



Writing the Second Book: A System for Meaningful Authorship and Career Development

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Abstract

The scholarly monograph is described through a cliché: the gold standard of research. The most supportive structure for writing a monograph is within a doctoral programme, with peers, supervisors, professional development sessions, and time. Such conditions rarely reappear after the doctoral examination. This article offers a system and model of how to configure the next step, and the second book. How do un(der)supported researchers continue to progress and publish, and not lose the curiosity and skills of researching and authorship? This article provides a process through which a second book, and subsequent monographs, can be produced while in full-time work and adjacently aligned to the higher education sector. As universities restructure and remove tenured staff, high quality academic research written outside of an institution is a reality. The number of independent scholars is increasing, alongside post-PhD researchers in other professional fields. Therefore, this article probes how the second book can continue both career and professional development for doctoral graduates working outside of higher education.

Keywords: Academic Publishing, Academic Writing, Academic Professional Development, Research Training, Research Education

Introduction

The PhD is often described as research training or, perhaps more evocatively, a research education. The focus is, rightly, to enable a research apprenticeship to create a thesis, or in some international modes and enrolments, a series of articles. There are a few proxies that demonstrate the effectiveness of this process. The most common is the completion and successful examination of a thesis. With international examiners, research standards are verified. These standards are also checked in some systems by an oral examination or viva. While the doctorate activates many assumptions and myths, it is – at

its most basic – a degree, with an enrolment, candidature and assessment. Students construct outputs that are assessed for their quality.

A key question that hovers around the doctoral graduation is, what happens next? What happens after the degree is presented for examination, and the doctorate awarded? Myriad next steps in the story are offered as options. Postdocs. Part-time teaching contracts. Precariat functions such as marking or tutoring. Adjunct status. Junior academic post. Returning to full-time work. Continuing the job that was held during the candidature.

Then there is the question of research. Have all the articles been published from the thesis? Has the student's work been scuppered or minimized by supervisors / advisors – and others – who claimed the right to authorship? Did the thesis become a scholarly monograph? Was a plan constructed for the publication of all the conference presentations, seminars, and SoTL innovations that emerged through the candidature? Were Non Traditional Outputs (NTRs) generated and disseminated?

It is intriguing how rarely the focus on research training or research education incorporates detailed attention to dissemination and writing strategies after the candidature. Such systematic planning to enable students to activate a diverse dissemination plan is urgent, meaningful, and honest. Unfortunately, we live in selfish times. Supervisors / advisors, if they do not gain authorship, have little to gain from PhD supervision, except the maintenance of their integrity and to fulfil the requirements to attain workload points. But once a student has left the programme, there may be no further co-authored publications to squeeze from the project. The self-interest of the supervisor is not continued after graduation, with no further publications to emerge. Therefore, what happens to the former student, without the scaffolding, support, and supervision, and funding to support travel and research incidentals? How does the next project emerge after the doctorate?

This second project matters because it teaches distinct lessons from the doctorate. There are no maintenance funds. No one reads, drafts and edits the research. No peers offer support, commentary, or critique. This is a tough, isolated, and atomized professional development space. Therefore, once strategies, techniques, and plans are put in place for this second publication, these are repeatable and transferable skills for the continuance of an academic research career, often against the odds. Developing those systems and skills is the project of this article. How does a graduated PhD student produce the second book, then the third, then the tenth, then the twentieth? Such strategies are even more difficult to sustain with the threats and challenges of Generative AI, ghost authorship, (post) reading cultures, and the predicted 'end' of reading. In a recent PEW Internet and American Life survey, the longitudinal survey for 2025 had to change the element that they measured. They no longer assessed the percentage of the population that had read a completed book. Partial book reading was recorded (Bishop, 2026). Most American citizens did not read a single book in a year, but the people who do read are reading heavily and expansively.

Academics are a reading and writing community. Indeed, scholarly communication is a distinctive way of reading, writing and thinking, with scholarly monographs an historic foundation for knowledge development in many disciplines (Lindholm-Romantschuk and Warner, 1996). What recent surveys about the ‘decline’ of reading demonstrates is that the differences between academics and non-academic citizens are increasingly stark. Therefore, academic researchers complete their work in a context where there will be little or no support for writing a book. Academic writers must be a self-saucing pudding. Hoping for a sabbatical or a mentor to support the research and writing of a second book is highly unlikely. The second book is unique. It begins with a decision. To start. This is a crucial decision and a courageous decision. The question is, what techniques and strategies are deployed to create a book after this decision is made?

This article is situated in this career gap, which is also a support gap and a care gap, between the completion of a PhD and the construction of a second book. It is written by a just-completed PhD student, who is also maintaining a senior managerial role as a regional library leader, and a senior colleague who was not involved in her supervision. The two authors of this article – Dr Lauren Gray and Professor Tara Brabazon – met in Lauren’s first year of her undergraduate degree and reconnected in the final stages of her PhD. Since that time, co-authored articles have been published (Brabazon and Gray, 2026) and a decision has been made to write a co-authored book on libraries and their role in regional development. It is particularly important for Lauren that she continues to be research active. Librarians and information managers have a role – and often an under-researched role – in developing innovative modes of scholarly communication and epistemic cultures (Cronin, 2003). This article, therefore, activates, captures and shares the developmental arc, and strategies to support the building of a second book without supervision, without a university, and without research metrics to bend a career path into a particular direction.

This ‘second book’ project also has a career imperative to it. When Tara was an external representative on a Canadian interview panel, they asked of the candidates, “What is your second book?” The first book – the PhD – was assumed to be the initial, completed monograph. The panel was interested in the second book. It signifies originality. Commitment. A self-starter attitude. A research trajectory. This is a meaningful interview question. Therefore, the strategies outlined in this article operate in an environment with little support for post-PhD students. We build a book from nothing, from an idea to a publication. Three sections organize this article: finding and developing an idea, testing and trialling the argument, and the difficult work to finish. Each section moves between the writing of the two authors.

The plurality of writing styles in this article is important and rare. This piece occupies the developmental space of the second book for a post-PhD student. It tracks a research project in progress, building the second book for a recently graduated PhD student,

whose doctorate has become a book. The construction of this article is a dialogue to reveal the scaffold, of how this second book is forged.

Writing a Book While in Full-Time Work (Lauren Gray)

My first book is titled *Dispatching Democracy*, to be published by Springer. It takes the research from my PhD thesis and re-configures it to formulate arguments for a book, rather than for PhD examination. I genuinely revelled in the process of stripping the PhD phrases from the prose and seeing my research without the PhD vernacular. For me, the process involved reducing the thesis from 98000 words down to 70,000. That meant, editing out nearly a third of the PhD text. How do you do this whilst in full-time work? I was not ready to let that research go, with the submission of the PhD for examination. My life became so intrinsically linked to the PhD that I literally breathe it in and exhale it. The timing of the book, including setting the task of turning my research from a PhD into a Book, was crucial to completing the arc of my research. I completed this task while the PhD was under examination, and while I was intrinsically linked to that research.

I also started a new job after the submission, which meant I was not already embedded in the next career stage. It was a time of expansive change. Bureaucratic work by design smothers and invades all the corners and crevices of a life if we let it. It takes over and infiltrates like social media. I had started a new job, in a new state, and I was not burdened and infiltrated nor mentally consumed by the throes of that system. I had the mental capacity to think and enjoy my research as it entered its dissemination phase.

Plus, I had just finished completing Tara's *Ten drafts to completion* (Brabazon, 2025). I had a framework and the experience of editing. Through these ten drafts, I moved my scrappy thesis draft from 160,000 to 98000 words. To turn my text from a PhD to a book, I knew the drafting and editing had to change. In reducing the length once more, from 98000 to 70,000 words, the goal was to remove everything that made my book look, feel and sound like a PhD and make it available, potent and meaningful for wider reading beyond examiners.

Another motivation was the examiner's feedback. For the first time, I had seen how others, who did not know me or were not my supervisors, read my text. Some of their feedback was challenging, and some was illuminating. Some was the opposite of constructive feedback. I appreciated all of it. Editing my research data sets again was an opportunity to integrate some of that insightful feedback.

My motivation was already high. A couple of other factors furthered this motivation. Another scholar who had been in the academic system for decades and had achieved so much confided she never published her thesis research, and was never appointed to a tenured position within academia. She wondered if those were linked. Had she completed the process of turning her PhD research into a book would she have got tenure? Therefore, I also experienced personal inspiration to publish the thesis.

There is also the bigger question and motivation, such as an obligation to share research. I had received a PhD grant whilst working fulltime and studying part time. It enabled me to travel from Perth to Sydney many times, as well as to interview people, and buy books and equipment that made doing my PhD research possible. Many people enabled my research too, including those who took part in my research. There is an obligation to do something with this knowledge, and not let it stay on the shelves and in archival boxes.

Motivation is a major component of prioritising time. It is a choice. We have a choice where we place time and energy in times of transition. It is very easy to make excuses that paid employment extracts all our life, time and value. Indeed, it can, and it will – if you let it. Rationally, I knew that writing is hard. But to get my first book published I did not need to write more. I needed to become the best editor I could be. Editing is easier than writing from a blank page.

Like all life events, completing a task is about breaking goals into bite-size pieces. Doing the archetypal ‘low hanging fruit’ first. Find the word ‘PhD’ and replace it with the word ‘book.’ Remove mentions of an ‘original contribution to knowledge.’ The culling of the first 5000 words was a breeze. From here, I gathered momentum and commitment to the task. I was invested in metamorphosizing the PhD to the book. I was invested in seeing the dissemination through to completion.

Removing the last 5000 words to create a monograph-length document was difficult. When I had taken out all the easy PhD sections, phrases and words, then having to take out meaningful content was a challenge. This difficult last stage involves questioning if there is a better way of expressing or summarizing the purpose of that word, sentence or paragraph in the context of a book. It was line by line editing. This takes time and significant mental load. There is no ‘find all and replace’ functionality at this point. For me, in full-time work, that meant allocating time on the weekend. Setting aside a morning or an afternoon and just doing the editing process for a few solid, dedicated hours. I acknowledge this time is not easy to carve out through exhaustion from full-time workloads and life’s personal and professional schedules. But without carving out that dedicated time, the task would not get completed.

With the manuscript in the form of a book, the next task was to work on a publisher proposal. I had never have written a book before; writing for the audience of a publisher and proposing that they publish my first book took time and effort. It felt similar to applying for a job, marketing not only myself but my book. This was challenging, and it is difficult to maintain authenticity. But again, there are many things in life that we do not like doing, but are required. If I wanted to try to publish my first book, then it required a book proposal with a promotional and marketing tone. Difficult tasks require dedicated time and several attempts. On my fourth revision of the four-page proposal, it started to take shape. I was fortunate to have Tara to guide me throughout this process, provide a proposal template, and commit to the task.

Finding and Developing an Idea (Tara Brabazon)

The foundation of every scholarly monograph, every academic book, is a powerful idea. Books differ from a PhD. The doctorate requires a SOCK, a significant contribution to knowledge. There is much handwringing about the literature review, finding the research gap, and developing dull and predictable methods. PhDs can make great books, but the topic must often be selected at the start of the candidature with an eye to a scholarly monograph. After graduation, the publishing support is concluded. The supervisor has gone, and the team of students for co-authorship, legitimate or otherwise, has vanished. The former student is now in full-time work – either inside or outside a university – or struggling to scratch out a living from transitory, temporary or adjunct posts. If the next research project is to be envisaged, then the frame, trajectory, and responsibility rests on a person without professional support.

A key question is, why a book in these difficult times?. As Don Herzog confirms, we live amidst *Reading Wars* (2026). The book occupies a profound history in and for our universities (Mann, 1980). Scholarly monographs have an intricate and distinctive pathway through most disciplines. For the humanities and social sciences, careers are organized, structured, and punctuated by and through the book (Cordón-García et al., 2019). Books matter because expansive ideas can be stretched and probed beyond the restrictive framework of an academic article. The best academic books have a startling, gleaming idea at their centre. This idea builds into an argument that continues the legacy of the powerful scholars from the past, but also speaks to an intellectual future. The best of books occupy a bright and porous present. A book does not exist without an edgy, meaningful, and powerful idea. Considering the state of contemporary employment, inside and outside a university, the volatility makes it difficult to be able to focus on a single project. A book requires commitment, grit, motivation, and a belief in the project, against the odds. Therefore, the first step must always be to find a meaningful and powerful idea.

The next task is to find an audience for this idea and make them care. But in tough times, how does a researcher develop or find that initial idea? Six options are offered in this article.

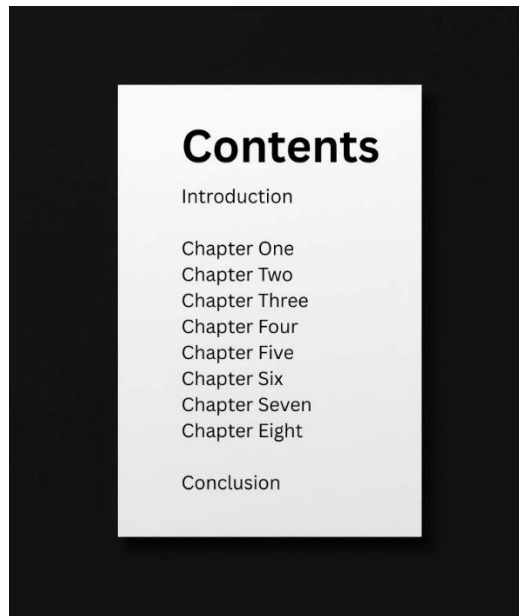
1. A problem emerges in professional life, teaching, or in a classroom that does not make sense. The book works through solutions to that problem.
2. The researcher is angry about something in an academic discipline, the workplace, or the world. Writing through the anger provides propulsion for the research.
3. A major world event requires shaping or reshaping, interpretation or reinterpretation.
4. An eminent scholar published a piece or a book that is very right or very wrong, and it requires re-evaluation and reframing.

5. A researcher sees a connection between two ideas, cultures, theories, or concepts that no one has seen or valued.
6. There is an emerging concept, trope, term, and a book allows it to stretch, expand, and increase in its applicability.

Those six triggers can start the project of a book. The isolation of a weird problem, a dreadful or strange event, a major intellectual moment that is very right or very wrong, or a connection between two ideas that no one has aligned, can begin research and writing. For Lauren and me, a project emerged that offered meaning and value for her professionally, and would create a powerful second book. We realized that the GLAMs literature (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums), and the regional development literature were misaligned. Too often, regional development was mashed into economic development, with public and citizenship development functions undermined or marginalized. Therefore, we combined (1) and (5), locating a professional problem and building a connection between two ideas, to provide the foundation for a book. Rob Walker's argument is important to value when shaping a project. In discussing *The Art of Noticing for Writers*, he asks that we cultivate, "the ability to attend to what others overlook" (2019). This is a focus on a distinctive lens or point of view. Our book explores the role of public libraries in enlivening their regions.

A book differs from all our other research outputs. It must sustain an argument, but it is also an opportunity to create a subtle and careful pathway through ideas. A book constructs a lens, a new way of seeing, and a new way of thinking. A book can express a worldview. Shortcuts are not required. Basic premises or assumptions can be questioned. Instead, a meaningful, powerful and potent argument can be carefully structured and developed. That is the gift of a book.

From this provocative idea, a book title must wrap around it. The main title must draw in an audience. It must be engaging and provocative. The subtitle must be descriptive of the content. The final stage in this first step in building a book is to open a book file with this title. From this title page, move to the contents page. List the introduction and conclusion, and eight chapters between these headings. Start with eight chapters. It may end up being six. But commence the contents page, so that the entire project is visualized.



Contents
Introduction
Chapter One
Chapter Two
Chapter Three
Chapter Four
Chapter Five
Chapter Six
Chapter Seven
Chapter Eight
Conclusion

Figure 1: Contents page (Tara Brabazon)

At its best, add provisional topics or ideas to each chapter. Ponder examples, case studies, concepts, or major researchers. This provisional contents page visualizes a plan for the book. From this initial stage of an idea, title, and contents page, the second stage of this process is testing and trialling an argument to build up and flesh out the book.

The Development of the Chapters and Content Page (Lauren Gray)

After these initial stages, the gathering and analysis of data sets are required. Data are all around us. I started a new job and relocated to the state of Tasmania in Australia. The quality of life skyrocketed as I embarked on the role of regional library manager of the south-central region of Tasmania. This position encompasses a large region, from Geeveston in the south to Oatlands in central Tasmania. There are 46 public libraries in Tasmania. They are banded across four regions and into three tiers. Tier one libraries are very large and servicing large, populated areas. The south-central region has two tier one libraries - Glenorchy and Kingston. The second tier libraries are medium in size, serving medium sized township and in my region this includes Bridgewater, New Norfolk, and Huonville libraries. Then there are the small libraries, designated tier three in the south central region. This band encompasses Bothwell, Oatland Geeveston, Cygnet and Bruny Island Online.

In commencing my role, I learnt a lot about each of these libraries. What struck me

is the uniqueness of each library and community. Each had differing challenges and strengths; each had an organisation culture and rhythms. I was appointed as the first regional manager of the south central region. Prior to my appointment, they had operated in catchments, which lead to silos. My appointment was made to synchronise the south central region. But how does one do that in a way that keeps the essence and spirit of community and enlivens and enriches citizens through the regional library? As my time in the region progressed, I realized that it was necessary to deeply understand each library and the people it serves, while also being bold and trying new methodologies and interventions.

Every week something happened; my observational data sets and knowledge were growing. The first example of an important regional development was in Kingston, which is the second busiest library in the state. It has a learning centre across the road. When I first went there, I nearly resigned. It was terribly run down. It was only a matter of time before something happened – and of course it did. The decision was then to shut the Kingston Learning Centre down whilst determining what safety measures could be implemented. The outrage from KLC users was enormous. Their response was ferocious (Alexander, 2025). They could not see that the decision before them was to make the site safe. They saw its closure as an attack on them – stopping them from doing what they normally do and had done for years. They did not see the deteriorated site nor that it was a risk, or who carried that burden of risk and purse strings to start addressing it. This was a problem. This was one challenge of many in and across the region.

How I saw the sites in the role for which I was appointed created a great deal of information and data sets on all eleven sites. Themes of transformation, environmental issues, digitisation, racism, and Tasmanian Indigenous rights acknowledgements and injustices emerged as resonant and important in my work, as did growing reading cultures and services in Tasmanian regions. My professional daily life became a point of discovery, exploration, and documentation.

The verbalisation of these observations and understanding the frameworks and scholarly theories for regional development, Tara guided me to the works of Yusef Waghid that built an infrastructure of care (Waghid, Waghid, and Christie, 2019). To develop that infrastructure, it was clear that – firstly – a taxonomy of care was required. The shaping of such structures requires a different mode of leadership. This knowledge transformed my approach, elevating care and enhancing each library using structures and methodologies, and continuing to gather more data sets to reveal and review the impact of these changes. From this information, I can then understand the blockages and resistance to waves of caring. Each library was unique. Each required its own culture of care. Each chapter of the book emerged as a case study and an exemplar to build a new way of thinking about GLAMs and regional development. The shape, purpose, and trajectory of the second book emerged.

Testing and Trialling the Argument (Tara Brabazon)

Ideas are important. Indeed, the recognition and development of an idea remain the great gift of intellectual life. But ideas are not research. Ideas are not a publication. A scaffold and strategy are required. The power of Lauren's strategy outlined in the last section is that she observed a series of challenges and issues and started to take notes. The evidence led the argument. The idea was grounded in a strategy for change. This is an inspirational story as most of us, noting the current state of higher education, will never have a sabbatical or an opportunity to focus on research as a singular scholarly activity. Research is squeezed around two or three already full-time jobs. In this context, a book can seem overwhelming. Indeed, a book can seem impossible. What we are formulating in this section are quick and effective strategies to build a book from an overstuffed professional life, including an academic life.

Unlike Lauren's example, my first book was not my PhD. It produced eleven refereed articles and book chapters. But at the time – I graduated in 1995 – it was very difficult to publish a PhD. Publishers did not want them. Now, because of the expansion of academic publishers and diverse business models and platforms for publishing, PhDs are finding an audience. Indeed, with the process of what I describe as 'cannibalizing books,' each chapter of a book has its own life, DOI, and abstract. Therefore, individual chapters can have a publishing life beyond their parent publication. This diversity is welcome, although there are myriad interpretations of this plurality, spanning from "democratizing" the monograph to exploiting scholars through particular modes and models of credibility (Mills and Robinson, 2022).

When I was a young woman in a junior academic post, with a completed PhD but no support, no time, no mentor, and no one caring about my progress, I had to build a career and the first book after the PhD. In my case, this book was *Tracking the Jack: A retracing of the Antipodes* (2000). I am still very proud of it. It was completely different from the doctorate and had no overlap or convergence in form or content, epistemology or ontology. *Tracking the Jack* did not start as a book. It started as an idea. The possibility of a book. I started to test some arguments in small articles. An essay on Noel Coward probed how colonial Englishness travels around the world, from "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" to the Singapore Sling (Brabazon, 1999). I trialled some pieces on popular music movements between Australia and Aotearoa / New Zealand, with some focus on The Triffids, Don McGlashan, Split Enz and Crowded House (Brabazon, 1996). Pieces on fashion were summoned (Brabazon, 1997), alongside sport (Brabazon, 1998).

I was also teaching a course called *Cultural Difference and Diversity* at the time. There was a week on postcolonialism, but also two weeks on Australian multiculturalism and Aotearoa / New Zealand biculturalism. I wrote and taught the first curriculum in Australia that included Aotearoa / New Zealand and biculturalism as more than a case

study. It was a marinade for thinking about difference. Therefore, in my teaching, I was testing out these ideas, reading deeply, and constructing a new way of thinking and shaping the antipodes. Indeed, I was rethinking the meaning of the antipodes through a postcolonial lens. I attended a couple of conferences during this period and used the enforced deadlines to write more chapters.

With these articles, conferences, and teaching experiments, I had six chapters of a book sketched. Therefore, I worked through two more chapters, and a large introduction that completed the theoretical frame, and an expansive and defiant conclusion. At this point, I had completed a rough first draft of a book. Every Saturday morning I started to draft this raw text, to align the disparate chapters and build a new research theory and output. I learned how to develop transitions and an argument.

This process was not the integrated top-down shaping that comes through the construction of a PhD, with a structured programme of professional development and a supervisor. This was a bottom up – careful - development of an argument with the available resources and time. My thinking as a young and inexperienced academic, was to cluster my research and align my interests for efficiency, to create a book. Each small piece was a test for the argument, that moved me further into the project. This strategy also slotted around a double full time teaching load, as is common with junior academics.

It was an incredibly successful book, accepted by the first publisher I sent it to, and was shortlisted for a writing award. This model became my strategy for writing my first three books that followed quickly after the first. I was a junior lecturer. No one cared about my teaching, research, career, or progress. If I were to write a book, then it was completely up to me to develop it. In response, I used every moment and opportunity I had, to build a new segment, section, or part of the research, ensuring that the components all clustered into a project. This project would become the next book.

The methodology I developed during this time of high levels of teaching and no support was to use teaching, conferences, seminars, and papers to build the foundation for the formation of a book. In a tough job with little time, a book may seem impossible. One article is not impossible. One seminar is not impossible. Recognizing a lecture delivered in a second year undergraduate course deserves a life beyond that room and those 150 students is not impossible. This process is how a book is created in tough times. But it is also built through a predictive contents page that was constructed in the early stages of this article. That list of possible chapters, the predictive contents page, is the guide to completion of a book. From this first stage, the most important strategy is to cluster all research, writing and conference presentations around completing those chapters. It may be 4000 words of a chapter. It may be 2000 words prepared for a short departmental seminar. But if any research and writing are clustered around a single idea, then a book can be developed.

That book can be completed in the toughest of times. This article with Lauren

offers a different method that is particularly valuable for post-PhD researchers outside of the university system. The methodology is similar, building incremental studies with efficiency. Every opportunity to speak, teach, and write can be reconfigured and reshaped into a book.

How Chapters Emerge from A Full-Time Job Outside of Academia (Lauren Gray)

The chapters of the emerging second book exploring GLAMs and regional development were formed through the process of gathering and talking through the data sets. The data sets were gathered through the observation of what was happening in the south central libraries. This observation was then matched with the implementation of an intervention and observing the impact. The impact informs whether the intervention worked and to what extent. An example of this was the Kingston transformation project at Kingston Library, where a major project was established to install new shelving, update the layout, and modernise daily business processes (Libraries Tasmania, 2026). A project working group was established. The working group chose a new colour scheme: black shelving, wooden bay ends and a service desk. Most importantly, the shelving was on wheels and featured face-out shelves to showcase the collection. The collection layout was designed to create space for reading and interaction. Soft sage green was introduced with a green feature wall, chairs and plants. The transformation intended to grow reading. This reorganization of the reading architecture worked, and the borrowing numbers increased. The library collection popped against this colour scheme, inviting the public to read the beautifully showcased books.

Through activating such interventions at every south central library, the data set was growing for the second book. Situating the information into chapters formulated the structure of the book. I was able to apply the knowledge I gained through the PhD candidature, and established the structure and scaffolding of the book. Applying what I already know builds confidence, motivation and momentum. There is a purpose and efficiency to my writing as I activate and fill the chapters of the book. Valuing this rare empirical data set and the direct experiences of culture development matters. Writing this book matters. Sharing the information and knowledge matters.

The Hard Slog to the Finish (Tara Brabazon)

Writing a book is difficult. The dream is strong. But the push for completion is not as strong. In a survey, 81% of Americans wanted to write a book in their lives. Only 3% of people finish a book, and 1% are able to get it published through traditional publishers (Analysis, 2002). Academics are different. We write for a living, but only particular publications are valued and counted. Research is showing the “decline of the scholarly monograph,” even in the humanities and the social sciences (Alexander, 2019: 5-

20). For example, the QS World University Rankings include only citations to journal articles in the research impact component. Books are not valued. Only refereed articles are counted. There is, as Thelwall and Sud confirmed, no “citation advantage” for monographs (2014). The citation granted to an article with 8 co-authors is granted the same value as a citation for a singly authored scholarly monograph of 70,000 words. Therefore, even within universities, it is difficult to write, complete and publish a book as it is not supported by national policies and international institutional rankings.

Olejniczak, Savage and Wheeler explored the “Rhythms of scholarly publication” and conducted a bibliometric comparison across disciplines (Olejniczak, Savage and Wheeler, 2022; Savage and Olejniczak, 2022). Bibliometric evaluations that used only journal articles did not capture 50% of the published works in 26 of 170 listed disciplines over a ten-year period. Almost all of these disciplines are in the humanities. The timelines for books are also different. For example, 81% of historians have written at least one book in a 10 year period. But 56% of historians have authored a book in the last 5 years, and in 3 years, 42% have authored a book (Olejniczak, Savage and Wheeler, 2022; Savage and Olejniczak, 2022). This is inspiring, but that pattern of book writing is also challenging to monitor within research metrics. Most university research metrics measure outputs over a 3-year period. The median number of books per person published in a three-year period is zero. That is why, even in disciplines that value the scholarly monograph, it is declining. The research levers in institutions have specific measures that involve the ranking of journals, and recognizing funding streams. Books rarely slot into national research measurements. This policy lever means that, in disciplines such as anthropology, there is an “onslaught” of the journal article, ahead of a book (Handelman, 2009). Beyond policy, there is also a leadership challenge. In qualitative and quantitative investigations of research leaders in universities, it is clear that they are selected from the experimental sciences, health sciences, medicine, and engineering (Quinton and Brabazon, 2022). These are disciplines where the article dominates, and scholarly monographs are rare. Therefore, without a data set of one – a research leader understanding the value of monographs in their own lives and careers – there are few correctives in and for national policy.

Whenever assessing short time frames in research metrics, the book evaporates, or disappears like a chimera. It is difficult to find international datasets on academics publishing books. National studies proliferate (Ward et al., 2009). A study of Norwegian university researchers showed monographs account for 2.6% of all publications. They demonstrated that most researchers in most fields never publish a book (Rørstad and Aksnes, 2015). A 2020 Polish study showed that 16.5% of researchers published one monograph in a career, with 5.3% published two, and 3.9% published three or more books. This means that 84% of Polish academics published no books. In the medical and health sciences, 92% of academics never publish a book (Kulczycki and Korytkowski, 2020). This study built on an earlier investigation, exploring how the diversity of scholarly

monographs is impacting the research metrics in Polish universities (Kulczycki, 2018).

A study of US social sciences studied between 2011 and 2019 confirmed that the books published per person declined between 31% and 54%, dependent on the discipline (Aria, Misuraca and Spano, 2020). This is an unusual and concerning trend, as this is also the period where the diversity of monographs emerged, from the conventional or traditional monograph, to the ‘shorts’ – embodied by Springer Shorts – the mini book, the audiobook, and the chapbook (Brabazon, 2026a; Brabazon, 2026b). As Mrva-Montoya so evocatively revealed, there is not only a ‘future’ and an ‘evolution’ to the monograph, but most evocatively, an “ecology” (2016). This is a meaningful trope and metaphor. Yet, through the proliferation of such diversity, the decline has been researched in specific nations.

Therefore, the dream remains from people inside and outside of the university to write a book. It is an increasingly unsupported dream. Yet the desire for knowledge and expertise is clear. The largest lectures, seminars, and workshops I run around the world are about book publishing. The dreams remain, even if the metrics do not capture these outputs, and the longitudinal studies we do have are showing a decline in the proportion of academics with a book. The leadership role for Deputy Vice Chancellors in the research portfolio is crucial. They hold a translational role for the national metrics within an institution. But with the domination of engineering, medical sciences, applied sciences, and fundamental sciences scholars filling these posts (Quinton and Brabazon, 2022), very specific definitions of authorship are configured and narrow dissemination protocols and platforms are valued.

For Lauren, her professional priority remains distinct from such metrics. As a librarian, the book has professional and personal currency. To research a meaningful and necessary area for her current position, and to disseminate this research through a book is valuable and appropriate. While the university system does not support a book as an output, it is significant that diverse research outputs are emerging beyond higher education. As the diversity of doctoral students increases, including the diversity of their positions and roles after graduation, it is no surprise that consequential research emerges beyond the university.

Whatever the context, finishing a book requires grit, time and discipline. The previous sections of this article created a system and structure for building a book project and assembling systems and structures to work on it in difficult times. The goal is to create a plan, with efficiency. If writing a book were easy, then everyone would write a book. Therefore, we conclude this article by recognizing the key challenges, and offer solutions to them.

The Importance of the Book for Librarian Leadership (Lauren Gray)

The meaning of the book in the library is precious. The library is a place of literary stories, information, knowledge, sharing, giving and taking, borrowing, returning, and

connecting. It is the architecture for epistemological encounters by diverse communities and citizens. The public library is a special place. It is a safe place filled with books, knowledges and care. It is one of the very few warm, dry places, designed to serve the community, and not charge money. A citizen (rather than a consumer) can leave with 15 books, seeds to grow food, and participate in community interactions, programmes and events.

The public library is evolving. Technologies mean that e-collections are growing and the hard copy collection is shrinking. Large text collections are getting smaller. Newspapers are no longer printed. That is not always the library's choice; it is market driven. But what does that decision mean for the book? Textile hard copy books entice reading. There is nothing quite like browsing the shelves of libraries and being enticed by the books before you, welcoming a new reading experience. Bookstores and publishers use many techniques to entice readers to buy books. It is also valuable for public libraries to entice citizens to borrow and read books. Have the children's collection displayed so that toddlers can reach and rummage through the collection allows them to gain agency, autonomy and choice. Have lots of face out shelving that showcases the entire book cover, and indeed colour code the collection.

There is power and meaning in promoting and valuing library programmes and events, including reading groups and author talks that grow reading cultures. At the same time, it is valuable for library leaders to observe and study what works and analyse how communities can find a snippet of their day to read and embrace all the benefits of reading. Reading is healthy. It slows the personal, professional, and life clock. Seeing children engaging in Rock and Rhyme or reading to their friends, grandparent or even their dog reveals a trajectory of engaging in reading for the rest of their lives. This is a valuable focus of my research and enables leadership in public librarianship.

If we want people reading, then we need people writing books. Telling stories, sharing stories, knowledges, and observations of the world they live in or create. Libraries are filled with the books of humanity. Words matter. Words on the page matter. The book passes through time, and people. It is an act of giving and sharing.

The library and the librarian, and knowledge workers more generally, are important, as is their professional development. For the PhD-qualified librarian leadership, there are many ways to value the book and continue a research trajectory. One pathway that both demonstrates a commitment to the book and ensues a research career beyond the doctorate is to develop a strategy to build a trajectory after formal enrolment. The project and potential of 'the second book' is meaningful as an object, a pathway, and a statement of value.

The Challenges in Writing the Second Book (Tara Brabazon)

There is power and meaning expressed through Lauren's commitment, motivation,

inspiration and aspiration. This propulsion is needed as the difficulties in writing research are many. They include a fear of failure and deep self-doubt. Sometimes this is called imposter syndrome. Writing is difficult, and self-doubt attends every sentence and paragraph. But writing is a craft. We learn to write by writing. But confidence – or a lack of confidence – remains a key concern.

This confidence must be extended over a lengthy period. Because a book is so large, it can become overwhelming. That is why – very early in the process – constructing a contents page and listing the chapters is valuable, creating a list of tasks, and then building strategies to complete these tasks. Each chapter is granted four sections. Complete a section each week. A book – like all writing – is completed one sentence at a time. But there must be a commitment to write that sentence.

Writing one hour a day will finish a book. Committing to writing 500 words a day will finish a book. There is no ‘someday’ to writing a book. There is only today. And then, tomorrow. Commit to the task of writing. Make it a routine, and that will stop the cognitive load of decision making each day.

Writing a book requires that the writer is centred and focussed. Negative feedback can knock confidence. But writing a book is an exercise in discipline, to be clear, precise and deliver on a large goal. Most people – indeed, most academics – never write a book. Most academics rarely write a second one. This is a special and specialist act. This specificity means that colleagues, family and friends can offer little advice or support, even at an experiential level. Therefore, courage and commitment are required.

Routines are crucial, but so is testing the research through one, two, or three refereed articles. This is an important strategy, but the rising movement of ‘self-plagiarism’ must also be monitored. An article can test an argument, but then must be rewritten and re-cut to become a chapter. When we break down a book into chapters and sections, and strengthen that structure with task and time orientation such as writing for an hour a day or writing 500 words a day, then a book can rise from the hard drive.

A book is a gift to the world. It is a gift to readers. The diversity of platforms matters. Armstrong et al. asked, “why would I want to publish electronically?” (2000: 21-29). Over a quarter of a century after this article was published, we now grasp the diversity of audiences that emerge through a diversity of platforms. Different modes of books – audiobooks, chapbooks, edited collections, and scholarly monographs – enable new ways of thinking, reading, and disseminating research. It is a lens that allows readers to see the world in a new way.

We have shown through this article that to start a second book – or a tenth book – requires creating a contents page, working on it each day, and finishing it. Through that finishing, an author completes a task that 81% of the world would like to do, but only 3% achieve. Then the next task is to write a book proposal and approach a publisher. But this next step is based on an author beginning and ending a book. What this article demonstrates

is that the research education and research training in doctoral programmes rarely prepares a scholar to write the second book, under very different conditions from a PhD enrolment.

The PhD is a great achievement. But it is a first achievement, an apprenticeship in academic life. The question is now where students will take those skills and abilities. There have never been more platforms and publishers than in our present. Yet still, monographs matter (Crossick, 2016). The higher education sector – internationally – is in trouble through a lack of resources, resulting in iterative restructures. But there are so many opportunities for a different style of research, and different audiences. Books matter. The second book is an opportunity to use expertise and activate new readerships, and a meaningful future.

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