of innovations at all levels in the organization. It would also promote a focus on building an innovative, creative and entrepreneurial organizational culture, to facilitate all stages of the innovation process.

Looking to the future, Maness (2006) is not alone when he suggests that Web 2.0 will have substantial implications for libraries and other players in the information industry, such that a paradigm change is on the horizon. Library 2.0 is a user-centred virtual community. While information professionals might act as facilitators and provide support, they are not necessarily responsible for the creation or provision of the content. Users

interact with and create resources with one another and with librarians. If, how and when users adopt Web 2.0 technologies could have an important impact on the rationale for and role of libraries and a whole range of other organizations in the information industry. And, if Web 2.0 does not provoke the paradigm change that some predict, then there are a host of other technology-based innovations that have the potential to have a significant impact on libraries, including the e-book and the development of other digital documents and learning resources, open-source initiatives (including open-source software [OSS], open access publishing and open universities) and mobile learning technologies. More parochially, *Resource Description and Access* (RDA) cataloguing rules and cloud-based library management systems will create opportunities to share metadata, processes and practice in new ways. Finally, and arguably most pressing at the time of writing, many countries are facing significant public sector funding cuts over the next few years, and all public sector employees are likely to be under the directive to 'do more for less'. Major shifts in the role of libraries, or, equally importantly, the public perception of the rationale for libraries, will require some sure and swift footed large scale innovation. Not enough information professionals and leaders have experience with such large scale innovations and their associated change processes. Information professionals would be well advised to take any opportunity available to develop their understanding of innovation and their skills in managing innovation processes.

1.2 Innovation

1.2.1 The innovation imperative

Information organizations exist in an environment in which the importance of innovation is widely recognized by organizations, government bodies and other policy-makers. Organizations need to innovate in order to grow, compete, succeed and survive. Innovation is becoming vital to the survival and growth of most

organizations. Damanpour summarizes the situation thus:

Organisations innovate because of pressure from the external environment, such as competition, deregulation, isomorphism, resource scarcity, and customer demand, or because of an internal organisational choice, such as gaining distinctive competencies, reaching a higher level of aspiration, and increasing the extent and quality of services. Either way the adoption of innovation is intended to ensure adaptive behaviour; changing the organisation to maintain or improve its performance.

(Damanpour, 2009, 652–3)

The significance of innovation to societies and economies is evidenced by the range of government initiatives designed to promote innovations. For example, in the UK, the aptly named Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) aims to direct the UK towards a knowledge economy through creativity and innovation. In Australia, the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) not only provides support and advice for Australian ministers and government and administers legislation, but it also manages various programmes, undertakes analyses and provides services and advice to the business, science and research communities. And, the European Parliament has initiated the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 aiming to achieve the following:

Raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal, social and economic development; to disseminate good practices; to stimulate education and research, and to promote policy debate on related issues.

(Europa, 2009)

However, despite this growing acknowledgement of the importance of innovation, there is evidence that many organizations have a distance to travel in understanding and managing innovation and

innovation processes. For example, a relatively recent study by Cottam, Ensor and Band (2001) suggests that although most UK companies are aware of the importance of innovation to their competitive position, they are not committed to it and further do not know how to commit to an innovative approach. This implies that organizations have a long way to go to optimize their innovation performance and the contribution that innovation can make to their organizational performance. Information organizations, then, are not alone in their need to examine and focus on the development of their innovation management practices.

The following subsections explore the nature of innovation and its link to opportunity seeking, offer some examples of innovation in information organizations and provide some preliminary comments on the management of innovation. Chapter 2 develops the theme of innovation further, with more discussion of different types of innovation, and the innovation process and its management.

1.2.2 Defining innovation

Arguably, one of the difficulties in understanding and managing innovation is the diverse and contextual nature of innovation. Innovations can be small scale and local, or they may involve whole organizations in complete shifts in their strategic direction. This can lead to some confusion as to the exact nature of innovation. Accordingly, the concept of innovation has a number of different definitions. Yet, it is important when considering innovation in an information organization to develop some shared view of what constitutes an innovation. We draw a few definitions of innovation together here in order to explore the question: 'What is innovation?' The definitions that follow present some differing perspectives on the nature of innovation. We conclude with the definition of innovation that we shall be adopting in this book.

A good starting point is Thompson's (1965, 2) early and

straightforward definition, which simply states that ‘Innovation is the generation, acceptance and implementation of new ideas, processes, products or services.’ A similar definition of innovation was proposed more recently by West and Anderson (1996) and quoted by Wong, Tjosvold and Liu (2009, 239): ‘Innovation can be defined as the effective application of processes and products new to the organization and designed to benefit it and its stakeholders.’ This definition introduces the notion of benefits to the organization and its stakeholders. Other definitions, such as that offered by Jayanthi and Kingshuk (1998, 472), focus on the idea of newness, and specifically the subjectivity of ‘newness’, and the need to understand newness in context: ‘As long as the idea is perceived as new to the people involved, it is an “innovation” even though it may appear to others to be an “imitation” of something that exists elsewhere.’ Some definitions, such as that proposed by Tang (1998, 298), see innovation in terms of projects towards specific innovations: ‘Innovation is a process of raising and doing projects with the aim of commercializing or utilizing an innovative product, process or service.’

On the other hand, Damanpour’s much quoted definition of innovation focuses on innovation as a means of changing an organization, and emphasizes the role of its external environment in provoking and shaping those changes:

Innovation is conceived as a means of changing an organization, either as a response to changes in the external environment or as a pre-emptive action to influence the environment. Hence, innovation is here broadly defined to encompass a range of types, including new product or service, new process technology, new organization structure or administrative systems, or new plans or programmes pertaining to organization members.

(Damanpour, 1996, 694)

Other variations in the definition of innovation arise from different disciplinary perspectives. For example, in knowledge management,

the focus is on knowledge being vital for innovation:

Innovation is the creation of new knowledge and ideas to facilitate new business outcomes, aimed at improving internal business processes and structures and to create market driven products and services. Innovation encompasses both radical and incremental innovation.

(Plessis, 2007, 21)

Finally, we introduce the definition of innovation that will be used throughout this book. This definition was created from an analysis of many earlier definitions of innovation, and is intended to provide an interdisciplinary and all-encompassing definition of innovation:

Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, services or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace.

(Baregheh, Rowley and Sambrook, 2009, 1334)

Reflect: One way of measuring how innovative an organization is, is to count the number of innovations that it has completed in, say, the last year. Make a list of the innovations that your organization has implemented in the last year (reviewing a newsletter or annual report might help). What are the problems with this innovation counting approach to the measurement of innovation performance? Can you suggest any alternative approaches to measurement?

1.2.3 Innovation in practice

Innovation takes a number of different guises and scales. Table 1.1 offers an assorted collection of recent innovations in information organizations. Some innovations, such as the introduction of self-issue systems, or the introduction of radio-frequency identification

Table 1.1 *Examples of recent innovations in information organizations*

| Organization | Innovation |
|--|---|
| Open University Library Service | Placing the library at the hub of the Open University's distance learning services – taking the service to where the user is. |
| National Health Service (NHS) Quality Improvement Scotland | The use of Web 2.0 technologies for current awareness in healthcare. |
| Leeds Library and Information Service | Across the Board: autism support for families. |
| School libraries | Providing access to digital resources to support learning in art, English, history, modern languages and science. |
| Winchester Discovery Centre | New and innovative public library building/community space. |
| University of Hertfordshire | Rebranding and positioning of information staff as Knowledge and Business Intelligence Consultants. |
| Academic libraries | Introduction of self-issue systems. |
| Public libraries | Development of therapeutic reading groups. |
| Esher College | Use and development of Microsoft Office SharePoint technology as part of a managed learning environment. |
| Hillingdon Public Libraries | Partnerships with high profile brands, such as Starbucks and Apple iMacs. |
| Academic libraries, publishers, universities and others | Changes in scholarly publishing models, including open-access initiatives. |
| British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) | Making previously internal digital resources available free to the public. |

(RFID), are driven by opportunities offered by the development of technologies. Others, such as the growing importance of evidence-based practice in health libraries, are driven by changes in government or public sector policies. In such instances, it is likely that many libraries in a specific sector will be attempting similar innovations more or less simultaneously. In other instances, such as the design and construction of a new building, the timing of the innovation may vary significantly between libraries, depending upon local opportunities and needs. Many innovations within libraries are part of a wider pattern of innovation across the information and digital industries. For example, in initiatives to encourage reading, public and school libraries will be working with

a range of other agencies and groups, and, in their endeavours to move to a world of digital information resources, academic libraries are part of a wider landscape that includes publishers, search engine providers, subscriptions agents, authors, editors and national libraries. Such a complex network of innovations of different types and extents provides plenty of opportunity for benchmarking and learning from others. It is important that such benchmarking does not only address the details of the innovation (e.g. how to design a current awareness service for a consultancy firm), but also the innovation process.

Innovation is a process, and a process that does not just happen, but which needs managing. The innovation process involves a number of stages, and all innovation requires:

- ideas and opportunities
- selection of 'good' ideas for further development
- development of selected ideas into new products, services, processes, or ways of working or other innovations
- co-ordination across functions
- management of knowledge, financial, human and operational resources
- communication and engagement with customers.

One of the big challenges of innovation is integration and co-ordination across functions. Typically organizations are structured to facilitate their existing tasks; this means that they may not be well structured to facilitate, for example, communication, team-working and resource allocation for innovation. Further, there is a tension associated with continuing to do what the organization has always done, alongside innovation.

There is evidence that some organizations are better at successful innovation than others; such organizations may be described as innovation oriented. In such innovation-oriented organizations, innovation – and associated processes, such as learning – are embedded in the culture and strategy of the organization; innovation

and entrepreneurship are encouraged and welcomed, but they are also managed so as to generate outcomes that contribute towards the organization's ongoing success.

Innovation in practice, then, involves both specific project management to select, design and implement a specific innovation, and also the promotion of an organizational culture that encourages and facilitates innovation. These themes are developed further in Chapters 2, 4 and 5.

1.3 Entrepreneurship

1.3.1 Linking innovation and entrepreneurship

Successful innovation requires individuals with the ability to see and take advantage of opportunities, being prepared to challenge and change, possessing a willingness to take risks, an ability to enthuse and engage others and a focused and determined drive to succeed. In other words, innovation requires entrepreneurial attitudes and activities, or entrepreneurship.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are, then, tightly coupled; it is not possible to discuss one without the other. There are two separate literatures, but these are complementary. The innovation literature tends to focus on the processes associated with the development of new products, services and processes, and has a strong interface with the literature on research and development processes; the underlying context for much of the discussion and operationalization of innovation is large organizations. Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, is more traditionally associated with start-up businesses that are typically small. The word 'entrepreneur' comes from the 17th-century French word *entreprendre*, which refers to people who 'undertook' the risk of new enterprise. As we shall discuss further in Chapter 3, early theories of entrepreneurship, such as those developed by Schumpeter, focused on the role of the entrepreneur as an agent for change in economic systems. However, more recently, commentators have taken increasing interest in the entrepreneurial process, and, most

interestingly for our purpose, entrepreneurial behaviour. The impact of such behaviour is not restricted solely to economic outcomes, but may also lead to social, technological and cultural outcomes. Both innovation and entrepreneurship are important in all types of organizations and communities.

This section on entrepreneurship explains the link between entrepreneurship and innovation. It discusses different types of entrepreneurship and identifies social and public entrepreneurship as being of most interest to information organizations. Chapter 3 develops the theme of entrepreneurship further, with a more detailed discussion of the different types of entrepreneurship and a particular focus on entrepreneurial characteristics and behaviours.

1.3.2 Defining entrepreneurship

Before proceeding, it is useful to reflect on what is meant by the terms 'entrepreneurship' and 'entrepreneur'. As with innovation, there are many varying definitions of entrepreneurship and as many different approaches to describing the traits, behaviour and competences of entrepreneurs, so the answer to the question: 'What is entrepreneurship?' is not straightforward. Here are four definitions that are good, because they focus on entrepreneurship as being associated with taking opportunities, and emphasize the link between entrepreneurship and innovation:

- 'The discovery, evaluation, and utilization of future goods and services' (Murphy, Liao and Welsch, 2006, 29).
- 'Turning ideas into a success, being imaginative, creative, inventive, problem solving and can even just be about making things more interesting' (see www.nwda.co.uk).
- 'Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity driven' (Morrisette and Schraeder, 2007, 15).
- 'Entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently

control. The essence of entrepreneurial behaviour is identifying opportunities and putting useful ideas into practice' (Barringer and Ireland, 2008, 6).

Recently, there has been an increasing focus on what Rae (2007) refers to as 'opportunity-centred entrepreneurship'. Rae suggests that opportunity-centred entrepreneurship involves four interconnected themes: personal enterprise (relating an opportunity to personal goals); creating and exploring the opportunity; planning to realize it; and acting to make it happen. Complementary to this is Sorensen, Lassen and Hinson's (2007) suggestion that entrepreneurship is a 'social journey of opportunity construction'. They suggest that the entrepreneurial process is an interaction between:

- *voluntarist* (willing) individuals
- their *social networks* – emphasizing that no individual can construct, evaluate or exploit entrepreneurial opportunities without others (such as customers, bankers, suppliers and/or colleagues)
- *structures* associated with objectifying the opportunity, or translating it into a form that others can understand and engage with
- *the physical context* of the entrepreneurial process, which generates a variety of barriers and facilitators as the process unfolds.

Comments from other important writers focus on the entrepreneur, the person who delivers on entrepreneurship. These commentators also emphasize the link between entrepreneurship and innovation. Drucker's (1998) perspective is that successful entrepreneurs have a commitment to the systematic practice of innovation, or to the effort to create purposeful, focused change in an enterprise's economic or social potential. Rae (2007) describes an entrepreneur as a person who acts in an enterprising way (using skills, knowledge and

personal attributes to apply creative ideas and innovations to practical situations) and who creates and acts on an opportunity. Bessant and Tidd (2007) suggest the concept of the innovative entrepreneur. Such individuals are driven by the desire to create or change something, whether in the private, public or third sectors. Independence, wealth and reputation (all possible outcomes of entrepreneurship) are not these people's primary goals; their main motivation is to change something or to actually create something new. Two important categories of innovative entrepreneurs are social entrepreneurs and technological entrepreneurs. Both of these categories are pertinent to information organizations, and are discussed next.

Reflect: Have you ever 'spotted an opportunity'? What did you do about it? Make a short list of the negative and positive consequences of your action.

1.3.3 Entrepreneurship in information organizations

On account of its association with starting a new business, and other commercial activities, entrepreneurship has too often been viewed as of limited interest to public and academic libraries. Indeed, there is limited mention of entrepreneurship in the information literature. The most common mention of entrepreneurship in relation to libraries arises in association with the surges of interest in fund-raising activities in libraries, which are acknowledged to require enterprise (e.g. Nicholson, 1992; and, Riggs, 1989). More recently, there have been occasional contributions that discuss the role of libraries in contributing to local and regional economic, community and cultural development (Li, 2006) and as cultural entrepreneurs delivering four types of experiences: entertainment, education, escapist and aesthetic (Nijboer, 2006). Overall, however, there has been insufficient attention focused on the creation of entrepreneurial cultures at organizational level and entrepreneurial behaviours and competencies at individual level.

The broadening of the concept of entrepreneurship to embrace entrepreneurship in a variety of different contexts is of particular relevance to public sector information organizations. This has led to the proposal of concepts such as ‘corporate entrepreneurship’ and ‘intrapreneurship’, ‘social entrepreneurship’, ‘public entrepreneurship’, ‘digital entrepreneurship’, ‘technology entrepreneurship’ and ‘knowledge entrepreneurship’, all of which have a role in information organizations. Here we explain each of these terms briefly, and return to discuss them in more detail in Chapter 3:

Corporate entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship

Corporate entrepreneurship is concerned with acting entrepreneurially in an existing, often large, organization, and is often associated with change and innovation:

Corporate entrepreneurship can be defined as the effort of promoting innovation from an internal organizational perspective, through the assessment of potential new opportunities, alignment of resources, exploitation and commercialisation of said opportunities.

(McFadzean, O’Loughlin and Shaw, 2005, 352)

Corporate entrepreneurship is sometimes regarded as synonymous with *intrapreneurship*, since both are concerned with entrepreneurship within an existing organization. However, Antoncic and Hisrich (2003) make a differentiation between the two terms on the basis that corporate entrepreneurship implies that the organization is typically a large commercial organization, whereas intrapreneurship can apply to any organization, and its scope, while including other innovative activities and orientations, may also embrace the formation of new ventures. They suggest that intrapreneurship may include: ‘new business venturing, product/service innovation, process innovation, self-renewal, risk taking, proactiveness, and competitive aggressiveness’ (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003, 9).

Public and social entrepreneurship

Public entrepreneurship is an attempt to broaden the notion of entrepreneurship from its focus on profit making, to embrace its role in innovation towards the availability and delivery of public services that augment social capital (Zampetakis and Moustakis, 2007). Caruana, Ewing and Ramaseshan (2002), for example, suggest that 'public sector entities can provide new value to the various stakeholders they serve by adopting an entrepreneurial approach with the resources over which they have control'. And Morris and Jones (1999, 74) suggest that public sector entrepreneurship is: 'the process of creating value for citizens by bringing together unique combinations of public and/or private resources to exploit social opportunities'.

Social entrepreneurship is distinguished from commercial entrepreneurship by its focus on the creation of 'social value' rather than on the generation of profit or wealth. According to the Ashoka Foundation (www.ashoka.org) (the non-profit organization for encouraging social entrepreneurship) social entrepreneurs are: 'individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They are ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide-scale change.'

It is important to appreciate that social entrepreneurship is more than just philanthropy or good works, and is targeted at creating long-term sustainable change rather than a short-term alleviation of problems. The most notable examples of social entrepreneurship involve new non-profit venture creation by individuals with drive and vision, but social entrepreneurship can be conducted within existing non-profit, public sector and business organizations. Increasingly, both social enterprises and businesses are concerned with 'more-than-profit', and use blended business value models that combine revenue and profit generation with the generation of social value. During the 19th and 20th centuries some of the most successful entrepreneurs have straddled the public and private sectors and led to innovations in mainstream public services such

as education, the arts and healthcare.

Social entrepreneurship and public entrepreneurship are linked, since social value, it might be argued, should be the outcome of public entrepreneurship. But social entrepreneurship is not restricted to public sector organizations and, equally importantly, public sector organizations have specific mandates, processes, structures and systems which may constrain their scope for the creation of social value.

Digital, knowledge and technology entrepreneurship

Digital entrepreneurship is associated with the leverage of new technologies in ways that create new commercial opportunities, disseminate information and support collaboration, communication and community building.

Knowledge entrepreneurship is associated with seeking opportunities and taking action in order to realize an innovative knowledge practice or product. Knowledge entrepreneurship might either lead to a knowledge-based product or service for the marketplace, or it might focus on the promotion of organizational learning to support organizational change and innovation (Rowley, 2000). For example, in taking the second of these two perspectives Skrzyszewski (2006, 3) defines a knowledge entrepreneur thus: 'someone who is skilled at creating and using intellectual assets for the development of new ventures or services that will lead to personal and community wealth creation or to improved and enhanced services'.

Technological entrepreneur is a term most usually applied to refer to those responsible for small start-up technology companies, which may grow into much larger businesses. Such entrepreneurs are an important part of the information industry, and include such names as Bill Gates (Microsoft), Larry Page and Sergey Brinn (YouTube), and Steve and Julie Pankhurst (Friends Reunited).

Reflect: Identify a list of people who you would describe as entrepreneurs. Which of the labels above would most apply to each of the people in your list?

Reflect: Look at the characteristics of entrepreneurs listed in Figure 1.1. Are you (or have you been, or might you become) an entrepreneur?

Bessant and Tidd (2007) suggest that some of the key characteristics of an entrepreneur are:

- 1 a passion for seeking new opportunities and ways to profit from change or disruption
- 2 a pursuit of opportunities with focus on a limited number of projects, rather than being distracted by every option
- 3 a focus on action and execution, avoiding endless analysis
- 4 involving and energizing networks of relationships, exploiting the expertise and resources of others, while helping others to achieve their own goals.

Figure 1.1 *Are you an entrepreneur?*

1.4 Creativity

Central to both innovation and entrepreneurship is the process of generating and developing ideas, or creativity. Creativity lies at the heart of the idea development process. Bessant and Tidd define creativity as:

Creativity is the making and communicating of meaningful new connections to help us think of many possibilities, to help us think and experience in varied ways and using different points of view; to help us think of new and unusual possibilities and to guide us in generating and selecting alternatives. These new connections and possibilities must result in something of value for the individual, group, organization, or society.

(Bessant and Tidd, 2007, 40)

In traditional models of the stages of innovation, creative idea generation is often seen as the first stage in the innovation process, and is associated with the generation of new ideas: 'Creativity is

the process of generating a novel or useful idea' (Barringer and Ireland, 2008, 45).

From this perspective, discussions of creativity in entrepreneurship and innovation tend to focus on idea generation. From the perspective of the individual, Barringer and Ireland (2008) discuss creativity in terms of the following stages:

- 1 *Preparation*: the background, experience and knowledge that the individual brings to the opportunity recognition process.
- 2 *Incubation*: during which a person thinks about a problem, or 'mulls over' it, either consciously or unconsciously.
- 3 *Insight*: the flash of recognition when the solution to a problem is seen or an idea is born.
- 4 *Evaluation*: when an idea is subjected to scrutiny and analysed for its viability and potential.
- 5 *Elaboration*: when the idea is put into a final form, the details are worked out and the idea is transformed into a new product, service or business concept.

Such models are interesting as they elaborate a structure that can assist in thinking about the creative thinking process. However, they tend to be 'front-end creative'. It is preferable to subscribe to the view that creativity is essential throughout the idea development process, as proposed by Bragg and Bragg (2005). Bragg and Bragg suggest a four-stage idea development process, which includes seeking and shaping opportunities, generating new ideas, evaluating and selecting ideas, and planning for implementation, and argue that creativity is essential throughout the innovation and entrepreneurial process. Further, successful ideas do not just emerge, they need cultivating and developing. The 'type' of creativity required at different stages in the process may differ, and typically involves a combination of intuition and imagination (divergent thinking) and logic and systems (convergent thinking); it may therefore need to draw on the differing creative talents of a range of people. Table 1.2 shows the relative importance of

Table 1.2 *Creative thinking styles through the idea development process (Bragg and Bragg, 2005, 43)*

| Step | Description | Thinking style |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 Seeking and shaping opportunities. | Identifying and exploring different opportunities, followed by analytical judgement. | Divergent and convergent thinking equally dominant. |
| 2 Generating new ideas. | Creating significant volumes of innovative, imaginative and associative ideas. | Divergent thinking is dominant. |
| 3 Evaluating and selecting ideas. | Screening the best from the rest and then evaluating those few in detail. | Convergent thinking is dominant. |
| 4 Planning for implementation. | Identifying and overcoming blocks to implementation. | Divergent and convergent thinking equally dominant. |

divergent and convergent thinking at the different stages in the idea development process.

Creativity is not restricted to people who have ‘creative’ jobs, such as those that include design, development and advertising, but is an orientation towards the novel, and is based on a belief in the ability to produce creative outcomes. Personality traits often associated with creativity include: openness to experience, tolerance of ambiguity, resistance to premature closure, curiosity and risk taking. They also include creative thinking abilities, such as fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (Bessant and Tidd, 2007).

While we all have the potential to be creative, we engage with that potential to varying extents and express our creativity in different ways. Although some individuals may be viewed as being more creative than others, it is possible for most people to improve their creative productivity. Organizations have an important role in promoting individual creativity through conscious attention to the organizational climate and its impact on creativity, the environment in which people work, the projects, opportunities and challenges that people experience and the structures, systems,

policies and techniques that support and influence their working practices. An individual or team's level of creativity may depend crucially on context. So, it may not be possible to identify a person as more or less creative. Rather, as Bessant and Tidd suggest (2007, 43), the question should be: 'Creative at what, when, how, where, why, and with whom?'

Reflect: Make a list of some changes in your working context that you feel might increase your creative productivity.

1.5 What's new about innovation?

As discussed in Section 1.1, information organizations have changed significantly in recent years, in response to the challenges and opportunities resulting largely from the digitization of information resources. To achieve these changes organizations and individuals will have been engaged in many change processes, and will have developed a level of expertise in engaging in, managing and leading change. So, what is the difference between change management and innovation? And what is the relevance of the body of expertise that has been gained through these experiences to innovation? This section seeks to provide some answers to these questions.

An innovation is a change, in a product, service, process or, more widely, an organization. Innovation management therefore shares much in common with change management. It might be argued at one level that successful innovation is dependent on successful change management. And in both change management and innovation it is important to work with the people who will be affected by or involved in the change or innovation, and to provide leadership, confidence and inspiration. Indeed, as part of the discussion of organizing for innovation in Chapter 4, a subsection on launching into an internal market, or change management, is included. So, the shift from a focus on change to a focus on innovation can be viewed as a matter of emphasis and perspective.

On this basis, change can be differentiated from innovation thus:

- Literature on change management tends to assume that change leaders and change agents either know what change is necessary, or are able, through collaboration and consultation, to arrive at a compromise that specifies what needs to happen. Innovation has greater potential to be both bottom-up and top-down.
- Innovation applies to changes to products, services, processes and organizations; change management tends towards a more internal focus, often with an emphasis on people (employees) and processes.
- Partly on account of its emphasis on 'newness' and 'novelty', taking an innovation perspective as opposed to a change perspective tends to strengthen the emphasis on the ideas generation phase of a development.
- The innovation literature directs greater attention to the organizational environment than does the change literature. Innovation starts with ideas. Those ideas are filtered and selected on the basis of their capacity to enhance organizational performance, whether that be measured in terms of revenue and profit or in terms of social value and impact on and contribution to communities.

Reflect: Is innovation a facet of change, or is change a facet of innovation?

1.6 Promoting innovation in information organizations

One of the very real challenges to many information organizations is that innovators and entrepreneurs do not perform well in bureaucracies, and public sector organizations are often mired in bureaucracies with over-prescriptive accounting systems, overburdened IT departments and lack of discretionary time and money (Best, 2001). There may be a need for innovations and

entrepreneurial action throughout the organization, and arguably radical, paradigm innovation, but potential innovators need a well honed pair of scissors and a lot of patience to find their way through the 'red tape'. Many public sector organizations have neither the culture nor the structure to effectively support change, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. They are risk averse, quoting public accountability as a defence, and often find it difficult to release resources to support imaginative and substantial innovation. Some argue that the culture of control that is ingrained in such organizations is at odds with innovation. One blogger observed that Google give staff 20% of their working time to engage in developing their own ideas. How many library managers would dare to implement such a scheme? (And would they lose their job if they did?)

Nevertheless, there is hope, and evidence that entrepreneurial behaviour can surface. For example, in the UK there is evidence that public service is changing rapidly, with a reinforced focus on citizen and community, underpinned by a network in public services (Communities and Local Government, 2008; Taylor and Pask, 2008). Information professionals need to play an active role in such developments, to grasp the opportunity to embrace innovation and entrepreneurial action, and develop, deliver and promote their role as public sector entrepreneurs. The Elsevier Foundation, under its Innovative Libraries in Developing Countries Program, awards grants to innovative libraries in developing countries (Africa, Asia and Latin America) to enhance library infrastructure, expand library information resources, offer training and education programmes and support partnerships (<http://elsevierfoundation.org>). Griffin (2008) describes initiatives under this programme that variously improve how information is used to combat AIDS, assist with agriculture development and support patient healthcare. In the US, the Special Libraries Association is establishing Library Innovation Labs, focusing on promoting technology innovation. In one of the few published studies on public entrepreneurship, Zampetakis and Moustakis (2007) found facets of entrepreneurial behaviour in frontline staff

in the relatively traditional Greek public sector. They noted, in particular, evidence of the impact of a supportive context, such as encouragement of initiatives and access to managerial information on entrepreneurial behaviour among public servants. Key antecedents of entrepreneurial behaviour were identified as 'creation of an energetic working environment', 'change orientation' and 'strategic vision'.

Reflect: What are the most significant constraints upon your acting entrepreneurially? What could you do to lessen the effect of these constraints?

Summary and conclusions

This chapter has introduced the innovation imperative, and has explored the various meanings associated with the concepts of innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity that will re-emerge in various guises throughout this book. It has commented on the tight linkage between these three concepts, and has discussed the relationship between innovation management and change management. More specifically, this chapter has commenced the discussion on the need for innovation in its various guises in organizations, and the value of innovative organizational cultures and a systematic approach to innovation management. Further, it has noted the importance of appreciating that entrepreneurship is not just applicable in business organizations, but also has a role, in the form of public and social entrepreneurship, in creating value for communities. Creativity is central to both innovation and entrepreneurship and should not be viewed as being restricted to specific roles or stages in the innovation process.

The last two sections in this chapter explore some key aspects of innovation management for information organizations. The first of these explores the difference between change management and innovation management, suggesting that information organizations should use their experience with change management as a platform

to develop innovation management capacity. The final section acknowledges some of the challenges of the cultivation of innovation and entrepreneurship in information organizations, many of which are public sector organizations, and offers a platform for further discussion of these challenges and their negotiation in later chapters (specifically Chapters 3 and 4).

Review questions

- 1 What are the potential benefits to information organizations of a more proactive approach to the facilitation and management of innovation?
- 2 Choose the definition of innovation that makes most sense to you. Explain why you have selected it.
- 3 How would you describe: (a) entrepreneurship and (b) an entrepreneur?
- 4 Discuss the different types of entrepreneurship that have been proposed, and explain why each concept is useful.
- 5 What do you understand by the term 'creativity'? Why is it important to both innovation and entrepreneurship?
- 6 What is the difference between change management and promoting and managing innovation in information organizations?
- 7 Discuss some of the initiatives that are underway to promote innovation in libraries and other information organizations.

Challenges

- 1 How can an information professional identify the most important innovations for the survival and success of their organization?
- 2 What is and what is not an innovation? How new does something have to be to be regarded as an innovation?
- 3 To what extent can entrepreneurship be learned?
- 4 Is it necessary to differentiate between different types of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs?
- 5 How can creativity be cultivated and applied in specific contexts?
- 6 How can public sector organizations adapt their culture, systems and processes to facilitate innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity?

Group discussion topics

Group discussion topic 1: Future innovations

- 1 Discuss what you think will be the next big innovation that will impact on the information industry.

Group discussion topic 2: Capitalizing on opportunities

- 1 In relation to a recent innovation that you have been involved with:
 - What were the personal circumstances or drivers that led you to seek an opportunity to do things differently?
 - How did you go about locating and developing that opportunity/idea?
 - How did you go about the planning for translating that opportunity into action?
 - How did you go about capitalizing on the new opportunity?

Group discussion topic 3: Entrepreneurship in information organizations

- 1 What do you see as the primary outcome(s) of entrepreneurship in information organizations? (Or: Why is entrepreneurship beneficial in information organizations?)
- 2 Do you perceive there to be conflict in seeking to generate revenue and social value simultaneously?
- 3 Identify two information professionals who you would regard as successful entrepreneurs. What have they achieved and how?

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