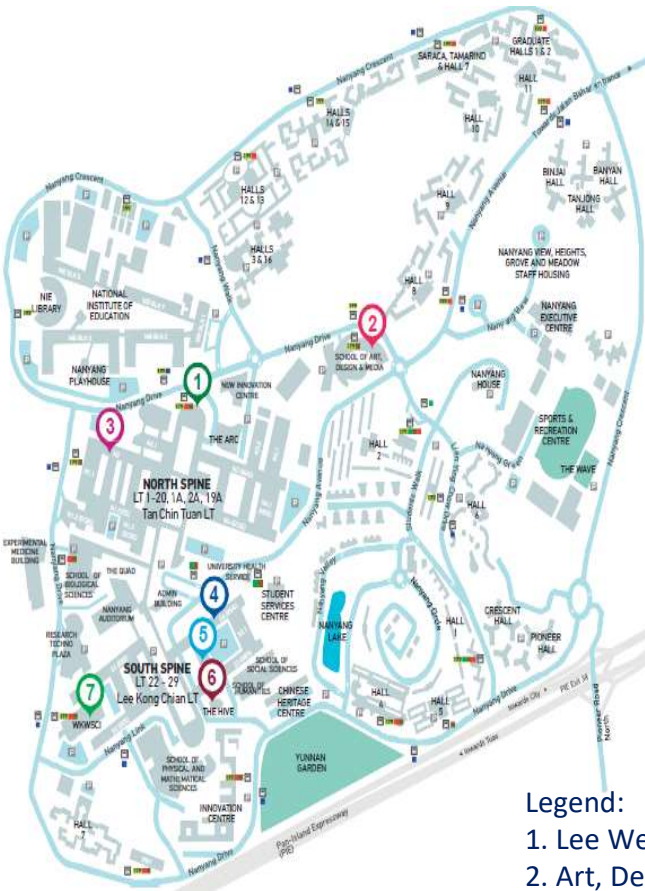# The Librarian As Innovator

Southeast Asia Libraries of the Future Summit 2024,
Building the library of tomorrow: Sustainable Innovations for a Resilient Future
Penang, Malaysia

Caroline Pang
University Librarian
NTU Library

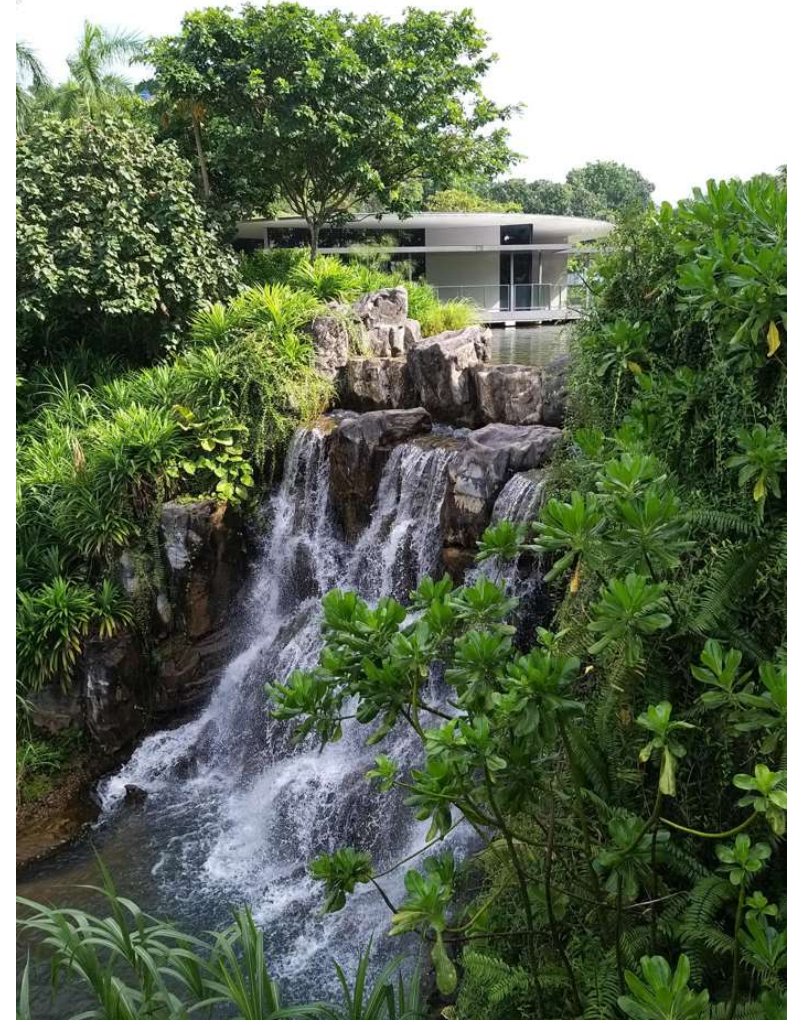# Beautiful Campus

https://www.ntu.edu.sg/

Total Floor Area:
14,847 sqm

Legend:
1. Lee Wee Nam Library (LWNL)
2. Art, Design & Media Library (ADML)
3. Business Library (BUSL)
4. Humanities & Social Sciences Library (HSSL)
5. Chinese Library (CHNL)
6. Library Outpost (LOP)
7. Communication & Information Library (CMIL)

Spaces & Services Highlight

Hygge

- A dedicated wellbeing space at the Quiet Zone of Lee Wee Nam Library (Level 5) designed to encourage users to engage in reflection, contemplation and mental relaxation.

- HYGGE features the concept *Fascinature*, which combines elements of soft fascination and nature to facilitate mental rejuvenation.

https://www.ntu.edu.sg/education/libraries/spaces-and-facilities

TEMI Robot

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfurJhMUfe8

Outline

1) What is innovation? Why is it a requisite skill for librarians to be innovative?

2) Innovation in NTU Library: Implementation of Remote Service Centre
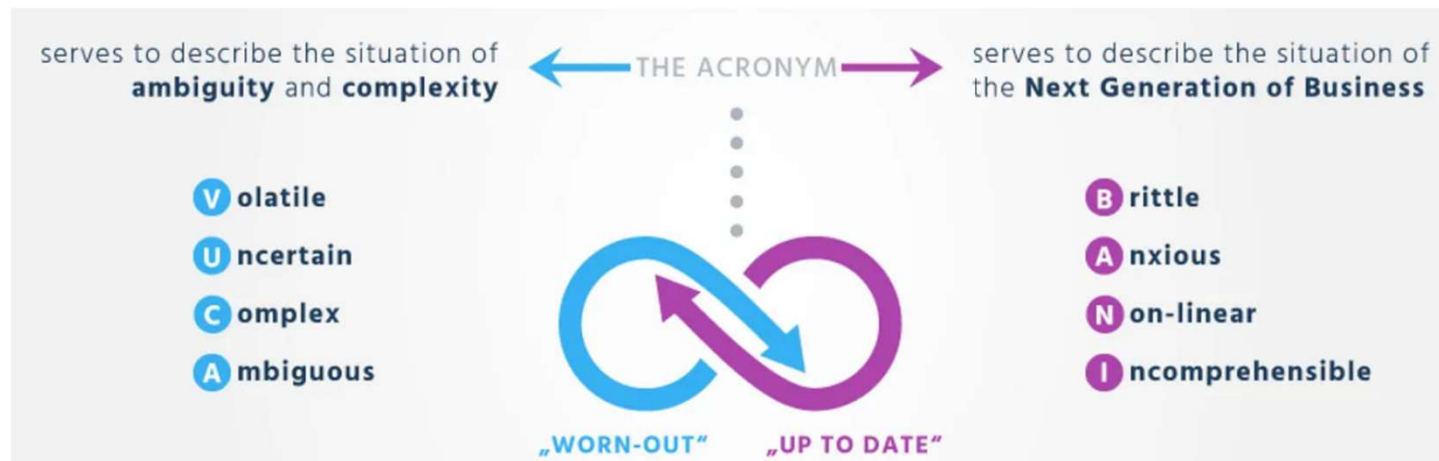
THE VUCA WORLD HAS EVOLVED
INTO BANI WORLD.

VUCA has ...
→ lost its descriptive meaningfulness
→ become not suitable for today's relevance

BANI facilitates ...
→ new perspectives
→ an accurate description of the current situation, emotional states, and causal connections

serves to describe the situation of **ambiguity** and **complexity**   ← THE ACRONYM →   serves to describe the situation of the **Next Generation of Business**

V olatile
U ncertain
C omplex
A mbiguous

B rittle
A nxious
N on-linear
I ncomprehensible

„WORN-OUT"   „UP TO DATE"

https://marian-temmen.medium.com/bani-vs-vuca-a-new-acronym-for-a-new-world-59c7be2dddce

Brittleness requires → **capacity & resilience**

Anxiety asks for → **empathy & mindfulness**

Nonlinearity calls for → **context & adaptivity**

Incomprehensibility demands → **transparency & intuition**

credit: Stephan Grabmeier

THE STRAITS TIMES

Staff requests for flexi-work arrangements must be considered by employers by 2024

MINISTRY OF MANPOWER

Tripartite Guidelines that Shape the Right Norms and Expectations Around Flexible Work Arrangements to Come into Effect on 1 Dec 2024

16 April 2024 | Employment practices

cna

'Singaporeans need to level up': Companies say flexi-work could push them to hire overseas

18 Apr 2024 02:46PM | (Updated: 26 Apr 2024 03:37PM)

SINGAPORE: As flexi-work becomes the norm in Singapore, employers said they may rethink hiring local staff and look overseas for recruitment.
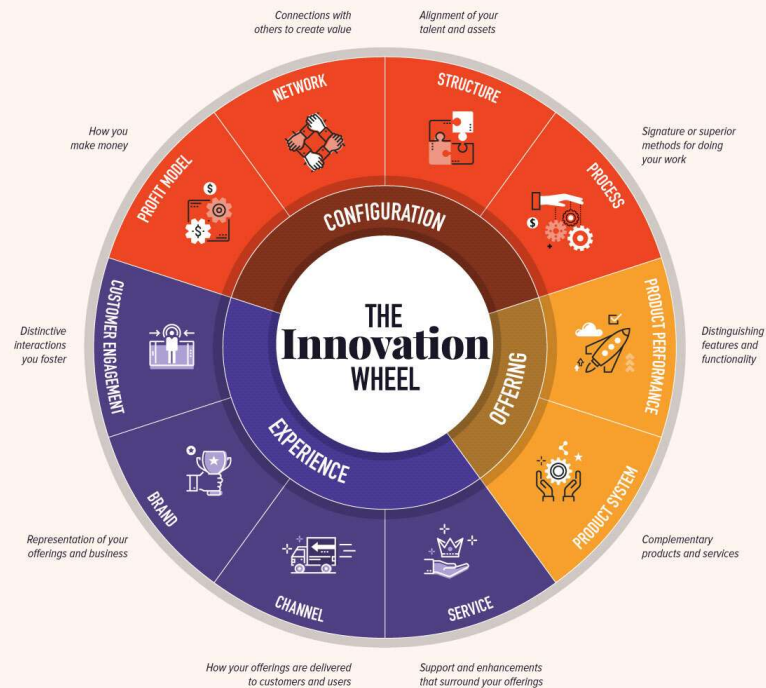
What Is Innovation?

UNDERSTANDING THE
10 Types of Innovation

New products are invented from scratch all the time, but this is merely one way to innovate.

According to innovation firm **Doblin**, most big breakthroughs in history comprise some combination of the following 10 types of innovation.

Connections with others to create value

Alignment of your talent and assets

NETWORK

STRUCTURE

How you make money

Signature or superior methods for doing your work

PROFIT MODEL

PROCESS

CONFIGURATION

THE Innovation WHEEL

PRODUCT PERFORMANCE

Distinguishing features and functionality

Distinctive interactions you foster

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

OFFERING

EXPERIENCE

PRODUCT SYSTEM

Complementary products and services

Representation of your offerings and business

BRAND

CHANNEL

SERVICE

How your offerings are delivered to customers and users

Support and enhancements that surround your offerings

By tactically examining these 10 different types of innovation, you may uncover exciting new product opportunities – or you may change the business world forever.

VISUAL CAPITALIST

/visualcapitalist @visualcap visualcapitalist.com

"Most big breakthroughs in history comprise some combination of the following 10 types of innovation."

https://www.visualcapitalist.com/10-types-of-innovation-the-art-of-discovering-a-breakthrough-product/#google_vignette

#	Innovation Type	Description
1.	Profit Model	How you make money
2.	Network	Connections with others to create value
3.	Structure	Alignment of your talent and assets
4.	Process	Signature of superior methods for doing your work
5.	Product Performance	Distinguishing features and functionality
6.	Product System	Complementary products and services
7.	Service	Support and enhancements that surround your offerings
8.	Channel	How your offerings are delivered to customers and users
9.	Brand	Representation of your offerings and business
10.	Customer Engagement	Distinctive interactions you foster

https://www.visualcapitalist.com/10-types-of-innovation-the-art-of-discovering-a-breakthrough-product/#google_vignette
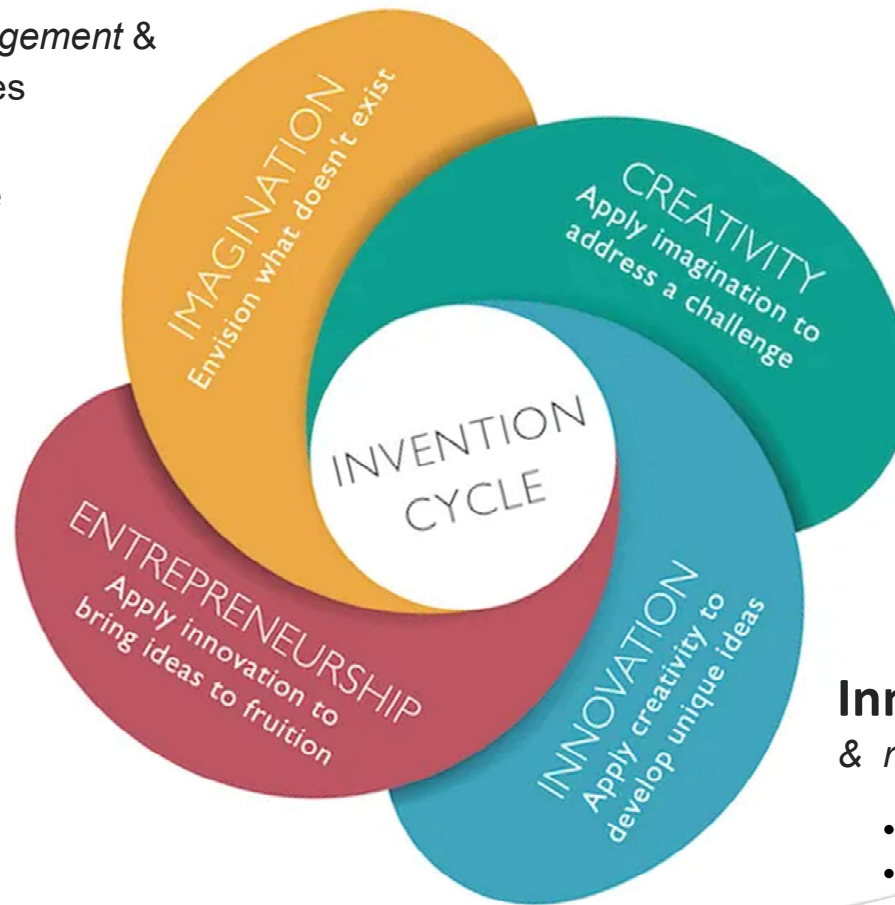
Imagination requires *engagement* &
the ability to *envision* alternatives

- Immerse & Observe
- Identify pain points
- See opportunities

Creativity requires *motivation* &
experimentation to address challenges

- Driven to help
- Explore to improve

Entrepreneurship

requires *persistence* &
the ability
to *inspire* others

- Scaling ideas
- Get people to join you,
  invest in your ideas &
  buy your product

Innovation requires *focusing*
& *reframing* to generate unique solutions

- Challenge assumptions
- Reframe the situation
- Connect ideas from disparate
  disciplines

IMAGINATION
Envision what doesn't exist

CREATIVITY
Apply imagination to
address a challenge

INVENTION
CYCLE

ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Apply innovation to
bring ideas to fruition

INNOVATION
Apply creativity to
develop unique ideas

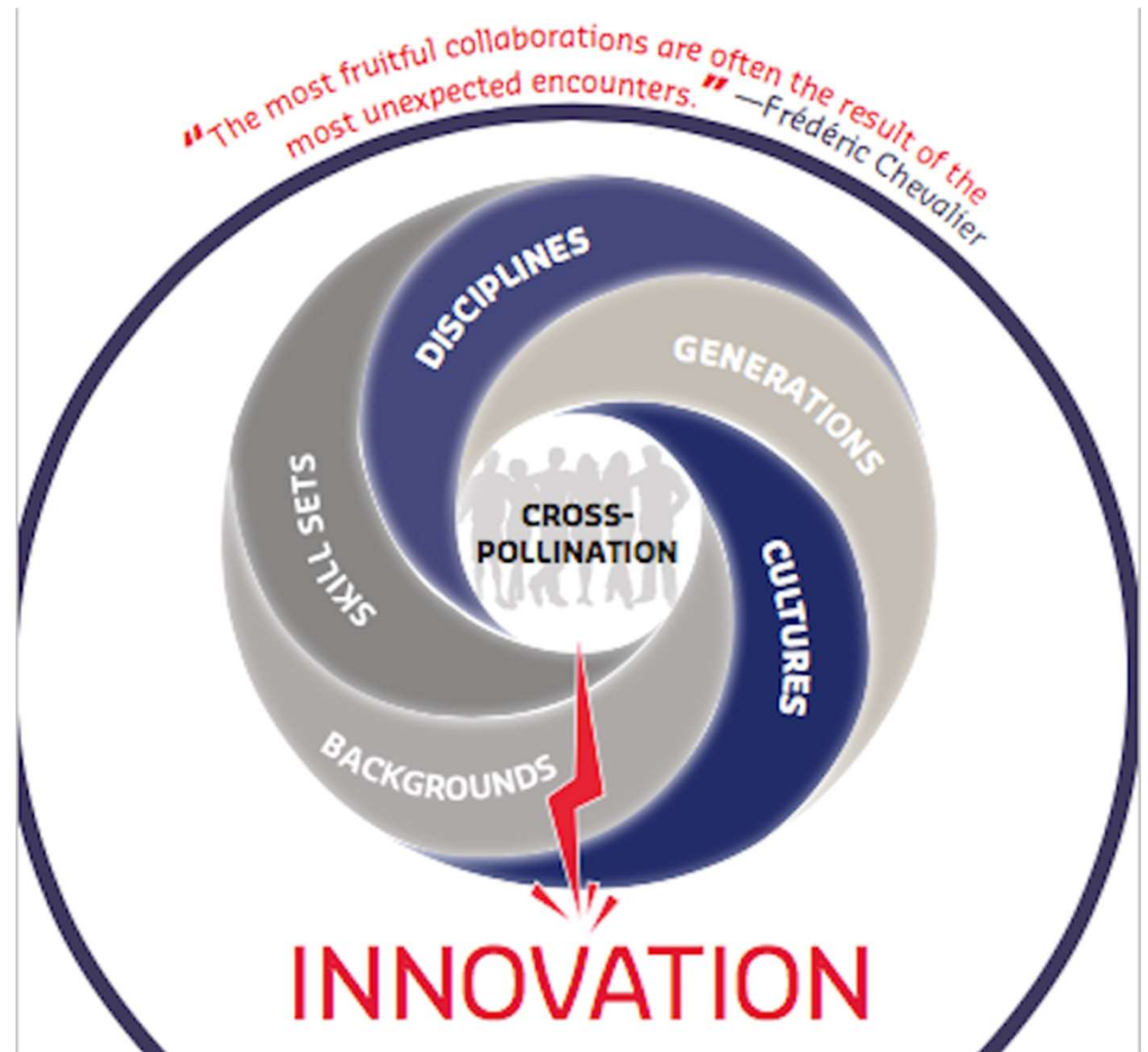**Insight Out : Get Ideas Out of Your Head and Into the World**

Tina Seelig: Invention cycle

How To Unleash Your Creativity, From A Stanford Professor

What if we design our library spaces to foster cross-pollination?

"The most fruitful collaborations are often the result of the most unexpected encounters." —Frédéric Chevalier

DISCIPLINES

GENERATIONS

SKILL SETS

CROSS-POLLINATION

CULTURES

BACKGROUNDS

INNOVATION

Innovation in NTU Library

Implementation of the
Remote Service Centre

Library Operations Transformation

- Due to manpower issues, **more libraries have become self-service**

- **Increasing online interactions with users requires dedicated team for response**

- **Improve the overall library user experience**

Manpower issues

With 7 libraries, we needed 17 library staff to man all libraries but we only had 15 staff

- Needed full-scale ops transformation to convert 4 out of 7 libraries into self-service libraries
Innovation

- With this transformation, we only needed 11 staff for counter duties
  - Redeployed 3 staff to RSC, one other staff to another library team

Self-Service Libraries

- 4 out of 7 libraries are now self-service during office hours
- Self-borrow books, return, book pick-up, chat or videocall with library staff

Before

After

Temi deployed in **NTU Art, Design & Media Library (ADML)**
- answering frequently asked questions,
- video calling a NTU Librarian,
- conduct library tours

Transformation of **NTU Humanities & Social Sciences Library (HSSL)** Service Desk area into Self-Service area
- Addition of more study spaces

VS0

NTU Library Remote Service Centre

- Launched on 30 October 2023, led by Soma (Acting Lead, OIKLS Service Innovation & Excellence) with 2 dedicated staff
- Staff identified from pool of counter staff
  - upskilling them with on-the-job trainings, process knowledge of other library operations and customer service skills

Take over management of CEMS enquiries by doing "first resolution"

Operate the remote services including library chat, video calls and remote patrolling (Temi)

Constant monitoring of urgent issues & "hot" cases

NTU Library Remote Service Centre
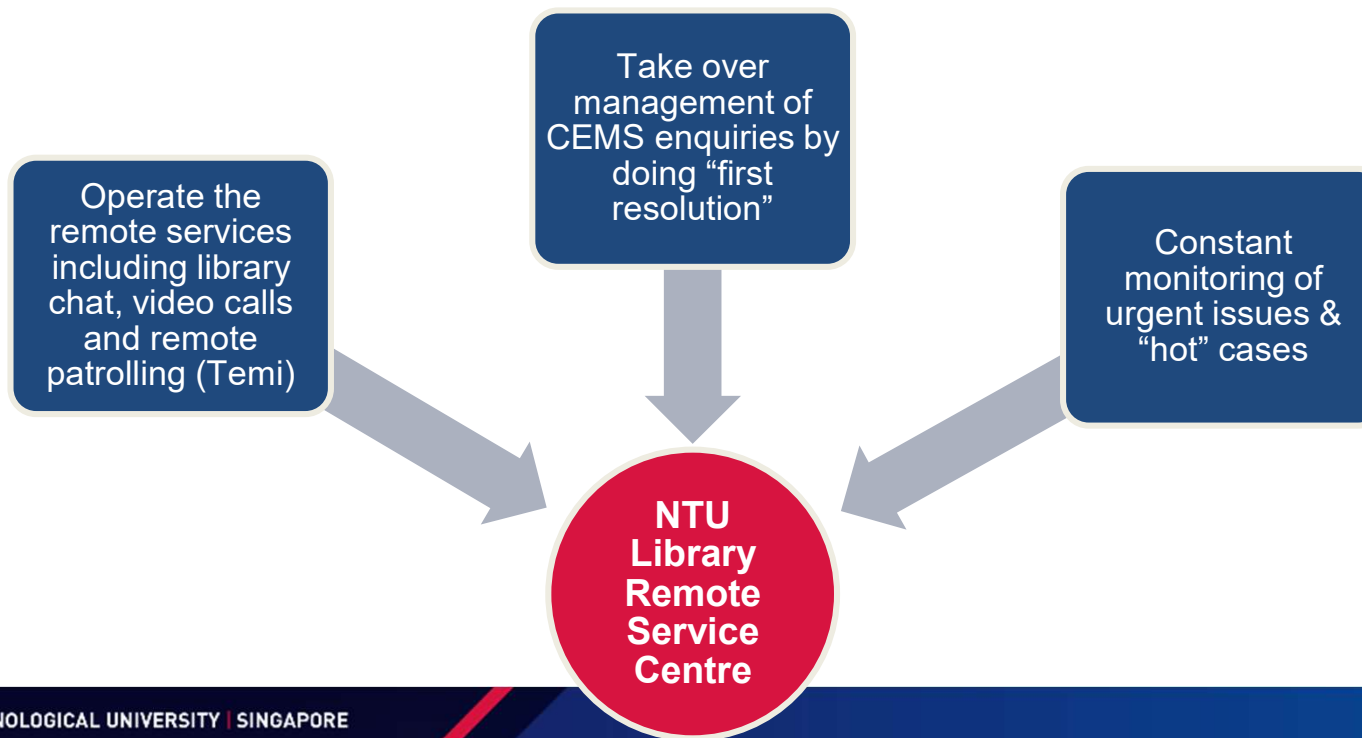
Current RSC KPIs
- 3 working days or less since Asked Date
- 3 interactions or less per ticket
- **Average feedback rating of 4.5 out of 5**
- Aim **for zero ticket transfers**

VS0   Rework title

V Somasundram, 2024-04-09T15:53:14.018

Expectation
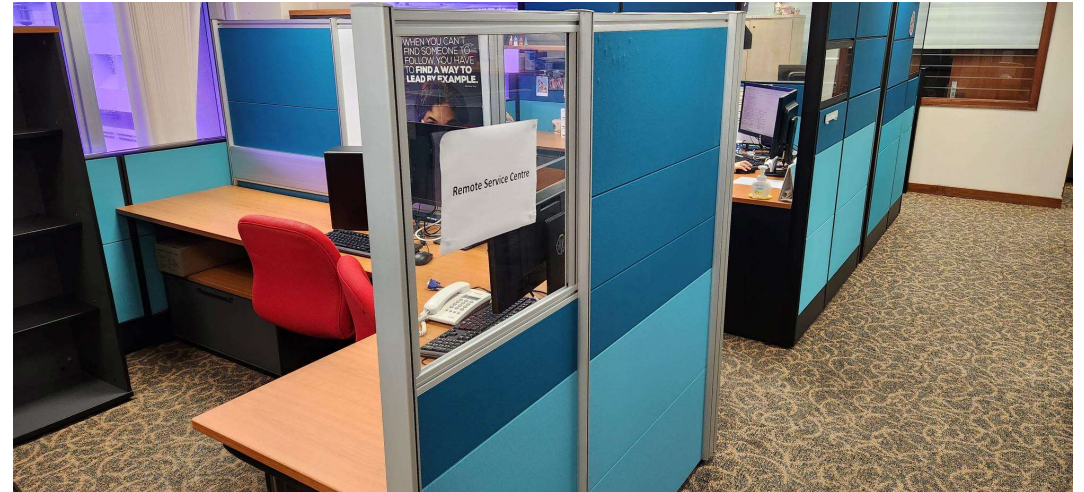
Reality (supposedly)

Centralized Enquiry Management System (CEMS)

- Launched in January 2020

- Over **6000 enquiries** every year

- Staff were expected to claim enquiries with no overall owner

Issues:
- Unanswered enquiries
- Non-standardized level of response to users
- No centralized point of escalation and service recovery
- Frequent repetitions of basic enquiries are taking up the time of the specialists which can be used to answer more complex enquiries
- No coordination among teams for effective resolution

Impact of NTU Library Remote Service Centre

Since its launch on 30 Oct 2023, RSC team has…

Answered 42% of Library's ticket enquiries
(903 out of 2,131 tickets sent to Library)

RSC answered 109 tickets typically answered by other teams, from start to end
(Reduced ticket workload of other library teams)

Attended to 10 video calls & 33 chats initiated by users from self-service libraries

58% decrease in cases requiring service recovery

All figures taken from 30 Oct 2023 to 31 March 2024

NTU Library FAQs

Challenges

- Setting up a team from **existing pool of counter staff**

- **Convincing other teams** to put together a training plan for RSC
  - Resistance to training, fear of losing job

- **Training other staff** to answer enquiries
  - To be friendly & customer-centric

- Balancing **user demands & resource constraints**
  - E.g.: Request to buy all resources they want, demanding faculty

Moving ahead

- **Identify & rotate different staff** to expand their skill sets

- **Work towards zero ticket transfers**
  - Reduce workload of other teams
  - Working with other teams on training RSC staff on product knowledge

- Developing **RSC Ops handbook**
  - Standardize procedures, track KPIs, train new RSC staff

Thank you