



International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions  
Fédération Internationale des Associations de Bibliothécaires et des Bibliothèques  
Internationaler Verband der bibliothekarischen Vereine und Institutionen  
Международная Федерация Библиотечных Ассоциаций и Учреждений  
Federación Internacional de Asociaciones de Bibliotecarios y Bibliotecas  
国际图书馆协会与机构联合会

الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات ومؤسسات المكتبات

## About IFLA

[www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org)

IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.

IFLA provides information specialists throughout the world with a forum for exchanging ideas and promoting international cooperation, research, and development in all fields of library activity and information service. IFLA is one of the means through which libraries, information centres, and information professionals worldwide can formulate their goals, exert their influence as a group, protect their interests, and find solutions to global problems.

IFLA's aims, objectives, and professional programme can only be fulfilled with the cooperation and active involvement of its members and affiliates. Currently, approximately 1,600 associations, institutions and individuals, from widely divergent cultural backgrounds, are working together to further the goals of the Federation and to promote librarianship on a global level. Through its formal membership, IFLA directly or indirectly represents some 500,000 library and information professionals worldwide.

IFLA pursues its aims through a variety of channels, including the publication of a major journal, as well as guidelines, reports and monographs on a wide range of topics. IFLA organizes workshops and seminars around the world to enhance professional practice and increase awareness of the growing importance of libraries in the digital age. All this is done in collaboration with a number of other non-governmental organizations, funding bodies and international agencies such as UNESCO and WIPO. IFLANET, the Federation's website, is a prime source of information about IFLA, its policies and activities: [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org)

Library and information professionals gather annually at the IFLA World Library and Information Congress, held in August each year in cities around the world.

IFLA was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1927 at an international conference of national library directors. IFLA was registered in the Netherlands in 1971. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library), the national library of the Netherlands, in The Hague, generously provides the facilities for our headquarters. Regional offices are located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Pretoria, South Africa; and Singapore.

IFLA Publications 139

# **Strategies for Regenerating the Library and Information Professions**

Eighth World Conference  
on Continuing Professional Development  
and Workplace Learning for the  
Library and Information Professions

**18-20 August 2009, Bologna, Italy**

Edited by  
Jana Varlejs and Graham Walton

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## Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	
<i>Jana Varlejs and Graham Walton</i> .....	9
<b>Introduction to the IFLA Satellite Conference</b>	
<i>Susan Schnuer, Roisin Gwyer and Loida Garcia-Febo</i> .....	11
Owning Our Future – Twenty-first Century Librarians 2009 Elizabeth W. Stone Lecture	
<i>Alex Byrne</i> .....	17

### Recruiting a New Generation

Issues Impacting Recruitment of Secondary School Graduates	
<i>Tania Barry and Gillian Hallam</i> .....	32
What Impressions Do Young People Have of Librarianship as a Career?	
<i>Sarah Newbutt and Barbara Sen</i> .....	46
Social Representation of Librarianship as a Profession – The Colombian Perspective	
<i>Ruth Helena Vallejo-Sierra</i> .....	61
Recruiting Ethnic Minorities into the Library Profession – A Brief Survey of the U.S. Federally Funded Program	
<i>Sha Li Zhang</i> .....	71

### Socializing, Mentoring, and Coaching

Mentoring Programs in U.S. Academic Libraries – A Literature Review	
<i>Myoung C. Wilson, Marianne I. Gaunt and Farideh Tehrani</i> .....	84
Roles of Coaching and Mentoring in Attracting Recruits and Socializing Entrants to the Profession	
<i>Margaret B. Edwards and Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe</i> .....	96

Developing a New Approach to Partnering in the Formal Mentoring Process <i>Janine Golden</i> .....	109
Peer Coaching for the New Library <i>John Lubans, Jr</i> .....	126
Transmission of a Professional Culture: Transition Mentoring <i>Beatrice Baaden</i> .....	137

### **Four Generations in One Workplace**

Generational Tug-of-War – Playing Nice Between Millennials and Baby Boomers in a Multi-Generational Staff <i>Heidi Blackburn, Alysia Starkey and Kate Wise</i> .....	148
The Internal World of Libraries and the Challenge of Civility <i>Gina D. Matesic</i> .....	158
Workforce Planning: A Case Study – Initiatives to Position the Victoria University Library Workforce to Meet Future Needs <i>Garry Potter</i> .....	171

### **Wanted: New Managers, New Leaders**

Growing Next Generation Library Managers – Are New Librarians Reluctant to Step into Management? <i>Jill Benn and Rebecca Moore</i> .....	187
Future Leaders: What Do They Think? <i>Graham Walton, Anne Goulding and Derek Stephens</i> .....	202
Key Factors in Developing as a Leader – The Library School, Self-Awareness, Emotional Intelligence <i>Brooke E. Sheldon</i> .....	215
Developing Your Leadership Style – A Workshop <i>Blanche Woolls</i> .....	223
Succession Planning and Passing on Leadership – Approaches for Library Associations <i>Blanche Woolls</i> .....	235

## Keeping up with Changing Demands

Strategies for Re-Skilling the Library and Information Profession in Nigeria <i>Chinwe V. Anunobi and Scholastica C. Ukwoma</i> .....	245
Continuing Professional Development – Its Role in the Changing Educational and Qualification Landscape of the Information Profession; a Case Study of the U.K. <i>Judith Broady-Preston</i> .....	260
E-Tutorships and E-Learning – Re-Skilling Librarians for Interactive Communication in Virtual Environments <i>Valentina Elvira Comba</i> .....	279
Gathering Leadership Momentum Across Great Distances – Creating an Online Community of Practice <i>Erin Dini-Davis and Danielle Theiss-White</i> .....	289
The Smart Ones – One-Person Librarians in Ireland and Continuing Professional Development <i>Eva Hornung</i> .....	301
A UNESCO Agency Offers Professional Development Across Geographical and Generational Borders <i>Paul Nieuwenhuysen and Peter Pissierssens</i> .....	317

## Evolving Career Trajectories

Women’s Career Progression in U.K. Academic Libraries – Organisational Change and Management Change <i>Emma Hadfield and Barbara Sen</i> .....	328
Career, Skills, and Professional Dilemmas – A Framework for Information-Documentation Transformation <i>Paula Ochôa and Leonor Gaspar Pinto</i> .....	342
Library and Information Science Graduates from Spain – Professional Training and Workforce Entry <i>Blanca Rodríguez Bravo</i> .....	355

The Next Generation of Professional Librarians – Job Search in the Persian Gulf and with International Organizations <i>Jessica Brooks and Mary Finnan</i> .....	370
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### **Education for the Profession – Critiques from the Field**

Towards a New Library Professional – Reflections on the Quality Leaders Project – Youth <i>David Percival</i> .....	382
Skills for Future and Current Library and Information Professionals – Perceptions of Academic Librarians in New Delhi <i>G. Mahesh and Rekha Mittal</i> .....	391
Pathways to New Academic Library Practices – South African Exploration towards 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Academic Research Support <i>Clare M. Walker</i> .....	402



## FOREWORD

The papers in this volume are a selection of those prepared for the Eighth World Conference on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning for the Library and Information Professions in Bologna, Italy, 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009. This satellite meeting was planned to precede the 75<sup>th</sup> World Library and Information Conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), held in Milan 23<sup>rd</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> August. The Bologna conference was the first one that the Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) Section of IFLA organized in partnership with another unit, the New Professionals Special Interest Group (NPSIG).

Reflecting the concerns of the partners, the announced theme of the conference was “Moving In, Moving Up, and Moving On: Strategies for Regenerating the Library and Information Profession.” The broad focus was to be the creation of a positive work environment for a multi-generational workforce. A particular interest of the organizers was to showcase examples of best practice in strategies for regenerating the profession through both research based scholarly presentations as well as experiential stories of successes and lessons learned.

This conference very much followed on from the CPDWL’s previous IFLA satellite conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 2007, on “Pathways to Leadership in the Library and Information World” (selected papers published by K.G. Saur in 2007). One of the themes at this event was the generational differences in leadership styles and what this meant for future leadership development. With this being such a key issue, it made a lot of sense for the Bologna 2009 conference to consider this in more detail. Working with the New Professionals Group in organizing the conference also seemed very appropriate.

Topics that the conference planners hoped to cover included:

- Managing between and across generations
- Mentoring and coaching
- Communication skills, e.g. goal setting, providing feedback
- Dealing with organizational blocks
- Attracting people to the profession
- Developing retention strategies
- Creating a positive work environment
- Teambuilding and cohort development
- Working and leading within the organization
- Challenging existing organisational structures
- Re-skilling and transferability of skills
- Succession planning and passing on knowledge

We were quite successful in attracting proposals on these topics: out of the more than eighty submitted, about half evolved into conference presentations, and over thirty were selected for publication. More detail is given in the introduction to this

volume. A major strength of the conference has been the diversity that was represented in Bologna. There were presentations from librarians from the four generations as well as from across the world. There also was diversity in presentation types, ranging from formal research reports to workshops, posters, to and accounts of actual experiences in negotiating the changing workplace. The organizers are particularly pleased to be able to present the text of the keynote address, the 2009 Elizabeth W. Stone lecture given by Alex Byrne, a former IFLA president.

There are many people whom the editors would like to thank for their contributions to this volume. The authors themselves are to be credited for the high quality of papers submitted for publication. We report with pride that many of the authors are new to the profession and/or first time participants in an international conference.

All abstracts and written papers were submitted to an independent reviewing process. Many thanks are extended to members of CPDWL and the New Professionals Group who gave of their time to participate in the reviewing.

The publisher of all eight of the proceedings of these World conferences, K.G. Saur, is to be lauded and appreciated for the efficient production of the conference papers in hardcover and delivering the volumes in time for registrants to receive them at the opening of the satellite conferences. But of even greater value is the publisher's work in ensuring the ideas, vision and vitality captured at Bologna in August 2009 is available to the wider world.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE IFLA SATELLITE CONFERENCE

Moving In, Moving Up, and Moving On:  
Strategies for Regenerating the Library and Information Profession,  
18-20 August 2009, Bologna, Italy

Organized by the Continuing Professional Development  
and Workplace Learning Section (CPDWL)  
and the New Professionals Special Interest Group (NPSIG)

Susan Schnuer, CPDWLChair;  
Loida Garcia-Febo, NPSIG, and Roisin Gwyer, CPDWL,  
Co-Convenors

Welcome to the Eighth World Conference on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning in Bologna, Italy. We are celebrating two important beginnings at this Eighth World Conference: it is the first time that the CPDWL section has partnered with another group on the satellite meeting, and it is also the first time that the New Professionals Special Interest Group has convened a satellite meeting. The intense collaboration between our two committees has set the stage for what promises to be an interesting conference focused on strategies for regenerating the profession. This topic is one that resonates around the world as new professionals enter the field and long-term professionals adjust to the changes in our rapidly evolving profession.

We are delighted to welcome you to this conference and wish to take a minute to thank the leaders in CPDWL and NPSIG who have worked tirelessly to organize this conference. We also have a team of dedicated editors and you can see the results of their work in the published record of the conference. We want to recognize our sponsors, Emerald and the University of Bologna. Emerald's support has been critical to the success of many of CPDWL's satellite meetings. We certainly could not have hosted this conference without the assistance that we have received from the University of Bologna. The local team of Marialaura Viognocchi and Enrica Manenti have made organizing a conference in another country less difficult and much more fun than trying to do so alone. The venue, Santa Cristina, is an ex-convent which has been converted into teaching and conference space by the University of Bologna – itself the world's oldest university. Additionally we thank Biblioteca Sala Borsa, Comune di Bologna for sponsoring the conference dinner.

Finally, congratulations to all the presenters, about eighty, who will be sharing their views with us over the next two days. We are delighted to have a variety of sessions that offer the opportunity to network and engage in conversation with colleagues from all over the world.

## **DOES OUR PROFESSION NEED REGENERATING?**

The answer to this question depends on our understanding of the ways that libraries will work in the future. Is the library role changing? In a 2005 environmental scan report from OCLC three patterns for future libraries emerged.<sup>1</sup> First is the “decrease in guided access to content” meaning that most library users operate independently and prefer easy and simple searches. Coming to the library and finding information in ways that librarians have determined may not appeal to users. Second is “disaggregation”. Increasingly users are accessing portions of a whole document, the portion that is most suited to their needs. The last pattern is “collaboration”. Users want to work and learn in a coordinated context, moving easily from one task to the other, while at the same time remaining connected to others. These three patterns do suggest that we need to reexamine and rethink the role of libraries and the implications for librarianship.

Another study that shows that the profession does need regenerating is “International Perspectives on the New Librarian Experience,”<sup>2</sup> a survey including 176 new librarians from 5 continents and 12 countries. It reveals that given the opportunity, these professionals would seek positions in a different library field. They would follow this path looking to obtain new skills and mentoring. New professionals also want a job that they find challenging and in which they feel they are respected and can play a role in the organization’s strategic initiatives. More than 61% of those surveyed want to search for a non-library job because their work lacks excitement and their skills and knowledge are not acknowledged. Still, surveyed professionals intend to stay within the library field for the next five years. These findings are an eye-opener for library associations and library-decision makers who must commit themselves to evaluate their way of working to identify areas that should go through a regeneration process.

Regenerating the profession becomes a priority as we change the way libraries operate. We need to identify competencies and needs while at the same time changing library organization and culture. To be successful in this endeavor all the generations of librarians must come to the table to discuss the future. While each group needs to have a voice in this discussion, what is truly critical is that we need to leave the table together focused on the same goal.

In the 2009 Elizabeth Stone Lecture given by Alex Byrne he is unequivocal about the need to change: “We must throw open our doors and move out into the highways and byways of the global information culture to cultivate a new profession which steps out comfortably in a borderless information world ...”

## **MOVING IN, MOVING UP, MOVING ON**

The conference addresses this need by considering three groups. First we deal with those entering the profession, their expectations and needs and how we recruit and

retain able people (Moving in). Several papers look at recruitment of young people, in light of how librarianship as a career is viewed, from the perspective of various countries and changing demographics. Second, we look at those already in the profession, how they develop the skills needed to become leaders in their own areas of activity as well as leaders of wider organizations and how we consider, value, and develop the contribution of our staff (Moving up). Topics included on the program include one-person libraries and the challenges of professional development for this group; conflicts and dilemmas that exist between developing new skills and the demands of constructing a life-long career; and training needs of graduates as they are perceived by themselves compared to how more established professionals see them.

A third group we consider includes those concerned with using their skills in different places (other sectors and other parts of the world to name two examples) and how we pass on some of the wisdom and experience of those leaving the profession (Moving on). Young librarians will hear about ways of seeking work with international organizations such as UNESCO that offer careers across geographical boundaries. Mid-level professionals will hear advice from senior leaders in the profession on how to nurture their successors.

### **MOVING OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE**

The cultivation of a new profession as envisaged by Byrne is already underway. New and developing roles for both the academic and public library sectors are discussed by presenters in the hope that they will shake up the library community. Some areas to look at are the preparation of new library professionals, ways of re-skilling entrenched professionals, and the changing qualification landscape in various countries. Any time of great change is bound to create tensions, and there is a need to face some of the negative effects that the rate of change and an inter-generational workforce trying to co-exist can have. One way towards harmony among library workers is to introduce the notion of “internal customer service” as a means of bridging the generational differences and creating a balanced organization. Another way is to seriously design succession planning strategies. These strategies must be developed by professional associations, library decision makers, and library administrators at local, regional, and international levels.

There is no doubt that some of the differences between generations are due to developmental differences. Some of us are not the same person we were thirty years ago; then we were more direct, focused on the end task, more concerned about accomplishments and less about the journey. We see some of those same characteristics in younger generations. Technology, however, has made a huge difference, one that cannot be explained away by developmental theories. Professionals who have grown up with technology have different strategies for working, strategies that intrigue the older generation but that are not always understood. The

issue is not solely about technology, but agreeing to provide services needed by the users anywhere and in any way they need.<sup>3</sup> We look forward to emerging from this conference with a better understanding of the diversity of voices in our profession.

The use of newer technologies is addressed by presenters including topics such as e-learning and e-tutoring to develop staff as well as online communities of practice to help develop leadership skills. The more tried and tested methods such as coaching and mentoring are also discussed in a number of papers, including one which uses the example of a conductor-less orchestra as a way to coach a library team. Future library leaders and what they think are discussed by a number of presenters, whether they are more reluctant than their predecessors to step into leadership roles and the key factors in leadership development. Differences among generations become evident when there seems to be a group that perceives younger librarians as less keen to move into top posts, and another group that sees them as eager to take on leadership roles.

It is apparent that both generations must reach an understanding to move library workers into the new profession mentioned by Byrne. In that sense, it is of benefit for new and seasoned professionals to cultivate healthy communication patterns to help them understand each other. Different communication styles might lead to negative generational stereotypes.<sup>4</sup> There are indisputable needs and challenges that will only be addressed by understanding both generational and developmental differences. The library has expanded and moved beyond traditional concepts and so should librarians across generations.

To sum up, in order to provide services according to the new progressive roles of libraries and librarians, they must reinvent themselves. New and veteran librarians should rise to the task or risk entering a state of stagnation that will cause the library concept to cease to exist. Definitely, what unites us is stronger than what divides us; as Byrne says, we need to “hold tight to our values.”

#### **WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH WITH THIS TYPE OF A CONFERENCE?**

The organizers of this satellite conference took much care in writing the Call for Papers, hoping to engage new and long-time professionals in examining if and how we should regenerate the profession. Judging from the number of abstracts submitted the Call was successful! At this meeting we want to have new and experienced library professionals discussing issues on an equal footing. We want to create a space where individuals are free to express their opinions, regardless of the number of years of experience, and where everyone can listen openly to the ideas being presented. A main goal for this conference is to have participants leave with a better appreciation of the skills and working preferences of each generation and ideas on how to create a positive work environment for everyone.

To achieve this vision we offered help and advice in two ways – through mentorship and through making awards available – so that new professionals or those new to presenting at international conferences had the support in place to develop the skills and confidence to participate fully.

CPDWL used some of their funds to offer 40 awards to presenters covering all conference formats, not just those writing papers and sharing their research findings. We backed this up with the offer of a mentor for all new professionals or presenters and had a very positive response. This seems to us to model exactly the collaborative, cross-sectoral, worldwide and inter-generational partnerships the conference wants to foster. We hope both sides of each mentor relationship learned from the experience. It is very pleasing to see joint papers from lecturers and students and from new and experienced professionals. The experience of attending an international conference both to present a session and a poster has also been used as a deliberate learning event.

One of the goals of the NPSIG is to build a forum for the discussion of issues faced by new professionals worldwide. This satellite conference represents a prime opportunity for veteran and new librarians to come together and discuss hot issues impacting each group. The status of the profession, leadership roles, involvement in association work and understanding of generations concern newer librarians. This historical event seeks to provide new professionals with a space for dialogue, sharing of ideas, networking and to engage them in IFLA's work.

## **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM WORKING TOGETHER?**

Although this introduction necessarily touches on the topics of the published papers, the program itself includes presentations, discussions, workshops, posters, and interactive sessions of different types. Whilst there may be generational differences in ways of working we believe that considering different learning styles is more important and that these learning styles are represented within all generations, so it is pleasing to have such a mixture of types of activity planned. It is hoped that these proceedings will be supplemented with material from the other sessions on the CPDWL website for those who couldn't be part of the Bologna experience.

The perception that new professionals are unwilling to take on leadership roles has been disproved by our experience of working together on this conference. It has been a very positive and enlightening experience to work across cultures, countries and generations. The notion of a lack of work ethic or drive to move forward has been dispelled. New professionals are willing to take on challenging responsibilities.

Working together was an enriching experience for both CPDWL and NPSIG. The New Professionals saw that CPDWL members' commitment attested to their passion for the profession as many eagerly produced workshops and presentations for the satellite conference. Veteran librarians have accumulated a wealth of knowl-

edge which allows them to make quick decisions based on their understanding of past experiences. At the same time the younger generation was keen to engage in dialogue to reach agreements including both groups' desires. In the end, it was enlightening to see how these camps did what they said they were going to do. Respect, professionalism and equal opportunity for participation were the basis for developing the first IFLA event of its nature including new and veteran librarians.

CPDWL leaders have found working with the New Professionals SIG to be wonderful. Chair Susan Schnuer says that

We have found the members to be committed to the project, willing to openly express their opinions and finding time to have some fun with the project. We have appreciated the speed of their communication and have learned to decipher the short-hand style of their notes. We have admired their ability in putting together a program that is balanced and interesting; a program with flexibility and time for conversations. The past year has been a great and enriching journey. We are delighted to have been one of the participants.

## IN CONCLUSION

We truly believe this historical conference is setting the foundation for future collaboration between new and seasoned professionals. It is our wish that the published papers will help equip library workers with tools to start strategic planning to move libraries into a new conceptual frame.

We need a library revolution. We ought to encourage a serious shake up of the library core, mind, heart and strategies followed by libraries worldwide. The time has come for librarians from all generations to open their minds and devise best ways of preserving the profession. Healthy communication is the key element to iron out generational issues and understand each other. This conference serves as a direct call to library decision makers to facilitate this dialogue.

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**OWNING OUR FUTURE:  
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LIBRARIANS**

THE 2009 ELIZABETH W. STONE LECTURE

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**ABSTRACT**

*Our skills in managing and accessing information and knowledge are vital to social and economic development. They enable new solutions to be applied – from new seeds to controlling pests, from new materials to remediating polluted regions, from revitalising ancient cultures and languages to promoting new ventures. But we need to apply them differently, rethinking our professional identities, reforming our organisations, re-imagining our potential and opening our hearts and minds. In these ways we will regenerate our professional identities, attract talented colleagues, build great teams, inspire leadership and continually develop.*

**KNOWING WHO WE ARE**

I want to first talk about identity because it is crucial to know who we are. I start by saying: “Welcome to Bologna. We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Villanovians.” This will sound strange to you because you and I know Bologna as the capital city of Emilia-Romagna in the Po Valley and home of the oldest university in the Western world, the *Alma Mater Studiorum*, founded in 1088.

But I come from Australia, one of the modern world’s post colonial nations which, more than a century after it became a modern democratic nation, is attempting to come to terms with its doppelganger history of settlement and dispossession. Many Australians feel it is important to recognise the prior owners and cultural significance of the land on which we have built our houses, businesses and universities. So on formal occasions at the University of Technology, Sydney and at many other public events, we acknowledge the traditional, indigenous, owners of the land on which we meet and their elders, the Cadigal people of the Eora nation in the case of our central Sydney campus. This acknowledgement goes some way towards cultural reparation and is a facet of a most important project to move beyond the sometimes terrible history of the last two centuries since the European colonisation of Australia into a shared future in which we can celebrate

both our rich indigenous heritage of more than four hundred centuries and the many cultural riches that have come to us from across the world over the last two centuries.

Here in Bologna it seems odd to acknowledge the Villanovians because twenty-five centuries have passed since they were farmers and shepherds in this area.<sup>1</sup> They were replaced by the Etruscans who were in turn conquered by the Boii, a Gallic tribe, leading to the establishment in about 189 BC of the Roman colony Bononia. That was a long time ago. But to really know this region, it is important to recognise and understand that history which has doubtless left traces in its landscape, language and even cuisine.

It is similarly important to understand the deep roots which shape other aspects of our modern world including, in the context of this conference, our profession. Those roots continue to nourish our professional identity and give us our place in the modern world. We are long removed from our predecessors who archived clay tablets in Babylon or collected early divinations on bone fragments in China but the continuities of our concern with access to information and its long term preservation remain at the core of our profession. Not that our profession is static, concerned only with memorialising the past. It is, and should be, a dynamic profession that responds to the needs of the contemporary world: ‘moving in, moving up, and moving on’ as the theme of this conference puts it.

### **A CHANGING WORLD: FROM WSIS TO THE GFC**

Our Janus-like commitment to looking back to preserve knowledge and looking forward to its wider availability is never more important than in today’s information society. As the extent and ramifications of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) have become increasingly apparent over the last couple of years, we have been forcefully reminded that we live in a world that is saturated in information, in a world in which good, well understood and well managed information can mean the difference between prosperity and penury. The GFC snowballed from poor prudential practice in banks and other financial institutions.<sup>2</sup> We are told that it started to unravel when it became apparent that many banks had backed through financial derivatives the so-called “subprime” or very low equity loans, which were unlikely to be repaid. Intended to assist needy Americans to buy housing, those subprime loans were bundled into derivative instruments which masked their high risk to lenders who should have been more cautious. Coupled with high levels of loans to equity for many banks and corporations, this situation became a house of cards which began to tumble, leading to many losses and growing unemployment. At root, it was a question of insufficient knowledge about the bases of the loans and their inherent risks: among the myriad data, the information which might have encouraged more prudent investment was not communicated, or at least well hidden.

It is a graphic and painful example of the importance of information to our global community. The crisis has extended from the United States to affect all nations from those with a high concentration of financial organisations, the United Kingdom in particular, to the manufacturing behemoth of China, to poor countries such as Bangladesh.<sup>3</sup> This confirms, if we needed any confirmation, that we truly live in a global information society and demonstrates that skilled management of information is vital to its effective operation.

That tenet was at the core of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in which IFLA participated from preliminary meetings early in 2002, to the summit meetings in Geneva at the end of 2003 and Tunis at the end of 2005, and continuing on into the current negotiations on Internet governance. WSIS was a crucial watershed which recognised the centrality of our concerns with information, knowledge and their management and accessibility to the future of the planet. The summit offered a process through which the developmental goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration<sup>4</sup> could be linked to the application of technology, the importance of culture and human rights including, particularly, the right to know which we hold so dear. The outcomes, agreed by all the governments, were expressed in the *Declaration* and *Plan of Action* agreed in Geneva and the Tunis *Commitment* and *Agenda for the Information Society* adopted two years later.<sup>5</sup> They established eleven action lines to be coordinated by intergovernmental organisations:

- C1. The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
- C2. Information and communication infrastructure
- C3. Access to information and knowledge
- C4. Capacity building
- C5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
- C6. Enabling environment
- C7. ICT Applications:
  - E-government
  - E-business
  - E-learning
  - E-health
  - E-employment
  - E-environment
  - E-agriculture
  - E-science
- C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
- C9. Media
- C10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society
- C11. International and regional cooperation

These action lines established a program for the global community to pursue over the decade from the 2005 Tunis meeting to the UN Millennium goals deadline of 2015 – a decade that is now almost half completed. The WSIS action lines encompass the information aspects of the enormous challenges faced by humanity in environmental sustainability and the underlying science, in health and agriculture, in education and industrial development. It is a much broader program than was envisaged by the initiators of WSIS who focussed on information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the accompanying infrastructural issues. As civil society organisations, including IFLA, and sympathetic governments demonstrated through the WSIS process, the vital matters to be addressed lie in social, cultural, education, linguistic and ethical concerns – issues of direct concern to the library and information sector.<sup>6</sup>

## **OUR SKILLS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER**

How is our profession positioned in the face of these major global concerns? Are we able to contribute to the urgently needed, worldwide response to the two headline examples of the importance of information: the imminence of significant climate change and the immediate threat to livelihoods posed by the GFC? Is our profession relevant to the needs of the twenty-first century?

As the example of the GFC demonstrates, there is a pressing need for relevant and effective management of information and an appreciation of how knowledge is constructed, communicated and mediated by culture. Understanding and responding both to the big challenges we face, including the GFC and climate change, demand the capacity to manage and apply very large amounts of information and to make them available not only to the scientists but also to policy makers and the general public. Effective, culturally appropriate knowledge management and access to comprehensive information are central to determining how and how quickly we – humanity, on our one small globe – can respond to the threat of environmental catastrophe.

We are not the analysts or the journalists but, through our international network of libraries and information centres, we have a big responsibility to ensure that all needed information is readily available without economic or other hindrance to those who need it and that unpalatable data and views are not suppressed. However, we are not that well prepared to fulfil this responsibility in the information age. As Rahman has shown in relation to Bangladesh, there are enormous disparities in access to information.<sup>7</sup> He cites a selection of the World Bank's world development indicators to demonstrate the reality of the digital divide as is reproduced in Table 1. This divide is a reality with which libraries are equipped to engage, as Rahman notes, and with which we must engage if all the peoples of the world are to obtain the information they need to live happy and fulfilled lives – a necessary precondition for peace and harmony as the history of Europe over the last century has demonstrated.

**Table 1:** Sample ICT statistics on world (per 1000 people)

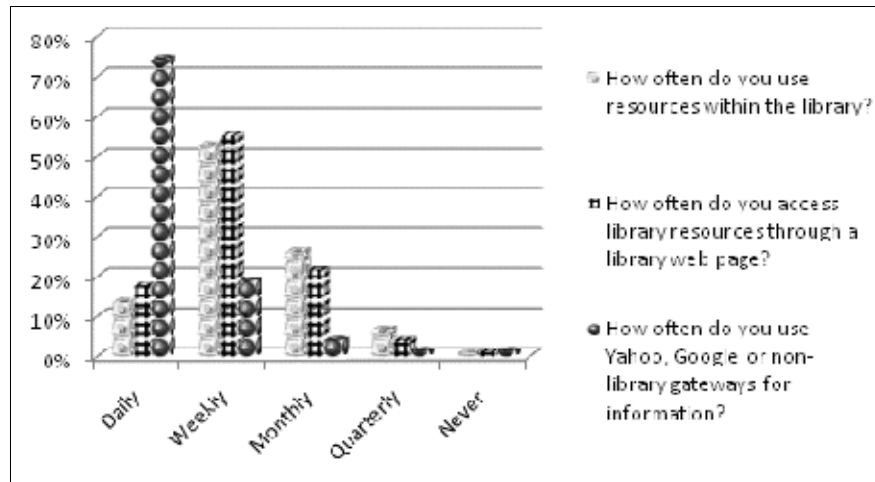
Country	Population (millions)	Radios*	Households with TV sets	Phones		PC	Internet user
				Fixed	Mobile		
Albania	3.1	260	9.0	82	356	12	24
Denmark	5.4	1,400	9.8	643	956	656	696
Sweden	9	2,811	9.4	767	1034	763	756
France	60.4	950	9.5	561	738	487	414
Germany	82.5	570	9.4	661	864	561	500
UK	59.9	1,445	9.9	563	1021	599	628
USA	293.7	2,109	9.7	606	617	749	630
Australia	20.1	1,996	9.6	541	818	682	646
New Zealand	4.1	991	9.8	443	745	474	788
Bangladesh	139.2	49	2.9	6	31	12	2
India	1,079.7	120	3.7	41	44	12	32
Sri Lanka	19.4	215	3.2	51	114	27	14
Pakistan	152.1	105	3.9	30	33	5	13
Japan	127.8	956	9.9	460	716	542	587
Malaysia	24.9	420	9.8	179	587	197	397
Singapore	4.2	672	9.8	440	910	763	571
Source: *World development indicators 2005 World development indicators 2006							

Delivering on that promise of “all information for all” is a massive project which will demand innovative application of the skills of all elements of our profession including school and public librarians, information scientists, metadata and system specialists, and those who develop information literacy.

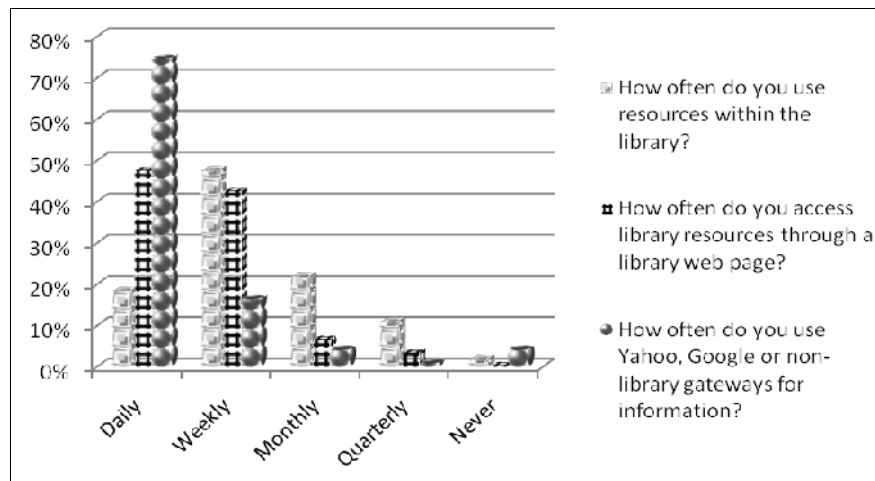
But many of us continue to live in the past, in the pre-cyber world. Our notions of collection, for example, often continue to be based on the books, journals, maps and other resources we can house in a building or buildings. We find it difficult to conceptualise, let alone describe and manage, a ‘collection’ which is a reflection of our clients’ interests and needs, a ‘collection’ that draws on the bibliosphere and blogosphere as necessary to fulfil those interests and needs but is not a tangible presence in our library buildings. Yet that cyber world is precisely what our clients inhabit and use. Both our experience and formal studies show us that they – and we – first go to Google or other search engines or to social networking technologies such as Facebook which combine accessibility with peer involvement. Having commenced to discover useful materials in those tools, they may zero in to needed information via the tools we make available – or they may pass us by.

Understanding those emergent behaviours is crucial. At the University of Technology-Sydney (UTS), for example, LIBQUAL+ data in 2008 told us that undergraduate students report the patterns of use shown in Figure 1 while the use by faculty is in Figure 2. These patterns confirm that both, and postgraduate students

whose usage is very similar to faculty, tend to use the Internet more often than our discovery tools when seeking information.



**Figure 1:** UTS undergraduate students' patterns of use reported via LIBQUAL+ 2008 (n= 740)



**Figure 2:** UTS faculty patterns of use reported via LIBQUAL+ 2008 (n=122).

This tells us that it is “oh, so twentieth century” to focus on our catalogues and in-house collections and tools when our clients are out in the Web. We too have to be out in the Web, exposing our resources and capabilities to harvesting and linking via del.icio.us, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, etc and bringing the power of

those tools into our services. It is not merely a question of exposing resources – collections – but also promoting them and developing information literacy so that users will be better equipped to discern what will be of value to them.

Of course, different libraries have different purposes. The environment I work in, the academic library, is quite different from a public library, a special library or information service, and a national library. As we are all aware, national libraries have a responsibility to maintain the documentary records of their countries' histories and cultures and may also drive aspects of library and information service provision. Public libraries have a much tighter focus on the needs and well being of the communities they serve, just as special libraries and information services support the enterprises to which they belong. Academic libraries focus on assisting learning, scholarship and research but sometimes also have a commitment to building and maintaining rich collections. These are all important foci but they cannot be interpreted in the same way as they would have been less than a decade ago.

For all of us, the world has changed. We truly live in an information society. It may not be as evident in a country in sub-Saharan Africa or on the pampas of Argentina as it is in a European economy such as Italy but all are affected by the interweaving of communication and information technologies and policy and regulatory regimes that has created the shimmering, ever changing, now-you-see-it now-you-don't, information society. That magic carpet on which we fly ever so fast into the future profoundly affects our employment, our democracies, even the food we eat.

We are more than ever conscious of the rapidity and unpredictability of change, recalling the provocative question "Does the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas?" suggested by a colleague for Edward Lorenz's 1972 address at the American Association for the Advancement of Science.<sup>8</sup> The phrase has found its way into popular culture as a metaphor for the inconsequential origins of major events. The original point made by Lorenz, who died last year, was to characterise the sensitive interdependence of elements of complex systems by highlighting the fact that very small changes in parameters can produce dramatic changes in outcomes. Nearly four decades since the question was phrased, we live in a world in which small stimuli can be almost immediately have large effects elsewhere.

The subprime mortgage problem in the USA may have been a rather heavy butterfly but no-one foresaw that it could bring down the world's largest financial institutions, undermine world trade and threaten the livelihood of so many across the world, from merchant bankers in London to manufacturing workers of China and the struggling in Bangladesh. That interdependence is founded on information, the stuff in which we deal.

In this context, our skills in managing and accessing information and knowledge are ever more vital to social and economic development. They enable new solutions to be applied – from new seeds to controlling pests, from new materials

to remediating polluted regions, from revitalising ancient cultures and languages to promoting new ventures. But we need to apply them differently, rethinking our professional identities, reforming our organisations, re-imagining our potential and opening our hearts and minds both to these great needs and the tremendous professional opportunities they entail.

It is no longer sufficient to focus on developing great collections of printed and archival materials, describing them accurately in catalogues and working to bring clients to our libraries. We have many centuries of achievement in those domains and we must continue to care for the collections we built up when that was the most effective way of transmitting knowledge through time and to broader audiences. But that is no longer enough because knowledge and information have now escaped from the control of the expert and the vaults of our memory institutions. It is now a global currency which all can create, use, share and transmit for humanity's betterment or, sometimes, ill.

## **TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LIBRARIES**

So the skills which we have developed to such a high level need to be reinvented in this very different world. We need to reconceptualise the domain of knowledge in which we deal and what that means for our skills. The great revolution in information handling which we achieved by harnessing standardisation through the Anglo American Cataloguing Rules, classification systems, the MARC record and other protocols, by employing technology, and by establishing national and global bibliographic systems has to be reapplied in this new connected world.

And we are doing so. The IFLA-CDNL Alliance for Bibliographic Standards (ICABS) was established in 2003 by IFLA and the Conference of Directors of National Libraries with the commitment of several leading national libraries (National Library of Australia, Library of Congress, British Library, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Die Deutsche Bibliothek, and Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal) to assure ongoing coordination, communication and support for key activities in the areas of bibliographic and resource control for all types of resources. It places particular emphasis on metadata, persistent identifiers, and interoperability standards and has supported, to take a most important example, the completion of the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR).

Through taking such initiatives, we are beginning to reinvent our institutions. Several national libraries, including those in Australia, Sweden, and The Netherlands are seeking to record the digital realm through preserving the Web domains of interest to their countries and archiving digital publications. The National Library of New Zealand/Aotearoa initiated and drove New Zealand's national digital strategy.<sup>9</sup>

These initiatives are having profound effects. The National Digital Strategy in New Zealand, for example, is changing the way New Zealanders think about their



nation and its place in a digital world where the geography that has consigned their islands to be distant from the major centres of cultural and business activity has become much, much less important. As shown in Figure 3, the digital strategy expresses a vision of leadership for New Zealand as a “prosperous, sustainable and vibrant society” that enjoys a healthy environment, high value economy and vibrant communities and culture. Although the diagram does not identify libraries as key enabling organisations, the enablers it lists – the four ‘Cs’ of Connection/ Confidence/ Capability/ Content clearly point to the central role of even handed social institutions such as libraries and information services. In the bicultural context of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, libraries join with museums and other social and cultural institutions to progress that vision of community harmony and prosperity. The National Library of New Zealand/ Te Puna Mtauranga o Aotearoa itself pursues these broad goals in many ways in a country with a bi-cultural foundation and a multicultural national community. The Library’s plan for responsiveness to Māori is entitled “Te Kaupapa Mahi Tahī: a Plan for Partnership,” a title which signals the importance of matching our skills to community needs.<sup>10</sup>

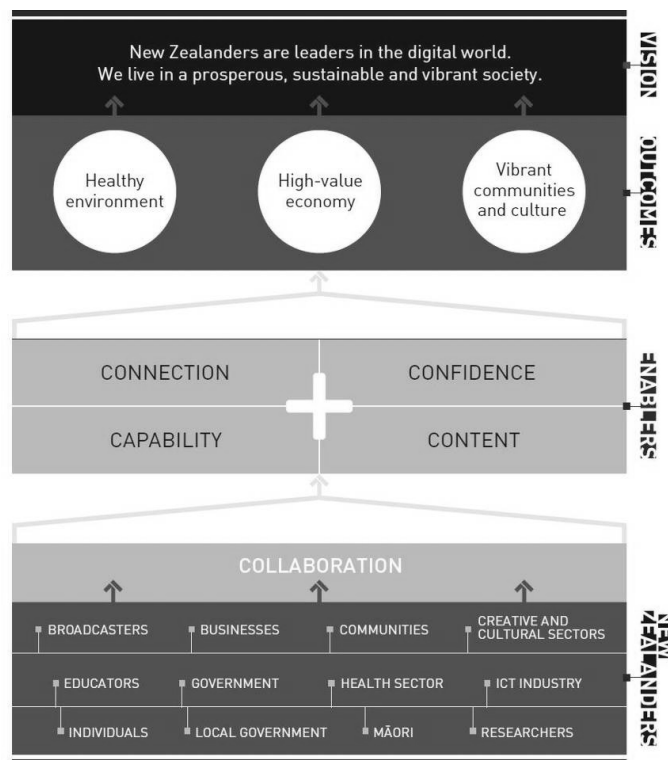


Figure 3: New Zealand National Digital Strategy

This example from one small and geographically isolated nation illustrates the profound challenges that we face. Those challenges lead us to reconsider our pre-occupations and to identify new opportunities which arise in the digital information environment. We need to embrace those opportunities if we are not to become irrelevant museums of highly processed wood pulp, as a colleague information technology director described our business.

Other libraries are engaging with other issues such as initiatives in digital publication through open access and with data curation, as we are at UTS. The UTSeScholarship initiative has three legs to its stool: publication of scholarly journals, conference proceedings and books through UTSePress; supporting research collaboration and dissemination of findings through UTSiResearch; and curating research data in the social sciences through the Australian Social Sciences Data Archive with a special responsibility to develop a national indigenous data archive, ATSIDA. By engaging with those areas, we hope to contribute to influencing the shape of information provision which has been distorted by the commodified publishing model in which the major multinational publishing houses have taken control not only of scholarly publishing but of the means of assessing its quality. Companies such as Thomson Reuters and Elsevier have vertically integrated by seeking to control editing, publishing and assessment of value, the key elements shown in Figure 4. This has created a profitably closed system of scholarly journals while monographs have largely fallen by the wayside. The open access movement, led by such consortia as the Association of Research Libraries' SPARC program, has begun to make inroads into that profitable, monopolistic model but there is a long way to go. We must recognise such challenges and engage with them as may be appropriate for our organisations and our professional roles but we cannot ignore them. To ignore them places not only those issues at peril but also weakens our profession which comes to be seen as irrelevant, mere curators of what others produce rather than vital creators and navigators in the information realm.



**Figure 4:** The scholarly journal publishing system

## AN AGENDA FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LIBRARIES

In a paper last year, I proposed an agenda for twenty-first century academic libraries<sup>11</sup> which must address:

1. *Research discovery and curation*
  - facilitating eResearch including both the promotion of sophisticated literature and data discovery systems and the implementation of techniques for the curation of research data
2. *Learning discovery and skills*
  - supporting eLearning and the development of human capital not just in the instrumental vocational sense but to enable the realisation of the human potential for creativity
3. *Capacity building*
  - developing the systems and staff of academic libraries to respond to continually changing needs of universities, to continually ‘reinvent’ the academic library adaptively while remaining true to its central roles
4. *Shaping the information society*
  - contributing to the drive to regain balance in intellectual property regulation, to promote ethical practice and to protect intellectual freedom which are all essential foundations for freedom and integrity in scholarship.

Although they focus specifically on the university library environment in which I work, the four challenges in this agenda extend across our profession. We must all be concerned with discovery in a world awash in information and must recognise that we have a significant role to play in supporting the essential need for ongoing learning by all in a fast changing world. By making those contributions we help to shape the information society so that it will benefit all but we can only do so if we continue to build our capacity and continually reinvent ourselves, individually, and our profession, collectively. So our agenda for twenty-first century libraries continues our core commitments to curation – preserving and carrying forward the knowledge of the past and present, to discovery – finding information not only in our ‘collections’ but in the broad realm of information, and to society – but with a much broader and more urgent remit.

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LIBRARIANS

We need to remember always that we deal in information and that our skills lie in making information available through time and across borders, the borders of place and time and those of the mind: geographic, political, linguistic, cultural and other borders. It is those avocations which lie at the heart of our profession, not the Dewey, UDC and other tools which we use. Our success in building the international bibliographic network has cut us off from the broader world of information

which has developed so dramatically, especially over the last decade since the invention of the World Wide Web.

We are no longer the primary keepers of the bibliosphere and it – the bibliosphere – is not longer limited essentially to the books, journals, manuscripts and other records kept in libraries and archives. Those resources are still important but have been immersed in an ocean of other materials – the interactive contributory blogosphere expressed via Wikipedia, – by means of which individuals, groups, corporations, governments and every form of human expression expose what they chose. No longer is information beyond current reportage, the personal and tacit safeguarded and rationed out to users almost exclusively by our institutions. It is now posted on the dimensionless democracy walls of cyberspace in its splendid anarchic tapestry of official pronouncements, factual data, educational resources, commercial activity, creativity, self expression, and demagoguery. We must throw open our doors and move out into the highways and byways of the global information culture to cultivate a new profession which steps out comfortably in a borderless information world, no longer confined to curating formed collections in shuttered libraries.

### **REGENERATING THE PROFESSION**

In many countries we have seen a drop off in the number and quality of entrants to the profession and, as a result, many library and information studies schools have closed while others have reinvented themselves as “iSchools” or “information and knowledge management” programs. While worthy, these changes miss the point: they focus on the profession as a body of knowledge and skills, not as an avocation with a predisposition of values. That is, they focus on the mind not the heart. We need both. We need a highly skilled profession which is quick to embrace the opportunities of new technologies and new approaches but it must also be a profession which is important to society. We do not wish to be like the nineteenth century milliners who disappeared in the face of industrialised clothing production with only a few remaining as “bespoke” practitioners making curios and items for the rich and privileged.

To avoid the death of our profession, we need to hold tight to our values for we are one of the few professions – along with our colleagues in archives and museums – to take the long view about the need to preserve and make available without bias the knowledge of the past, present and the future. But we need to situate those values within a borderless information world in which we cannot hide in our institutions but must become “barefoot librarians” of the cyber street. To do this, we need to be very active and to encourage and mentor enthusiastic people into our profession, taking the wisdom of the experienced and the energy and curiosity of novices to create a new, highly communicative profession. To do so demands new organisational structures which no longer inhibit invention and exploration

through hierarchy and blockages. These are structures that are tolerant and resilient, able to foster innovation and accept occasional failure. They are structures which attract, develop and retain good people in positive, team based work environments but are also supportive of individual initiative and creativity, avoiding the tyranny of conformity to the norm.

Those new organisations need to be supported by adventurous professional associations which will break down professional isolation and reinforce values. Not associations which separate us into librarian, school librarian, archivist, curator, information scientist and many other finer distinctions but associations which bring us together to delineate and celebrate our identity. Removing the dead hands of the old and privileged, those associations will give new opportunities to the young and vibrant and help new leaders to develop. Not just leaders by position but leaders “in place,” leaders at all levels of our profession and our organisations, leaders who lead by initiative and by example, not by direction.

This will not, of course, happen easily. We need to continue to apply and further develop our methods and standards. But we need to apply them differently, re-thinking our professional identities, reforming our organisations, re-imagining our potential and opening our hearts and minds. In these ways we will regenerate our professional identities, attract talented colleagues, build great teams, inspire leadership and continually develop.

We need the wisdom and skills of those who have contributed so much to our profession. But they cannot continue to sit in the captain’s seat preventing others from navigating us into this new information society. We need to transfer their skills, pass on knowledge to their successors but also move them into new roles or out of the profession so that they achieve professional renewal along with the profession itself. This process will require newer professionals to have skills in managing up as they shape the profession through leadership in place by changing the views of those in positions of power and capturing their power to create a new, vibrant profession which no longer hides behind its institutional walls but is clear about its identity as the foremost profession of the twenty-first century information society.

### **“FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW”**

An Australian protest song by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, “From little things big things grow”<sup>12</sup> tells the story of Vincent Lingiari and the strike by Gurindji stockmen that led to the Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. The Act gave indigenous people freehold title to traditional lands in the Northern Territory and the power of veto over mining and development on those lands and, in many ways, began the long process towards proper recognition of Australia’s indigenous peoples.

That small step of taking a stand in a very remote region and its momentous consequences should encourage us. From little things, such as our 2004 establishment of UTSePress, big things such as major change to scholarly publishing can grow. But it takes all of us to make a start, to take a stand. If we do so, we can truly own the future which is rightly ours, not as “people of the book” but as the information people, the central profession of the information society. Here in Bologna, home of the oldest university in the Western world, let us make a commitment to owning our future.

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## ISSUES IMPACTING RECRUITMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years concern has been expressed internationally about the future of the library and information services (LIS) profession: recruitment and retention, changing skill sets, and declining numbers of people choosing librarianship as a career are all factors contributing to an uncertain future. One area yet explored in any depth is the topic of why LIS studies are not perceived, let alone promoted, as a good first professional qualification for high school graduates. This paper considers the professional literature that examines the uptake of librarianship as a first qualification by school leavers and discusses, in the context of the Australian library sector, the role of professional associations, library schools, National and State Libraries, as well as individual libraries and librarians. Examples of best practice are presented to highlight the opportunities for inspiring and motivating students through well structured and stimulating work experience programs. The topic is relevant to all librarians who are interested in the future of the LIS profession. It is argued that the focus of the present conference on 'moving up' and 'moving on' can only have real significance when the profession has a more complete understanding of the barriers to and the opportunities for 'moving in'.*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years concern has been expressed internationally about the future of the library and information services (LIS) profession: recruitment and retention, changing skill sets, and declining numbers of people choosing librarianship as a career are all factors contributing to an uncertain future. While professional bodies have encouraged considerable research into the problems facing the current workforce in order to better understand issues of sustainability, one area that has not yet been explored in any depth is the topic of why LIS studies are not perceived, let alone promoted, as a good first professional qualification for secondary school graduates.

In Australia, the Federal Government is keenly aware of the need to establish career pathways that will encourage the progressive development of employability



skills to ensure the nation is economically competitive in a global knowledge economy. The development of effective career pathways requires an integrated relationship between the schools, vocational education and higher education sectors, along with employers and professional associations. There is considerable scope for the LIS profession to develop career models that might be representative for other areas of employment.

This paper presents a review of the professional literature that examines the uptake of librarianship as a first qualification by school leavers, which has informed the development of a research study of the issues impacting on the recruitment of young people. In the discussion about this research, specific attention is paid to the role that the different stakeholders, for example professional associations, library schools and, collectively and individually, library institutions and librarians, can play to inspire and motivate students through well structured and stimulating work experience programs. It is argued that the focus of the present conference on 'moving up' and 'moving on' can only have real significance when the profession has a more complete understanding of the barriers to and the opportunities for 'moving in'.

*Regeneration – to re-establish on a new, usually improved, basis or make new or like new; to give new life or energy.*

This paper considers the second part of the above definition of 'regeneration' – "to give new life or energy". Over the past several years, there has been increasing concern over the future of library and information services (LIS), with issues such as recruitment and retention, evolving and changing skills sets, and the greying of the profession potentially leading to a loss of vital talent as senior, experienced members of the profession retire.

This issue is beginning to come to the forefront of the library industry in Australia, with about half of Australian baby boomers expecting to retire in coming years. While many library managers are panicking over the potential struggle to fill vacancies and attract the appropriate skill sets required to handle new projects as the profession evolves, there has to date been no single concerted effort to address this across all sectors nationally. Some individual sectoral or regional studies have taken place<sup>1-4</sup>; the *neXus* workforce planning project has endeavoured to raise awareness of the issues nationally<sup>5 6</sup>; and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) has convened regional discussions<sup>7</sup> and a national summit meeting of key stakeholders to consider education and workforce issues.<sup>8</sup> ALIA has also played a key role in contributing to the Local Government Skills Shortage Steering Committee (LGSSSC).

Despite this range of initiatives, the lack of coordination across the LIS sector greatly increases the risk of duplication of effort and means that opportunities to develop models of best practice which could be used to guide recruitment across all sectors are not being pursued. Furthermore, in recent years there have been concerns in the literature that insufficient students are entering the profession, eventually resulting in a shortage of qualified library professionals. Hallam<sup>9</sup> cor-

roborates this, stating that the retirement of a large number of baby boomers in the next ten years, coupled with the drop in enrolments, weakens the capacity of the profession to attract the best and most aspiring candidates. Other factors attributed to the lack of interest in high school graduates taking on a career in libraries include low pay scales and the persistently negative representations of the profession. In Australia specifically there has been intense competition for workforce 'talent' as a result of the resources boom: in the short term, there was a dip in high school graduates going directly to university, with many young people opting to work in the mines in semi-skilled jobs to take advantage of the inflated wages. The global financial crisis in 2008 has, however, led to market adjustments and a movement back towards higher university enrolments in the present academic year.

It is emphasised that library institutions should not try to handle the magnitude of workforce issues in isolation; strategies need to be put in place to attract the right people to the profession for the benefit of the whole LIS sector. The value of planning ahead is critical. Library managers need to think beyond their immediate local needs and form collaborative partnerships with other institutions, with secondary schools, library schools and the professional associations to inspire and motivate secondary school students to seriously consider a LIS qualification as their first professional qualification.

### **PATHWAYS INTO THE LIS PROFESSION – THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT**

While the term 'recruitment' is often used in the context of filling a specific position in an organisation, there is also a collective context, where recruitment is about bringing people into a particular industry sector or to a profession in general. Notably, many of the issues that characterise the situation in Australia will be common to other countries. Compared with some other countries, Australia has a 'blended approach' to education for librarianship, with both professional and paraprofessional pathways available. Professional LIS education is offered at the university level, with graduates becoming librarians, and at the vocational education level through the institutes of technical and further education (TAFEs) and registered training organisations (RTOs). Diplomates from the vocational programs become library technicians. Courses that lead to entry-level librarianship qualifications are offered at the undergraduate, the graduate diploma and the masters degree level. The current ratio of undergraduate to postgraduate qualifications is about one third to two thirds. There is evidence that the diverse library sectors tend to prefer different types of training, for example the public library sector recruits a higher percentage of librarians with undergraduate qualifications, while academic libraries hire a larger proportion of postgraduate qualified library staff.<sup>6</sup> Geographic differences come into play as well, with the local employment market

generally reflecting the level of courses offered by the universities in the region. Libraries in regional and rural areas of Australia face immense challenges in recruiting and retaining staff: newly qualified library professionals prefer to stay in the metropolitan areas (indeed Gen Ys would rather work overseas than in regional Australia!).<sup>5</sup> Some people may fall into the career by accident and after working in a library for a while, seek to gain the relevant academic qualifications; those in regional areas are therefore more likely to study for an undergraduate degree by distance education. Libraries in regional areas have the motivation therefore to 'grow their own'. It has been revealed, however, that in terms of staff development, most libraries are addressing short term training needs rather than considering the opportunities for progressive professional development and career growth<sup>6</sup>: the number of library assistants and library technicians offers great potential for up-skilling within the sector, to enable staff to migrate from paraprofessional to professional roles. This is perhaps another approach to 'growing your own.'

## THE MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

Effective recruitment strategies are critical if libraries are not only going to fill the anticipated vacancies in the coming years, but also create new positions to be able to develop innovative services for the future. As indicated, a collaborative approach with responsibility shared by the different stakeholder groups offers the greatest potential for change. So who are these different parties and what can they do to when faced with these challenging issues of ensuring sustainability in the profession?

The acknowledged stakeholders in the recruitment agenda in the library sector are:

- Professional associations
- Library schools
- National and State Libraries
- Individual library institutions
- Individual librarians.

Some dimensions of the roles and responsibilities of these parties may be distinctive, while others may be shared.

### *Professional associations*

Professional associations seek to promote the professional interests of those in the library and information profession, empowering them to develop, promote and deliver quality library and information services, through leadership, advocacy and

mutual support. In Australia, there are opportunities for both individuals and institutions to become members of a professional body.

The overarching body for the library and information industry is the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), which has demonstrated its concern about workforce issues through its support for the *neXus* study which has examined trends and issues in the Australian library and information services workforce.<sup>5-6</sup> Others also concerned with these issues in Australia include sectoral groups such as the Australian Law Librarians Association, Health Libraries Australia, Public Libraries Australia and the Victorian Public Library and Information Network, as well as consortia such as National and State Libraries Australasia and the Queensland University Libraries Office of Cooperation. These bodies are not only contextualised by the interests of their immediate membership (eg law libraries, health libraries, public libraries, academic libraries etc), but also provide an opportunity to establish and nurture the desired collaboration across the different sectors.

Professional associations can contribute to the development of career focused strategies that will attract young people to the profession.

#### *Lobby for internship/graduate recruitment programs*

The *neXus2* study into workforce policy and practice revealed that while more than 77% of the institutional survey respondents regarded new graduate or internship programs as very valuable, less than 20% actually offered one. Encouragingly, however, almost all of the respondents indicated that they would be considering such an initiative in the future.<sup>6</sup> In 2009 the Queensland University Libraries Office of Cooperation is launching a collaborative new graduate program, with the individual offered the opportunity to have a series of rotational positions in some of the different academic libraries in the consortium. The individual will benefit from gaining a wide range of experience in diverse academic libraries, while the institution will benefit from a programmed approach to managing vacancies within the organisation.

#### *Adopt a holistic approach to marketing the profession to careers teachers*

A toolkit designed for individual libraries to use to discuss the profession and its potential would highly increase chances of these being passed on as exciting career opportunities for students. The American Library Association (ALA), in conjunction with the Institution of Federated Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), was instrumental in developing the *@your library* campaign. ALIA has engaged with the campaign by becoming a signatory to the international trade mark agreement, so that its membership can use the logo and create marketing campaigns. The State Library of New South Wales is perhaps the most active player in terms of encouraging libraries to market themselves. The 2009 program schedule incorporates many different themes, such as *Holiday fun @your library*;

*Treasures@your library*, *Food@your library* and *Blokes@your library*. However, anecdotal research indicates that only one library in Australia, Bayside Library Service in Victoria, has adopted the *Careers@your library* theme<sup>10</sup> to encourage interest amongst potential employees. The website links to further information on the ALIA website. Sadly, however, it must be noted that a few years ago when the campaign was new to Australia, some State Libraries reported that the *Careers@your library* was the only theme they chose not to invest in. It would be valuable to see these decisions revisited.

*Develop positive working relationships with schools through careers advisory associations*

An initial inquiry in 2005 to career advisers associations\* about options for work experience placements was greeted very enthusiastically. Most groups contacted indicated that their members (careers advisers in schools and other educational institutions) would readily promote LIS but that they needed the essential information delivered in an appropriate format. The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) is utilising the interest in the Local Government Skills Shortage Steering Committee (LGSSSC) to promote the opportunities for work experience to offer exposure to professional engineering practice (IPWEA, 2009).<sup>11</sup>

*Communicate that librarianship is not only about 'reading books'*

Professional associations need to convey the significance of a librarian's skills – aspects such as teaching information literacy and managing information are highly critical in today's age of instant Internet information retrieval. While traditional collections are still important, the value of a library's role is also recognised as a place of social capital and in advocating for freedom of information. In the United States, the Institute of Museum and Library Studies (IMLS) has reported that trends in library schools indicate increasing enrolments with a younger student demographic: "Younger students are typically attracted to technology and the 'new library'... [and] want exposure to multiple digital and technology related courses."<sup>12</sup> Significantly, LIS courses also provide a sound foundation for the development of transferable skills – the employability skills that can be applied across and beyond the library sector. Pedley<sup>13</sup> outlines some of the roles as being intranet managers, webmasters and knowledge managers. Professional associations can present the profiles of their members who have successfully moved into positions which draw directly on the transferable skills they have acquired during the course of their library career.

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\* Career Advisor Associations are peak advisors for secondary school career counsellors and work experience coordinators, providing services also to those looking to enter the workforce or change career paths in Australia. They include bodies such as the Career Education Association of Victoria, the Career Development Association of Australia Inc. and Career Advice Australia (formerly the Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers).

*Advocate the career perspectives of working in libraries*

Professional associations, with their role in developing and maintaining the standards that are critical to education and the profession, often coordinate and promote professional development programs to ensure that members remain professionally relevant in a dynamic information environment. By underscoring the value of career-long learning, associations can stimulate interest in employers adopting a stronger role in career development for all staff. In this way they can support the movement to 'grow our own': staff who lack credentials and paraprofessional employees can be encouraged to up-skill and study towards higher professional qualifications. The association can draw attention to the opportunities to study and potentially negotiate industry scholarships as an incentive to young people.

*Library schools*

In Australia, there are no longer any "library schools" as such. Independent "library schools" have been subsumed into LIS departments, to ultimately become nothing more than a discipline stream within a school within a faculty. Many courses may have a common qualification such as a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Information Technology, with students distributed across a number of different streams, only one of which may be the LIS stream. The introduction of (escalating) student fees has had an impact on professional education and on student enrolments. The government funds 75% of undergraduate study costs, with the student responsible for 25% of the costs, either payable upfront, or deferred as a student loan. Postgraduate programs, on the other hand, are full-fee paying, so with no government subsidy, fees for graduate diploma programs are currently about \$10,000 to \$15,000, depending on the institution. Masters programs range from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Student loan schemes are available to offset the direct costs of study. The colleges of TAFE and registered training organisations offer paraprofessional courses with a much lower fee structure. Some young people are opting to choose a vocational course to start with, to see how they like working in libraries. This situation can be developed into a strategy for progressive career development, with employers providing financial support for further study.

While professional associations need to address the strategic issues, library schools can offer support to the ideas with some effective action plans.

*Curriculum development*

As library services continue to evolve, it is essential that students are offered a progressive and stimulating curriculum, in both face-to-face and distance modes, which develops the knowledge and skills to face an ever-changing future, yet at the same time continues to meet the present needs of library employers. Data gathered in the *neXus2* study indicates that very few employers get involved with course development.<sup>6</sup> It is marginally more likely that employers are involved in

paraprofessional courses, which reflects the opportunities for students to be assessed in the workplace. Employers have advised, however, that they feel their industry needs are not adequately reflected in the current study programs, with the result that there is a perceived gap between the expectations of managers recruiting new staff and the attributes of the candidates applying for jobs.<sup>6</sup> A training gaps analysis was undertaken in Canada in 2006, with a number of recommendations inviting closer collaboration between LIS educators and practitioners.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Market the LIS course and showcase the future career opportunities*

Library schools need to consider how best to attract students who wish to work in a dynamic profession, and market the course accordingly. Stronger connections need to be built with high schools and careers advisors, so the focus moves away from an institution as employer, to promote the particular course and career. Teaching staff should make the most of opportunities to work with professional associations to explore the career avenues available within the field that might give other dimensions to the academic qualification. Libraries from different sectors can be invited to exhibit at open days and roadshows, to showcase career opportunities within their institution, making the most of role models. Examples of LIS professionals who have moved onto another career, using their library experience as a springboard, can demonstrate where their study has taken them. This further highlights career options in an extensive library and information landscape. Two-way communication channels can also offer opportunities for outreach to LIS employers to promote the merit of further study within the discipline, by encouraging library support staff and library technicians to study LIS, as well as undergraduates to take on postgraduate studies in information science.

#### *National and State Libraries: playing a lead role in advocacy*

National and State Libraries in Australia, both individually and collectively, play an important leadership role in the library community. The National Library of Australia is “committed to a leadership role in sharing our expertise and coordinating key projects.”<sup>15</sup> The State Library of Victoria acknowledges that it plays a key role within the public library community, to develop, lead and deliver programs that address the strategic priorities of public libraries.<sup>16</sup> Noted in particular are a number of workforce sustainability and leadership issues. Meanwhile the consortium of National and State Libraries Australasia stresses the importance of collaboratively aspiring “to keep transforming our capability and culture and keep encouraging flexibility and innovation.”<sup>17</sup> Engagement in education and professional development, as well as recruiting and retaining new staff, is critical to achieving these goals in both the medium and long term.

One initiative that has resulted from the workforce sustainability project work in Victoria is the “Destination Libraries” concept, which is described as a working party to promote taking up the LIS profession as a course of study and as a career.

To date, this group has coordinated a successful Libraries Careers Evening as a cross sector forum involving the State Library, public libraries and LIS educators. One idea that was seeded was that school libraries could set up traineeships for their own students. The working party has set up a wiki as a resource for anyone interested in a career in the library and information industry (<http://destination.library.pbwiki.com>), which offers guidance about career options, working overseas, links to useful career resources and profiles of young people working in libraries. Further communication is achieved through an eList hosted by ALIA.

### *Individual libraries and librarians*

As an extension to the collaborative work in Destination Libraries, individual libraries and librarians can play a valuable role at the grass roots level. The energy and support of individual librarians and their employing library have made a significant contribution to the success of the Destination Libraries project. Together, libraries and librarians can make things happen, by finding ways to promote librarianship to groups within the community and by working with high school libraries to develop a shadowing or mentoring program. Importantly, they have the capacity to create structured work experience programs which can create a positive experience for secondary school students which can ultimately influence them to choose librarianship as a potential course of study (and perhaps also encourage their friends to consider the same!). Individual librarians can provide ongoing mentoring to work experience students to enhance their understanding of the employment opportunities that are available to those undertaking a library qualification.

### **WHAT ABOUT WORK EXPERIENCE?**

The paper so far has provided a broad overview of the issues that information professionals and organisations are currently facing within the library and information sector, and has put forward a number of ways that major stakeholders can work towards recruiting to the profession. However, although recruitment and retention involves working with, and mentoring, LIS students and new graduates, so that they are happy with the choices they have made and are more likely to 'move on' and to 'move up' in the profession, it is argued that recruitment needs to go back a step and specifically target secondary school students, to encourage them to 'move in', to bring new blood into the profession

One of the challenges facing the library profession in Australia, as in many other countries, is how to best approach the issue of encouraging secondary school students to undertake library and information studies as a first qualification, with particular focus on providing useful work experience opportunities to students in order to have them give serious consideration to librarianship as a stimulating and



rewarding career. Work experience is offered to students in Australia as way to allow them to explore possible career paths they may be interested in, giving them the opportunity to see if the reality matches their expectations. The program is generally available in Year 10, when students are between 15 and 16 years of age, and runs for one or two weeks. As well as exploring workplace situations, work experience also broadens students' experiences and gives them a better understanding of career opportunities available to them.

Ideally, a student's placement is within an organisation that has a direct bearing on the career path the student wishes to follow. All too often however, with the case of placements within a library, the library is chosen for expediency, speed and ease of access, rather than a desire to choose librarianship as a course of study. Whilst persistent negative images of the profession still linger, coupled with the unexciting perceptions of the role, low pay and low prestige also tie in with students being reticent about considering a career in libraries.<sup>18</sup> This can effectively block their interest in spending their work experience placement at a library.

The situation is exacerbated by library managers themselves. An anecdotal study on work experience placements within libraries in Australia undertaken in 2006 showed that the majority of libraries are unwilling to take on Year 10 work experience students. A variety of reasons were given for this, however the predominant one was the perception that work experience resulted in extra work to host a student placement, but with little practical work to really offer them. Of those students who were able to be placed in a library, many were given repeatedly mundane tasks to do, such as shelving, stamping, folding notices or filing. When asked why this was the case, the responses were usually that these tasks required little training and even less supervision, so were easy to pass on. Whilst no one would argue the importance of everyone in the library taking on shelving as a critical part of collection maintenance, doing it for extensive periods as a way to minimise responsibility does nothing to promote librarianship as an exciting career prospect and does everything to perpetuate the myth about the boredom supposedly inherent in the profession.

### ***Best practice models***

If we want to change the future of our profession, then we need to rethink and redesign the experiences secondary school students have when placed in a library for their work experience program. Students need to feel that they are, in a sense, part of the team for duration of their stay. Three examples of work experience programs currently in operation in Victoria, Australia, are presented as models of best practice.

#### *Vision Australia Information Library Service*

Vision Australia Information Library Service is the only national public library for the print disabled community in Australia. Staff at Vision Australia make an active

effort to work with secondary schools in their local areas in order to draw attention to opportunities within their organisation. In preparation for a work experience placement, a program is drawn up to ensure that the student has the opportunity to do a variety of tasks that are within their capabilities. Vision Australia will also take on students with disabilities, making sure that these are discussed with the work experience co-ordinator prior to commencement.

Initially, students are given an overview of the organisation, and how the library is placed strategically, along with a tour of the building and facilities and introductions to departmental contacts. Staff explain the program to the student, introducing the work placement person on site, who is usually a team leader or manager. The latter is critical if the student is to maintain a sense of belonging during their program. The program generally encompasses a range of activities:

- Information Access (learning about alternate format access to information and the technology used);
- Circulation (assisting with post, returning and sorting books or packing magazines);
- Reader Services (sitting with staff members who are talking to clients);
- Collection Services (assisting with and learning about cataloguing);
- Transcription (learning about computer aided transcription);
- Audio production (assisting with CD and cassette duplication).

The tasks given to the student are designed to give them a sense of the work environment and the typical duties in a busy library service:

#### *Bayside Library Service*

Bayside is situated south east of Melbourne on Port Phillip Bay. The Library Service has four branches (Beaumaris, Brighton, Hampton and Sandringham), with three of them being open seven days a week. The work experience program was devised several years ago and runs at all of the branches. Despite the added workload for the staff, the consensus is that this is a valuable program and the importance of accommodating as many requests as possible cannot be underestimated.

At Bayside, work experience students come under the charge of the circulation supervisor at the particular branch and a schedule is devised for them that is similar to the desk roster. For the first few days they are rostered specifically to learn tasks they will be performing throughout the week, such as shelving and assisting with storytime. This stops the feeling of isolation that can occur when there is not enough prepared for the student to participate in, which is frequently the case in other work placements. Students get involved in:

- Assisting with storytime;
- Circulation: assisting with the courier run, issues, returns, memberships, reservations and information enquiries;

- Databases: an overview of databases available to members via the library's website;
- Children's services: an overview of children's services provided by the library to the community;
- Repairs and processing;
- Collection management: participation in book buying.

This range of tasks alters on an hourly basis, to allow for variety and to give the student a greater understanding of roles within the library.

#### *Eastern Regional Libraries*

Eastern Regional Libraries is a co-operative venture of three outer eastern metropolitan councils in Melbourne: Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges, serving a population of 386,000 residents across the three municipalities. The Library Service has thirteen branches, with five of them open seven days a week.

Branch managers are the first point of contact for all work experience placements at their branch. Eastern Regional has put together extensive guidelines and procedures which allows for a systematic approach to the program and guides the direction of students during the placements. Assessment of a student's capabilities is made to determine what activities can be undertaken safely. Students are always given tasks which are interesting and which give them a good understanding of the public library environment. The daily roster of tasks is devised to provide students with as wide a range of experiences as possible. Supervision is essential at all time and typical duties include:

- Work room duties: for example deleting items from the database and an overview of book processing;
- Youth services: searching for suitable activities and themes for future programs;
- Information and circulation: checking in the branch run, checking out items under supervision and computer bookings;
- Information desk: finding holds, observing information requests and observing database use.

The provision of such varied and interesting programs by these three library services allow the students to take part in, and learn about, most of the processes within the library, allowing for increased understanding and support. This results in a heightened sense, on the part of the student, of the value of libraries in the community and the parent organisation. The work experience programs are clearly designed to promote an awareness of the diverse roles and career opportunities available in libraries. The student placements also have the effect of allowing staff to take part in mentoring and professional development in a new way.

## CONCLUSION

It is acknowledged that multiple factors impact on the decisions made by young people about their future careers, including the influence of parents, teachers and friends, their impressions on the field of work and employment prospects, as well as the interplay between their personality and their career goals. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to consider the complexity of the specific issues associated with career choice. However, within the context of the LIS sector, further research is currently underway, with the aim of developing a model that can be utilised in libraries across all sectors to implement successful work experience programs that will not be onerous to the hosting library, the student, or the participating school.

Our future lies in attracting new people to the library and information sector: we need to place a high importance in mentoring the information professionals of the future. We should invite secondary school students to 'move in', encourage them to ask questions and offer ideas, and then act upon those ideas that have merit for the library and the industry as a whole. We can talk to them about why we took up librarianship as a career, what we have gained from it, as well as outlining the variety of jobs on offer and the various pathways available. We can, and should, actively seek ways to demonstrate the importance of our standing as information professionals in today's information age. After all, we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to our profession.

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## WHAT IMPRESSIONS DO YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE OF LIBRARIANSHIP AS A CAREER?

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to discover young people's impressions of librarianship as a career, what barriers there are to young people entering the profession, and what appeals to them about librarianship. Two questionnaires were used: the first to a sample of young people aged 18 to 24, who were making choices about their professional futures; the second to MA Librarianship students at the University of Sheffield who had already chosen librarianship as their career. The questionnaires asked about impressions of librarianship as a career and perceived barriers to entering the profession.*

*It was found that both a lack of understanding of what the role of a librarian entails, and a lack of awareness of librarianship as a professional career choice resulted in young people not wanting to become librarians. The MA students identified a number of barriers to young people entering the profession and suggested possible solutions to the situation. Due to young people's impressions of librarianship, it is not a career that appeals to them. Librarians should promote their roles in order that misconceptions can be eradicated; increased understanding may lead to young people finding it a more appealing career choice.*

### INTRODUCTION

This research was undertaken in response to data collected in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* of 71 authorities in England and Wales.<sup>1</sup> This national survey reveals that 8.2% of the total library workforce (in 41.2% of England and Wales) is made up of under 25 year olds and a mere 0.9% of professionals are aged 24 or under. Over half of the total library workforce, 56.6%, is made up of staff aged between 40 and 59 years, with a further 6.0% aged between 60 and 69 years. These statistics indicate that over half of the people who work in libraries are soon to be reaching retirement age and not enough young professionals are coming up to take their places. The aim of this research is to ask why young people are not attracted to librarianship as a profession and what can be done to attract them.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Staffing Crisis:** The *Library Workforce Survey 2005*<sup>1</sup> shows that, in the UK, there are not nearly enough people to fill the roles of those who will be retiring in the next few years. Ard et al. commented on a similar “staffing crisis” in the United States of America (based on 2002 reports).<sup>2</sup> The study found that by 2009 over 25% of librarians will reach or pass age 65, and nearly two out of three current librarians will retire by 2017.<sup>2</sup> The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) also reported a potential crisis with 60% of librarians in Australia aged 45 or over.<sup>3</sup> These statistics indicate that the profession is suffering worldwide with a problem in recruiting young people.

**Young Librarians:** It seems from the literature that many people do not decide to pursue a career in librarianship from the start,<sup>4</sup> suggesting that librarianship simply does not appeal to young people:

In the eyes of many youth, maybe librarians lack the glamour of...other disciplines, or perhaps people with more life experience have had more opportunities to develop a deeper appreciation of the nature of library work.<sup>2 (p239)</sup>

There are initiatives to encourage those young people who do become librarians. Love Libraries, a campaign to promote public libraries in England, held an award in 2006 for the “Top Ten Young Librarians of the Future.”<sup>5</sup> The same campaign also holds an annual award for the “Top Ten New Librarians.”<sup>6</sup> Many of the winners were people in their early twenties, chosen because,

They are challenging the traditional stereotypes of the types of people who work in libraries and as individuals are transforming public libraries with their fresh ideas, creativity, drive, passion and enthusiasm.<sup>6</sup>

This shows the importance of young people in the library workplace.

Young librarians may seem in short supply due to the qualifications process. In the UK, a degree and a postgraduate qualification, often following library work experience, are all required in order to become a professional librarian.<sup>7</sup> Unless librarianship has been decided upon from the outset of a person’s career, it is hard to complete this educational process and become a librarian before the age of 25.

**Perceptions:** The problem of the lack of new, young talent entering the library profession may be due to public perceptions of libraries and librarians. In a Canadian survey of over 2000 new university students, “fewer than 40 per cent recognized that librarians require a university education” and this job title was rated as a low prestige job.<sup>8</sup> There exists a misunderstanding of what the librarian’s role entails. It is likely that young people have only encountered public, school or academic libraries and have no knowledge of other sectors, or wider information

roles. This leads to a lack of awareness of the profession and a lack of appreciation of the librarian and their environment.

**Careers Advice:** Lack of awareness may also come from a lack of information. A study of how students view librarianship in the United States revealed that career counsellors or advisors at either the high school or college level do not commonly advocate the field of librarianship, with one student noting, “librarians were not listed in a career directory he had consulted.”<sup>1(p85)</sup>

Information about librarianship as a career is available from careers websites aimed at young people, such as Prospects<sup>10</sup> and Connexions Direct.<sup>11</sup> The Internet is considered to be the most useful information resource amongst school students, and so these websites, and others, may be a common place for young people to go to look for careers advice.<sup>12</sup>

**Stereotypes:** The perception young people have of what librarianship entails may also come from the common stereotypes of librarians as old women shushing, shelving, and stamping.<sup>13</sup> Young people’s perceptions of librarians may link to their interest (or lack of) in taking up the role as a career. Welsby calls for awareness programmes to be established in areas where there is a clear lack of understanding and appreciation of what librarians really do, highlighting “the need for a much higher profile for this oft-unappreciated band of people.”<sup>14</sup>

The stereotype of the librarian and the problems it causes, are worldwide. At the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Pre-Session Seminar in 1992, library and information professionals from around the world gathered to discuss the image, status and reputation of the library and information profession.<sup>15</sup> Today, concerns are still being raised about the future of the profession and the stereotypical images accused of holding the profession back. This is shown in Harris and Wilkinson’s study:

The cultural ideas surrounding information and computer technologies affect perceptions... and, as a result, affect the flow of new entrants to computing-related occupations (as well as those occupations that are seen to be non-computer-intensive).<sup>8</sup>

This review of the literature identifies obstacles to overcome in encouraging young people into the library profession. Though there are initiatives to promote libraries, such as the Love Libraries Campaign,<sup>16</sup> they do not outweigh the deep-set stereotypes embedded in people’s minds.

## METHODOLOGY

The research took a qualitative inductive approach, as the conclusions are guided by research responses rather than a predefined theory. Qualitative research was appropriate to this study as it suited the reflective nature of the profession of li-



brarianship and the questionnaires gave respondents the opportunity to state their own memories and opinions in their own words. The data was analysed thematically using open coding.

Two different surveys were conducted and then examined, compared, and discussed. The first questionnaire was aimed at young people who have not chosen librarianship as a career or who had not decided upon a specific career path. This survey used a convenience sample sent electronically via e-mail to contacts of the researcher who were requested to forward the survey by snowball technique to other young people who met the age criteria of 18 to 24. The second questionnaire was aimed at students taking the MA Librarianship course at the University of Sheffield. These participants had already decided upon librarianship as a career. This approach enabled different viewpoints to be considered and evaluated.

Both of the questionnaires were designed using Survey Monkey, a tool that enables questionnaires to be designed and administered electronically.<sup>17</sup> This tool allows for different types of questions to be used, including multiple-choice boxes for closed-end questions and comments boxes for open-end questions.

As this research called for respondents' personal opinions and encounters, many open-end questions were used in both questionnaires, with large text boxes in order to encourage detailed answers. The analysis of the data in the open-end questions takes on an open coding approach; for each question, common themes are drawn out of respondents' answers. These themes, or categories, were ranked in order of most popular, giving an ordered list of answers for each question, which can then be tabulated and analysed.<sup>18, 19</sup> As the aim of this study was to gain impressions from young people, determining participants' ages was important. The age ranges in both questionnaires were chosen in order to correlate with those used in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005*.<sup>1</sup>

The MA Librarianship questionnaire was emailed to everyone registered on the MA Librarianship course at the University of Sheffield, ensuring that all 42 students received the questionnaire. For the young people, the survey was sent electronically via email to 10 contacts, aged between 18 and 24, with the request that recipients forward it on to anyone else they knew within the specified age group that they felt may also be interested in completing it. This method of identifying appropriate participants is known as snowball sampling, where respondents may act as informants to identify other potential participants.<sup>18</sup>

## RESULTS – YOUNG PEOPLE

The purpose of this first questionnaire sent to young people was to gain an insight into the impressions 18 to 24 year olds have of librarianship as a career.

### *Profile of the respondents*

Of the 19 respondents:

14 (73.7%) were female

5 (26.3%) were male

8 (42.1%) were teenagers (aged 18-19)

11 (57.9%) were in their twenties (aged 20-24)

10 (52.6%) were students

9 (47.4%) were in work

**Table 1:** Profile of respondents to first survey (non-library students)

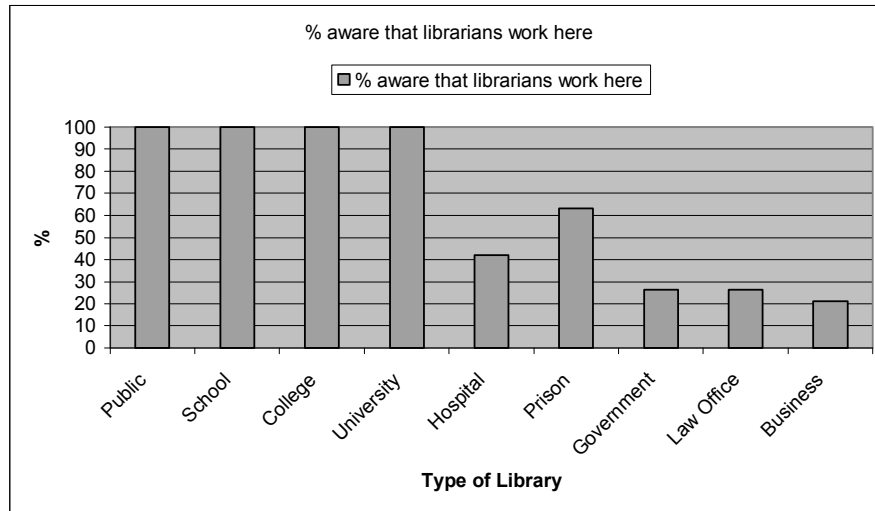
Age	Gender	Occupation
18	Female	Student (college)
24	Female	Teacher
23	Female	Student (Trainee Teacher)
24	Female	Administration
20	Male	Ice-cream van driver
23	Male	IT Operations Assistant
19	Male	Sales Assistant
18	Female	Student (university)
18	Female	Student (university)
24	Female	Teacher
24	Female	Teacher
18	Female	Student (college)
24	Female	Student (university)
18	Male	Student
18	Female	Student (college)
22	Male	Student (university)
22	Female	Administration
18	Female	Student (university)
24	Female	Teacher

**Question:** *In your view, what do librarians do? What does their job entail?*

The most popular answer to this first question were comments to the effect of “keep libraries organised,” ranging from “Put books back on shelves when returned,” suggesting a library assistant’s role, to “managing staff and resources,” Other popular answers centred around users and their needs, such as “organising

events for the library” and “researching.” Some answers, such as “till work” and “keep track of borrowed books” indicate a miscomprehension of the difference between the librarian and library assistant. “Keep libraries organised and structural” could indicate an understanding of the management responsibilities of librarians or could simply mean that they keep books organised and in order. One response, “Shout at people,” indicates that this respondent has a very negative stereotypical view of librarians.

**Question:** *Did you know that librarians work in...? (Please tick all places that you are aware of a librarian working in)*



**Figure 1:** Awareness of library sectors

Respondents were asked to tick the box next to any sector that they were aware of librarians working in from the list of nine suggestions. Figure 1 shows that every respondent knew that librarians work in public, school, college and university libraries, and this is not surprising since the young people are most likely to have had personal experiences of these libraries. Over half (12, 63.2%) of respondents were aware of librarians working in prison libraries and eight out of nineteen (42.1%) knew that librarians could be found working in hospitals. There was limited awareness of librarians working in specialist sectors such as government, law and business.

**Question:** *Have you ever considered becoming a librarian? If yes, can you explain why it appeals to you? If no, can you explain why not?*

Three (15.8%) respondents replied positively to this question, all saying that the job might appeal to them due to their love of books. Two of these three people

knew people who worked in libraries. The 16 (84.2%) negative responses to this question produced the following reasons, in order of most frequently occurring:

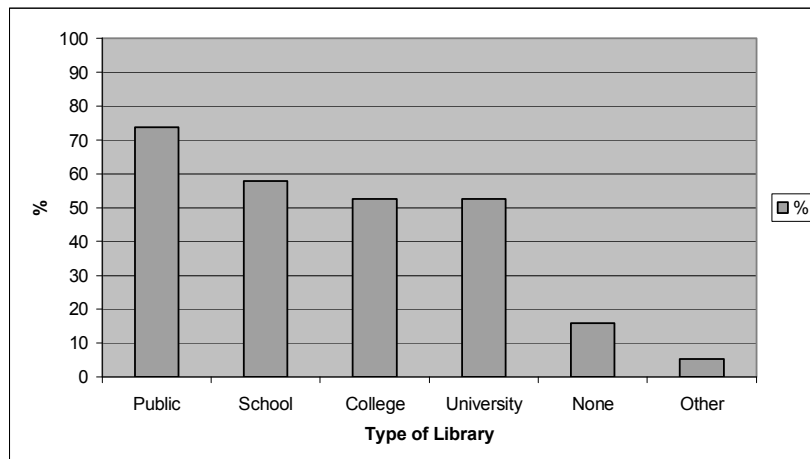
1. Boring/wouldn't suit my interests
2. Lack of careers advice
3. Already decided on a different career

One interesting response was that librarianship “Seems an unintellectually challenging job”, which displays a lack of understanding about what the job entails; this is based on the respondent’s understanding that librarians “Keep the books sorted and in order. Order more books. Customer Service” (response to question one). These answers show a lack of understanding about the role of the librarian leading to a lack of interest in librarianship as a career. This relates to the second most popular reason for not considering librarianship as a career: lack of careers advice.

Five (26.3%) of the 19 young people admitted that they do not really understand what the job of a librarian entails. One respondent answered, “No, because not a lot of information seems to be given on the job at school or careers advice”. This questionnaire may have been the first time the respondent had been prompted to think of librarianship as a career.

**Question:** *Have you ever or do you currently use any of the following libraries? (Please tick all that apply)*

This question was designed to ascertain whether use of different libraries makes any difference to knowledge of librarianship. Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents who answered that they had used public libraries or libraries in the education sector.



**Figure 2:** Respondents’ use of libraries, by type

Of the 19 young people who answered this questionnaire 14 (73.7%) said they had used a public library. A slightly lower number, but still over half (11, 57.9%), said they had used their school libraries. Nine of the 19 are currently students, either at college or university, with at least a further 4 (teachers) having been to university. It is somewhat surprising, then, that only half (10, 52.6%) of the respondents have used college and university libraries. Libraries have clearly not been promoted or available in some of these young people's lives, which may explain the lack of understanding about librarianship.

Three of the 19 (15.8%) respondents to this question said they had never used any type of library and one selected the 'Other' option and commented "no I owe them all money", which suggests that in fact he has used a library in the past but has had a negative experience.

**Question:** *Do you know anyone who is, or has been, a librarian? Or do you know anyone who works, or has worked, in a library? If yes, please give details.*

This question was asked to determine any influence from knowing someone in the profession. Eight (42%) answered yes, 11 (58%) answered no. Those who answered 'Yes', stated *who* they knew, for example "my mother" but they did not state in what capacity that person worked. This may show that even having a family member or friend who works in a library does not mean that young people understand or appreciate the different roles.

## RESULTS – MA STUDENTS

The second questionnaire was administered to MA Librarianship students at Sheffield. Its purpose was to assess the attitudes towards librarianship of those who are interested in it as a career and to compare them to the young people's impressions as revealed by the first questionnaire.

### **Profile of the respondents**

Four (26.7%) of the 15 respondents who answered this question were aged between 18 and 24 years. Eleven respondents (66.7%) were aged between 25 and 39 years, with one respondent being over 40. Given their ages, it is clear that the majority chose to become librarians, not directly after leaving school, college or university undergraduate courses, but after having worked for a while, either in a library environment or elsewhere.

**Question:** *Library use.*

The MA Librarianship students were asked about their use of libraries as children and young people to determine whether this may have affected their choice to become librarians: 46.7% had used their libraries at both primary and secondary school; 100% used their public libraries up until the age of 11, 80% between the ages of 11 and 18.

**Question:** *Why do you want to become a librarian? Did anything in particular influence your decision?*

The 16 respondents gave a range of answers to this question, with many similarities. The top reasons (each stated by 9 respondents, 56.3%) were: wanting to develop a career or progress within libraries and wanting to work with and help library users, be they the public, students, or professionals. Many said “I was influenced by people I met who were librarians.”

Another popular answer, stated by 7 respondents (43.8%), was a passion for books and reading: “I think that reading and the notion of access to knowledge to all who want it are two very important things, and the opportunity to be involved in this seemed too good to pass up.”

Three (18.8%) of the MA students had chosen librarianship for its variety, mix of skills and interest, with one clearly stating that, “I wanted to become a librarian as I wanted a job that would be interesting and varied.”

Other responses were:

- An interest in education (31.3%)
- Positive experiences as a library user (18.8%)
- Relevance to first degree (18.8%)
- Suits a social and creative lifestyle (6.3%)

**Question:** *At what age or stage in your life did you make this decision?*

Nine respondents (56.3%) stated an age at which they decided to become librarians. Five (55.6%) were in their twenties, between 21 and 26 years. Three (33.3%) were in their thirties, between 30 and 34 years, and 1 (11.1% of the nine) said, “I decided to become a librarian from quite a young age while still at secondary school.” Whilst others who didn’t state a specific age said they had considered librarianship as a career earlier in life, they didn’t take it seriously as a career until after university and/or after some work experience, either in a library or elsewhere.

**Question:** *What perceptions did you have of librarianship before the start of this course? For example, what did you think that the job of a librarian would entail? Have your perceptions changed now, at the end of this course?*

Almost all of the respondents felt they had learned more about librarianship from taking the MA Librarianship course, with 50% of respondents admitting to an increased awareness of and interest in different sectors within the library and information profession. Respondents were surprised at some of the course content, e.g. the inclusion of information technology and information literacy teaching (see course prospectus).<sup>20</sup>

**Question:** *What perceptions did you have of librarians before the start of this course? For example, what kind of people did you think were librarians? Have your perceptions changed now, at the end of this course?*

Eleven of the respondents (68.8%) said they have learned more about the type of people librarians are from taking the MA Librarianship course. Eight (50%) ex-

plicitly said that it was their fellow course mates who have changed their perceptions of what librarians are like, or at least what future librarians will be like.

The 11 respondents (68.8%) whose perceptions of librarians had changed, all mentioned an awareness of the stereotypical image of librarians as “Boring people who wore cardigans.” However, these respondents felt that, “Although I had seen this stereotype, it didn’t deter me, so I must have known somehow that this wasn’t universal.” All respondents had positive perceptions of themselves as the librarians of the future.

**Question:** *What barriers do you see facing young people wanting to enter the librarianship profession? Please also give any other comments relating to young peoples’ impressions of librarianship as a career.*

Responses to this question tended to be lengthy, showing a deep understanding of the different barriers for young people entering librarianship *and* the barriers of the profession in attracting young people. This seemed to be a passionate subject for many of the respondents. The answers are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Barriers facing young people wanting to enter the librarianship profession as identified by MA Librarianship students

Barrier identified	Example quote
Invisibility of the Profession	“Lack of awareness of it as a choice; lack of depth of understanding about what is involved in it.”
Negative Stereotypes	“I think the stereotypical image of librarians as women in their 40’s and 50’s would put off young people and particularly young men from entering the profession.”
High Level of Qualifications Required	“Another possible barrier is that to actually become a librarian you are required to undertake a postgraduate course. This I think would put off some young people because of the financial costs and amount of time involved.”
Poor Careers Advice	“It is not promoted by careers services. I have never seen a stand at a careers fair about library work.”
Lack of Job Opportunities	“Another issue I’ve noticed is that I’ve found it very difficult to get a job: people seem to stay in jobs for many years and not move on which means it is difficult to find that promotion opportunity and progress in your career.”

Low Salary

“When you’re younger (and often older!) you want to do a sexy job that pays a fortune... It’s hard to sell librarianship on these grounds.”

**Question:** *What sector did you hope to work in before the start of this course? What sector do you hope to work in now/on completion of this course?*

In all but 2 cases, the course has opened up students’ options or changed their minds about the best sector for them. In 6 cases (40%), respondents had changed their preferred sectors completely. Six respondents (40%) gave 2 or more sectors in which they would be interested in working. Three respondents (20%) did not state any particular sectors, with one response being “The library world is my oyster. I’ll see what grabs me.”

## DISCUSSION

Both sets of respondents noted barriers facing young people in joining the library profession. The MA Librarianship students felt that a lack of awareness of librarianship as a career choice, coupled with the poor careers advice on offer, were important factors in librarianship not appealing to young people. The young people demonstrated a lack of awareness of what a career in librarianship entails.

Due to increased exposure to libraries and librarians, the MA Librarianship students had a different attitude towards the profession than the young people. While the young people generated impressions of librarians’ roles such as “Put books back on shelves when returned” and “shout at people,” the MA students recognised and dismissed these as false stereotypes. Library use, both as children and as adults, was higher in the MA Librarianship group (100%) than in the young people’s group (73.7%). The MA students had learned the most about the profession from the content of the course and their peers as future librarians.

The MA Librarianship students identified a number of things that attracted them to the profession including wanting to help users, a love of books and reading, the variety that the job entails, and the positives influence received either from library professionals or from being a library user. These responses highlight key areas where librarians can exploit their roles in terms of excellence in customer service when interacting with users, and promoting books and reader development. These are roles that should be second nature to practising librarians.

Making young people aware of the variety within the job, and the wide range of opportunities available within the profession is a more difficult issue. This is the responsibility not just of the individual librarians, but also of organisations and professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), careers advice professionals, and schools to educate young people when selecting careers.



The stereotypes surrounding the age of librarians is one of the big barriers in attracting more young people to become librarians. There are numerous statistics and studies supporting this, such as those in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005*, which relate to age in the public library workforce.<sup>1</sup> In a study of independent school libraries 43.7% of school library managers were aged between 46 and 55, with just 4.9% aged 26 to 35.<sup>21</sup> In Brabazon's article on school libraries states that "a recent survey discovered that the average age of school librarians was 50", and school librarian Anne-Marie Tarter reveals a worrying fact: "fewer young professional librarians are seeking employment in the schools sector."<sup>22</sup> Only 2 of the 15 (13.3%) MA Librarianship students explicitly mentioned that they were looking to work in a school library on completion of the course.

As public library visits drop in the teenage years, it is in the school library where most young people are likely to interact with library professionals, and as one MA Librarianship student identified:

*I think the stereotypical image of librarians as women in their 40's and 50's would put off young people and particularly young men from entering the profession.*

A lack of awareness of what the librarian's role entails was identified as a barrier by both sets of respondents. This lack of awareness is again likely to reinforce stereotypical views of what librarians do. Educating people about the roles and responsibilities is critical. We should play to our professional strengths, ensuring that we excel in every exchange with all customers young and old. Leading by example, showing users that librarians are supportive, encouraging users, helping them with their information needs – requires not just customer service skills, but the time to spend with users, which gives those responsible for staffing levels and budget a challenge in the current economic environment.

If the stereotypical image is a barrier, then things need to be done to break that down, either through direct action such as employing not just younger staff but a greater diversity of staff or through education and advocacy. Innovations in library buildings and use of space particularly in the higher education sector and in schools may encourage young people to use libraries and have positive experiences there. This will also give them an opportunity to see librarians working with technology and teaching, not stamping books, therefore dispelling the stereotypical views.

The issue of invisibility is compounded as librarians increasingly take a "back-room role" pushing out electronic information, making it difficult for the user to see who has supplied that information and to fully understand the librarian's role. Ways need to be found to market that role, making the librarians' intermediary role in the electronic supply chain clear to the public.

Lack of awareness of a librarian's role supports what the MA librarianship students identified as "invisibility of the profession". The young people reported that they did not realise it was a career choice. This lack of careers advice could be ad-

dressed by making the profession more visible by school and college careers advisors and at university careers fairs. The students on the MA Librarianship course did not see themselves as stereotypical librarians. The younger generation entering the profession can play a role in changing the image of libraries and librarians, perhaps through involvement with groups such as CILIP's Career Development Group, which is active in a number of regions in the UK.

There are a number of public library promotions currently in place in the UK, including Love Libraries, "a campaign to make England's public libraries even better"<sup>16</sup> and 2008's National Year of Reading, which included a "Library Membership Campaign" for public libraries in England.<sup>23</sup> However, there do need to be more positive images in the media, such as librarian characters in programmes aimed at young people, and generally more promotion of librarianship as a career choice. In the USA, past First Lady Laura Bush "enacted a new student grant program" to provide initiatives for students to join the profession of librarianship.<sup>2</sup> Such campaigns may make a difference if implemented in other countries.

Based on the data from the two questionnaires, school libraries have had less of an impact on the respondents than public libraries; this is an area that could and should be improved upon. With children and young people seeing librarians involved with all different types of new technologies, the image of librarianship may start to change; the new generations will start to see the librarian with an interesting role and providing services that are not confined to the lending counter. If school librarians can become even more visible to students, students will not only benefit from increased information skills but also awareness of the importance of the library and the role of the librarian. This should benefit the library profession by attracting more young people. Many of the MA Librarianship students had been influenced by practicing librarians.

At the IFLA pre-session seminar in 1992, it was stated,

...there is "Little understanding amongst the general public of what library and information (LIS) workers do and what responsibilities they undertake"... It was then suggested that this might be the responsibility of "the profession itself to put right."<sup>24</sup>

This responsibility has been echoed in more recent literature, such as Welsby's<sup>14</sup> call for librarians to market librarianship and Totterdell's statement that, "library staff need to add the skills of self-publicizing and political astuteness to their professional expertise and dedication".<sup>25</sup> The MA Librarianship students who contributed to this study seem willing to rise to this call; one respondent commented, "the future of librarianship should be very positive with such enthusiastic people wanting to enter into it".

## CONCLUSION

The findings from both questionnaires reinforce many points from the literature. Staffing problems are likely to continue in a profession that is failing to attract young people in sufficient numbers. Moreover, those young people entering the profession are expressing concerns about the lack of opportunities for them with entry-level posts and opportunities for career progression, with many jobs being low paid.

The library students have the advantage of increased exposure to libraries and an increased understanding of the profession through their educational programme. This has enabled them to reject traditional stereotypes that are more difficult to dispel with the young people who had negative perceptions of the profession and librarians. Part of this misunderstanding comes from little or poor careers advice in schools. The lack of careers advice reinforces the invisibility of the profession. Librarians need to take up the challenge to extol the profession more widely as individuals through their professionalism and customer service, and by increasing involvement with their professional bodies and professional networks, and partnership with schools, colleges, universities and careers advisors and organisations.

This project is limited by the small sample; a large-scale study would provide more valid data. This project is limited to the UK, though the literature suggests the issues occur worldwide: for example, Ard et al. in America, the Australian Library and Information Association, and Harris and Wilkinson in Canada,<sup>2,3,8</sup> so further research in other countries would be beneficial. It would be interesting to do a similar study in a number of years time to see if young people's perceptions have changed, and also to follow up on the librarianship students to see if and how they have championed the profession of librarianship.

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**SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF LIBRARIANSHIP  
AS A PROFESSION –  
THE COLOMBIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract**

*This research is a first attempt towards providing insight into the social reality of librarianship, through a qualitative study of the ideas, significance, opinions, beliefs and attitudes that are generated around it. The study aims to unveil the perceptions that Latin American professional leaders, Colombian library science students, and high school students have about the profession. This project begins with a theoretical analysis of the notion of profession and the conditions that make it emerge. This is followed by an explanation of how professions have been conceptualized in social representations. Finally, this paper provides an analysis of social, historical, academic, and labor aspects of librarianship. Some of the results found are: there is no unique notion of librarianship and there are many differences in how it is perceived. Among high school students who can be considered potential candidates for library science education, there is no evidence of a concept of librarianship as a profession; they relate the profession exclusively to reference services in libraries. The groups that took part in this research furnished recommendations that include strengthening library science schools, professionalizing librarians, creating new channels of communication with high school students.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Choosing librarianship for one's profession is the topic of preliminary research carried out during 2008 as part of the doctoral programme in Methodologies and Lines of Research in Library Science and Documentation at Universidad de Salamanca, Spain. The purpose of the initial proposal was to provide insight into the social reality of the profession, as it is represented in Colombians' knowledge, meanings, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes expressed about this profession.

This project emerged due to various reasons. On many occasions within her social circles, the author was asked to explain whether librarianship is a profession or not and why it is necessary to study in order to work in a library. Other negative comments relate to the stereotype of the librarian's image. Currently there is a

small number of students who choose library science as a major, as well as a significant number of permanent positions that cannot be filled due to the lack of qualified professional personnel. Finally, a more relevant issue may be how we perceive ourselves within our profession and how librarians value the profession.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project starts with a theoretical analysis of the concept of profession and the conditions that make it emerge, based on constructions of social representations, and includes a review of historical, social, academic, and labor aspects of library science.

The historical and conceptual development of any given profession has been subject to not only academic conditions or the structures of knowledge but also to economic and social conditions. There are various authors who have referred to concepts of profession and especially to its developmental process, and they generally agree that the critical foundational role is played by society, not only in accepting the profession but also in needing it.

Some authors state that librarianship's sphere of activity emerged as an answer to a social need and not as an urge to seek answers to questions about reality as is the case in other areas of knowledge. Delgado<sup>1</sup> mentions that "*to do*" was more relevant than "*to think*," and this initial orientation located librarianship within a non-scientific frame. As is well explained by Roggau,<sup>2</sup> it was necessary to preserve manuscripts, and in the Middle Ages to guard and rescue the record of the church as well as of classical antiquity. Later, during the Renaissance, the flourishing book production created a need for bibliographic control, and with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, it was necessary to massively register all types of documents and facilitate access to information. Finally, the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought accuracy and rapidity in information processing, transmission, and communication by means of new technologies. Roggau believes that this "empirical" origin of librarianship, which lacked explicit theoretical grounds, constituted the basis for an image without academic prestige. Rather, it was an image of a responsible repeater of practices, and consequently, its association with occupation, not profession. Writing on education for librarianship in 1972, Jesse Shera stated:

Library science, for the first time in its long history, is obliged to clearly formulate its role in the society, to creatively examine its intellectual grounds and to look at itself as a whole, as an integral system that serves man throughout his life, as an individual and also as a society member.<sup>3 (p290)</sup>

In the socio-cultural context of librarianship, the evolution of the profession has been linked to the history of the book, access to culture, and to the development of information technology. The librarian has gone from the role of conservator and preserver to that of professional in the service of the community. As Shera saw it,

when it was decided to democratize the culture, the role became “to relate men with the information.”

Some common stereotypes have emerged about the librarians’ image (such as feminization of the profession), its social recognition, and its professional prestige. These facts are supported by a theoretical analysis of the history, professional development, and professional profile of librarianship in Colombia.

To study perceptions of librarianship, we can use the framework of social representation. Research using this perspective has integrated the social and psychological dimensions that explain the construction or reconstruction of the reality in diverse fields. The study reported here aims at understanding how social structures influence the development of library science representations and how previously constituted schemas influence new representations.

Knowledge of the social representation of library science is a path to understanding society’s perception of this science as a profession: How that influences young people’s selection of it as a profession, its professional status, its visibility, and its recognition. In turn, this understanding can provide new readings of the profession and reconstruct the social dynamics surrounding library science and can contribute to its professional re-positioning and strengthen its development.

## **THE COLOMBIAN CONTEXT**

In Colombia, education for the profession, as elsewhere in the world, emerged from the universities, in short courses that focused on the technical management of libraries. An associated effect was that librarians’ status and salary were often-times perceived as very basic. With time, the short courses have evolved into fully comprehensive degrees at the university level, making the outlook more positive. Librarianship as a career was recognized as professional practice when the Colombian government issued professional law, Act 11 of 1979.

In Colombia there are currently library science schools in the following universities: La Salle, Javeriana, Quindio, located in Bogota; Medellin and Armenia (Virtual). These are certified as high quality programs that grant a diploma in librarianship to comply with the law of professional practice. There are now also professional programmes in information science and information systems.

These days the panorama is more positive, when you consider the information provided by the Universidad Externado de Colombia about labor conditions and about trends in the demand for professionals based on employment indicators, unemployment, and income.<sup>4</sup> From these data, it can be concluded that the university programmes with better prospects for employment of their graduates are as follows: administration, library science, economics, and administrative engineering.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective stated for this research was to understand the representations of librarianship held by information professionals in Latin America, and by Colombian library science students and high school students. Specifically, the objectives were:

- to describe the representations – knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values – that professionals, library science students, and high school students hold about librarianship, and
- to describe the different connections they make among these representations (knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values) and librarianship's realities (professional recognition, labor conditions, and professional visibility).

## METHODOLOGY

The research process was carried out in several stages:

- first, selection of methodology, identification of the study population and the method for selecting members of each group, and design of instruments for data collection;
- second, data collection, and organization and categorization of the gathered information.

In order to study the social representation of librarianship, ethnography was considered as the method that would allow the researcher to understand how the subjects perceive librarianship as a profession. The aim was to unveil socio-cultural implications and meanings and from these to construct a new discourse. As part of this qualitative methodology, the criteria for selecting one participant and not another, were criteria of membership in groups that were familiar to the profession, rather than statistical representation. Two elements, adequacy and sufficiency, were taken into consideration.<sup>5 (p135)</sup> It is important for the selection to meet the criterion of adequacy for the purpose of the research, that is to say, the individuals comprising each group to be studied should be representative of the larger population of which they are members. The criterion of sufficiency requires that the groups or sources of information are familiar enough with the topic studied to answer the researcher's questions and clearly construe "social representation." The three groups that were formed were: library/information professionals, library science students, and high school students.

Ten professionals, presidents of various Latin American library associations, were selected in order to ensure quality responses and some level of homogeneity. Also, it was possible to have access to these individuals online. They were given a



virtual survey on such topics as their conception and vision of the profession, professional identity, and the social context.

Seven library science students were selected from different semesters in order to represent the student body. The group included some students who already had hands-on experience as employees of various libraries (it is important to note that in Colombia, it is common practice for librarianship students to work in libraries from their very first semesters).

A focus group was held, where the objectives of the study were discussed, and students were asked about their choice of the profession, challenges, opportunities, and their ideas about strategies to for re-positioning library science.

The selection of ten high school participants used the technique that Babbie<sup>6</sup> describes as non-probabilistic sampling procedure. In this process, a sample is chosen considering the knowledge of the population, its nature, and the objectives of the research. The topics of the interview with these students were: their choice of a future profession and factors affecting this decision; their relationship with libraries and librarians; and the subjects or contents of library science as a field of study.

## **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

When trying to analyze the social representations constructed by the professionals, library science students, and high school students, it was necessary to explore different spaces of interpretation such as the ones constructed around knowledge about the profession and about professional “work,” and about vocational decisions.

The analysis showed that social representations about librarianship as a professional choice are influenced by the following factors:

1. whether or not the respondent is part of the library science group;
2. relationship with libraries;
3. lack of social recognition;
4. persistence of the librarians’ negative stereotype;
5. the image of the professional;
6. lack of professional consolidation and the reductionist practice of the profession related exclusively to the libraries;
7. lack information and communication;
8. low labor recognition and the lack of professional regulations.

Perceptions of working conditions revolved around low professional status, professional positions occupied by non-qualified personnel (professionals from a different discipline), uneven salary, the value the society gives information and libraries, the lack of a dynamic professional attitude, the use of the library only to

do homework, and inadequate professional development of the personnel in charge of the libraries, resulting in inappropriate service.

When discerning the complex reality that emerges from the social representations of library science as articulated by the three groups, we may say that it is determined by:

What do we know? We know that there is not only one conception of librarianship. There are various theoretical divergences within the groups directly related to it. By the high school students (potential recruits to librarianship), it is not perceived as a profession and refers exclusively to reference service in the library.

What do we believe, how do we interpret it? The main beliefs about librarianship are focused on considering it an occupation and not a profession. It is also believed that it is not necessary to have any professional development to be able to work in a library, since it is matter of only circulating books. It is clear that for all, the librarian's traditional image persists. There is a perception of the emergence of new stereotypes that relate professional practice exclusively to libraries and only to the format of printed books.

What do we do? Professional practice is characterized by low status, reduced prestige and inappropriate labor conditions.

The number of open positions is higher than the number of applicants, making job availability a decisive factor for those who have entered library work. Library science is not among the professional choices of applicants that have access to college education. This picture is discouraging, since solutions to the recruitment problem do not depend only on professional librarians.

The social reality demonstrates that studying library science is not seen as a professional option. It is associated with reading behavior, a particular personal profile, an occupation, and to the lack of knowledge of the profession.

The perception of librarianship as a feminine profession seems to have been overcome by the participants, since the perspective of gender was not part of their reflection.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the results obtained, there were proposals for re-positioning the profession through the identification of different drawbacks which have been grouped into areas in order to be able to design the appropriate strategies:

### *Improve libraries*

- Strengthen school libraries and professionalize the librarians who work in them. This change would aid the recognition and acceptance of the profession by this important sector, and would provide role models for students who might select librarianship as their future profession.

- Re-conceptualize the library and the construction of a professional practice in favor of social inclusion and access to information.
- Improve reference service in all the libraries by taking advantage of information and communication technologies and of course the appropriate professional development for those who render this service.
- Work on the recognition of libraries and on professional development for the human resources that administer them.
- Define specific strategies for librarians and the community in order to reconstruct a vision of librarianship in the perceptions of the profession, the users, media, and society.

#### ***Enhance professional profiles***

- Librarians will be recognized as professional when they have the academic background, the updating level, and the personal profile in accordance with a profession of service.
- Library science schools should widen the communication channels of the profession as well as the sectors they address, especially with campaigns with the professional advisors in high schools.
- Library science schools will see the number of students increase in the years to come, although it does not necessarily have to do with their vocation.
- Re-define the professional profiles, since the ones constructed in the different schools have not covered the social environment.
- Raise librarians' educational achievement beyond basic professional preparation and undergraduate programmes through graduate studies
- Professionally develop librarians not only in their technical knowledge but also in their personal image and public relations.

#### ***Advocate for the field***

- Develop specific strategies addressed to librarians and the community to change the image as an occupation.
- Re-structure the advertising programs of the profession to position it in the knowledge society.
- Look for new market opportunities for the profession in order to position it in the knowledge society.
- Carry out market studies on the need for information professionals.
- Undertake a project of professional re-positioning.
- Include a libraries program in the political agenda to guarantee professional improvement.

***Recruit to the profession***

- Understand the factors that attract prospective students towards a profession and integrate and highlight them within the communication process of the librarianship academic program.
- Include librarianship in career decision making. Determine interests and preferences within social interests, family traditions, psycho-economic factors, affinity, willingness, professional recognition, abilities and skills and redefine the channels to approach potential recruits.
- Unify the concept of library/information science in presentation to society as a professional career direction. The consolidation of library and information science is the only guarantee for the social status and professional recognition.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Librarianship is important to society, although in the so-called information society there is not adequate recognition of it as professional work. There is no understanding of the diversity of librarians' knowledge, the complexity of their social meaning and the dimensions of their work that influence the professional process. Those are some drawbacks present today and if those are recognized we can design strategies to improve the future. This affects us, since it is about recognizing whether society can visualize us or not as a profession. It is necessary to identify the reasons that link this profession to various sources of knowledge, in order to establish its real foundation and consolidate its boundaries. In other words, to thrive for the epistemological consolidation of the profession.

It could be suggested that the changes that have happened should not necessarily modify the foundation of library science but simply make it stronger. We should think then in terms of a unique theoretical position that allows us to identify clearly the characteristics and attributes that make us different from other professions and would also allow us overcome the concept of being just an occupation rather than a profession, or the recognition in some sectors and not in others.

The conclusions of this research are tentative and are limited by the qualitative methodology and the small number of subjects. Given the findings, it can be stated that perceptions of the library science profession raise questions about the need to look for a professional space and an identity in this new information society.

It seems that information has an obvious value in fields ranging from the educational, social, cultural, political, to economical. The current challenge is for library and information sciences to engage in a process of complementing each other, and in consolidation. As stated by Catrovo,

... the legitimacy of a profession becomes the relevance of their actions according to the expectations that society as a whole is facing the same ... against this background, the challenge is introduced to the profession suggests the possibility of knowing and interpreting the same reality to understand complex and changing issues in their various manifestations, to deepen the impact of social dynamics in this and in alternative dispute resolution.<sup>7 (p9)</sup>

It is necessary to react to a society that is demanding a change to help you solve latent problems such as access to information, democratization of knowledge, and information overload, where this really becomes a means to ensure the quality of life of the community.

It can be stated that the proposals aforementioned clarify the challenge that library science has in society. The findings point to a need for creating a clear and different identity for a profession that can have an impact on society and obtain social recognition. This can be possible if an appropriate plan is developed that takes into account all actors (society, professionals, students, employers and government), and is supported by other disciplines. The project reported here provides a preliminary analysis of social representations, but is limited and cannot be generalized. A more broadly based study would require not only different instruments for data collection but also a wider population. The final objective is to propose a planning model to provide an identity for the profession which includes a total strategic analysis of it, a proposal for construction of a new identity for the future. At this point it is necessary to consider the reach of the profession, its attributes, groups, essence and image, which can suggest individual and group strategies for change. A system to implement a re-positioning librarianship as a profession has to look for support in all sectors, and propose communication mechanisms that would involve all the relevant groups.

Ideally, the analysis of the profession should be done globally, from the reality of each country, although IFLA could assume leadership in structuring a plan of identity construction and implementation. Each society, in accordance with its development structures and its social representations, recognizes the professions it requires for its development.

It is expected that research of this nature would be greatly useful for understanding our library science reality. It could lead to actions to make the reality better. It is possible that in the end, there are more queries than answers which become the grounds for other research about librarianship as a profession.

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**RECRUITING ETHNIC MINORITIES  
INTO THE LIBRARY PROFESSION –  
A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE  
U.S. FEDERALLY FUNDED PROGRAM**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Recruiting ethnic minority librarians into the library profession is very challenging. Library literature highlights the under-representation of librarians with ethnic minority backgrounds in the U.S. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon: a persistent negative image of librarians; low and non-competitive salaries; the lack of minority faculty, diverse curricula, and concerted recruitment efforts; and limited financial support. Since 2003, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has provided funding to help recruit new library and information science (LIS) professionals, including ethnic minority students to attend LIS programs through its Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program. More than \$100 million has been awarded to fund 3,220 master's degree students, 186 doctoral students, and 1,256 pre-professional students, according to Dr. Anne-Imelda M. Radice, Director of IMLS.<sup>1</sup> This paper surveys selected LIS programs funded by the U.S. federal grants that focused on recruiting under-represented ethnic minority students, identifies models that may be useful for future recruitment, and offers recommendations for similar programs.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The make-up of the general population in the U.S. has witnessed rapid changes in the past decades. The data from the 2005-2007 U. S. Bureau of Census's *American Community Survey Demographic Estimates* show that more than 30% of the U.S. population consists of minorities.<sup>2</sup> The minority population categories are Black or African Americans, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino. According to the projections of the U.S. Census Bureau released in August 2008, the nation will be more racially and ethnically diverse by midcentury, with 54 percent minority in 2050.<sup>3</sup>

The demographic changes have influenced the way many organizations conduct business, whether for profit or non-profit. With diverse populations, libraries have to strive to provide services and programs that meet the needs of their changing

user communities. For those libraries located in urban areas and in minority communities, the challenges are even greater. In trying to attract potential users from various ethnic groups, increasing professional librarians with diverse backgrounds is one way to help meet with the challenge.

Smith<sup>4</sup> points out that the presence of minority faculty at college campuses will help attract minority students to pursue higher education in that environment. The same may hold true for libraries: that users will feel more comfortable if they are served by library staff who are like them. According to Dunkley and McCook, “recruiting and retaining new librarians of color is a challenge that both the library profession and the faculty of schools of library and information science must face together.”<sup>5</sup> The nearly 110,000 credentialed librarians in all types of libraries in U.S. are predominantly white, as shown in Table 1. The total number of credentialed librarians with ethnic minority backgrounds is only 12,131, or 11%.<sup>6 (p9)</sup>

**Table 1:** Number of credentialed librarians by characteristics, 2000

			White	African American	API	Native American	Two or more races	Latinos
Total		109,958	97,827	5,244	3,516	310	923	2,138
Gender	Male	19,463	17,386	572	570	93	245	597
	Female	90,495	80,441	4,672	2,946	217	678	1,541

**Source:** 2000 U.S. Census

According to the American Library Association’s 2007 report, *Diversity Counts*, the data indicate that currently over half of the ethnic minority librarians age 45 and older will retire over the next two decades. This report also states that LIS is not recruiting or graduating enough ethnic minority librarians to replace the number expected to retire in the next two decades, highlighting the need for recruiting the next generation of ethnic minority librarians.<sup>6 (p11)</sup>

## RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

In order to increase the ethnic minority librarians in U.S., the 1985 American Library Association (ALA) President’s Commission on Library Service to Minorities released a report, *Equity at Issue: Library Services to the Nation’s Major Minority Groups*. The report recommended that the ALA Committee on Accreditation request that all ALA-accredited LIS programs have minority recruitment policies and procedures.<sup>7</sup>

The influence of the ALA President’s Commission’s report should not be underestimated in the profession’s efforts to recruit ethnic minority librarians. In the *Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies 1992*, adopted by the ALA Council in January 1992, a specific statement was



added to the Standards, "The school has policies to recruit and retain a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual student body from a variety of backgrounds."<sup>8</sup>

Subsequently, in the 2008 Standards, the language became more specific than its previous version: "The school has policies to recruit and retain students who reflect the diversity of North America's communities."<sup>9</sup>

Several U.S. library associations have notable initiatives to help recruit librarians with ethnic backgrounds. The ALA Spectrum Scholar Program is one of the successful recruitment programs. The mission of the program is to improve service at the local level through the development of a representative workforce that reflects the communities served by all libraries in the new millennium.<sup>10</sup> The ALA Spectrum program provides financial assistance, mentoring, leadership and professional development opportunities to help recruit students from underrepresented ethnic minority groups into library and information science programs. From 1998 to 2007, the Spectrum program supported 523 students with scholarships. Additionally, the Medical Library Association, Association of College and Research Libraries, and Public Library Association have also built on the Spectrum program's efforts by contributing funds and development opportunities to ethnic minority students enrolled in LIS programs.<sup>11</sup>

## ROADBLOCKS TO RECRUITMENT

In their interviews with several ethnic minority LIS educators, Dunkley and McCook<sup>5</sup> identified factors contributing to the low percentage of ethnic minority librarians: the old stereotypical images of librarian held by minority students, the low starting salaries for librarians in comparison with other professions, lack of minority librarian role models, and lack of recruiting efforts from LIS programs. Furthermore, in Neely's professional library literature review on recruitment,<sup>12</sup> the author confirms the same recruitment roadblocks: persistent negative image of librarians, low and non-competitive salaries, and increased competition from related information professions. Additionally, Neely attributes the lack of minority faculty, diverse curriculum, concerted recruitment efforts, and limited financial support as barriers that are pertinent to recruiting minority students into LIS programs.<sup>12</sup>

In the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) 1997 statistical report, the year prior to the inception of the ALA's Spectrum Scholars Program, only 444 or 9% ethnic minority students graduated from LIS programs in U.S. in 1996-1997, out of a total of 5,068 graduating candidates in the same year.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 2:** Degrees and certificates awarded by gender and ethnic origin, 1996–1997

Gender	AI	AP	B	H	W	I	NA	Total
Male	4	20	36	28	851	48	120	1,107
Female	22	111	157	66	3,126	101	378	3,961
Total	26	131	193	94	3,977	149	498	5,068

Note: AI-American Indian, AP- Asian or Pacific Islander, B-Black, H-Hispanic, W-White, I-International students

The recruitment situation has not improved much between 1997 and 2004, the latest year for which ALISE data are available. The number of ethnic minority students at LIS programs has held steady, except that the number of Hispanic students increased from 94 in 1997 to 195 in 2004, as shown in Table 3. Among 5,951 ALA accredited degree candidates in 2003-2004, the minority graduates numbered only 596 or about 10%.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 3:** Degrees and certificates awarded by gender and ethnic origin, 2003–2004

Gender	AI	AP	B	H	W	I	NA	Total
Male	2	39	31	45	849	37	177	1,180
Female	18	105	206	150	3,475	161	656	4,771
Total	20	144	237	195	4,324	198	833	5,951

### LAURA BUSH 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

The largest financial support to help recruit ethnic minority students into LIS program so far has come from the U.S. federal government. In 2002, the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program was established within the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The program aims at “the recruitment of new library and information science professionals,” according to then First Lady Laura Bush.<sup>15</sup> Ms. Mary L. Chute, IMLS Deputy Director for Libraries, points out that “with the administration’s commitment and bipartisan support of the Congress, the first \$10 million investment proposed for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian program in January 2002 has grown to over \$120 million over the past six years.”<sup>15</sup> Table 4 shows the increasing funds that the U.S. Congress has allocated to the program from 2003 through 2009, with a total close to \$150 million.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 4:** IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program Appropriation History 2003-2009 (Budget Authorized in Thousand of Dollars)

Year	Amount
FY 2003	9,935
FY 2004	19,882

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
FY 2005	22,816
FY 2006	23,760
FY 2007	23,760
FY 2008	23,345
FY 2009 Request	26,500
Total	149,998

**Source:** IMLS Appropriation History, 1998-2009.

The increased federal funds have enabled the library and information science programs to aggressively recruit, educate, and train new library and information science professionals with the knowledge and skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century library and information services. It is noticeable that some of these funded programs are specifically designed to attract new professionals with ethnic minority backgrounds. As shown in Table 5, from 2003 to 2008, close to \$35 million from IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program was awarded for recruiting 1,401 ethnic minority students and library staff.<sup>17</sup> This initiative has helped address the specific issues to quickly increase the number of ethnic minority librarians in library profession.

**Table 5:** IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program funding for ethnic minority students' programs, 2003–2008

<b>Year</b>	<b>Master's degree</b>	<b>Ph.D. Degree</b>	<b>High school interns *</b>	<b>Funding \$\$\$</b>
2003	186	1		3,631,740
2004	280		42	3,418,061
2005	217		513	7,315,318
2006	158	12		4,870,082
2007	283	4	60	8,420,549
2008	260		90	6,960,670
Total	1384	17	705	34,616,420

\* Some programs did not include the specific number of high school interns. So the total number of the funded interns is incomplete at this stage.

A brief survey on the funded LIS programs reveals that the federal funds have helped these programs address critical issues facing minority student recruitment.<sup>18</sup> These programs can be characterized as follows:

1. Financial support: Funding of more than \$34 million as shown in Table 5 from the federal agency was provided to the LIS programs for aggressively recruiting under-represented ethnic minority students. The scale of financial support is unprecedented in library profession.
2. Curriculum: The funded programs offer courses to train the recruited students to understand diverse user needs, diverse communities, and diverse individuals within the communities served by the library. This kind of curriculum prepares the students to meet the real challenge when they enter the employment stage.
3. Research projects and community outreach activities: Several funded programs provide minority students with the opportunity to conduct research projects that are related to diversity and to reaching out to the local communities. This type of professional exposure in the early stage enables the students to explore various career paths in library profession
4. Mentoring: Most of the funded programs match the minority students with experienced librarians during their LIS course work to assist their career development and prepare for employment upon graduation.
5. Internships: Funded programs offer students internship opportunities at the academic, public, school, or special libraries to help them gain practical experience during their LIS programs.
6. Leadership and professional development opportunities: A dozen of these programs received funds to help students attend national and local professional conferences and meetings which help them network and make professional connections with other librarians.
7. Collaboration: In several cases, the funded programs collaborate with libraries and library associations to expand recruitment efforts.
8. Transition to work: A couple of the funded programs have built in transition periods to assist minority students in employment upon graduation.

### **BRIEF CASE NARRATIVES**

In researching this article, the author was assisted by several individuals who generously offered information about their respective programs. They are Dr. Jana Bradley, Professor and Director, School of Information Resources and Library Science at the University of Arizona; Professor Toni Carbo, Dean of the School of Information Sciences and Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburg; Professor Irene Owens, Dean of School of Library and Information Sciences at North Carolina Central University; and Mr. Charlie Greenberg, Project Director at Yale Medical Library. Their narratives offer insightful observations, experience, and comments on the IMLS funded programs which they direct and manage.

***Knowledge River (KR) Program***

The KR program was founded within the School of Information Resources and Library Science at the University of Arizona in 2001 by Ms. Patricia Tarin who was the director of the program from 2001-2007. The program focuses on librarianship from Hispanic and Native American's perspectives. It provides scholarships to students with the combination of interest, expertise, knowledge, language abilities, and commitments to provide services for multi-cultural communities. The program weaves multi-cultural perspectives throughout its curriculum. For example, every student must take at least one class that centers on library and information issues from multi-cultural perspectives. In the initial class in 2002, the program recruited seven Native Americans and 17 Hispanics from all over United States. The students met all academic requirements of the LIS program.<sup>19</sup> Each year, between 15 and 20 Hispanic, Native American or other ethnic minorities graduated from the program. In 2005, the program received \$990,174 from the IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program. The federal funding has enabled the program to accept more students. Subsequently, 48 Native American and Hispanic students were recruited into the master degree program in 2006 as a part of the KR initiative. The grant money has been very influential in making the KR program successful.<sup>20</sup>

The KR program graduates have become very much in demand and have been employed in libraries across U.S. The program is very proud of its outstanding graduates. For instance, Mr. Mark A. Puente, a 2004 graduate, was recently appointed by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) as Director of Diversity Programs.<sup>21</sup> In that capacity, Mr. Puente will provide leadership for a range of initiatives to recruit people from under-represented racial and ethnic groups into careers in research libraries and prepare and advance minority librarians into leadership positions in ARL libraries.

***The Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program***

At the University of Pittsburgh, the library and information science (LIS) program in partnership with ALA created a Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program. The program was designed to recruit and provide full tuition support and stipends to 12 full-time doctoral students for four years of study. The fellows entered the program in fall 2007 and 2008. The program was funded by IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program in 2005 with \$999,771. The fellowship builds on the success of the ALA Spectrum scholarship program.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the University of Pittsburgh, nine LIS programs at other universities in U.S. participated in the effort. The fellowship program's emphasis is on leadership. The six fellows who started in the fall of 2007 are continuing to be heavily involved in research activities through their course work, especially doctoral seminars which require extensive research and writing. According to Dr.

Toni Carbo, all six fellows have already demonstrated leadership initiative and have been mentored by their advisors to build their leadership skills.<sup>23</sup>

The fellows have become key promoters and visibility raisers to help recruit a diverse student body. For example, several fellows have worked closely with senior staff responsible for recruitment to develop detailed plans to recruit at conferences and meetings targeted to under-represented groups. They have also been actively involved with identifying individuals from minority groups to speak at their schools and have met with alumni from these groups to identify ways that they can develop partnerships among students, alumni, and staff for the most effective recruitment and retention of master's and doctoral students, Dr. Carbo states.

#### ***Library as Place: North Carolina Central University Diversity Scholars***

In 2006, the School of Library and Information Science at the North Carolina Central University received \$439,688 from the IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program. The funding enabled the school to partner with public and school library systems from five counties in central North Carolina to recruit 20 minority students to earn master's degrees in library and information science. The financial support allows the students to conduct research projects on the themes related to public and school libraries while earning their degrees. Students are expected to return to their libraries of origin or to public and school library systems in North Carolina upon graduation.

Based on the successful experience and built on the first funded program, in 2008 the program was awarded \$839,073 from the same federal funding agency to provide scholarships to an additional 20 minority students. This extended, research-oriented master's program focused on studying the theme of library as place and the issues relating to diversity in librarianship. The partnering libraries provide students with work experiences, mentors, and opportunities for greater interaction between the academy and practice in their research projects.<sup>24</sup>

The outcomes of this research-centered program were quite impressive and multi-faceted, according to Professor Owens. The students conduct research projects that are useful to the profession; they apply what they have learned about diversity within the context of library as place into their careers; they aspire to become leaders in the profession; they gain from their travel and training experiences; they become interested and committed to pursuing Ph.D. programs in their future careers; and they have become recruiters on their own for the LIS programs at the university.<sup>25</sup>

#### ***Academic and Cultural Enrichment Scholars' Program***

The Department of Library and Information Studies (LIS) and the University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), along with partners from the ten academic libraries in North Carolina, received \$862,014 from IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program in 2008, to create an Aca-

demic and Cultural Enrichment (ACE) Scholars Program. The program is now recruiting 12 ethnic minority students interested in working in academic libraries into the LIS program at the university.

UNCG opened its door in 1892, as a direct result of a crusade by Mr. Charles Duncan McIver, then President of the institution, who believed in women's education. For many years it was the only institution of higher education in North Carolina that women could attend. Becoming a co-educational institution in 1964, UNCG has continued striving for diversity recruitment and retention of its student body. In 2008, the percentage of UNCG's ethnic minority students reached 24%, making it the most diverse historically white campus among the University of North Carolina System and with the highest rate of retention and graduation of the ethnic minority students.<sup>26</sup> The enrollment of the minority student body at UNCG also reflects the percentage of the ethnic minority populations in the geographic area that the university serves. However, the number of ethnic minority students enrolled in the Department of Library and Information Studies at UNCG has lagged, and is much lower than that of the university. As shown in Table 6, less than 10% of ethnic minority students, i.e., African Americans, American Indians, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics, were enrolled in the LIS program, based on the data of 2003-2008.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 6:** The UNCG LIS Department enrollment by ethnicity, fall 2003 – fall 2008

	White	African Americans	American Indians	Asian/Pac Isl	Hispanic	Unknown	Total
Fall 2003	120	3	0	5	0	8	136
Fall 2004	119	3	0	3	1	4	130
Fall 2005	210	10	0	2	3	13	238
Fall 2006	206	9	0	4	2	13	234
Fall 2007	201	14	0	5	1	13	234
Fall 2008	189	13	0	4	2	12	220

**Source:** UNCG Fact Book, 2003-2008

With funding from the federal program, 12 ethnic minority students will be recruited into the LIS program at UNCG in fall 2009. The program will provide the minority students with financial aid for tuition, stipends, travel to conferences, internship opportunities at the participating libraries; pair them with experienced librarians for mentoring; and offer them cultural enrichment activities during their two-year LIS program.

Due to much media attention from the local and the region to this federally funded program, the LIS program is receiving a larger pool of minority applications than before, which enables the program to select students receiving the scholarships on a very competitive basis. Because this is a partnership project with

a LIS program and ten academic libraries, a Steering Committee was established to assist in carrying out the project plans. Additionally, three subcommittees, i.e., Recruitment, Internship, and Mentoring, are also formed within the Steering Committee to take advantage of talents and energy from all the participating libraries.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Career in Health Information, Librarianship, and Informatics (CHILI)***

In 2005, the William H. Welch Medical Library at the Johns Hopkins University received \$639,746 from the IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program to increase the number of under-represented minorities in the health information professions. With the partnership from medical libraries at seven universities, the program, Career in Health Information, Librarianship, and Informatics (CHILI), introduced high school students from under-represented minority groups to a health science library career, with a 30-hour after school internship program at the participating libraries. Some of the program activities included: students interviewed library staff to discover their educational background, occupational activities, and career goals; shadowed library staff in their daily library work; received database training from the librarians; attended library classes conducted by librarians; assisted librarians at the reference desk; interacted with minority professionals from a wide spectrum of science and health profession on each campus, etc. The wide range of activities gave the participating high school students maximum career exposure to the library profession. The students also received compensation for participation. Comments from students are very telling. For instance, one student wrote, "I did not realize that being a librarian was more than sorting books. It is kind of exciting actually. I would never have guessed it." Another student also reflected, "Learning that (library work) is not as boring as it seems."<sup>29</sup>

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program is the largest federal funding source that has helped aggressively recruit librarians to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century library and information services in many diverse communities in U.S. The funded LIS programs across the U.S. are well designed to address the critical issues and remove roadblocks through financial support, outreach efforts for recruitment, diverse LIS curriculum, mentoring, internships, and research, career and leadership development opportunities. The benefits and influences of this federal funding effort are far-reaching. The program directors cited in this article have attributed the success of their respective programs to the available funding from federal program which has helped them sustain their existing programs and support their new programs that otherwise would not be possible.



Based on the positive outcomes and feedback from the cited programs, it is recommended that a full scale of survey to funded LIS programs focusing on recruiting ethnic minority students be conducted to learn the best practices and models for program design, curriculum development, recruitment strategies, graduation rate, and employment. Such efforts will ultimately increase the number of ethnic minority librarians in library profession.

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## MENTORING PROGRAMS IN U.S. ACADEMIC LIBRARIES – A LITERATURE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this review is to pull together selected research reports that examine how academic librarians approach mentoring and how they perceive the role and function of mentoring programs for academic librarians in the United States. The focus of the review is to identify the scope and types of mentoring programs that exist within U.S. academic libraries.*

### INTRODUCTION: MENTORING VERSUS APPRENTICESHIP

Mentoring relationships can play a vital role in professional development. Researchers who study these relationship as aspects of learning grapple with the meaning of mentorship. The sense of the word can be traced as far back as the classic period of Odysseus. In the modern period attempts have been made to elaborate the concept in order to give it greater theoretical and empirical purchase. In her 1985 book, for example, Kram notes a distinction between mentoring for career advancement (instrumental support) and mentoring for personal growth (emotional support).<sup>1 (p22-46)</sup> While this definition captures the modern sense of mentoring, the underlying concept is still rooted in a fundamental view of what constitutes human socialization. No society (or institution) can exist without older and more experienced members passing on acquired wisdom to new members. In most traditional societies this was done informally in father/son and mother/daughter relationships, with the addition of apprenticeship relations with non-family members. With the advent of the modern industrialized state, learning acquired a more hierarchical and formal nature (e.g., the modern classroom). The apprenticeship model gradually receded in importance except within academia where it continues in the relationship between professors and graduate students.

The importance of studying mentoring in academic libraries, therefore, lies in the peculiar intersection in this environment of the older, academic apprenticeship pattern and the modern bureaucratic mode of interaction.

In recent years researchers who study mentoring relationships, especially in the work place, depend on the theoretical framework established in Kathy Kram's 1985 *Mentoring at Work*.<sup>1</sup> This shows how mentoring as a focus for research has been transformed into a relatively new area of inquiry. Among studies of work place mentoring that followed the publication of Kram's book, Crosby has usefully shown how most utilized quantitative methodologies to analyze people in corporate settings.<sup>2</sup> (p8) Our initial investigation indicates that there is a paucity of quantitative research that explores mentoring in academia and especially within academic libraries. Moreover, many academic librarians who report on the institutional development of mentoring programs utilize largely descriptive and qualitative methods.

The purpose of this review, therefore, is to pull together selected research reports that examine how academic librarians approach mentoring and how they perceive the role and function of mentoring programs for academic librarians in the United States. The focus of this review is to identify the scope and types of mentoring programs that exist within these libraries.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW**

A rich and extensive corpus of research on mentoring exists in the fields of organizational behavior, developmental relationships, management and human resources, and higher education. Although a complete inventory of this literature is beyond the scope of this review, it is clear that the library and information profession can benefit from a close examination of selected mentoring programs in other fields. A considerable amount of research on mentoring programs also exists on school librarianship, the unique role that librarians play in mentoring students to become better learners in a library environment, mentoring for the purposes of recruitment (especially of non-MLIS students who wish to enter the academic library profession), mentoring for the purpose of developing leadership for administrative roles and, finally, mentoring of women and minority groups. However, unless such studies cast light on the development of mentoring programs for academic libraries, they have been excluded from this review.

### **GENERAL LITERATURE**

Golian and Galbraith's 1996 essay provides a comprehensive review of issues related to effective mentoring for the library profession in general. In addition to its extensive treatment of mentoring issues in the library profession, the authors make an important contribution by synthesizing the diverse and often elusive definitions

of mentoring in different fields. After examining mentoring as it is defined in higher education, in management/organizational behavior, in psychology, and library science fields, the authors conclude that no operational definition of mentoring currently exists within library science.<sup>3 (p99)</sup> One definition used in the higher education field defines mentoring as a form of professional socialization ...a definition, we believe, that should be more carefully examined and then applied in studies of academic librarians' mentoring programs.

Culpepper also presents an extensive literature review of mentoring in the library profession focusing on the role of mentoring in the career advancement of academic librarians.<sup>4</sup> However, the research that the author identifies in this review belongs within the general area of how mentoring processes can be initiated and implemented, who can be mentees, what mentoring means for ethnic minorities and women, and who can be a mentor. Although the author asserts that research on the mentoring of academic librarians reveals that professional librarians in mentoring relationships seek career guidance for a variety of reasons, this appears to be anecdotal, containing self-assessments by the participants rather than validation based on objective analysis.

Faye Crosby's literature review examines mentoring questions in the context of developmental relations in the multicultural milieu of the 1990s. As one of the significant milestones of mentoring research, Crosby refers to the 1978 work of Levinson and his colleagues, "Seasons of Man's Life," in which the authors explore the importance of mentors in the career development of white middle-class men.<sup>2 (p3)</sup> However, Crosby suggests that systematic academic inquiry of mentoring relationships in more diverse workplaces only began with the publication of Kathy Kram's articles and, notably, her book, *Mentoring at Work*, which legitimized the study of the entire field of mentoring relationships.<sup>2 (p7)</sup> In her review, Crosby also presents a useful "meta-list" of research on mentoring in order to identify how researchers from 1988 to 1996 operationalized the definition of mentoring.<sup>2 (p12)</sup> Her conclusion was that most of the operational definitions used in these studies conflated the instrumental (career advancement) and emotional (psychosocial) aspects of developmental relationships.<sup>2 (p11)</sup> This finding comports with Delong's notion that mentoring isn't just about promotion but is much more about developing one's potential as a professional and as a human being.<sup>5</sup>

In one of the more recent works on mentoring in academic libraries, Murphy encourages academic librarians to re-conceptualize mentoring practices as they have evolved from a traditional, hierarchical and, some even claim, exploitative dyadic pairing of junior/senior librarians to a peer mentoring model.<sup>6</sup> Such a transition can contribute to a learning culture that supports change in a dynamic library environment. The author cites studies that explore the transformation of mentoring in new work environments where the role and expertise of the senior mentor blurs with that of junior colleagues whose expertise may lie in different areas. This new environment encourages multiple developmental relationships. The study, on the whole, is a descriptive one that contains examples of mentoring pro-

grams that were established in selected U.S. academic libraries. Two examples that were cited are the three-level mentoring program at the University of Delaware Libraries and the Colorado State University Libraries' peer mentoring groups.

In a brief article, Struthers presents the results from a survey of 165 female professors who had been mentored at some point during their academic careers.<sup>7</sup> The survey was designed to determine whether having a male or a female faculty mentor affected the rate of career advancement. The study found that it was the organizational rank of the mentor (e.g., full professor versus assistant professor) rather than the mentor's gender that had the most significant effect on advancing career goals. The author repudiates the common perception that male mentors are better equipped to use power to enhance career objectives while female mentors are better at augmenting psychosocial support.

In separate research, Maack and Passet surveyed over 150 women faculty of all ages in the Library and Information Science (LIS) field, using face-to-face interviews, focus groups and telephone interviews. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which academic women have access either to role models or mentors. One of the major conclusions was that women faculty in the LIS field value long distance mentoring relationships, usually with an individual at the university where the respondent earned her highest degree. They saw a need for more support on the local level.<sup>8 (p148)</sup>

## ACADEMIC ACCULTURATION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

One of the key issues in developing mentoring programs in academic libraries is facilitating the acculturation process that is required for academic librarians to achieve promotion and tenure. The preparation of teaching faculty to join the academic community requires lengthy graduate school training, whereas many consider library school education as inadequate or even irrelevant to successful academic citizenship.<sup>9 (p383), 10 (p468)</sup>

It appears that academic librarians who are engaged in developing mentoring programs tend to overlook the critical importance of how academic librarians are acculturated into the larger faculty culture. For example, the 1999 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) survey of mentoring programs in its member libraries found that only a little over half of the survey respondents (57%) stated that learning more about campus culture was a stated goal of the mentoring program.<sup>11 (p5)</sup>

There are two articles that explore the critical importance of socialization issues for academic librarians. Incorporation of ideas expressed in these two articles may benefit those who contemplate the design of academic library mentoring programs. First, Mitchell and Morton have published an excellent article that captures critical aspects of academic librarians' socialization by comparing and contrasting the process for librarians versus that for the professorate.<sup>9</sup> The authors emphasize the critical role that senior librarians play in mentoring junior librarians. Second,

Jean Major interviewed 18 mature (i.e. experienced) librarians who were selected from publicly supported university libraries; her findings suggest that academic librarians achieve collegiality more often through their service on campus governance bodies rather than through common research activities. Her findings also suggest the importance of early mentoring on how to be a faculty member.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, we find that to date the majority of research on mentoring for academic librarians largely addresses either the procedural concerns involved with planning and instituting mentoring programs or the immediate needs of developing research competence and uncovering publishing opportunities for new tenure track librarians. A more comprehensive goal of the mentoring programs should consider how to assimilate new academic librarians within the larger campus faculty culture.

## MENTORING IN U.S. ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

### *Traditional formal mentoring*

In 1999 there was sufficient interest in mentoring programs in U.S. academic libraries that the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) issued its SPEC Kit 239 on mentoring programs in ARL libraries. This survey showed that only 26% (21 libraries out of 122 ARL libraries that were surveyed) reported having mentoring programs for professional librarians.<sup>11 (p4)</sup>

Two of the more widely cited studies on academic library mentoring programs are the case studies of the University of Delaware's three-tiered mentoring program<sup>12</sup> and the Louisiana State University Libraries (LSU) formal mentoring program.<sup>13</sup> These two studies represent different approaches and processes in the design and development of sustainable mentoring programs in academic libraries. Earlier, Jesudason reported on the "New Colleague (Mentoring) Program" that was implemented in 1993 at the University of Wisconsin Madison General Library. In this program the "New Colleague Program Committee" pairs a senior volunteer librarian with a new junior colleague.<sup>14</sup>

Another comprehensive report is a case study of the mentoring program at the University of Kansas Libraries that was largely modeled after LSU's formal mentoring program. In this study, the authors examine a mentoring program that initially began as a way to help train tenure track librarians but evolved into all-inclusive mentoring for all staff.<sup>15</sup> In another recent case study Farmer and her colleagues report on the revitalization of a twenty-year old formal mentoring program at the Kansas State University libraries that evolved from mandatory participation to more flexible voluntary involvement. Using a Professional Development Committee as the main mechanism for fostering a new approach, this mentoring program changed its focus from "attaining tenure" to the development of individuals in all aspects of their professional and personal lives. These authors also made a



significant contribution by compiling an extensive bibliography on mentoring issues that are relevant for academic libraries.<sup>16</sup>

Crump and her colleagues report on the University of Florida mentoring program that was instituted in 2004.<sup>17</sup> This program focuses on the mentoring of tenure track librarians up to the midterm review (a third year review) as part of junior faculty mentoring. The mentoring program starts the first year of employment and lasts through the completion of the midterm review at the end of the third year when a promotion and tenure committee evaluates whether the candidate has made satisfactory progress toward tenure and promotion. Additionally, the authors examined the websites of the libraries of the Association of American Universities institutions with specific attention to midterm reviews and mentoring. Additionally, they conducted an informal survey via various electronic discussion lists regarding a third-year review prior to tenure and mentoring programs that support the review process. The results are included in an appendix to their article. Their survey partially updates the 1999 Association of Research Libraries SPEC Kit survey on mentoring in academic libraries with an emphasis on midterm reviews prior to a tenure decision.

Lee describes the critical role that the Research Committee plays at the Mississippi State University Library that, in addition to serving as an information clearing house for matters that relate to research, provides individual mentoring beginning with a web page that highlights the publications of library faculty.<sup>18</sup> The Committee also organized programs that will enhance research skills for both tenured and non-tenured faculty members.

Slattery and Walker report on a formal mentoring program established at a medium size academic library. The program focused on “organization and campus culture [that] help[s] acculturate the new librarian to things academic beyond the immediate aspects of librarianship.”<sup>19 (p2)</sup> The value of this study lies in its effort to acculturate new academic librarians to a larger faculty/campus culture beyond the library environment.

In many of these case studies librarians debated whether the immediate supervisor or the department head of the protégé should also serve as a mentor. The studies recommended that, in general, immediate supervisors or department heads should not serve as mentors under the assumption that non-supervisors would create a less threatening learning environment. Unfortunately, we were not able to locate any research that actually tested the validity of assumptions, such as this one, that are frequently held by the designers of academic library mentoring programs.

### ***Peer mentoring***

Against the background of long established traditional dyadic (senior/junior pairing) mentoring relationships, the emerging concept of peer mentoring has increasingly gained acceptance as a viable alternative, or supplement, to the traditional formal dyadic mentoring model. Peer mentoring is especially encouraged and

popular in academia where each faculty member or librarian has his/her own subject or disciplinary expertise. Some researchers suggest that peer mentoring also encourages learning by mentors, as well as by protégés, thereby promoting an overall organizational learning culture. As a consequence, some argue that peer mentoring can serve as a useful tool for understanding and advancing learning within organizations and helping to promote transformational leadership.<sup>20</sup> Peer mentoring groups are normally self-organized, composed of untenured faculty members who address issues that concern collaborative research agendas and the sharing and exchange of information, both professional and personal.

Angelique and her colleagues present a model of classic peer-mentoring among non-tenured faculty.<sup>21</sup> The authors characterize the traditional mentoring relationship as one that involves a one-to-one, unidirectional, asymmetrical relationship in which a junior and less experienced individual is paired with an experienced person for the purpose of receiving guidance and support. Researchers contrast this traditional relationship, where the existing values of an organization are reinforced, with peer mentoring which has emerged as more appropriate in academic environments. One example of the newer model is the New Scholars Network, a support group among non-tenured faculty members at the Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg campus. The authors report that the members of the Network place great emphasis on professional development. Examples are the development of collaborative interdisciplinary research agendas, assistance and editorial advice on grant proposals, and the sharing/exchange of information on conferences, teaching, syllabi development, and community connections.<sup>21 (p203)</sup> This is a useful study, especially for those interested in forming a peer mentoring group.

Keyse and her colleagues report on the mentoring of untenured librarians at the Oakland University Library.<sup>22</sup> This model is not a totally self-organized peer mentoring group since the formation of the Untenured Librarian's Club was "spear-headed" by an administrator who participates in their informal monthly meetings. The value of this report is a short checklist of how to be a successful leader of an informal mentorship program. Senior librarians, who have not had a chance to attend workshops or be trained in becoming an effective mentor, will benefit from this short list of the attributes of a successful informal mentor. The list was developed from the perspective of untenured librarians and can be supplemented by the experience of informal mentors themselves.

At Colorado State University Libraries, Level and Mach report a mentoring program where the peer support group supplements the formal mentoring program.<sup>23</sup> Nicknamed The Junior Club, this peer support group was created by tenure track librarians for the benefit of other tenure track faculty. The members of the Club created an e-mail list that serves as a main communication tool and a forum for sharing research project information and information about upcoming conferences, etc. The e-mail list is supplemented with a web page on professional resources that can be accessed by all library faculties.

The case studies reported in this section suggest that academic librarians develop mentoring programs not only to advance individual career objectives but also to encourage “a culture of engagement” and “a culture of mentoring,” and to create a learning organization. For example, Mavrinac argues in her essay that peer mentoring can serve as a values-based learning process that promotes the democratic nature of a learning culture.<sup>20 (p392)</sup>

While peer mentoring is encouraged as a way to establish an initial mentoring relationship within peer groups, especially among junior librarians, the findings from Major’s study indicate that library directors can play an important role in encouraging librarians to participate in campus governance.<sup>10 (p468)</sup> Doing so can enhance the visibility of librarians and increase the relevance of mentoring as a tool for integrating librarians into the general life of the institution.

## **E-MENTORING**

Despite the advances in telecommunication technology and the ubiquitous presence of the Internet, researchers note that “electronic mentoring is a ‘relatively new and under-researched field’.”<sup>24 (p372)</sup> Also called cyber mentoring, virtual mentoring, and online mentoring, Hamilton and Scandura suggest that e-mentoring “refers to the process of using electronic means as the primary channel of communication between mentors and protégés.”<sup>25 (p388)</sup> Hilbun and Akin define e-mentoring as the “merger of [traditional] mentoring with electronic communications to develop and sustain mentoring relationships.”<sup>26 (p1)</sup> With the advent of globalization and online teaching, the greatest advantage of e-mentoring is its ability to overcome geographical barriers. In their extensively researched article, Hamilton and Scandura explore the concept of e-mentoring and the role that e-mentoring plays in extending the traditional mentoring relationship (referred to in this article as t-mentoring).<sup>25</sup>

Hilbun and Akin view electronic mentoring as a natural offshoot of the impact of electronic communication technology on teaching and learning.<sup>26</sup> They also suggest that because librarians work within an electronic environment, e-mentoring seems ideally suited for transferring knowledge and experience throughout the library field, either within the same library system or across systems. E-mentoring is particularly useful in large library systems that allow partnering relationships to span branches, departments, or even towns. Finally, the authors identify helpful elements that will lead to successful e-mentoring. These include the structure of mentoring programs, mentoring objectives, administrative support, technical support, communication tools, training and support for the participants, and finally, assessment. While the case studies reported in this article assessed a school media environment, the article presents the basic issues necessary for a successful e-mentoring program in any library environment, including academic libraries.

Headlam-Wells and her colleagues reported on the design and management of an e-mentoring system that included the design of an automated matching system. This scheme was developed in the UK in order to help develop women's career potential. One of the useful findings of this study was that the most widely adopted approach was a blended one, "where e-mail and telephone contact were included."<sup>24</sup> (p383)

For academic librarians the earliest experiment in electronic mentoring was conducted in the early 1990s by the Association of College and Research Libraries' Research Committee in order to encourage research by academic librarians. Echavarría and her colleagues reported on this experiment whose aim was to extend the traditional boundaries of mentoring activities to a network environment that would utilize an electronic list as a communication tool.<sup>27</sup> The participants, who were geographically dispersed, were organized into six broad subject groups according to their research interests. Among these, only the subject group that was engaged in research on understanding the user led to a satisfactory mentoring relationship. Participants cited poor matches between mentors and protégés, and the lack of face-to-face contacts as some of the reasons for a less than satisfactory mentoring experience. This approach fits within Hamilton and Scandura's description of a technology and team mentoring model.<sup>25</sup> (p 398)

One of the results of successful traditional and peer mentoring programs in academic libraries has been the creation of web sites that contain information, including institutional documents, related to mentoring programs. Often the main purpose of such websites is to share professional resource information that can be accessed by all library faculty members. Many academic libraries also post the procedural documents related to their mentoring programs on their websites. In her descriptions of successful mentoring programs within the academy, Osif, by mining just such websites, presents a snapshot of successful mentoring programs in eight academic libraries.<sup>28</sup> Although, as noted earlier, electronic lists and websites were constructed for the purposes of mentoring in many academic libraries, it appears that e-mentoring has not, to date, been the dominant force driving mentoring in academic libraries. Indeed, as was the case reported by Farmer,<sup>16</sup> academic librarians appear to invest their time and effort in revitalizing the traditional model of mentoring relationships.

## CONCLUSION

This brief review of literature covering research on mentoring programs in U.S. academic libraries suggests that much of this work fits within the case study genre. Unlike research on mentoring programs in management and other fields, there are no large-scale quantitative studies designed to test the effectiveness of mentoring programs either of librarians in general or of academic librarians in particular. Many case studies that report on mentoring programs in academic libraries contain

a section on assessment at the end of the pilot project – but these tend to be anecdotal and self-referential in nature.

The basic ingredient of mentoring involves a transfer of knowledge through sharing experiences, whether the mentoring adheres to the traditional junior/senior dyadic format or to the more recent approach of peer mentoring. However, little, if any research on academic library mentoring addresses the importance of the newly emerging field of knowledge management (KM). If the stated goal of peer mentoring, for example, is to share information and exchange ideas among equals, KM concepts such as “Communities of Practice” can be incorporated into the development of an effective mentoring program. Doing this would result in a hybrid model of formal/informal/peer mentoring or group mentoring. While discussing KM tools and techniques for libraries, Nelson suggests that mentoring is simply a people-centered KM technique.<sup>29 (p135)</sup> Rejecting the traditional idea of mentoring as a lifelong commitment, Nelson cites Steve Trautman’s notion that the knowledge of the mentor can be segmented such that information can be acquired in bundles that allow the apprentice to assimilate new information better and faster on a task-specific basis.<sup>29 (p136)</sup> This approach to mentoring expands the idea of learning restricted to specific assignments and makes it potentially inclusive of librarians at all levels.

Although there is cross fertilization among academic library mentoring programs regarding issues of importance to librarians, one weakness noted in this review is the lack of additional cross fertilization from other fields and disciplines. Mentoring in academic libraries in general needs to address larger issues of acculturation in the context of the wider university faculty culture. Such an approach can encourage tenure track librarians to integrate with the research and teaching faculty, thus filling in a lacunae that many have seen as a shortcoming in the training of academic librarians at library schools. A commitment to scholarship and instruction is one of the quintessential requirements for membership in a faculty. It appears that the majority of academic library mentoring programs have a limited focus on professional competence rather than nurturing librarians to appreciate and participate in the broader culture of scholarship and research. Acquiring such an appreciation would clearly have an impact, passively or pro-actively, on the careers of librarians in their post-tenure period.

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## **ROLES OF COACHING AND MENTORING IN ATTRACTING RECRUITS AND SOCIALIZING ENTRANTS TO THE PROFESSION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*As the library and information profession continues to broaden in scope and the workforce expands, competent and prepared professionals are critical to the success of the profession and users' abilities to receive the services that they need. Library and information science education provides a good foundation for lifelong learning as a practitioner by introducing the basic theories, values, and approaches of the profession. Ongoing professional learning is required to build on that foundation in order that professionals can develop the depth of knowledge required over time and the new knowledge and skills required as information and thus the profession changes. Coaching and mentoring new and prospective professionals provides an opportunity for both new and seasoned professionals to develop and refine the necessary skills to be successful in the diverse and rapidly evolving library and information profession.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the library and information science (LIS) profession develops and changes, ongoing professional learning and pre-professional education must also evolve to meet the developing and changing needs. Currently, students as well as incoming and mid-career professionals need to develop technology, teaching, advanced specialization, and a variety of non-traditional library and information skills both to advance the profession and to grow themselves as individuals.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem that the numbers of people retiring over the next ten years is accelerating so the recruitment of new professionals is particularly important. The issue of recruitment is a large and complex challenge as the profession is not always recognized as a profession per se much less one requiring graduate level education credentials. Moreover, the LIS profession is unique in the United States in that there are no substantial pre-professional programs at the undergraduate level as compared with the pre-law and pre-med programs that are common in colleges and universities. Exemplifying this challenge is the finding "overall students' perceptions of the social status of the library and record professions seem



fairly low.”<sup>2</sup> Lack of awareness of the profession and a perception that it is a low status profession hinder recruitment efforts. In their 1995 study of the perception of LIS professionals in both a law firm and a medical library, Fleck and Bawden noted that “the overall impression is that LIS staff are highly thought of by the respondents, but perhaps stereotyped as a particular type of person who, although effective, intelligent and valuable to their organization, is not, for the most part, ambitious, nor obviously pro-active or dynamic, but there to help others with their needs.”<sup>3</sup> At the point at which students are considering a profession, perceptions, such as those recorded by Fleck and Bawden, provide little room students to identify with this professional characterization.

Retirement patterns and recruitment challenges provide evidence of the importance of supporting coaching and mentoring in the library and information science profession. In considering the development of the profession, mid-career professionals whose skills and acquired knowledge are beneficial for new professionals and whose leadership potential can be nurtured should also be recognized as a key component in these coaching and mentoring relationships.

### WHAT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ARE NEEDED?

As the profession changes, the abilities, skills, and knowledge needed by library and information professionals are also evolving. Understanding what is needed is the basis for identifying coaching and mentoring relationships that support professional success and achievement. Various professional associations and scholars have provided statements that can serve as useful touchstones for clarifying what skills and knowledge professionals need.

In August of 2008, the American Library Association (ALA) released the final version of the *Core Competences of Librarianship*.<sup>4</sup> The competencies are organized into eight categories:

- Foundations of the Profession
- Information Resources
- Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information
- Technological Knowledge and Skills
- Reference and User Services, Research
- Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
- Administration and Management

Similarly, the Special Libraries Association (SLA) has articulated *Competencies for Information Professionals*,<sup>5</sup> the Medical Library Association has its *Competencies for Lifelong Learning and Professional Success*,<sup>6</sup> the Association for Library Service to Children as identified the *Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries*,<sup>7</sup> and the Music Library Association has the statement *Core Competencies and Music Librarians*.<sup>8</sup> Sub-groups of the Association of Col-

lege and Research Libraries also have competency statements, for example, *Competencies for Special Collections Professionals*<sup>9</sup> and *Standards for Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators*.<sup>10</sup> The Society of American Archivists has both a *Code of Ethics* and *Statement on Strategic Priorities* which, to a certain extent, guide the professional development of its members.

Related are standards for the education of library and information science professionals. Among these are ALA's *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies*,<sup>11</sup> IFLA's *Guidelines for Professional Library/Information Educational Programs*<sup>12</sup> and ALISE's *Information Ethics in Education*.<sup>13</sup>

Though the particular specialities within the library and information profession differ in their specific priorities and desired skills, there are numerous commonalities, which can be usefully considered through the framework of competencies identified in "CI Soft Skill Competencies" by Neil Simon: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social/organizational.<sup>14</sup>

Intrapersonal competencies are those that "relate to a person's ability to recognize one's own unique way of perceiving and comprehending the world."<sup>14</sup> Does the individual have desire to continue to learn? Can they think independently and adhere to a set of ethical values? ALA *Core Competences of Librarianship*<sup>4</sup> addresses this in various competency categories including Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning which states "the necessity of continuing professional development of practitioners in libraries and other information agencies." The Foundations of the Profession category also address this area by stating "the ethics, values, and foundational principles of the library and information profession" as a core knowledge competency.

Interpersonal competencies, in comparison to the reflective approach of intrapersonal skills, "focus on our ability to connect with one another. These include our ability to effectively communicate, understand, and empathize with another's position, and to build relationships."<sup>14</sup> Such skills determine our ability to create an ambience where individuals work together to create "an environment of mutual respect and trust" and where everyone "respects and values diversity" as articulated in the SLA *Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Likewise, the Society of American Archivists states in its *Code of Ethics* that "archivists cooperate, collaborate, and respect each institution and its mission and collecting policy. Respect and cooperation form the basis of all professional relationships with colleagues and users."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, social/organizational competencies relate to the "ability to function and contribute within the social structures of an organization."<sup>14</sup> It is these skills which most determine both the day-to-day harmonies of an organization and its long term successes and are the competencies which are most emphasized across the standards in LIS. These competencies speak directly to the individual's ability to understand and function within the organization, its structure, politics, mission and values. The professional must be able to successfully communicate within these

structures, work in collaboration, adhere to organizational policies and standards and take appropriate risks and responsibilities. It is when the professional collective is able to demonstrate these competencies that an organization can effectively operate. As such, it is appropriate for standards such as ALA's core competencies to include "the techniques used to analyze complex problems and create appropriate solutions; effective communication techniques (verbal and written); concepts, issues, and methods related to the management of various collections; the principles involved in the organization and representation of recorded knowledge and information; the systems of cataloguing, metadata, indexing, and classification standards and methods used to organize recorded knowledge and information; techniques used to retrieve, evaluate, and synthesize information from diverse sources for use by individuals of all ages and groups; the methods used to interact successfully with individuals of all ages and groups to provide consultation, mediation, and guidance in their use of recorded knowledge and information; the fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods; and the principles of planning and budgeting in libraries and other information agencies" to name a few.

The professional competency statements and the framework provide by Simon's grouping of general competencies as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social/organization, are useful for understanding what skills, abilities and knowledge information professionals need to develop and become fluent in. While formal education, formal job training and professional development workshops and conferences provide valuable and relevant opportunities for initial professional training and continued professional growth, the supported structure of a mentoring and/or a coaching relationship can also provide individualized approaches to successfully fulfilling such competencies, particularly as needs change over time and through career pathways.

## **WHAT ARE COACHING AND MENTORING?**

Coaching and mentoring are two types of the larger category of professional training and development. Training and development encompasses a broad range of activities that also includes formal coursework, workshops, tutorials, manuals and documentation, and other kinds of learning experiences and activities.<sup>16</sup> *Coaching* and *mentoring* are often used synonymously with one another. They are similar in that both refer to relationships that are typically one-to-one and individually oriented. The benefactor is often conceived as the person who is being coached or mentored but the one who is coaching or mentoring typically benefits to some degree from the relationship as well. Though there are these similarities, it is useful to make a distinction between these two types of activities as well since there are some meaningful differences.

For the purposes of this discussion, coaching is understood as instructing, directing and/or training an individual in regards to a particular task, project or action to ensure needed knowledge and skills are developed for successful performance. Mentoring, in comparison, is conceived as a continuous and evolving and therefore somewhat ambiguous relationship developed for the purposes of personal and professional growth.

As with many attempts to define related terms, these abstract definitions create a juxtaposition whereas in lived experience coaching and mentoring are more likely experienced as a continuum or an iterative process with different levels of emphasis at different times. Similarly, coaching relationships may evolve into mentoring relationships, though not necessarily, and a mentoring relationship does not require first a coaching one. One may also be, for example, a mentor and mentee in different relationships at the same time.

What matters for this exploration of how coaching and mentoring impact the recruitment, education, and professional advancement of library and information science professionals is not making a harsh distinction but rather understanding these terms as representing concepts useful in exploring and understanding the potential impact of coaching and mentoring in the various developmental stages of becoming and succeeding in the profession.

### **HOW DO COACHING AND MENTORING CONTRIBUTE TO PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION?**

The process of internalizing the culture, values, beliefs, and norms of a profession and thereby becoming part of and identified with the profession is a process of socialization,<sup>17</sup> specifically professional socialization, and is related to work socialization, which encompasses processes and structures related to the workplace.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, there is relatively little in the library and information science literature to provide a model of this process for the library and information science profession though there are studies of what libraries do to assist in socialization, though primarily related to new hire orientation and workplace acculturation.<sup>19</sup>

Without a formal model, it is still possible to suggest general components of a socialization process: discovering and gaining awareness of the profession, exploring educational and career possibilities, developing professional identity, and committing to leadership and relationship development within the profession. This conceptual framework can serve as a set of lenses for exploring the roles of coaching and mentoring in the professional socialization process for library and information science. The framework is presented below in a series of tables that organize the examples according to the components of professional socialization that we have identified. Each component is explored through examples of current and past practices experienced or observed by the authors against the background of professional and general communication competencies discussed previously. Table 1

addresses discovering and gaining awareness of the profession, the process by which one investigates the opportunities of the profession, correlates their strengths and interests with professional competencies, and pursues information relating to the education and professional requirements. While this is more often than not the first step one takes to enter the profession, this is also undertaken by a mid-career librarian looking to either expand their professional horizons or take a new direction in their career.

**Table 1:** Discovering and Gaining Awareness

<b>Sharing Information</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a supervisor to an undergraduate student employee relationship, the supervisor provides constructive feedback to undergraduate student who has just completed a reference interview. Student is not currently directed to the LIS profession, but is being provided with professional LIS practice tips in regards to a particular transaction.	In a school media specialist to high school student(s) relationship, the school media specialist provides information regarding the LIS profession to students who volunteer in the library with or without prompting.
<b>Asking Questions</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a law librarian to lawyer relationship, the lawyer asks questions regarding research skills as they directly relate to the preparation of a particular case.	In a supervisor to an undergraduate student employee relationship, the student repeatedly takes advantage of the opportunity to ask probing questions of the supervisor in regards to the LIS profession. The supervisor answers the questions with encouragement.
<b>Observing Talent and Aptitude</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a supervisor to hourly employee relationship at a digital archive, supervisor acknowledges employee's adherence to and precise implementation of archival standards during a large scale digitization project.	In a director to reference librarian in a public library, the director discusses the natural leadership qualities they possess in regards to future management opportunities.

Table 2 addresses exploring educational and career possibilities and opportunities, the process by which one investigates the educational requirements both for the profession in general (e.g., master's degree in library and information science) and/or the additional competencies required for specific areas of the profession. In this stage of the continuum, prospective and current students and professionals in their mid-career may be found.

**Table 2:** Exploring Career Options

<b>Sharing Information</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a supervisor to page relationship at a public library, supervisor assists page with library school application. Supervisor discusses opportunities within the profession in order to help the page with focusing their application essay.	In an advisor to student relationship, advisor meets regularly with student, determines student's interests, continually shares and encourages student to take advantage of practical skill opportunities such as practicum and internships that would further develop their professional aspirations.
<b>Write Letters of Reference &amp; Recommendation</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In an library school faculty to a student relationship, faculty agrees and/or offers to write letters of reference and/or recommendation for jobs, scholarships, internships, awards, conference proposals, etc.	In a senior faculty librarian to a junior faculty librarian, colleagues use informal times of conversation to discuss successes and failures that can be used in the content for future letters of reference and/or recommendation and encourages and helps develop writing and communication skills with junior librarian to write effective reference and/or recommendation letters for others.
<b>Review Personal Statements &amp; Resumes</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a corporate librarian to intern relationship, librarian offers to review job application, resume and corresponding professional statements.	In a community college librarian to graduate student intern relationship, librarian and graduate student meet on a regular basis to discuss and analyse the practical work in relationship to professional goals. These parallels prove beneficial when writing and reviewing personal statements and resumes.

<b>Facilitate Job Shadowing &amp; Internships</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In an LIS faculty member to undergraduate student relationship, faculty calls on professional relationships for job shadowing opportunities for undergraduate student within the larger context of professional exploration.	In a public library director to library school students relationships, providing pre-professional and thought provoking opportunities for students to relate their coursework with practical opportunities.
<b>Provide Informational Interviews</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a city archivist to an interested student or professional relationship, city archivist takes time and provides opportunities for students and other professionals to have productive and formal dialogue regarding the archive profession.	In a public reference library to student relationship, advertising formalized informational interviews, forums for discussion with students. Librarian would also actively participate in network building with library schools and volunteer as a professional resource for local library school students.

Table 3 addresses developing a professional identity, the process by which one attains a sense of oneself as a professional and identifies oneself as a professional to others. This stage of the continuum may be revisited over the course of one's career as specializations change or responsibilities evolve.

**Table 3:** Developing Identity

<b>Encourage Professional Risk Taking</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a library director to new librarian relationship, the director explains the process for volunteering to chair a committee and offers ongoing advice on creating group agendas, project management, and managing committee member conflicts.	In a professional association leader to new member relationship, regularly discussing association policies, procedures and culture and opportunities for becoming involved in new projects and initiatives.
<b>Demonstrate Faith</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a head of technical services to cataloguing staff member relationship, the head reviews a complex procedure	In a librarian to librarian relationship, where they are colleagues and not in a reporting line, mentor librarian is con-

with the staff member and then makes public that questions about the procedure and those needing assistance should ask the staff member. Head also tells staff member not to refer questions where the answer is unclear but instead meets privately to review issues and then has staff member communicate to others.	scious of recognizing mentee librarian accomplishments, encourages additional risk-taking, and listening to concerns in order to shore up mentee confidence.
<b>Offer to Partner and Collaborate</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a librarian to practicum graduate student relationship, librarian suggests proposing a poster session to a national conference about a project the student is working on. When the student expresses anxiety about presenting by himself, the librarian offers to be the second author on the proposal and work with the graduate student on preparing the poster.	In a head of public services to teen services librarian relationship, the head observes the desire to start a teen gaming program and offers to work with the librarian on staffing the events, securing permissions, and articulating the alignment of the gaming program with the library's strategic plan.
<b>Challenge</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a library technology manager to new hire relationship, the manager assigns the new hire to investigate unfamiliar technologies and provide a recommendation to the library director but also provides templates for technology evaluations and a draft outline for the recommendation report.	In a library school advisor to advisee relationship, the advisor identifies an area of weakness for the advisee and recommends that the advisee do an independent study with the advisor in order to fill in the gaps for the advisee.
<b>Celebrate Successes</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a rare book library head to graduate student intern relationship, the head invites the student to lunch after the launch of a new digital collections website.	In a library unit head to new librarian relationship, the head posts to the institution listserv and ensures the preparation of press releases about an award received by the librarian identifying her as a library leader to watch.



<b>Reflective Conversations</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In an academic librarian to undergraduate student workers relationships, the librarian inquires as to the students' passions and interests and as appropriate shares information about librarianship career paths.	In an academic librarian to undergraduate student worker relationship, when the student has identified librarianship as her intended career, the librarian regularly shares how he is approaching professional tasks and responsibilities, the values and ethics involved, and the decisions that are reached.

Table 4 addresses committing to leadership and relationship development in the profession, the process in which one begins to develop a sense of one's self as a professional leader and coach or mentor to others in the profession. The focus is on enhancing one's personal influence and building the community of professional practice. This stage of the continuum is typically the domain of mid to late career professionals.

**Table 4:** Commitment to Leadership and Development

<b>Stepping Back</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a children's librarian to library director relationship, where the director is showing signs of professional burn-out, the children's librarian asks the director about her career path, accomplishments and purpose.	In a retired senior archivist to almost-retiring senior archivist relationship, a mutual conversation extends over a span of time about the impact of one's career, accomplishments, and disappointments.
<b>Develop Interdependence Relationship</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a rare book librarian to rare book vendor relationship, the librarian and vendor meet annually to share the most interesting items examined in the previous year.	In an academic librarian director to new librarian relationship, weekly meetings reveal shared philosophies of librarianship but generational differences that are probed for deeper understanding of share purpose and mission and how different approaches can be used to work toward the same ends.

<b>Nomination and Invitation for New Roles and Responsibilities</b>	
<i>Coach</i>	<i>Mentor</i>
In a head of a professional association to mid-career member who has volunteered for his first association project, the head recognizes the experience of the member in chairing committees in his library and asks him to serve as chair of a new working group. The head also provides documents of best practices and procedures for leading groups in the association.	In a corporate librarian to colleague librarian relationship, the mentor librarian talks with the mentee about areas of skills and knowledge that are not used in her current work assignments and suggests the mentee as lead for a new initiative to their shared supervisor that are a good match for her skills and abilities.

## CONCLUSION

The library and information science professions are evolving and professionals are no longer always employed in organizations that are purely defined as information institutions. Rather, library and information sciences professionals are employed in every facet of the workforce and must be prepared with dynamic and effective communication and collaborations skills as well as with information organization and dissemination skills that are transferable across work situations. It is imperative that this preparation is not cavalier but rather done with purpose and rooted in professional competencies and successful practices. Coaching and mentoring relationships are integral components of developing competencies for new and mid-career information professionals and are ideal for professional learning opportunities. It is through these relationships that these shared standards can permeate the ever-expanding profession and workforce.

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## DEVELOPING A NEW APPROACH TO PARTNERING IN THE FORMAL MENTORING PROCESS

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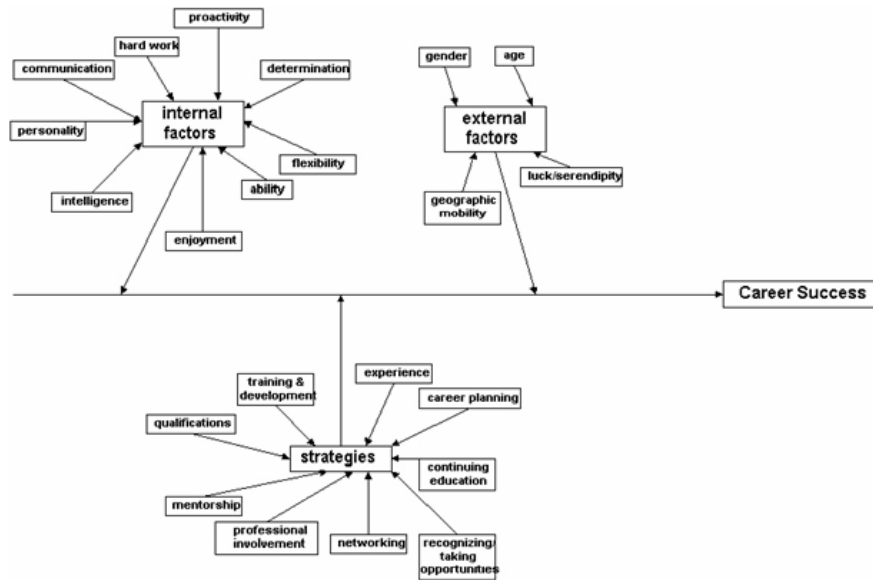
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### ABSTRACT

*The goal of this paper is to present ideas that will assist organizational mentoring programs in helping mentors and mentees acquire the knowledge, skills, and motivation for further successful career library leadership development. This goal is accomplished by focusing on the development of a mentoring model based on research literature, survey data, and observations of formal mentoring programs. The design of the model takes into account research showing the existence of major challenges to mentoring programs in: 1) processes used for the pairing of mentor and mentee; 2) lack of a continuous primary stakeholder buy in; and 3) weaning from initial coordination and motivational factors. These challenges have appeared in each component of the formal mentoring program: partnering process, program coordination, program evaluation, and program sustainability. Focusing on the partnering process, this paper presents strategies that organizations can use to assist mentoring partners in the visualization of their relationship as a growth process. An important aspect of the model is training that includes the use of the enneagram self-assessment tool.*

### INTRODUCTION

The mention of the word “mentoring” in some circles has begun to create a mental deafness. The claim is that mentoring does not work. Individuals state that they either have participated in a formal mentoring program or have heard of someone else being mentored where no constructive purpose was served. While this may be true in some cases, in today's attempt to regenerate the library profession, mentoring indeed can be a very viable career development strategy, not only for those entering the profession, but for those seasoned library professionals who may need a career boost. Figure 1 was created as part of a study of the career paths of current public library directors within the United States and illustrates the internal factors, external factors, and strategies (of which mentoring is one) affecting successful career development.<sup>1</sup> The study sought to determine the directors' own use of these factors and strategies, their perceived importance to the directors' career development, and strategies recommended by the directors for use by middle level public library managers.



**Figure 1:** Career Success Diagram

The research results that concern mentoring show that of the 193 responders to the question as to whether or not they have ever had a mentor, 118 (61.1 %) answered yes; 75 (38.9%) replied no. Thirty-nine (30.5%) said they could have achieved their current status without a mentor while 38 (29.7%) said they could not have. Fifty-one (39.8%) were undecided. At the factor in the career trajectory of these library directors. At the time of the study, 106 directors (55.5%) were mentors. The study concluded that mentorship was a contributory factor in the career trajectory of these library directors.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Current literature includes many additional studies that prove the worth of mentoring. For example, Armstrong, Allinson, and Hayes studied mentoring systems in three sectors (law and order, health, and engineering) and concluded that as a developmental tool, “the mentoring process is clearly a critical element in building effective careers, and research continues to report benefits which extend beyond the protégé to both mentors and organizations.”<sup>2</sup>

There are studies which are considered to be classics in mentoring research that indicate mentoring does lead to increased performance and promotion rate, early career advancement, greater upward mobility, higher income, greater job satisfaction, enhanced leadership, and perceptions of greater success and influence in an organization.<sup>3-6</sup> One cannot deny that the mentoring process should be considered

by individuals as a useful strategy for successful career development within the organization. Research has clearly shown that most mentoring relationships are positive, productive, and beneficial.<sup>7-10</sup>

Yet, on the downside, “If and when things go wrong they can go terribly wrong.”<sup>11</sup> Keele, Buckner, and Bushnell point out that although they have witnessed formal mentoring relationships as being extremely helpful, there are some potentially negative consequences: high expectations not fulfilled; not enough mentors for everyone who may want one; and problems between mentees and their immediate supervisors relative to outside mentors.

Scandura and Williams<sup>6</sup> attribute the success or failure of mentoring programs to certain key conditions: providing training to mentors and protégés, maintaining support from top management, and ensuring the commitment of each party.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Based on this research on mentoring, a pilot model has been developed to help create a successful formal mentoring experience for mentoring partners as well as for the sponsoring organization. What immediately follows are descriptions of three programs analyzed for the creation of the model, the description of the “evolutionary conscious” model created for the formal mentoring program, seven requirements of the model that organizations must ensure, and finally a short discussion relative to the enneagram personality assessment which is one of those seven requirements.

### ***Program descriptions***

The idea for the model was conceived from group observation and analysis of online survey data collected and analyzed both at mid-way and final points of the three selected mentoring programs. In all of these programs, the author has either created the program or has had direct input into the process. The first program is the Professional Education for Librarians in Small Communities (PELSC). This three-year program was funded through the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarians, Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant and the Tocker Foundation. It was built on the existing Master of Library Science program at Texas Woman’s University School of Library and Information Studies, with substantial modification designed to articulate directly with – and extend – the content of the Texas State Library and Archives’ Small Library Management Training Program. Thirty public library administrators entered the program as a cohort, and will graduate as such. A major component to this program is one-on-one mentoring by Texas Library Leaders for the length of the three-year program (2007-2010).

The second program is the American Library Association’s (ALA) Library Leadership and Management Administration (LLAMA) Mentoring Committee’s

program, built from LLAMA's Leadership Development strategic plan. Both mentor and mentee participants in this mentoring program are current LLAMA members who are located throughout the United States and work in all types of libraries. The program is publicized nationally and mentees are chosen on a first come basis. This first pilot problem runs from June 2008 to June 2009, coinciding with the American Library Association's annual conference.

The third program is a mentoring component of the Florida Department of State's Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute (SLLI). The participants are individuals who work in all types of libraries in Florida and have had management/leadership responsibilities within those libraries. The mentors are leaders within the State of Florida, yet are not limited to leaders only within libraries. The program began in 2006 and ran for one full year. Additional one-year programs still are in existence but are not included in the survey data related to the development of the mentoring model.

### ***Program comparison***

There are similar procedures that existed for each of the three programs listed above: mentee identification, mentor selection, personality/career interest inventory, actual matching of the participants, training (orientation), and personality self analysis. Note that each of these procedures listed are all part of the partnering process in a formal mentoring program. Table 1 below indicates the similarities and differences of each program. In order to understand the concept behind the relationship of these to the development of the model, further explanation of each procedure is given below the figure.

**Table 1:** Procedures applied to each mentoring program

<b>Mentoring Program</b>	<b>PELSC</b>	<b>LLAMA</b>	<b>SLLI</b>
<b>mentee identification</b>	Mandatory	voluntary	Mandatory
<b>mentor selection</b>	Pool	pool	self chosen
<b>interest inventory</b>	Yes	yes	Yes
<b>matching</b>	choice or given	choice or given	Choice
<b>training</b>	together/mandatory	together/mandatory	together/mandatory
<b>self-analysis: enneagram</b>	No	no	Yes

### ***Mentee identification***

In two of the three programs the mentees were pre-selected because of their enrollment in an organized program; PELSC participants are students as part of the grant,



and SLLI participants were enrolled in the Leadership Institute. In all three organized programs, entrance was competitive because the number admitted was limited.

### ***Mentor selection***

Even though PELSC and LLAMA are showing that mentor selection was accomplished by using a pool of individuals, the method for selecting these pools differed. In situations such as two of the three cases used in this study, organizations often believe that the candidate mentor applicant pool needs to be a control group possessing certain characteristics. As an example, administrators of PELSC invited individuals for mentors who were categorized as library leaders in the State of Texas. A list was constructed by a committee at Texas Woman's University, (the grant receiver) and some of its partners affiliated with the grant. LLAMA's pool permitted only current members or those agreeing to join LLAMA to be included as mentor candidates. The third example, which is SLLI, shows participant mentees choosing their own mentors by suggesting the names of two leaders employed within the State of Florida (private or corporate) to be their mentors. One commonality that existed in all three programs is that mentors, whether appointed or self selected, could in no way be responsible for the mentee's worksite evaluation. The examples given here illustrate three variations used in the initial step in the partnering process. There are potentially many more depending on the circumstance and the outcomes required.

### ***Interest inventory***

Although there are varied practices engaged for formally matching the mentor and mentee, most organizations initiate the process by providing the potential candidates with a type of interest and experience inventory form to complete about themselves, as did the PELSC and LLAMA programs. Generally these forms are completed online and include similar personal questions to both the mentor and mentee regarding career strengths, professional expertise, experience, educational background, and what each hopes to gain by participating in the program. Depending on the type of library, (academic, public, special, or school) some specific additional questions may be asked. In these two studies, data was collected, characteristics of each participant were analyzed and charted, and the partners were matched based on similarities in personal and career strengths.

### ***Matching***

In order to receive a mentor, in the PELSC program the mentee could either choose, or be appointed a leader from the TWU constructed selected list of leaders. The majority of the mentees did not know the leaders on the list and as a result agreed to be matched with a mentor. The LLAMA mentee could either suggest someone, or had a mentor appointed from the list of volunteer LLAMA members

solicited online by the mentoring committee. What occurred however was that either the mentor that was suggested was not a LLAMA member, or was someone who would be impossible to add to the pool, such as Laura Bush. SLLI participants were not matched since they suggested their own mentors. However, the State Library reserved the right to disagree with the mentees first choice if need be.

### ***Training***

Once the one-on-one partnerships were formed, the individuals in all three of the programs attended an orientation session. This orientation session was delivered to groups that contained both mentors and mentees. The partners came together to meet one another face to face, some for the first time (PELSC and LLAMA) for approximately a half to a full day's session. All three programs presented the same information which included a defined meaning of the mentoring concept, the role and expectations of each partner, the role and expectations of the organization, and logistical details. The partners were given suggestions on establishing individual and partnership goals, and how to further proceed with their mentoring within a given a program timeline.

### ***Self-analysis: the enneagram***

In one program only, SLLI, the partners were presented with an enneagram mini-workshop which gave them the opportunity to explore their own personality type as well as that of their partner. Lack of time and the inconvenience of geography prevented this from happening for the PELSC and LLAMA pairs. (A description of the enneagram is given later in the model's required items and in the Appendix.)

## **THE MODEL**

The model, now in its experimental stages, is built with an emphasis on four components of formal mentoring programs: partnering process, program coordination, program evaluation, and/or program sustainability. All four of these play major roles in the successes or failures of the program and have become the basis of study used for its development. Although all four components are necessary for a mentoring program, for this model the partnering process forms the foundation for the entire program. Online survey data collected from the three groups justified choosing the partnering process as a priority focus for the model. The survey data showed many more positive than negative comments, but the reality is that there were problems experienced by some participants in the organization sponsored mentoring programs. Some partners were just not pleased. Since SLLI mentees

chose their own mentors, there were no responses relative to compatibility. The responses that follow are those indicated by LLAMA and PELSC participants.

- My mentee is not even in the library/information science world yet so I struggle with how I can be a mentor other than being someone who can help her think about choices in the library field. She is so early in her career (and I so late – relatively speaking) that the mentor-mentee relationship has been challenging. I have enjoyed talking with her but don't feel that this is the kind of experience that the Mentoring Committee is trying to achieve.
- Since the first mentor assigned to me didn't respond to my email messages, I was disappointed during the process at the beginning.
- We were not well matched. I'm in public libraries; she's in academic.
- I think that a little more careful screening of applicants would be helpful. I would have expected, when I signed up, at the very least to have someone who was working as a librarian in some library/information centre environment.
- I believe that participants, mentors or mentees, need to be really committed to make this relationship work.

In response to: "What (if anything) has challenged you either with your mentor interaction and/or with the mentoring process"?

- limited interaction with mentor
- better mentoring relationship with classmates than assigned mentor
- disinterest on part of mentor

In response to: "What ways, if any, could this mentoring partnership be more effective"?

- forming closer relationship
- two-way communication

Unless the fit is just right, formal mentors may invest less time and effort with the learner, leaving the learner dissatisfied with the formal mentoring relationship. The formal mentor may not identify with the mentee and thus may not be as motivated as an informal mentor to provide career development and psychosocial functions. Non-complementary relationships may result in a loss of self-esteem, frustration, blocked opportunity and a sense of being betrayed by either party.<sup>10</sup> Carr identifies five key points that distinguishes partnership roles: relationship quality, mutual learning, developmental changes, involvement, and in the overall "big" picture.<sup>11</sup>

The successful foundation of a mentoring program results from the strength of the relationship of the partners. The name "evolutionary consciousness" is applied to this model in order to create a focus on the relationship of the partners. If the partners put forth effort to learn enough about one another, understand how and why the other interacts/reacts as they do, they then consciously evolve over time

into forming a strong relationship. The outcome measures should show that as the mentoring relationship evolves, individuals develop a partnership empowering them to first establish individualized learning and growth. As such, conscious individualism of the partners occurs first, followed by the partners' awareness of the evolution of the relationship. The end result is a successful foundation for the mentoring program built upon the strength of the relationship of the partners.

### ***Model's requirements for partnering***

Based on the analysis of PELSC, LLAMA, and SLLI data, in order for a formal mentoring program to be successful both for and between the partners, the model espouses that there needs to be seven major requirements:

1. There must exist an acknowledged program coordinator who communicates with the mentees and mentors on a regular and confidential basis;
2. Mentees must have direct input into mentor selection;
3. All mentees and all mentors must attend the orientation session in order to even be considered for participation in the program;
4. Mentors and mentees must attend the same orientation session;
5. The formal mentoring orientation session needs to contain various elements with the most important being a personality analysis assessment (preferably the enneagram personality system) administered to the pairs at this initial meeting;
6. An anonymous mid-way survey should be distributed online that identifies challenges and successes up to this point in the program, frequency of meetings, and topics discussed. The results need to be distributed, data collected, then spun back to the participants;
7. The mentoring program meetings of pairs should last no longer than 10 months, with the maximum being a year's time.

A further explanation of these seven requirements follows.

#### ***1. Program coordinator***

Whether there exists one person in the role as coordinator as in PELSC and SLLI, or a committee of liaisons in LLAMA, a regular form of communication needs to develop between the organization and the pairs. This communication can exist between one liaison to one pair as in the LLAMA program, or perhaps one coordinator for all the pairs. Communication can also be kept separate dividing the mentor messages from the mentees as in PELSC and SLLI. Critical to the success of the program is the willingness of the coordinator to offer anything from confidential assistance, to articles on the mentoring relationship, to final rah-rahs.

## **2. Mentee direct input**

To shorten the successful interaction between the mentor and mentee, according to this model the mentee as a direct and major stakeholder needs to contribute to the selection process, with a final selection choice left up to the organization. “The more that mentee and mentor consider themselves to be similar, the greater the perceived benefits of mentoring... Compatibility predicts positive relationship outcomes.”<sup>13</sup>

Johnson and Ridley and also Chungliang and Lynch agree that

Searching for a healthy mentoring relationship is not an easy task. It may be a challenge to find a good one. The world is crowded with gurus seeking to fill their own needs for love and attention, even worship. When looking for such a relationship, rely on your heart, your deep intuitive sense of what seems right.<sup>13 14</sup>

As an aside, Chungliang and Lynch also found that the best mentors are students of other mentors.

As mentioned above, of the three programs, only SLLI participants were required to initially submit two names of mentors as part of their admittance contract to the program. In the cases of PELSC and LLAMA, participants had the opportunity to suggest mentors, but ultimately the majority of the participants preferred the coordinator to choose for them from the organization’s hand picked list of invitees. Some did recommend leaders, albeit unattainable (i.e. Laura Bush, Oprah Winfrey, etc.). The point being made here is that the mentees must have input as they are asked to keep in mind that “personality, communication style, personal values, and career interests are especially salient matching variables.”<sup>13</sup>

## **3. Mandatory mentor orientation attendance**

This requirement for the model was chosen as a direct result of the survey data collected from the three organizations as well as first hand on site observance and participation in the program. In each example when the mentors were not able to attend, the survey results produced comments such as: “I am not certain that what I am doing is what the committee would have intended” (LLAMA); or “the organization should provide more structure/direction for the mentoring process, “(PELSC) or “The coordinator of the program ought to provide the mentors with more up-front and real-time information about what the course was covering.”(SLLI)

## **4. Same orientation session attendance**

There are three benefits for including this requirement that both mentor and mentee attend the same orientation session. The first is to ensure that both the mentor and mentee are in synchronization with each other’s roles as well as the role as-

sumed by the organization. The second is to encourage introductory interaction with each other, with other pairs, and with the program coordinator. The third benefit is the organization's opportunity to assist the individuals initiate the development of a deeper understanding of each other. As Riso and Hudson point out, "Conflicts are often avoidable once people gain insight into how to relate to others from their world view. The message cannot be heard if there is no understanding of one another."<sup>15</sup> And fourth, the participants will begin the process of learning alternatives to their own patterns of behavior.

### **5. Orientation/training presentation points**

In conjunction with the model, the orientation training session contains two parts.

*Part 1: Ten informational elements. These are essential points needing to be heard by all participants at the orientation/training:*

- a) Introduction and statement of the role of the coordinator.
- b) Presentation of the organization's definition of mentoring. Since each career field formulates their own meaning of the process of mentoring, the pairs all need to be in synchronization of their organization's intended meaning. This model suggests using the words and phrases as contained in a definition offered by Anderson and Shannon: nurturing, role model, teach, sponsor, encourage, counsel and befriend; promotion of professional and/or personal development, and ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé.<sup>16</sup>
- c) Myths and fallacies of mentoring.
- d) Stated roles of the mentor and mentee highlighting that the mentee drives the relationship.
- e) Clear expectations of each partner to one another as well as to and from the organization.
- f) The establishment of relational boundaries.
- g) Awareness of potential risks and benefits of engaging in the program.
- h) The recognition that both partners benefit from the relationship.  
"The mentor goes beyond the common notion of *master* to become a special kind of leader, one who can both guide and be guided."<sup>14</sup>
- i) The expectation that mentee career goal construction is a key element.
- j) The knowledge that there is a beginning and a conclusion to this formal organizational sponsored program.

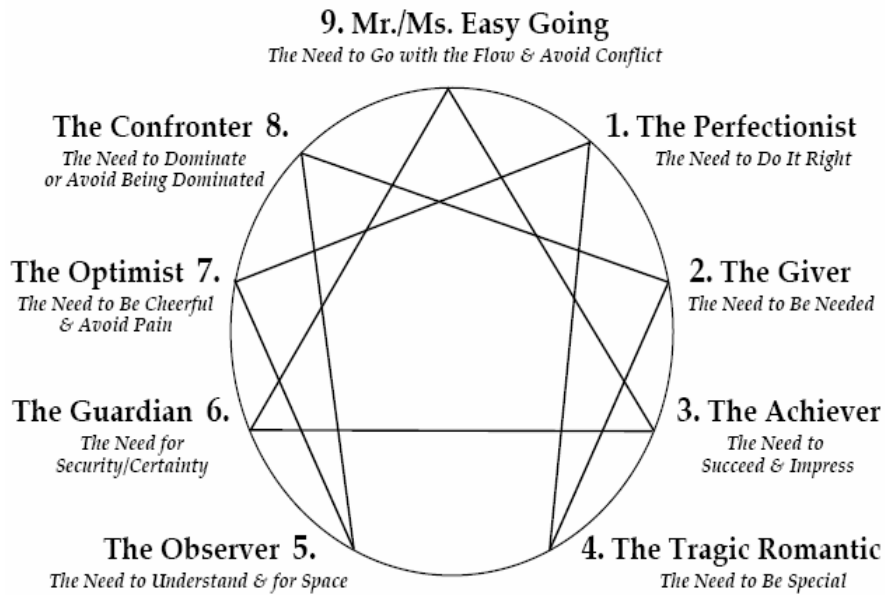
*Part 2: The enneagram personality self-assessment*

Of all of the pieces use in the construction of the mentoring model, use of the enneagram self-assessment is the most critical component necessary to help increase the conscious individualism of the partners as well as to heighten their awareness of the evolutionary relationship. Emphasizing again that as the mentoring relationship evolves, this self assessment helps the individuals to know themselves better

relative to strengths and weaknesses, and to be able to accept distinguishing characteristics in their partner. Without a doubt, this will help to empower the pairs to not only establish individualized/team learning, but growth as well.

The enneagram as a personality self-assessment is chosen for use in the model for two reasons. First, the basics can be delivered within a short amount of time, and secondly, unlike many other personality assessments, the literature about the enneagram states that our fundamental type stays the same throughout life. While people change and develop in numerous ways, they do not change from one basic personality type to another as they grow older. As such, the application of the enneagram has much to contribute to the success of the mentoring process. The enneagram delineates nine basic types of people.

Chris Wright, M.A., LPC, LMFT, in his presentation at the SLLI mentoring orientation session presented the diagram in Figure 2 in order for the participants to visualize the enneagram.



**Figure 2:** The Enneagram

According to Wright, the enneagram can help partners understand: their unique strengths and natural gifts, and of all the people they interact with; that people are inherently different and that each enneagram type's view of reality is equally as valid; that this knowledge enables the participant to attune to and honor different perspectives; how the mentors and mentees communicate with each other, and what they don't communicate (and why); significant blind spots in individuals, couples, families, and organizations; and the interpersonal dynamics in mentoring

relationships.<sup>17</sup> Turn to the Appendix to read additional information about the enneagram.

At the mentoring orientation session, participants are given a short test to help them assess their own personality characteristics based on the above nine types. As with other personality analyses, the process is much more involved. This particular procedure within the program is a critical piece to assist the mentor and mentee acquire a better understanding of one another initially as well as their own selves within the relationship that they are about to embark. Participants of SLLI spoke of their type long after the ten-month program ended. A few continued on with deeper research on the enneagram.

### **6. Mid-way survey**

Collecting data for the mid-way survey has a definitive impact on the partnering relationship. Generally half way through the program the partnership needs a boost. Sometimes communication from the coordinator alone may achieve this result. But this model suggests that a mid-way questionnaire be created asking (among others) questions from five very significant areas: how often the partners have been meeting, how the partners have been communicating (phone, e-mail, etc.), what subjects have they been discussing, whether or not they are experiencing challenges, and how the coordinator/organization can help. Data gathered from this anonymous questionnaire posted and collected online (using Survey Monkey) has been most valuable not only for the coordinator of the program, but for the participants. If done correctly according to the model, the results are summarized and then spun back to the participants. In effect the results show the pairs not only what their peers are doing, but it gives the pairs additional ideas, particularly concerning what subjects are being discussed when the mentoring pairs meet.

### **7. Length of program**

According to this model, the length of the program has direct impact on the partnering relationship. The model suggests a program of 12 months, with the mentors and mentees actually connecting for 10 of those 12. As noted in current literature, the mentoring relationship should have enough stated time to experience its natural course of the mentoring phases. One example subscribed to in this model is a four stage process used by Megginson and Clutterbuck – establishing rapport, direction setting, progress making, and moving on.<sup>18</sup> Another example is mentioned by Hill and Bahniuk:<sup>19</sup>

- Initiation:* the protégé admires, respects, and trusts the mentor. In return the mentor feels this respect and believes he/she has something to offer the protégé
- Cultivation:* both confidence and career support develop



*Separation:* the protégé becomes more independent and empowered causing the relationship to change

*Redefinition:* the relationship is reshaped to a “colleague” stage.

## CONCLUSION

The library and information science profession is particularly concerned about regenerating the profession. Amidst the greying of the work force, the resulting erosion of leadership, and the demands of the changing workplace, recruiting and retaining librarians requires the use of creative strategies more than ever before. Therein lies the beauty of the formal mentoring program; it can be touted as an added value to the librarian’s own career development. The library organization can encourage the mentoring process as a developmental tool by “fostering a climate conducive for informal and sponsored mentoring relationships.”<sup>20</sup> In addition to the already mentioned increased productivity, commitment and communication, mentoring will encourage: continual growth of competent and dependable employees; lower staff turnover rate; team based/facilitative management; esprit-de-corps; ease of transfer of usable knowledge and experience of the work, and a lower incidence of managerial burnout.

Within this changing workplace, the formal mentoring model presented here is so versatile that it can be used with all generations as they interact in the workplace. If followed properly the evolutionary consciousness model will have baby boomers, gen-xers and millenials knowing one another’s strengths and weaknesses well enough to understand how to successfully work together. There are many questions, theories, and assumptions needing to be yet studied concerning the other three sections of the model (program coordination, program evaluation, and/or program sustainability) and their relevance to the partnering process.

Of the four sections involved with the model, at the present time, the partnering process is shown to be pretty well developed. The remaining three listed above are still a work in progress. It becomes evident that because they overlap, some of the same issues need to be addressed again individual to each section. At the present time, *program coordination* details the administrative structure of the program involving the election of a coordinator, goals and objectives, a timeline, variables, and pitfalls; *program evaluation* is concerned with the purpose and timing of evaluating the program, as well as the tailor made forms such as contracts, forms used for goal construction, and questions for the surveys; and *program sustainability* deals heavily into the techniques for organizational membership and mentoring program self-perpetuation.

As the PELSC and LLAMA programs continue, assumptions and theories that were used to construct the created model will be adjusted depending on data analyzed from the results of completed projects. The PELSC mentoring program ends in December 2010, and LLAMA’s pilot year concludes in June 2009. What will

come out of both of these programs is additional input from the partners. In turn this model will be tweaked to improve and update it.

## APPENDIX – THE ENNEAGRAM

The enneagram helps the partners to understand not only why they behave the way they do, but it also points to specific directions for individual growth. People from the same type have the same basic motivations and view the world in some fundamentally similar ways. However, variations within each type stem from such factors as maturity, parents' types, birth order, cultural values, and inherent traits such as being naturally introverted or extroverted. The behaviour patterns that emerge from the nine types are as numerous, mysterious, and unique as the individual involved.<sup>21</sup>

The enneagram name derives from Greek, the diagram is of Sufi (Islamic) origin and the personality designations are given in Latin, but scholars dispute the contributions and proportions of its three traditions. Mystics, priests, psychologists, and social scientists have studied, taught written about, and utilized it so much so that today it has evolved into a powerful system for personal, spiritual, and professional understanding of the human personality.<sup>22</sup>

The enneagram is not a religion, and it does not interfere with a person's religious orientation. But it does concern itself with the one element that is fundamental to all life paths: self-knowledge. While everyone has a certain mix of types in their overall personality, one particular pattern or style is our "home base", and we return to it over and over.<sup>15</sup> However, even when individuals believe themselves anchored to one type, they also may have influences from other numbers that can greatly modify the tendencies of their type. There are two ways these influences are possible. The first are called wings. Wings refer to the enneagram number preceding your type and the number that follows your type. The other influence comes from lines. Each enneagram type has two separate lines that connect to two additional enneagram types (see Figure 2). In itself, the enneagram tells us nothing about another person's particular history, intelligence, talent, honesty, integrity, character, etc.. However, type does tell us a great deal about how we respond to stress, and many other important things.<sup>15</sup> By applying principles of the enneagram, each partner in the mentoring relationship can more easily appreciate perspectives that are different from their own.

The enneagram categorizes each type into three areas: emotional, mental, and visceral.<sup>17</sup>

## **EMOTIONAL TYPES**

**Type Two** – The Giver: The need to be needed

Gifts: Helpful, kind, compassionate, nice, flexible, hard working, cares about people.

Features: Indispensability, right-hand “man”, good worker, do-goodism.

Concerns: People-pleaser, unaware of own needs, give in order to get, rescuer, door-mat.

**Type Three** – Mr./Ms. Success: The need to Achieve, Succeed & Impress

Gifts: Versatile, highly motivated, hard-working, efficient, people-oriented, and smooth.

Features: Getting ahead; goal/image orientation; likes attention, strokes, praise.

Concerns: Appearances over substance, tendency to overwork, compete; chameleon, deceit.

**Type Four** – The Individualist: The need to be Special

Gifts: Creative, dramatic, intense, sensitive, imaginative, passionate, likes being special.

Features: Values authenticity, meaning, passion; strong personal style & appearance.

Concerns: Overly sensitive, overly dramatic, envious, not satisfied in the present.

## **MENTAL TYPES**

**Type Five** – The Intellect: The need to Understand & for Personal Space

Gifts: Objective, knowledgeable, perceptive, analytical. Observer. Thinker. Calm in a crisis.

Features: Seeks information; needs independence, privacy.

Concerns: Tendency to intellectualize; detached, not so people oriented or nurturing.

**Type Six** – Mr./Ms. Responsible: The need for Trust/Security/Certainty

Gifts: Reliable, hardworking, loyal, caring, trooper. Detail-oriented. Structured outlook.

Features: Trust. Fear. Need for structure. Loyal supporter. Security. Goes “by the book.”

Concerns: Controlling, tendency to distrust, focus on the negative, indecisive, vacillate.

**Type Seven** – The Optimist: The need to be Happy & Avoid Pain

Gifts: Fun-loving, energetic, imaginative, up-beat, charming, spontaneous, flexible, enthusiastic.

Features: Likes variety, stimulation, risk and adventure. Positive thinking.

Concerns: Idealistic, schemers, restless, pollyanna, superficial, chatterbox.

## VISCERAL, WILLFUL TYPES

### **Type Eight** – The Powerful: The need to Dominate

Gifts: Direct, powerful, assertive, decisive, reliable, earthy, self-sufficient, practical, dominant.

Features: Action-power-results orientation; comfortable with confrontation, challenges.

Concerns: Inappropriately forceful or insensitive; fear of exposing vulnerability, lustful.

### **Type Nine** – Mr./Ms. Easy Going: The need for peace and to go with the flow

Gifts: Good-natured, open, stable, unpretentious, self-effacing, supportive and likable.

Features: Inaction; avoid unpleasantness & conflict; sees everyone's view, harmonizes.

Concerns: Procrastination, neglectful of details; avoiding conflict and commitment.

### **Type One** – The Perfectionist: The need to do it right

Gifts: Detail-oriented, orderly, reliable, principled, forthright, responsible and hardworking.

Features: High standards, creating order, self discipline, "doing things right."

Concerns: Excessive detail orientation; tendency to be critical, judgmental, demanding, cold.

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## PEER COACHING FOR THE NEW LIBRARY

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### ABSTRACT

*John Lubans, Jr. addresses the concept of peer coaching in libraries and his observed evolution of a new type of library organization, a cross between the hierarchical and the team-based. In discussing peer coaching, the author alludes to his ongoing research of the conductor-less Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and how this orchestra is perpetuating its model of musical self management. Orpheus' collaboration with two schools of music and the interaction between Orpheus coaches and student orchestras suggests several skills library coaches could emphasize in working with peers on library projects. Finally, the author suggests an institute for library coaching to help young librarians make the best use of their skills and talents in the new library.*

### SLOWLY MOVING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Not long ago, I envisioned scrapping a library's hierarchical structures, literally tossing out the old ways of working. This epiphany – my colleagues saw it more as a *momentary lapse of reason* – dawned on me while I was helping implement a self-managing team organization in a research library.<sup>1</sup> Through this new organization, we hoped to tap into the resourcefulness of each and every staff member. And, along the way we'd somehow re-do the salary, the promotion and job classification structures, and the discipline and reward structures!

Five years later we had achieved some admirable productivity goals and glimpsed the mother lode of what was possible; but, we barely made a dent in the hierarchy. Entrenched resistance came from multiple fronts: the top down parent organization; many of the library's managers; surprisingly some support staff; and the inherently inflexible reward and promotion systems.

Since that disappointment, I've seen some movement in more than a few libraries toward less hierarchy and more self management; a subtle organizational shift is, I believe, underway. Much of the change is internal – sometimes unknown to the top leadership of the library, or more often tolerated in a *détente* with the executive group – and will eventually shift its way across the organization, where the real work gets done. Yes, the worst kind of heavy-handed, counter productive library administrations still exist, but, even in the most rigid hierarchies, I've wit-

nessed some positive changes from within, a burgeoning of the eternal human desire to control one's life.

While the top boss may still think she is in charge, some units function more like teams than like the old departments. These mid level leaders appear to be comfortable with team constructs, entailing a loosely knit arrangement among the staff and an expected collaboration among all team members in the work and decision making.

Externally, they deliver what Caesar demands, but internally, they appear to be working in more liberated ways.

This greater flexibility has evolved for various reasons – including heaps of positive evidence that greater productivity and innovation come through teamwork, especially when teams are *highly effective*. Another influential cause is that many new professionals (librarians included) increasingly demand or expect having a say in how to do their work. They prefer leaders to be more hands off than hovering.

Common sense suggests that people who are interested, engaged in their work will likely do a better job than those waiting for orders from above. To get results, a confident and secure department manager will give up some of his/her authority, share the power and put that newly tapped energy to work.

These notions are not new. What is new is that several influential management writers believe that the old hierarchy is diminishing and that a much looser structure is, if not already here, on the horizon. All the more, our current global recession should promote more collaboration and less authoritarianism. Arguably, most bosses when battered as we all are these days, will have enough sense to call out for help, to throw out the organizational life lines. Only the most foolhardy will maintain the top down delusion of absolute administrative control.

So, my hoped for organizational changes, delayed a decade, may finally be underway. But the change is not the wholesale replacement model I'd envisioned. Rather, it appears to be evolving *parallel* to the existing hierarchy. My published research on the conductor-less Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Southwest Airlines indicates there is a *business* side and there is a *performance* side to this "new" organization.

This liberation movement at the team or departmental level has benefits for and requirements of tyro librarians. First, the looser knit arrangement gives them a work environment in which to thrive. However, new skills are required to make the most of a more innovative structure. With the loosening up of the hierarchical model there may be less guidance and more need for resilience and linkage among participants. While not exactly an entrepreneurial model, the new library does require a greater resourcefulness among its members. If a boss is truly less important in the day to day operation of a unit then who makes decisions and how are these decisions made? New skills are essential and in the case of new librarians, these skills may not have been acquired in their library science education.

Without the accompanying personal skill set these new structures will not work at peak performance; teams will not be highly effective. We may espouse collaboration and team work, talk the talk, but if we lack team and collaboration skills, we may wind up with a superficially desirable structure in which members presumably feel better about each other, but get no more – or, more likely, less – done than in the hierarchy.

## THE NEW ORGANIZATION

Based on hundreds of interviews of young managers and leaders around the world, Marshall Goldsmith and his research team predict a major shift from traditional controlling structures to less firm, more fluid relationships in the work place.<sup>2</sup>

Goldsmith claims that the successful future leader will need to master some 14 attributes. These qualities are not new, the emphasis is. Of the 14, I've listed below 4 that will require enhancing several interactive skills and understanding the new relationships between leaders and followers. The honing of these skills will most likely be on the job and probably best learned with someone's help. One way is through peer coaching.

1. Create shared vision
2. Develop and empower people
3. Build teamwork and partnerships
4. Share leadership

The Goldsmith research suggests we will work with peers in new ways. We will lead differently and, as followers, we will respond differently to being led. For example, to share leadership suggests *many leaders*. How does one share leadership? Are your subordinates capable of accepting their share? If not, how will they be enabled?

Another theorist, John P. Kotter, anticipated in 1996 much of what Goldsmith *et al.* concluded in 2003 about the new organization and the essential skills.<sup>3 (p161-73)</sup>

Kotter's new organizational environment will have a sense of *urgency* – this will diminish the luxury of delaying needed change and will help break down the traditional structures that often impede rapid response. A colleague tells me that change in his library is coming about far more quickly than in previous years. Only a decade ago change in this library was resisted and dithered over. No longer. Now, he tells me, changes once regarded as too difficult to implement – the planning and discussion would have been interminable – can happen in a single meeting of participants. Unfortunately, the new urgency in this library comes from reduced budgets rather than collaborative and innovative use of existing resources for the greater good. Still, the new environment is far less confining, in particular for the new librarian, than it used to be.



According to Kotter, there will be genuine *teamwork at the top*. The one strong leader will be less important to the organization. Teamwork skills, if they are to be more than lip service, will need to be learned and practiced in the executive suite. Currently, libraries are still weak on this, assigning too much responsibility to the sole leader, more boss than team captain. Even libraries that are team based, and there are a few, often ignore the essential teamwork qualities to be truly successful at what they do.

There will be *broad based empowerment* requiring effective communication with others. It is easy to say the library staff are empowered. Results from empowerment is the only real way to demonstrate empowerment. How much latitude does staff have to do what needs doing without seeking permission from a higher up? How much praise or blame is heaped on someone who, when trying to provide the best customer service, makes a mistake? False empowerment does more to harm staff morale than probably any other unsubstantiated claim made by a library's leadership.

And, for Kotter, the successful new organization will have an *adaptive corporate culture*. Adapting, adjusting, anticipating all seem more doable in the loosely knit organization, with a wide spread of responsibility, than in a traditional organization with tight control over information and decision making.

One could argue that many librarians do not want to be overly engaged in the running of the library; a librarian may just want to do his or her job – the one in the job description – and to leave the major decisions to the bosses. While some librarians prefer this model, I know many librarians who thrive in the participatory model and are happy to take part in the leadership of the library. And, as I've already said the new librarian may expect to have a leadership role.

In my study of a women's college basketball team, I asked the players (akin for me to the new generation of library staff members) about their expectations of team captains. What would they like to see captains doing *more of*?<sup>4</sup> The players told me they wanted the captains to move the team toward *everyone* taking a greater share of team responsibility and authority. In keeping with this, the players asked the captains to give them more feedback, and involve them in decision making.

I was impressed with the players' openness and their wanting to have a greater role (more responsibility) in the work of the team. I suspect this is the same result I might get if I were to ask a group of freshly minted and engaged librarians about what they want from their team leaders, their supervisors, their department heads. Another recent team researcher, Richard Hackman, espouses *five* necessary conditions for successful teamwork:

1. The team must be a real team, rather than a team in name only.
2. It has compelling direction for its work.
3. It has an enabling structure that facilitates teamwork.

4. It operates within a supportive organizational context.
5. And, it has *expert* teamwork coaching.<sup>5</sup>

Hackman is unique among researchers in that he highlights the value of coaching teams. His observing the conductor-less Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in rehearsal for many years may well have convinced him of the quintessential value of peer coaching.<sup>6</sup>

## HELPING NEW PROFESSIONALS

At first glance a musical orchestra may be an unlikely source for ideas on how to work in the new organization model. After all is not the symphony orchestra the prototypical model for top down management – a boss with a pointed stick telling workers what to do?

Well, not really and seemingly less so with a new generation of musicians who are less content with being told what to do. There is a trend underway among musicians, even in conductor-led orchestras, for more say. Both the newly constituted Colorado and Tulsa, Oklahoma symphonies are thriving with extensive involvement by musicians in their management. Ronnie Bauch, an Orpheus violinist and former Managing Director, says “You can see that the landscape (for orchestral organizations) is changing dramatically.”<sup>7 (p40)</sup>

To this end, Orpheus is working with student orchestras at the Juilliard and the Manhattan schools of music in adapting their loose knit, seemingly leaderless way of making great music.<sup>7 (p38-41)</sup>

In the Orpheus/Juilliard/Manhattan collaboration, Orpheus musicians-as-coaches work with the students as they pursue a semester long project to produce a live, public, conductor-less performance. With Orpheus assistance the student players identify and develop specific self management and peer coaching skills that help the orchestra achieve its performance goals. At the end, it is the student orchestra alone on the stage delivering the performance. A student musician confirms, “(The Orpheus approach) changed the way I play in other ensembles and taught me how to use my voice to influence others.”<sup>8</sup>

What Orpheus does in coaching new musicians for self management and peer coaching is applicable to the new librarians in the “new library.”

While new librarians may have done small group work from grade school onward, they may not have acquired the necessary team skills required for participation in highly effective teams. At the graduate school level – in my experience – there is a prevalent aversion and disdain among students for working on team projects. They tell me they’ve had nothing but negative experiences in small group work. Good students feel taken advantage of by less able students and by students who do not hold up their end of the bargain. They feel at risk with the team’s receiving a grade rather than one for each individual. Frankly, they’d much prefer

doing any assignment solo. As the professor I persist and encourage and usually the teams in my management classes work together and produce a good product. My overt objective is that the students get through the *how* of working together, at least this once, so they see (if not on their own team, then on other student teams) that highly effective teams can far surpass groups that never figure out the *how*.

These are the team skills I've derived from observing numerous student symphony rehearsals guided by Orpheus musician coaches. The students apply these coaching and self management skills when working on their own:

- Collective listening
- Time management
- Delegation of responsibility
- Being prepared
- Being proactive
- Communication – talking – giving feedback

**Collective listening.** While listening actively is not a foreign concept to any professional, it is especially relevant to a musical group which strives to produce a particular sound. “You always have to be listening to what everyone else is doing,” says one student. “This can be tiring and it can be fun.”<sup>7 (p41)</sup> In Orpheus rehearsals musicians listen as audience members. At a rehearsal at Carnegie Hall, I saw several musicians taking turns sitting some 30 rows back to hear what the music was sounding like and then giving feedback to the entire orchestra on how to fine tune the sound. While playing, they listen in their own instrumental groups to the sound the other instrumental groups make; they seek to balance the overall sound, not just fine tune *their* sound.

A recent *New York Times* review of an Orpheus performance mentions the importance of listening, a role usually commanded by the conductor, the boss: “The risky part comes in listening carefully enough in the moment so that pliant phrasing and impetuous flourishes can happen in a natural way.”<sup>9</sup>

How does collective listening relate to libraries? Do we librarians have to concern ourselves with “pliant phrasing?” Perhaps not in the literal sense; what about “pliant phrasing” when used in a figurative way?

Well, it's all in the quality of our performance. Do we strive for an A level or a “good enough” C level product, result, or output. While we are different from musicians in not being on stage in front of an audience, we still produce something for others to respond to, to learn from, to use, to consume. We still try to be the best we can be. Why are some libraries more productive than others? An accident!, some would say in dismissing the varying results. *Au contraire*, in my experience, the best products, the best library performances come not from happenstance but from an ability to hear the “pliant phrasing” and to design, achieve a superior product, service, or way of working. When I talk with best practices librarians, I find positive attitudes, an openness toward different approaches, bosses

who encourage experimentation, and truly empowered staff who are recognized for their achievement.

Another result of collective listening is many students gain more confidence in their playing. They may in fact be hearing for the first time the overall orchestra. Imagine that, seeing for the first time the overall purpose of the library not just hearing our section's music!

**Time management.** Without a boss in the room (or even with a boss in the room) many groups are often prone to wasting time. Absent the boss, it becomes incumbent for the group to manage time. Unfortunately, the traditional library model suggests that there is always more time. I have been part of groups who have gone far beyond the point of least diminishing returns yet still are short of a decision.

The self discipline that occurs among musicians on a time budget, with a performance deadline, can be of great value to new librarians. This discipline adds focus but there is a trade off: the individual may have to settle for less than what he or she wants or is comfortable with, but at least you will have a product and probably a very good one.

**Delegation of responsibility.** Student musicians learn to assign people to keep track of time, to consider tempo, dynamics, balance, and to consider achievement and progress on a topic. None of these can be left to chance for a musical presentation, if it is to be the best it can be, anymore so than when a library team develops a new service plan.

**Being prepared, taking responsibility.** Self management doesn't work if group members are not prepared. The first rehearsals at both schools of music are telling. If the musicians have not done careful preparation, then the process goes slowly and painfully – and everyone knows. A first step in the Orpheus process is the appointment of a core: key players from each section of the orchestra who meet ahead of time to develop the character of the piece, to arrive at some initial agreement on the interpretation. This speeds up the process of rehearsal. When a group does not have a core, it is apparent in the hesitation and the lack of opinion among the players.

Richard Rood, a violinist and Orpheus coach, bluntly directed the students in one instance: “Do the core!” and told each of them to listen to recordings, read reviews, read the entire score – in other words be prepared. It is no longer enough just to show up and scan your piece of the music for the first time.

How often does this lack of preparation happen in the library workplace? Was being unprepared a lack of interest, an unwillingness to take responsibility because it was *my* agenda. Perhaps it would have worked better if they prepared the agenda.

An Orpheus coach alludes to what may drive wanting to be prepared, “The most important message to get across is how to establish musical goals.”<sup>7 (p41)</sup>

Lack of preparation inhibits being proactive. When the music does not sound right, you need to get out front of the orchestra and listen. Then give the orchestra feedback. If the music is not going anywhere, say STOP! and explain why. This holds true for any small group, going along silently facilitates an ineffective decision.

One critic observed that while Orpheus claims to play without a conductor, “Given the athletic body language emanating from the different parts of the orchestra, it really has four or five (conductors).”<sup>10 (pE4)</sup> That’s being proactive!

During a break in a rough and loud – all horns! – rehearsal of a Monteverdi selection, one student complained to me. “No one’s in charge.” That’s the same criticism I heard about so called leaderless teams in my library. There is someone in charge – the students, the team members. Once this concept is realized, ad hoc leaders will evolve.

**Communication – talking and giving feedback.** Obviously, this is central to most of these skills. Negotiation might be another way to describe what goes on in an Orpheus rehearsal. Here’s an example of an articulate student’s feedback. In describing a Haydn piece: “It’s boisterous, earthy – play it crass, (there’s) some dirt in the sound... It’s *not* Mozart!”

Expressing what is on one’s mind, without offending, is an acquired skill. Most of us have to work at using language which will have the intended effect and not the opposite with people resenting our words and not really hearing our suggestion on how to improve the music or the library service plan. Becoming fluent in disagreeing agreeably comes only with practice, like learning a new language.

Again, Richard Rood, the Orpheus coach, was pointedly clear about talking, telling the students, “Talk about the character more than you do the techniques of sound. What is the character of this piece?” He adds, “Talk and try out suggestions.” “Come up with some ideas, some opinions(!), some convictions.” As a highly effective coach, he elaborates on why it is important to have an opinion, an idea, a response. “The more everyone knows about it, that’s the beauty, the influence, the group effort.”

Or, as a student participant summed it up, the “Process of bouncing ideas around is incredibly difficult and stressful, but ultimately worthwhile.”<sup>7 (p40)</sup>

## THE LIBRARY PEER COACHING INSTITUTE

There is a complication, of course, in my recommending the Orpheus coaching model. Unlike Orpheus, we do not have a corps of librarians who have refined their communication and peer coaching skills to the point they can coach consistently with a similar message to others. Nor do we have an Orpheus way of working, one that would fit neatly in with my vision of the new library. While some

good efforts exist, there is no one I could actually point to and say, “Follow them!”

How do we get this cadre of library coaches, a nucleus like that of Orpheus? First, keep in mind, that the environment has to be supportive of coaching. Southwest’s Herb Kelleher sums it up:

In order to make coaching successful, you first have to have the kind of culture that is receptive to it, where people don’t feel that they’re being criticized . . . .

Feedback can be, in the wrong atmosphere, a code for a performance problem. In other words, you’re calling it coaching, but what it really is is criticism. And good coaches don’t coach that way.<sup>11</sup>

So while we do not have a team of master library coaches nor are we certain about the organizational climate to support peer coaching, I think an opportunity exists in schools of library and information sciences to inculcate good coaching skills.

I propose we establish a peer coaching institute at a library school, where for a semester groups of students are coached about the how of working together so they can be peer coaches – all the while working on a real and significant group project. This would be like the Orpheus model of a coach and symphony students learning to play without a conductor, akin to “leaderless” teams in a library.

I’ve attached as an Appendix a pragmatic team member effectiveness self test. Something like this, along with other tools, case studies, role plays, might be used as a beginning to develop awareness of each person’s strengths and needs for improvement as a team player and a peer coach.

Of course, the most effective way to learn about peer coaching is the immersion model practiced by Orpheus. For librarians this comes down to designing an assignment as equally meaningful for library science students as an end-of-semester live and conductor-less musical performance.

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## APPENDIX

### Team Member Effectiveness: ME

When you work in teams or team-like groups, how well do you do?

Please rate each statement by marking the scale, with 5 = "very often", 4 = "often," 3, = "occasionally," 2 = "infrequently" and 1 = "rarely, if ever". Mark 6 when you believe the question does not apply to you.

Add up your score. What do you think it means?

1. I ask questions to test my understanding of an issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
2. I participate in helpful ways in goal setting activities.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
3. I contribute relevant ideas from my experience and knowledge.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I listen, in an active way, to others.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I build on others' ideas.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
6. I consider, in an open and accepting manner, other ideas.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
7. I ask questions to clarify issues and to promote fuller understanding.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
8. I think creatively (come up with new ideas or am able to make new juxtapositions)  
1 2 3 4 5 6
9. I am able to focus on common interests and goals of the team.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
10. I make my needs known to the team.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
11. I disagree in constructive ways.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
12. I invest my energy and enthusiasm to help the team process.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
13. I stay focused on team tasks and am aware of time limitations and need for others to be heard.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
14. I work on conflict in helpful ways.  
1 2 3 4 5 6
15. I support members of the team as they work through an issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6

**Add up your score** (do not count 6s): \_\_\_\_\_

If 45 or less, how can you improve? If above 45, what can you do more of to get a higher score?



## TRANSMISSION OF A PROFESSIONAL CULTURE: TRANSITION MENTORING

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper presents the results of an exploratory study about the nature of mentoring during the transition from a departing experienced school librarian to the arrival of a new professional. The term coined for this study, transition mentoring, is defined as the transmission of culture and practice of the exiting librarian to the new professional who is taking his/her position. As cultural curators of their organizations, librarians are unique in their knowledge and practice and often information critical to the efficient functioning of their libraries is lost during the period of transition. The study surveyed school librarians relatively new to their positions about their experiences in the transition to their schools. The study concluded that communication of the professional culture of the library should be imparted through objects, forms and information left by the exiting librarian. Also important is the practical knowledge of support staff. Transition mentoring programs should be studied further in a variety of library and information settings.*

### INTRODUCTION

Experienced librarians who have been working in institutions for a number of years are repositories of unique knowledge engendered from their practice. This is not only knowledge of the resources and services they provide but, more importantly, of the organizational culture they navigate in order to provide service. To work effectively in a particular organizational culture, it is necessary to determine the hierarchy of the institution (the chain of command), the interpersonal relationships (key players, the formal and informal leaders), how to compete for resources (budgetary and administrative), and to understand the symbols and systems of rewards of that institution.<sup>1</sup> A librarian who has spent a career navigating, and perhaps developing these cultural norms, is not only the repository of the resources, but is also the cultural curator of the institution. Often this unique knowledge is lost when the librarian leaves or retires. The new professional replacing her then must re-discover this critical information. This creates a disconnect not only in the efficient work of the institution but especially for the person succeeding the seasoned professional.

From their graduate programs, new librarians enter the profession with some knowledge of the myriad tasks they need to perform, as well as a vision of how to incorporate skills and knowledge into the library's culture, but with only a vague sense of what that might entail. The experience of the incoming librarian of the library's culture is central to their acclimation and ultimate performance. The most important person able to provide information on policy, collection, curriculum, and other vital functions is the exiting librarian.

This article analyzes the nature of "transition mentoring," that is, the transmission of knowledge from the exiting professional to the new one. An exploratory study was completed in 2005 that analyzed the pathways for the transmission of a professional culture to occur. I begin with a review of how mentoring occurs in various library fields. I then present the salient points of the study and note challenges that arise during the transition period in the words of new librarians. I conclude with suggestions to ease the transition experienced by new professionals in they enter into a library facility and culture.

## **MENTORING IN LIBRARIES**

Mentoring is an important and popular practice in libraries and schools today. There have been many articles written about mentoring in the professional literature, whether it is library related, or comes from business or the field of education. A most pertinent reason for the attention given to mentoring in librarianship resides in the demographics projecting retirements in the library and academic fields. For example, it was predicted that between 2000 and 2010, 40% of the professional members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) were to retire, with an additional 27% between 2010 and 2020.<sup>2(p41)</sup>

Mentoring has been defined as "a professionally supportive relationship between an experienced, successful mid-career employee and a beginner. It is a time-honored method of encouraging new talent, of sharing expertise and connections, and of providing rapid, upward mobility to selected professionals."<sup>3</sup> Mentoring is a concept that has a long and venerable history. The term is most often said to come to us from Greek mythology. When Odysseus left his family for twenty years to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted his possessions and his son Telemachus to his close friend Mentor, who was responsible for his protection, guidance, and education. The word "mentor" now means a wise and trusted counselor. In all these centuries, the core idea of mentoring has remained faithful to the original concept. The need for mentoring exists in all library organizations, but the practice varies among different kinds of libraries. The following section examines the current conversation about mentoring in different library organizations.

### ***Academic Libraries***

Gail Munde examines research on the attributes of mentoring and current mentoring practices in academic libraries and states that “Library organizations must reinvent the ancient and venerable practice of mentoring.”<sup>4</sup> She presents an alternative proposal for organizational mentoring in academic libraries by advocating “consciously preparing employees to fill vacancies that are anticipated profession-wide...whether or not those persons chose to stay in their ‘sponsoring libraries,’”<sup>4</sup> (p173) rather than the current practice of mentoring for staff orientation or tenure/promotion only. Munde frames mentoring as a vehicle for succession planning.

A more recent article by Sarah Anne Murphy continues the argument for “reconceptualizing mentoring.”<sup>5</sup> Because of the “rapid transformation of library collections and services in the information age,” Murphy posits a pivotal question, “Is it also practical or realistic for seasoned library professionals to continue to prepare lesser experienced librarians for the future using traditional hierarchical mentoring relationships?”<sup>5</sup> (p434) Murphy’s article examines current perceptions of mentoring in recent management and human resources literature. A key element in this literature is acknowledging the role of mentoring relationships in the transmission and maintenance of an organization’s tacit knowledge, which is “tidbits of information or knowledge which are not explicitly stated but understood through stories.”<sup>5</sup> (p436) These “tidbits” can consist of technical knowledge that enable new professionals to work more efficiently, as well as “information about the organization’s political situation and cultural norm,”<sup>5</sup> (p436) which can help in effectively navigating institutional practices.

### ***Medical Libraries***

Mentorship for medical librarians has also been a part of the mentoring discussion in librarianship. After reviewing the literature on academic mentoring, Hongjie Wang concludes that “mentoring among medical reference librarians has not been widely practiced and definitely not adequately reported.”<sup>6</sup> Wang’s article discusses the author’s personal experience of mentoring as an effective means to ease a new medical reference librarian’s transition from pre-service experience to the professional workplace and notes the following as “highly valued” in the mentoring relationship: “advice on goal setting, opportunities for participation in professional activities, insight into the management of the institution, and, most importantly, effective means and ways to sharpen and learn technical skills from someone who knows.”<sup>6</sup> (p29) These attributes are critical for new professionals to learn from the onset of their practice from one who is experienced in the ways and means of the particular institution.

### *Archives*

In 2006, the Society of American Archivists presented the results of its first broad survey of individual archivists in thirty years, A\*CENSUS (Archival Census and Education Needs Survey in the United States), which developed a comprehensive profile of the profession at a time when it was “facing a number of challenges as members of the Baby Boom generation...prepare to retire.”<sup>7</sup> (p294) Referring to Stanley Wilder’s perception about one of these challenges,<sup>8</sup> the report states that it is critical not only to recruit new practitioners to replace those retiring, but also to assure “that the considerable body of knowledge and insight acquired by current archival workers – along with the core values of the archival profession – are conveyed effectively to the next generation.”<sup>7</sup> (p318)

Victoria Irons Walch, the project’s principal research consultant, acknowledges the need to convey two critical types of knowledge, citing definitions of explicit and tacit knowledge:

**Explicit knowledge**, which is “information that can be easily explained and stored in databases or manuals,” and

**Tacit knowledge**, which is “much harder to capture and pass on because it includes experience, stories, impressions and creative solutions.”<sup>9</sup>

One of the action items Walch proposes is that “repositories should consider now how to establish systematic methods for transferring knowledge from older to younger workers.”<sup>7</sup> (p 320)

### *School Libraries*

In the school library field, the dissemination of new standards such as the American Association of School Librarians’ *Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner*,<sup>10</sup> the New York State *Standards for the Digital Learner*,<sup>11</sup> and new teacher certification standards in various states in the United States has heightened the need for mentoring. The “No Child Left Behind Act” (a United States federal law that requires “highly qualified and effective”<sup>12</sup> teachers for all public schools) and various state laws ensure that as teachers, school librarians must demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter that they teach.<sup>13</sup> In addition, many states, such as New York State, have mandated that all teachers who have received initial certification upon graduation from their universities must complete a mentored experience in the first year of teaching. While public schools have developed mentor programs for their classroom teachers, this presents a dilemma for the school library teacher, who performs other roles besides that of a teacher. A school librarian is also a program administrator, performing administrative and managerial services, and an information specialist, providing reference services. When a district assigns another teacher within the school to mentor the school librarian, the mentor has little understanding of all the roles of a school librarian and can thus offer only limited advice. If the district assigns a school librarian from another school as a mentor,

there is still a lack of understanding about the function of that school library within the culture of the particular school.

The only person who can provide information about the school's culture, students, curricula and teaching imperatives as it relates to the school library is the outgoing school librarian. Because of hiring practices, the incoming school librarian often does not have the opportunity of contact with the outgoing one. In addition, whereas all new classroom teachers need to adapt quickly to their sites and teaching assignments because students are relying on them as soon as the school year begins, incoming school media specialists, hired as teachers, share this requirement but to a greater extent. Not only students depend on their readiness, but classroom teachers also need their services as instructional partners and information specialists. It is expected that the school library is an efficiently functioning entity from the moment school begins. School librarians enter their schools with the belief that they are instructional leaders and partners to teachers and administrators, based on the philosophy of *Information Power*,<sup>14</sup> an American Library Association document that describes the roles and responsibilities that the school librarian should perform in the contemporary school environment.

Librarians enter their workplaces with the knowledge and skills engendered from their academic programs and internship or student teaching experiences. They are deemed qualified because they have passed paper and pencil tests and completed the required amount of coursework. At best, in their preparatory experiences, whether through observations or field experiences, pre-service librarians visit just a handful of libraries for a limited amount of time. They experience the culture of these sites in a fragmented way. Internships provide practical learning experiences from the perspective of the respective sites and the cooperating teacher and academic supervisor.

Learning how to read the culture of library organizations may or may not have been a part of their academic program. This includes information about the hierarchy of the institution, formal and informal leaders, budgetary imperatives, as well as the cultural norms, system of rewards, and unstated but important values that define the library. A great deal of working knowledge and insight leaves with the departing librarian as a new professional arrives and attempts to implement a new vision with little practical experience.

### ***Summary***

Implications from the above review of mentoring in several librarianship specialties include:

- There is a need for conscious preparation for succession, for the transition and maintenance of a library's technical and cultural information that resides with experienced librarians
- Traditional hierarchical mentoring is no longer effective for the fluid nature of librarianship as it is practiced today

- There is a need to identify methods for transferring knowledge and values from experienced librarians to new professionals
- Information that needs to be transferred is not only that which is easily explained but also the values and cultural norms that affect successful working situations and relationships.

The study described below attempted to define the nature of this kind of mentoring and to develop a systematic method of transmitting information so that it would be useful to the incoming professional librarian. The study is limited because it had a small sample size and locality as well as being limited to the school libraries. However, the resulting implications apply to all library fields.

### **A STUDY OF TRANSITION MENTORING IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

An exploratory study by Beatrice Baaden and Jean Uhl, "Transition Mentoring: Transmission of a Professional Culture," examined the communication of past practices between exiting school library media specialists and incoming professionals; they coined the term, transition mentoring.<sup>15</sup> Transition mentoring is defined as the transmission of culture and practices of the exiting librarian to a new professional who is taking his/her position. It is the transmission of a professional culture. Transition mentoring is both similar to, yet different from, the traditional forms of mentoring noted in the studies discussed above. In academic libraries, mentoring usually involves a long term and supportive relationship between professionals to develop candidates for tenure and promotion. This is not the purpose of transition mentoring. Transition mentoring is a thoughtful way to anticipate the needs of the incoming professional when planning for succession. Transition mentoring does not call for a sustained relationship between professionals; it does recognize the need for the retiring professional to be cognizant that s/he will be followed by a librarian new to the cultural values and processes of that site and to take steps to communicate these.

Many transitional challenges arise when a librarian begins a new position. In Baaden and Uhl's study, transitional problems of new librarians fell into the following themes: a feeling of being overwhelmed and not understood, difficult aides or important others, and little information left by the outgoing school librarian that was considered essential. It seemed the only person who was uniquely qualified to provide information about the school's culture, students, curricula, and teaching imperatives as they impacted the school library was the outgoing school librarian. Yet, because of school hiring practices, the incoming librarian often did not have opportunity for contact with the outgoing one. Thus, critical knowledge and information that can ease the transition of the new professional and facilitate changes in practice or continuation of practices in the school library is lost.

The general objective of the 2005 exploratory study by Baaden and Uhl was to examine the communication of past practices between an exiting school librarian and the incoming professional. The study analyzed communication patterns between departing and entering school librarians, materials that were left by the exiting professional, and people considered helpful by the incoming librarian in the transition to her new school.

### ***Methodology***

Ninety school library media specialists working in their positions from one to five years in schools in Long Island, New York, were surveyed. Long Island consists of two counties that are multi-ethnic and economically diverse. Qualified respondents served in a variety of grade levels: 53 taught in grades K – 5; 22 taught in grades 6 – 8; 9 taught in grades 9 – 12; and 6 taught in K – 12 schools. Of the 90 respondents, 61 had some form of communication with the exiting library media specialist. Baaden and Uhl developed an initial questionnaire based on their personal experience of transition mentoring and on concepts about effective mentoring in education. Pilot questionnaires were sent to four school librarians in new positions to test the design, terminology, and ease of use of the questionnaire. Based on comments, revisions were made. The final survey consisted of 11 questions in total: 8 directed questions and three open-ended opportunities for comments. Data were analyzed using content analysis. Ideas and concepts were identified from the closed questions, as well as open-ended responses, developed and analyzed. Main categories that emerged were the following: communication, materials, helpful people, and the nature of the transition. Comments were further categorized for transitional problems and suggestions.

### ***Findings***

Most respondents said that the communication they had with the exiting librarian took the form of a phone call, while others cited brief meetings and specific conversations about the administration of the library media center or about instruction. When there was a lack of communication, the incoming library media specialist felt at a loss or that she or he was floundering. New library media specialists reported that they felt overwhelmed and not understood by other teaching professionals in the building. One respondent stated that the transition was “difficult since no information was left about lessons and no information about curriculum. I had no idea about which information skills had been taught” and thus didn’t have a good foundation on which to proceed. One library media specialist stated, “My first year I felt like I was drowning. Nearly every free moment during my week was spent researching ideas and planning lessons. The library itself was a mess. It’s difficult when you’re the only librarian in a school district.” Such comments suggested that it is critical for exiting library professionals to make an effort to

meet formally with incoming colleagues to share information about instruction and managerial, administrative matters.

There were a number of materials left by exiting professionals that respondents noted were helpful in the transition. Exiting school library media specialists generally left more procedural information, such as prior purchase orders, budget, and circulation procedures, rather than instructional information. Yet when procedural information was not left, the new school library media specialist felt at a loss. One respondent noted, "It would have been wonderful if the exiting librarian could have given me some information on procedures already in place. I was very overwhelmed in the beginning." But sometimes the information left was out of date with current best practices. When relevant information was left, one new school library media specialist felt empowered and stated, "The retired librarian left good files with records of all transactions as well as notes about different programs she chaired. These, along with several lessons, helped me to evaluate the success of the library program and I could make changes to continue the success of the library media program."

A range of people were considered critical in the transition to the new library media center. Library support staff/paraprofessionals and their practical knowledge were deemed most important. Some respondents noted that they were "fortunate" to have a "terrific library clerk who was both willing to share the 'old ways,' but equally supportive when it came to trying out 'new ways.'" However, in some cases, library support staff was considered the biggest transition problem. One new school librarian reported that the "biggest obstacle to a successful transition was the assistant in the library. She was extremely difficult to work with and resistant to change of any kind." Respondents did report that other district library media specialists were helpful, often taking the form of mentors. They were particularly helpful in advising about specific library matters such as knowing proper procedures and understanding policies. For a complete mentoring experience, the new school library media specialist needed both a mentor in the school building and a librarian colleague, even from another building in the school district.

### ***Discussion and implications for the library field***

This study clearly shows that there needs to be greater consideration for some type of transition mentoring. This kind of transitional communication between the outgoing and incoming librarian is essential, yet not often done in a way that is helpful to the new professional. More formal meetings need to be deliberately planned. The exiting professional should hold one or more face-to-face meetings with the new professional and should introduce the new professional to important staff, show the location of important documents, and delineate important procedures. Discussion should take place about materials and the position of the library in the culture of the institution.



Communication of a professional culture should also be imparted through objects, forms, and information left by the exiting librarian. S/he should leave carefully labeled and accessible procedural information, such as circulation, budget, and beginning-of-year procedures, prior purchase orders, selection and acceptable use policies, automation procedures, words and protocols for technology, technology support information, lists/ ranges of barcodes, important phone numbers, and keys for the new person. For school media specialists or academic librarians with teaching responsibilities, instructional information should also be left, such as schedules and calendars, lesson plans, collaborative planning forms, bibliographies and information about instructional improvements under consideration. All should be left where the incoming librarian can have easy access.

In addition to materials and resources is the knowledge that the library support staff imparts to the new professional. Library support staff know about procedures and routines and should be prepared for their important role in transition mentoring.

## CONCLUSION

Mentoring is a critical issue for the library field. Professional organizations, such as the Medical Library Association<sup>16</sup> and the Society of American Archivists<sup>17</sup> provide easy access to mentoring opportunities on their websites. Mentoring opportunities in those organizations are designed to facilitate communication between members with expertise in particular areas of their fields and members who want to build their knowledge. Participation in professional organizations is highly important for new professionals as they search for mentors.

The benefits of mentoring are numerous and diverse for library institutions. These benefits apply to more than just those involved in the mentoring relationship. In his book, *The Mentoring Manager*, Gareth Lewis divides the beneficiaries into three categories: the protégé, mentor and the organization.<sup>18</sup> Gail Munde confirms and adds to Lewis' list of benefits: protégés or mentees gain "higher salaries, overall career satisfaction, and satisfaction with their organizations;" mentors gain "a renewal of professional purpose...and a sense of satisfaction that one has helped to influence the future of the profession;" the organization gains "increased employee retention, reduced turnover, faster and more efficient introduction of junior employees to organizational norms and expectations..."<sup>19</sup> (p 172)

Each library or information setting has its own culture, as well as procedural imperatives and as such will need its own unique style of mentoring. Despite this, adopting transition mentoring would enable all kinds of libraries, whether they are large hierarchical institutions, small or medium sized information centers, or school libraries, to plan for succession within the specific organizational culture. New library professionals enter their workplaces with a vision of incorporating their skills and knowledge into the organizational culture, but have only a vague

idea of how to make it happen. The exiting library professional has critical knowledge that will facilitate this transition. Communication between the outgoing professional and the new one is critical for the transition process. Engaging in transition mentoring, where specific meetings occur and specific documents are left, is one way to ensure that a carefully nurtured professional culture is being successfully transferred. Transition mentoring programs should be studied further in a range of library and information settings.

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**GENERATIONAL TUG-OF-WAR –  
PLAYING NICE BETWEEN MILLENNIALS AND  
BABY BOOMERS IN A MULTI-GENERATIONAL STAFF**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Libraries are not exempt from the organizational clash of the Baby Boomers and the Millennials. Recent literature touts the challenges Baby Boomers face in managing the Millennial generation. However, little literature exists documenting the challenge more and more Millennials face in managing the Baby Boomer generation. For the first time in history, four different generations of librarians co-exist within many organizations. Understanding their differences can assist library leaders in harnessing the potential from each group and maintaining a professional, balanced and collegial atmosphere.*

*This paper will provide a general overview of the characteristics possessed by Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. Greater attention will be placed on Baby Boomers and Millennials as literature suggests these two generations are at odds the most. It will also introduce the notion of “internal customer service” as means for bridging the generational differences and creating a balanced organization. Internal customer service is the service provided to colleagues and other departments within an organization whom librarians rely on to complete work. When librarians move beyond simply thinking of colleagues as others who are “just there” to thinking of them as potential customers, the organizational mood lightens and productivity increases.*

**INTRODUCTION TO WORKPLACE GENERATIONS**

Many workplaces today find themselves in the position of including four different generations of workers, and libraries are no exception. Tension between generations is not unusual, and a variety of literature across many disciplines discusses this issue. This paper will outline the characteristics of the four major generations and then focus particularly on the conflict between the Baby Boomer generation and the youngest generation in the workplace, the Millennial generation. The idea

of internal customer service is presented as a tool for preventing and resolving these conflicts.

### **TRADITIONALS OR VETERANS – BORN 1909-1946**

The words most often used to describe this age group are loyalty and sacrifice. Persons born in this age range were shaped by the environment of the Great Depression and World War II, and are used to sacrifice.<sup>1 2</sup> Traditionals perceive themselves as holding to a more strict moral code than younger generations. In fact, they describe themselves as more ethical than subsequent generations.<sup>3</sup> They place great importance on patriotism and family, and are used to following traditional gender roles.<sup>1 2</sup> It is important to remember that this generation has seen the greatest change in technology of any generation alive today.<sup>2</sup> Many in this generation have witnessed the birth of the first computers to the rise of the internet in everyday life.

In the workplace, traditionalists are dedicated and respectful. They are used to hierarchy in leadership and a traditional organizational structure, and function best within a clearly defined organizational structure.<sup>1</sup> Of the four generations examined here, they are most likely to “buy into the status quo...and possess a traditional sense of dedication.”<sup>2</sup> Like their grandchildren, the Millennials, Traditionalists maintain a loyalty to their workplace, but prefer a 40 hour work week that leaves time for family. This group does not multitask very well; they prefer to focus on one task at a time.<sup>2</sup> Despite a tendency to look towards traditional hierarchy in leadership at work, this group values teamwork and working together as an extension of their sense of loyalty and sacrifice. Keeping in mind the sweeping changes in technology witnessed by this generation, it is no surprise that when confronted with new technology, this group prefers to coast on what they already know.<sup>2</sup>

### **BABY BOOMERS – BORN 1947-1964**

The Baby Boomer generation’s mission in life is to change the world. After the sacrifice displayed by the previous generation, the world was ready for a time of prosperity, and Baby Boomers enjoyed a focus on their childhood like never before. After the hard times of the Great Depression and world wars, people were ready for a new, more optimistic perspective, which they passed on to their Baby Boomer children. Boomers were raised in a youth-oriented culture, and continue to maintain aspects of a youth culture today. Although not overexposed to multimedia and entertainment like their Millennial children, it is also important to remember that the Baby Boomer generation was the first generation to grow up with television. After being raised in an environment that promoted the idea that they could achieve anything, Baby Boomers were ready to make some big changes to their society, and they did.<sup>1</sup> Often said to be “heavily involved in self-realization,”<sup>2</sup>

Baby Boomers wanted to know who they were, and the reasons behind the way society functioned. Quickly disillusioned by war, the Baby Boomers questioned the ethics of war in Vietnam. They also worked to redefine societal roles, especially traditional gender roles and civil rights. Baby Boomers additionally went on to redefine marriage, having less patience than older generations for marriages that didn't work, choosing divorce as an acceptable option much more than in the past.<sup>1</sup> It is no surprise that Baby Boomers are often called the "me generation" and are characterized by their drive to effect change.<sup>2</sup>

In the workplace, Baby Boomers value teamwork as a means to accomplish change. Although they willingly work within the traditional business hierarchy, they have a love/hate relationship with authority, and prefer to be led by consensus.<sup>1,2</sup> A generation known for its drive, Baby Boomers are often called workaholics. They will sacrifice time and energy for the job and tend to stick to established institutional practice. This generation "assume[s] overtime is a given,"<sup>3</sup> and often define themselves by their level of career success. At this point in their careers, most Baby Boomers have accomplished the goals in their careers they set out to achieve, and feel they have earned their place at the top of the hierarchy, but also may feel very burned out.<sup>5</sup> Boomers strive for and thrive on recognition, and look for and like to cultivate a workplace's team spirit.<sup>2,3</sup> Baby Boomers have experienced a traditional, paper based learning process that takes them from a textbook to practice to implementation of a new skill. Boomers are most comfortable with technology they grew up with, and may feel uncomfortable encountering a new technology without first receiving formal instruction.<sup>2</sup> Baby Boomers will tend to stay with the same employer for a long time, but will entertain better job offers.<sup>3,4</sup>

#### **GENERATION X – BORN 1965-1976**

"Generation X" is characterized by independence. This independence can be linked to their early childhood experiences as the first generation to have both parents in the workforce, which for many children led to moving around, following their parents from job to job.<sup>6</sup> This fostered an appreciation for multiple cultures and diversity as part of their world. With constant exposure to new emerging media such as the 24-hour newscast and access to developing news stories, they grew up sceptical of politicians and other major players after watching story after story about political corruption.<sup>6</sup> This created a large group of young people with a general distrust of all media and, in turn, meagre voter turn-outs. Generation X was also the product of more divorces than any generation before in the United States.<sup>6</sup> As children, they had to learn to take care of themselves from a young age, often walking alone to school or the bus and coming home to an empty house in the afternoon before their parents would arrive home. This responsibility taught them to be self-sufficient and individualistic, as well as overly-confident in their own abilities.<sup>6</sup>

These independent skills have transferred over to the workplace, creating employees who want little supervision and do not care for intimate relationships at work.<sup>7</sup> They easily adapt to changing environments and desire feedback with detailed evaluations, which can be difficult to gather and still maintain the freedom from supervision that this group craves.<sup>7</sup> However, managers should avoid skipping evaluations, particularly for a job well done, because Generation X thrives on recognition for their successes. They have even left desirable positions with large companies because of a lack of communication and praise.

Preferring a direct form of communication, especially in the workplace, members of Generation X will ask many questions and will immediately express their own demands. They thrive on rapid-paced work and become easily bored with what they see as mundane collaborative work.<sup>6</sup> This lack of subtlety in communication often leads to the label “poor people skills,” enhanced by the fact that, as previously stated, Generation X is not interested in fostering personal relationships at work. They tend to leave their peers at work and form friendships outside the office. This can lead to conflicts later with internal company politics, for which they have a low tolerance. No matter how terrible the news or review, this group expects open communication between managers and employees and will expect any promises that are made to be kept. They favour openness and honesty to brown-nosing and will be far more trusting of a manager that lets them know the whole situation.<sup>6</sup> Although this group appears to be made of entrepreneurs not attracted to working for large organizations or companies, in reality they want the security of belonging to an organization. To keep Generation X happy in the workplace, their compensation should be directly linked to what they contribute, and they should be given flexibility for how, when and where they work, including the freedom to move from project to project.<sup>6</sup>

### **MILLENNIALS – BORN 1977-2003**

The single most important characteristic that defines the “Millennial” generation is their love of technology. Several specific attitudes and actions typical of Millennials can be directly attributed to being surrounded by rapidly-changing technology for most of their lives. According to Diana Oblinger, 20% of Millennials began using a computer between the ages of 5 and 8, and virtually all had used computers by the time they were 16.<sup>7</sup> Not only are these young workers tech-savvy, but they are excited about incorporating this technology in the workplace. They are receptive to new technology and willing to change how tasks are being completed in the workplace by utilizing new features.<sup>8</sup>

Having grown up in an ever-changing digital world where access to information and peers is almost instantaneous, Millennials now expect their workplace to function in the same way. They look for engagement and interactivity in the workplace, and are especially comfortable in a group setting.<sup>7</sup> Millennials are social

creatures, used to connecting with friends and family around the globe, and choose to learn and work in diverse teams. However, they prefer the social interaction of a small taskforce that can foster personal relationships with team members and at the same time provide challenging and rewarding projects.<sup>9</sup>

However, having access to the latest trends at the touch of a button has caused Millennials to question established traditions, and they often do not respect workplace traditions such as seniority and political influence.<sup>9</sup> Often, the hierarchy and rank of the workplace needs to be explained to them for clarification and future reference because often there is a general lack of respect for authority until the Millennial considers it earned.<sup>10</sup> This group is not interested in hearing about “how things used to be,” nor do they show any concern about how long someone (such as a Boomer) has been with the company; they are only attracted to the “here and now.”<sup>9</sup> They look for promotion based on one’s ability and performance, which seems natural for achievement-oriented Millennials. They feel the best person for the job should receive the promotion, regardless of age or status. They cannot comprehend staying with an organization to climb the ladder, and will jump from company to company to reach the top because they cannot wait but must have their need for achievement fulfilled today. Satisfying their needs today is more critical than a stable future and retirement.<sup>9</sup>

While the multitasking Millennials’ behaviour may be confused with laziness by other generations, this group is highly regimented and accustomed to juggling multiple activities at once. They are used to having every minute of their day mapped out and appreciate a daily or weekly checklist of items that must be finished.<sup>10</sup> They rely heavily on digital resources such as laptops and cell phones to accomplish their tasks and are therefore natural visual learners who stray from reading vast amounts of text in preference for images.<sup>7</sup> They also value speed, sometimes at the cost of accuracy and require communication methods that are clear, concise and repetitive, which stems from their constant questioning of authority.<sup>10</sup>

#### **AREAS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN BABY BOOMERS AND MILLENNIALS**

Baby Boomers, as the generation most likely to be in management, and Millennials, as the generation most likely to be currently entering the library profession, are the most at variance of the four generations. Four areas of potential conflict are presented to illustrate and discuss the generational divisions that affect the workplace relationship between Baby Boomers and Millennials.

**Adapting to new technology:** Boomers and Millennials adapt to new technology in different ways. In the workplace or in the library, when a new technology is introduced such as new software or the latest model of office equipment, Baby



Boomers may avoid using the new tools at first. They are much more likely to read the manual or seek formal training before attempting to recommend or use the new tools.<sup>5</sup> Having been raised in an environment of ever-changing technology, Millennials see new software or office equipment as an opportunity to play with a new toy.<sup>11</sup> They prefer to learn about the new technology as they are using it and will not hesitate to learn by doing.

**Quiet vs. multi-stimulation work environments:** In the Baby Boomer's educational experience, they most often used text and paper-based mediums to acquire new knowledge. While the Boomer generation was the first to enjoy television all their lives, the explosion of entertainment and other electronic stimulation did not occur until mid-way through their lives.<sup>1</sup> Millennials have grown up with many different types of available educational media and electronic entertainment options. Further, they are used to multiple forms of stimulus available simultaneously. While this may have negatively affected their attention spans, they can switch quickly from task to task.<sup>10</sup> In the workplace, Millennials often find they need more than one stimulus, such as music playing while they are accomplishing routine tasks, in order to satisfy a shorter attention span and maintain a regular level of productivity.<sup>3 5</sup> Boomers might perceive this environment as one that does not promote productivity, as it is easier for the Boomer to focus without the extra stimulus.

**Communication styles:** Both Baby Boomers and Millennials like to work within teams in the work environment, but they approach collaboration in different ways. Boomers perceive working together as a way to incite change.<sup>3</sup> Millennials are accustomed to communicating with peers through technology and prefer collaboration through technology.<sup>11</sup> In the workplace, Boomers are more likely to be patient waiting for a response to communications, and will only use technology they have successfully used previously. Generally speaking, Baby Boomers prefer face-to-face communication rather than through a technology medium.<sup>3</sup> Millennials are used to instantaneous communication through technology and are comfortable with many technology mediums, even those that do not allow face-to-face communication.<sup>7</sup> In order to answer reference questions, a Millennial may comfortably use several mediums of communication including phone, email, instant message, or face-to-face communication.

**Job loyalty vs. career management:** In order to be in the career position that many Baby Boomers are in today, they have stayed with a company and worked up through the organizational hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> They see this as displaying a dedication to their career and place great importance on team spirit and loyalty to an organization. Millennials are often looking for the most efficient way to build their careers, even if it means changing jobs to work their way up the career ladder. Further, Millennials place equal importance on both their career and their home life.

Millennials do not see this as a lack of loyalty on their part; instead they perceive this as a savvy way to accomplish their career goals and have a balanced life.<sup>9</sup>

## **INTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Many potential solutions exist in literature to address the issue of generational conflict. Libraries are experienced in the practice of patron service. Borrowing a concept from the business world, customer service, we offer a solution that can apply to a variety of conflicts. Although this paper focuses on the conflict between Baby Boomers and Millennials, internal customer service may apply to conflicts between any generation.

Customer satisfaction is the foundation to a service organization's existence and success. Satisfied customers are repeat customers. Satisfied customers are the best marketing tool an organization has. In this age of instant gratification, information consumers are becoming more attuned to unpleasant user experiences and poor customer service. Libraries have long been the hallmark for knowledge and information management. However, the advent of the Internet has stiffened competition. Users are much more likely to turn to Google if their library research experiences are not expedient, pleasant, and obstacle free.

A comprehensive customer service philosophy should include policy statements with respect to both external and internal customers. Libraries often focus on external customers when considering customer service-related issues. The widening generational gap between library employees requires organizations to turn their focus inward as well. It is often the dynamics within the organization itself that determine the degree to which an external customer's experience will be positive or negative. Thus, attention should be paid to promoting the welfare of both external and internal customers to ensure organizational success.

External customers are easy to identify. They are those individuals who utilize our facilities and services in order to satisfy their information requirements. They are the reason for which libraries exist. However, every day a different group of "customers" is silently served: the library's internal customers. Internal customers are co-workers, fellow employees from whom we depend on in order to adequately perform job functions.

In an academic library, multiple individuals and/or departments routinely supply information or services to one another. Harris suggests if it is difficult to grasp who internal customers are, ask yourself, "Whose out-box do I work from and whose in-box do I feed into?" Also consider, "who cleans the building, who does your typing, who maintains your security, who provides frontline services to patrons, who works on computers?"<sup>12</sup> All of these individuals/departments are internal customers in an academic library. Just as there are generational expectations that must be met and considered when providing service to external customers, the same expectations must be considered when working with internal customers.

Heskett et al. state internal customer service is “characterized by the attitudes that people have toward one another and the way people serve each other inside the organization.”<sup>13 14</sup> Generational differences within an organization can influence specific attitudes. Viewing fellow library staff as internal customers is one way to address attitudes and bridge differences that might otherwise create rifts. Academic libraries have traditionally done an excellent job of measuring and evaluating the satisfaction of external customers (i.e. students, faculty, staff, etc.). The satisfaction of internal customers, or the relationships between departments and individuals, is often disregarded. Not examining internal customer satisfaction can be detrimental to an organization’s overall success as “employees’ performance is affected by their satisfaction with other employees.”<sup>15</sup> If employees’ performance is suffering, it often translates to poor service being experienced by external customers. Promoting internal customer service between the generations of employees ensures every individual feels valued and realizes their importance in the library’s operations. Satisfied internal customers create “an excellent foundation on which to begin meeting our external customers’ needs.”<sup>12</sup>

Library staff needs to be informed of how library administration defines “customer.” If administration wishes to promote internal customer service as a tool to bridge generations, employees need to know that “if the people in the next office routinely request information from your office, they’re customers”<sup>16</sup> and “The most effective technique for creating and enhancing an effective teamwork culture within an organization is to encourage employees to think of fellow workers as internal customers.”<sup>17</sup> Generational characteristics can often be mistaken for poor customer service when in fact it is just a different service approach. However, common courtesy can go a long way in connecting approaches. After all, “in a traditional customer service operation, being courteous to your customers is the number one rule.”<sup>16</sup>

There are several techniques that members of all generations can practice in order to build community and respect in the work environment: be consistent; keep your word; demonstrate loyalty to customers and the organization; treat others with respect; accept responsibility; and promote a positive attitude. Internal requests should not be viewed as interruptions, but as means to completing an organizational goal. All employees like to feel valued, regardless of the generation in which they belong. Acknowledging the contributions of fellow employees and simply saying “thank you” is the quickest way to erase generational differences.

## CONCLUSION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century library is a dynamic organization. The generational differences present among library employees is often a deterrent to progress. Each generation brings its own strengths and weaknesses to the environment. However, the multiple

viewpoints the different generations possess can also serve to balance organizational conflict.

Internal customer service is a tool which can be employed to help bridge the generational gap among library employees. By viewing co-workers and fellow employees as internal customers, the differing behaviours and approaches between generations can be minimized. This allows library employees to focus on achieving the overarching organizational goals as opposed to focusing efforts on generational frustrations.

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## THE INTERNAL WORLD OF LIBRARIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF CIVILITY

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### ABSTRACT

*The internal environment of libraries is a world more complex than its stereotypical image as a place of calm and quiet. The nature of conflict in libraries is as complex, sophisticated and hidden as the detailed process of buying, cataloguing and putting a new book on the shelf. This paper will identify qualities of organizational culture of libraries that have sustained its activities for centuries. This organizational culture is straining under the pressure of internal and external issues. As librarians respond to new technology and user group needs, they do so as a divided profession. Libraries are now populated with individuals from four distinct generations. As libraries undergo reorganization to preserve their values and role in society, institutional goals, values and processes now become areas of negotiation and spaces of contention. The need "to change in order to preserve" raises the level of internal tension. Unchecked, group consensus or civilized disagreement can morph into mobbing and bullying activities that terrorize library workplaces. This paper will describe how mobbing and bullying can flourish in libraries and conclude with strategies to counter and quash such acts before individuals are harmed in insidious and devastating ways.*

### ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

As libraries evolved over centuries, the organizational culture of the institution was established. It is a subtle feature of a workplace, transmitted either directly, through employee training, or indirectly, as general socialization in day-to-day working. Through direct and indirect means, shared meaning of various functional areas of the library such as reference, reader's advisory, or cataloguing and shared values, such as access to information, are communicated and reinforced. The organizational culture in libraries is woven throughout the structure of personnel, process of completing tasks, flow of communication, (including what, when and how) and degree of interdependence among staff.<sup>1-2</sup> Organizational culture provides stability to an organization. As the library culture comes under pressure from external and internal stresses, the push to change elements of its activities impacts organizational culture and a complementary space, organizational climate.

The social space of an organization is composed of two related areas, organizational culture and climate. Culture, which has already been presented, is the objective representation of institutional values; climate is the subjective perception of employees towards their work environment.<sup>3</sup> In order to be significant and permanent, any changes to the organization must involve changes in patterns of behaviour, supported by changes in fundamental beliefs and values.<sup>4</sup> While it is more common to refer to organizational culture, changes in a library will be felt much stronger in its climate. Whenever the organizational climate is stressed, research confirms that service quality, effectiveness, worker morale and employee turnover rates are also affected.<sup>3</sup> The stable membership of library employees and particular work activities cement common attitudes about the workplace, both positive and negative.<sup>5</sup> Differences (such as occupational or generational) between library administration, professional librarians, and other library staff can even lead to sub-cultures within one library.<sup>6</sup> In this way, the psychological environment or climate may be experienced and managed quite differently by each group.<sup>3</sup>

The library as an institution and its workers have been experiencing a variety of external and internal pressures, much of which has been thoroughly discussed in the professional literature and need only be summarized here. The traditional model of libraries emphasized the collection, maintenance and preservation of sources of information and librarians were individuals with expert knowledge and navigation skills within the complex system.<sup>7</sup> The needs of the library and its ongoing welfare were primary. The introduction of technology has had a cataclysmic impact on every corner of libraries. From the expectations of users to the way those needs are met, technology permeates library operations.<sup>8</sup> User needs are now considered primary. This philosophy affects the library's ability to deliver service quickly, efficiently, in ways that satisfy the user and eliminate obstacles to accessing library resources.<sup>9-10</sup> Globalization of information has created a more extensive, diverse patron base than libraries have ever experienced.<sup>11</sup> Libraries can now connect and share resources with other institutions far away. Traditional services are still needed, even with the demand for new and expanded services. Library users seek greater convenience and value for their time and money.<sup>9-10</sup>

This new environment has been imposed without a concomitant change in libraries' value system. Librarians are required to be both generalists and specialists. Library staff feel pressure to incorporate technology into their workplace while sustaining the values and activities of the traditional library. While time spent on some tasks has been reduced or eliminated, other employees with different skill sets are needed to fill new roles, especially related to technology development and maintenance.<sup>12</sup> New workflows require change in behaviour and activities.<sup>8</sup> The clash of old values and new expectations lead to contradictory objectives, worker role confusion and psychological instability. Stress is not recognized or managed in this new environment of more public service hours, wider variety of tasks, and diminished control over workload.<sup>8,13</sup> While users perform their own searches and use other non-library resources, library staff fear devaluing of skills

and irrelevancy in the evolving information age.<sup>7</sup> The last two decades of substantial change has seen upheaval experienced by library users and staff.<sup>14</sup>

## MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKPLACES

The presence of several generations of workers in the same library challenges library responsiveness and adaptability. Recent demographic studies in Canada, the United States, and Australia indicate four generations of workers present in libraries. Table 1 identifies four generational groups and common features of each group. In demographic terms, a generation or cohort spans approximately 20 years.<sup>15</sup> Historical events, economic experiences, and social upheaval shape generational identity. These generations have been identified in popular culture by the age range of the workforce, however one author notes that a common mindset is more relevant than one's year of birth.<sup>15</sup>

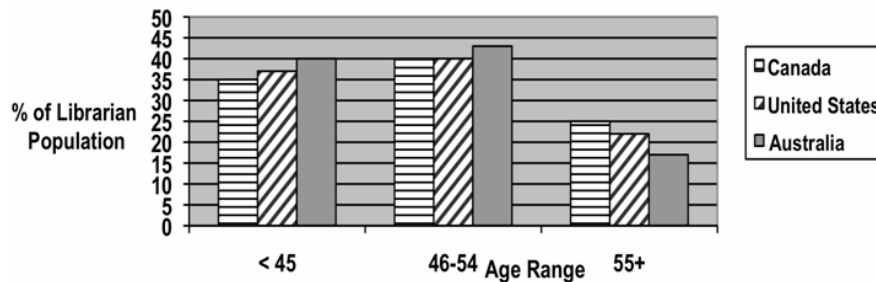
**Table 1:** General descriptions of four generational groups working in libraries\*

	<b>Traditionalists</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Millennials</b>
<i>Year range of birth</i>	Prior to 1946	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1981	1982 – 2000
<i>Present Age</i>	62 – 79	40 – 61	24 – 44	22 –
<i>General Characteristics</i>	Loyal, faithful, conservative	Idealistic, independent, question authority	Self-reliant, adaptive to change	Collaborative, culturally sensitive, media-literate
<i>Attitudes towards institutions</i>	Loyalty & respect	Change possible with commitment	Suspicion, potential sources of unbalance	Judged on their own merit
<i>Experience in libraries</i>	Card catalogue	From closed to open stacks – still card catalogue	Introduction of computers, email, OCLC, Dialog, Infotrac	Internet including Google, Web 2.0

\* Information for this chart was gathered from several sources. The sources are: Lancaster LC. The click and clash of generations: four generations at work means four distinct mindsets that collide every day, for better or worse. *Library Journal* [online] 2003;128(17): 36; Hill K. Defy the decades with multigenerational teams. *Nursing Management* 2004; 35(1):32-35; and Kapoun J. Generation X and Y meet the Baby Boomers at the Library. *LOEX of the West*;2004 Jun 2-4; Boise, Idaho. <http://library.boisestate.edu/loex2004/presentations/KapounLOEX2004.ppt>



In the last decade, the distribution of generational groups has been well-documented in the library literature. Initiated by concerns over the wave of upcoming retirements of Traditionalists and Baby Boomers, several surveys provide details of the distribution of multiple generations in the library workplace and the working life experiences of library staff. Statistics confirm the large numbers of librarians in the Traditionalist and Baby Boomer generations presently working in all types of libraries (see figure 1). In all three countries, the librarian complement is divided somewhat evenly into generational groups by thirds<sup>16</sup>. In the United States, the percentage of librarian population over age 45 increased from 42% to 65% while the median age of Australian librarians is 46.<sup>17-18</sup> In Canada, more than one-quarter or 25% of librarians are over the age of 55, which is double the rate of other Canadian workers, which is only 11%.<sup>16</sup> From 2001 to 2006, recent entrants to the profession increased in Canada from 18% to 21% of the total library workforce; their growing numbers have started to have an impact on organizational culture and operations.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 1:** Age ranges of librarians by country

Generational groups hold differing perceptions and opinions about a range of professional topics. Overall, loyalty and longevity have traditionally been rewarded in libraries. Statistics support the high level of institutional longevity; librarians work over 15 years, on average, at the same institution.<sup>15</sup> For Traditionalists and Baby Boomers, this continuity has led to positions of authority and decision-making.<sup>19</sup> Longevity at the same institution and numerical dominance of senior professionals may also explain the stability of the profession overall as well as the perpetuation of operations and values in individual libraries. Generation X and Millennial librarians have described current library management as “risk averse:” closed to new ideas, new individuals and new ways of operating.<sup>14</sup> These librarians suggest senior professionals have learned the operations of “their” library and have no experiential sense of the challenges and stresses of being a “new person.”<sup>20</sup> In contrast, a survey of librarians working for five years of less indicates that 81% have changed jobs at least once since becoming a professional.<sup>19</sup> More troubling, another survey in 2005 revealed how at least half of younger librarians said they had

considered leaving the profession.<sup>21</sup> This common frustration felt by both American and English junior librarians should raise alarms about the future status of libraries. The potential loss or continued negative climate of junior professional librarians can contribute to an unhealthy organizational culture and increase the potential for disagreement and conflict.

The workplace arena illustrates the clash of opinions about library issues that serve to heighten tension and increase the possibility of brief or sustained conflict among library staff.<sup>14, 18, 22-23</sup> While it is risky to generalize about people's attitudes within a generational group, for the purposes of illustration and explanation, examples can demonstrate how equally valid perceptions and values can clash among library professionals. Hernon, Powell and Young surveyed the perceptions of existing Association of Research Libraries (ARL) directors and non-ARL directors, asking them to rate qualities of success and effectiveness. Several years later, the authors updated their research by surveying a cohort of Gen-X librarians.<sup>24</sup> When comparing the ratings between groups, only 17.5% of the attributes chosen by Gen-X librarians *ranked as highly* in the other two lists.<sup>24</sup> The lack of agreement between the generations on leadership qualities illustrates the lack of consensus among library professionals. In this case, the differences could have important human resource implications. Directors may bypass Generation-X librarians for promotion and professional development opportunities if they have not valued, and hence not developed, the particular qualities deemed important. Without these types of investigations of perceptions across generational groups, misunderstandings can develop and persist among librarian colleagues.

Even though they enter the field with similar values, the translation of these values into library operations, policies and workplaces can be very different for each generation. Based on a combination of one's age, skills and knowledge, number of years at the library, all of these factors can affect the perceptions and behaviours of librarians. Shepstone and Currie's research illustrate this issue in their analysis of organizational values at one academic library.<sup>4</sup> Both junior and senior librarians were asked about current and future organizational values. In the initial assessment, *both* groups described the current direction of the library as having the same qualities and objectives. When asked what the future values and direction should be, the two groups *diverged substantially*. The senior librarians placed the same importance as current circumstances whereas the junior librarians supported a direction that emphasized more collaboration. This exercise demonstrates how generational groups can create different, but equally valid, professional perspectives. Through this investigation, the librarians at this institution avoided potentially chaotic future planning situations. Instead, this analysis gave all groups a way to articulate and negotiate library values and objectives.

A review of the issues explored thus far reveals multiple factors that enhance the possibility of tension and conflict within libraries. The external environment creates dynamics that challenge the traditional operations of libraries and roles of librarians. The stress and pressure introduced into the system is exacerbated by the

generational differences and misunderstandings occurring in every type of library. Individuals respond according to their personal and organizational experiences. Assumptions are found in the thoughts and behaviours of library members; initiatives that do not conform to traditional library values and these assumptions meet with resistance, fear or rejection.<sup>9</sup> The result is an evolution from general workplace incivility to outright bullying and mobbing.

## **MOBBING AND BULLYING IN LIBRARIES**

Workplace harassment leaves a deep, enduring impact on the careers and lives of individuals. While other forms of interpersonal conflict at work are well-researched, the body of knowledge about mobbing and bullying as workplace harassment continues to be developed.<sup>25</sup> The topic is difficult to research because of its subjective and insidious nature. Both terms imply escalating acts of aggression in a systematic way.<sup>26-27</sup> Both forms of harassment have been described as a pattern of predominantly observable behaviours, over a period of time greater than six months.<sup>28-29</sup> The intention is to humiliate, stigmatize and/or discredit a co-worker.<sup>30</sup> European researchers use the term “mobbing;” British and North America researchers use the broad term “bullying.”<sup>31</sup> Bullying and mobbing differ in the position of the instigator or “perpetrator” of the acts. Bullying is defined as aggressive or negative actions of one individual, usually a supervisor or someone in a “perceived” position of greater power, against another person.<sup>26 29</sup> Mobbing is a term used to describe the actions of more than one person, usually a group of colleagues, towards an individual.<sup>26-27</sup>

Mobbing and bullying occur in all types of organizations, though more research has been conducted in health and social service organizations. Large, highly representative studies in Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom indicate a prevalence range (based on self-report rates) of between 1 to 4%.<sup>27 31</sup> When studies asked workers to identify from a list of negative behaviours, the figure jumps to as high as 10 to 25% of workers being a target.<sup>32</sup> These figures match other studies that indicate at least one-quarter of the adult working population will experience some mobbing or bullying tactics in their working lifetime.<sup>25-26 28</sup> When this author discussed the matter with colleagues, five confirming responses were received in 24 hours.<sup>33</sup> The details of library experiences reinforced the research with disturbing accuracy.<sup>34</sup>

While a majority of workers never experience or witness mobbing or bullying in the workplace, research that focuses on the experiences of targets reveal a similar process of escalation.<sup>33</sup> The triggering or instigating situation that sets up the dynamic of “opposing” parties is most often an unresolved work issue or disagreement that actually becomes the smallest part of the whole bullying or mobbing experience.<sup>27</sup> “Opposing” is a relative term since it has been shown how members from different generations may hold legitimately different perspectives

about a range of library topics. However, once positions are established, the actions of the perpetrator focus on assaulting the professional reputation, social relations, workplace communication and even quality of work of the target.<sup>26</sup> In a mobbing situation, these actions can occur over the course of weeks, by many individuals, each contributing to the assault. In the beginning, the actions may be regular but subtle enough that the target may not piece together the whole process. In retrospect, the target can explain how the workplace changed.<sup>27</sup>

Pioneering Swedish researcher Harold Leymann has identified up to 45 different negative behaviours that encompass mobbing or bullying.<sup>28</sup> Keashly's study of workplace abuse in North America identified numerous acts between co-workers such as yelling, screaming, threatening, aggressive eye contact, aggressive gossip, refusing to communicate, criticizing or humiliating someone in front of others, insults, isolation and/or withholding information or resources.<sup>29-30</sup> When this author listened to a wide range of behaviours in the discussions with other librarians about being a target or a witness to mobbing or bullying experience, examples included regular, insidious derision of a colleague's opinions or behaviours in the person's absence, rumours, demeaning work characterization, negative opinions in the form of questions or ignoring the target's input in meetings or committees.<sup>33</sup> Mobbing examples provided by librarians included excessive monitoring of break, lunch and meeting times; criticizing reference interactions; or walking past the individual without acknowledgement. In the library environment, the shift or desk schedule can be used to indirectly reward some and punish others with quiet or busy times or scheduling known enemies together. It has been the author's experience at several libraries that scheduling in any capacity is not a desired activity. Therefore, the individual who takes on this duty may be given extra allowances in many (un-related) areas, which have the potential to be abused.<sup>33</sup> Communication lines are changed so information is withheld from the target or training scheduled when the target is absent and then criticism later for not being able to use the technology. The target is not given the proper resources or support to complete work effectively or is given minimal, humiliating or meaningless work as a way of encouraging the target's departure.<sup>28 33</sup> If the target stays in the job, criticism and social isolation could persist as colleagues distance themselves or become passive enablers, witnesses in the process. Other colleagues may join in the aggression even though they do not agree with the behaviour, either out of respect for the perpetrator or to avoid being a target themselves.<sup>27</sup>

## **THE EXPERIENCE AND IMPACT OF MOBBING AND BULLYING**

There are no typical qualities of bully, mob or target in the research literature. Targets and perpetrators can be of either gender and may be at any stage in their career, from entrant to senior level. Research suggests that the perpetrator may rate low on social competence and high on social anxiety and/or aggressiveness

scales.<sup>31, 35</sup> The target may rate low on social competence; however, researchers have also identified this group overall as creative, principled individuals in the workplace who often demonstrate exceptional accomplishment and commitment to work.<sup>27 35</sup> As one researcher described, the target's problem

“...was that they clashed with the norms of the work group to which they belonged. It is likely that in this case, the victim's [target's] conscientiousness went against a group culture characterized by rigidity and low tolerance for diversity. These victims [targets] were probably perceived as constant annoyances or even threats to the work group to which they belonged. As a consequence, the group may have started to harass these individuals, either to enforce conformity or to get rid of the person.”<sup>34</sup>

This comment is particularly disturbing in light of numerous surveys of the library profession that indicate a high degree of unresponsiveness to change experienced by junior library professionals. These recent entrants to the library field describe how bureaucracy, lack of openness to new ideas and rigid administration stifles initiative and a willingness to contribute to the library.<sup>14 21</sup> In addition, librarians' longevity has positive and negative implications for mobbing and bullying. Library staff can have strong connections with their colleagues and a time of proven performance at their particular institution; at the same time, disagreements can solidify into long-standing conflict. Co-workers who do not participate in mobbing are still witness to the toxic behaviour and feel a similar stress, reduced work engagement and commitment as the target.<sup>30</sup> The cost is high for all individuals in some libraries.

The short- and long-term costs of mobbing and bullying in the workplace are substantial. While there has been no proven direct relationship between bullying and symptoms such as depression, prolonged stress disorder and substance abuse, researchers have identified strong relationships between exposures to many of the tactics listed above and low levels of job satisfaction, increased job-related stress and stronger turnover intentions.<sup>26</sup> Targets frequently reported feelings of shame and humiliation at being victimized by co-workers or superiors and there was little social support to counter the messages of personal and professional failure.<sup>35 39-40</sup> Namie and Namie listed a range of symptoms from lack of confidence, humiliation and guilt, obsessive thoughts, inability to concentrate and difficulties sleeping.<sup>39</sup> These symptoms are similar to the constellation of elements in post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>27</sup>

## COUNTERING MOBBING AND BULLYING IN LIBRARIES

Bullying and mobbing requires individuals to instigate, perpetuate and tolerate the behaviour. Research from the business and organizational behaviour literature reveals that mobbing and bullying behaviour breeds in chaotic environments with

weak leadership, some degree of job insecurity, nebulous task or work roles, indistinct performance measures and strong conformity to organizational culture.<sup>28 31</sup> Unfortunately, surveys of librarians indicate all of these elements exist in libraries today. The description of new professional roles suggests libraries are grappling with a fast-changing environment.<sup>8</sup> However, new hires in these jobs may be vulnerable to vague job descriptions or contradictory responsibilities.<sup>34</sup> More than two-thirds of librarians report performing a wider variety of tasks than five years ago; only half found their workload manageable.<sup>8</sup> Organizational structures and practices appear to contribute to chaotic work environment but the system level is the place where any changes will have the most impact on a library's culture.<sup>43</sup> Without strong or clear leadership, libraries are vulnerable to rudderless activity and decision-making by peer pressure.

Lack of effective management training and strong leadership are necessary factors to sustain bullying and mobbing behaviour. Since the target is often described as resistant, disloyal or insubordinate, the most common organizational response to bullying or mobbing allegations is denial.<sup>25 27 29</sup> Since the target has been experiencing escalating abuse for at least six months before mentioning the issue, their increasingly defensive position is used against them.<sup>27</sup> Even when target does speak up, the situation is usually framed as a personality conflict.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, management and supervision skills are not widespread or valued skills in this profession. In Canada, more than 70% of librarians are currently working as supervisors or managers while only half of those surveyed received *any* management training.<sup>8</sup> When queried about the value placed on this professional role, *less than half* were interested in management and only 40% were interested in supervision.<sup>8</sup>

Lack of training or interest in management is felt in libraries' organizational climate. Research about retention indicates respondents rank the organization as the lowest factor for staying in their job. Among librarians who do stay at the same institution for a decade or longer, 80% of them report a lack of organizational commitment in terms of its policies, planning and communication practices.<sup>41</sup> From individuals who left the profession, their "... negative comments focused on management style and performance, lack of communication, lack of leadership and even unethical behaviour."<sup>41</sup> Almost all librarians are concerned about employee-supervisor interactions but only 77% of Canadian librarians believe they are treated with respect by their superiors.<sup>8</sup> Librarians who conducted a study for the Association of College and Research Libraries noted "more time needs to be applied to properly train administrators instead of just promoting individuals with the highest seniority."<sup>2</sup> This lack of attention and worth ascribed to supervision offers a possible contributing factor for the potential and real existence of mobbing and bullying behaviours in libraries. Without adequate training or ongoing motivation, the varied acts and actors in a bullying or mobbing situation create a complexity beyond the scope of many supervisors or managers expertise. In most situations, the common conclusion of the situation is the target leaves the organization.<sup>34</sup>

## **SOLUTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

Libraries are not exempt from interpersonal conflict, especially the particular dynamics of bullying and mobbing. Interpersonal relationships, interdependence of work groups and long-standing professional values complicate attempts by anyone to unravel the strands that lead to conflict in libraries. The fact of four generations at work in the same institutions must be addressed in working groups, committees and professional development sessions in order to reduce the potential for conflict. One of the most common complaints from all generational groups is the lack of listening by other groups to differing perspectives.<sup>14 21-22</sup> Solutions that focus on ways and means for professionals to talk in non-threatening environments about ideas, projects and work-styles will enhance overall library effectiveness. Libraries with additional work-life balance programs or specific initiatives around professional development, mentoring and succession planning will retain the most positive and effective librarians.<sup>2 11 16</sup> The lack of management training appears to be a circumstance that has led to a “generational effect” of poor supervision within libraries that contribute to poor behaviour by employees. As indicated, more than half of librarians supervise at some point in their career. Specific institutional sessions supported by library administration, combined with general library management courses, should be a priority for libraries that want to develop individuals who can perform outreach, instruction and reference services to all patrons with a positive mindset and contribute ideas of change in an encouraging work environment.

The progression of a mobbing or bullying situation leaves no one or nothing untouched, not the target, the bully, the mob, the witnesses, the supervisor or the library. In the current environment, libraries may spend more time and attention on meeting organizational objectives, proving value to the institution and being competitive in the broader information world. The ephemeral nature of organizational culture makes it easy to deny or ignore. However, libraries that discount this area are operating without the full energy and engagement of their engine of production: their employees. As indicated, turnover rates are not necessarily an accurate sign of organizational health. Libraries that choose to embrace differences of opinion and seek contributions from all employees regardless of age or professional tenure will benefit from higher quality service delivery and operations.

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## **WORKFORCE PLANNING: A CASE STUDY – INITIATIVES TO POSITION THE VICTORIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY WORKFORCE TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In September 2008 Victoria University Library (VU) adopted a workforce plan that included a series of initiatives to position the Library's workforce to meet the needs of the Library for the period 2008 to 2010. The initiatives in the workforce plan provide a clear framework for library staff and for the future development of Victoria University Library's workforce. Each of the initiatives identifies some key areas of the workforce for development and makes recommendations to address these areas.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of Victoria University Library's workforce plan is to prepare and develop the Library's workforce to meet the future needs of the Library, ensuring that the Library is aligned with the University's Strategic Plan, which in-turn assists with the long term viability and sustainability of the University. The workforce plan also aims to create a flexible workforce, one that is service oriented and student-centered, responsive to the changing needs of users, adaptive to changes in technology, and changes to the strategic directions of the University, to deliver quality services and resources to staff and students to support the teaching, learning and research outcomes of the University.

The purpose of the workforce plan is to:

- Develop a sustainable and financially viable staffing model by mapping positions and staff capabilities so that they are aligned with the Library service model
- Further develop Library staff capabilities (skills and knowledge) by providing opportunities to train and develop existing staff to fill identified skill gaps
- Recruit qualified staff with required skills and knowledge to better enable the Library to match staff capabilities with the strategic direction of the Library and the University and to assist with succession planning

- Use the Staff Performance and Development Plans to identify opportunities for staff development.
- Enhance leadership by developing current staff and the strategic recruitment of senior staff to improve the quality outcomes identified in the Library's strategic plan
- Support staffing initiatives in areas that are considered to be areas of expertise and strength, of strategic importance, a niche market or new opportunity that has potential to enhance the Library's strategic directions

In implementing the initiatives in the workforce plan VU Library indicated that it would adhere to University policies and procedures and the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement; work closely with the Workforce Planning Office, Human Resources, and Library staff; embed the initiatives into relevant Library branch operational plans where appropriate, and develop implementation plans for all short and long-term initiatives as required

## **WORKFORCE PLANNING CONTEXT**

Why does a library or any other organisation need a workforce plan? There are many reasons – from being sustainable to managing within a constantly changing environment where there are always new ways to think and work smarter, especially during times of economic rationalism, or to simply cope with an ageing workforce. In many cases it is all of the above.

Technology has also changed the way we work. New roles are being developed in the library and information science profession. The modes in which we work are changing constantly. As a result new skill sets are required to meet the ever changing needs and demands of library users. Workloads keep shifting, rising in some areas, decreasing in others. It therefore makes sense to develop a plan for the way in which we manage and develop our staff to meet the needs of the changing library and organisation.

Some of the underlying principles of a workforce plan include:

- Ensuring that the library's operations and services reflect the organisation's needs and are aligned with the organisation's strategic plan
- Valuing current staff and appreciating diversity
- Ensuring that staff skills are kept up-to-date
- Providing opportunities to assist staff to take up positions both internal and external to the library
- Assisting with career transition
- Recognizing the high level of service commitment by library staff, and
- A commitment to ensuring work/life balance.

VU Library's workforce plan is based on these values and its ability to be innovative, provide quality service, be cutting-edge, and be able to attract staff to work on new projects following the principles of plan, do, review, and improve.

For the workforce plan to succeed it is vital that the Library is able to live within its means by ensuring that the budget and workforce are sustainable and by re-engineering positions and services as opportunities arose.

For a workforce plan to succeed it is necessary for a library to have an operational or strategic plan. VU Library's operational plan aims to transform the University community through knowledge and information management resources and services that support collaborative, flexible and life long learning, teaching and research. Library staff expertise, coupled with evolving technologies, facilitate a client-focussed and seamless service. The operational plan should be about staff demonstrating the values of the organization. At VU these values include: transforming individuals and the community through knowledge and skills; equality of opportunity for students and staff; diversity for its contribution to creativity and the enrichment of our lives; cooperation as the basis of engagement with local and international communities; integrity, respect and transparency in personal and collaborative action; sound environmental stewardship for future generations, and the pursuit of excellence in everything that we do.

For the period 2008 to 2010, VU Library's operational plan identified the following key directions: continue to provide high quality information resources and services; progress Learning Commons projects; extend and embed web 2.0 technologies; implement the Library workforce plan; develop, train and extend Library staff; support research; support Making VU projects; progress Information and Knowledge Management initiatives; and protect VU in terms of copyright risk.

The ageing of the workforce in many countries is an accepted phenomenon. In Australia, the workforce is ageing faster than the general population and in particular workers in education are amongst the oldest workers. In 2004 a Department of Parliament Services report indicated that the average age of all Australian workers was 38.6 years and the average age of workers in the education sector was 43.4 years.<sup>1</sup> This report identified that the ageing of the Australian workforce in the education sector could lead to staff shortages as increasing numbers of workers reach retirement.

In the Australian Library and Information Science (LIS) sector, library workers sit at the older end of the age spectrum. In 2005 the median age of workers in the LIS was 46 with 60% of workers aged 45 years or older.<sup>2</sup> In 2007 the average age of staff in VU Library was 44.9 years. In 2007 54.48% of VU Library staff was over the age of 45. Whilst this figure is lower than the national average it still indicates that VU Library faces a considerable challenge to renew its workforce as more staff approach retirement. At the end of 2007 7.46% of VU Library staff members were over the age of 60.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that predictions of an older workforce and staff shortages are coming true, particularly in the LIS sector, and more so in the educa-

tion sector. VU Library is already facing the challenge of attracting workers in a competitive market into positions that require specific skill sets to meet the future needs and demands of the University and the Library's clients. The continued ageing of the workforce will increase this pressure. To meet these challenges the VU Library workforce plan developed strategic initiatives that will enable the Library to attract the right people with the required skills into positions that are attractive and sustainable. The plan will assist with providing career paths and opportunities; succession planning; and the development of a flexible workforce that not only meets the needs of the Library and the University, but also understands that change is a constant.

In developing a workforce plan, one of the first things required was an understanding of the Library's strengths and weaknesses. A simple brainstorming exercise helped with this and assisted with development of strategies and initiatives.

- VU Library's strengths include: the provision of an innovative and efficient library and information service across 11 campuses, including support to international partnerships; a strong commitment to quality management; well aligned to the University's strategic plan; able to quickly develop and implement projects; excellent results when benchmarked against other Australian University Library services (top quartile of the annual client satisfaction survey).<sup>3</sup> VU Library also has strong links to academic and teaching staff, is represented at the University level on a variety of committees, has loyal and dedicated staff, a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the University system, and a "one-library" approach to the provision of services.
- VU Library's weaknesses include: limited resources (when benchmarked against Australian University libraries the VU Library budget is ranked near the bottom)<sup>4</sup>; thinly spread provision of staff, services, and resources across 11 campus libraries; low staff to student ratio when benchmarked against other Australian university libraries; some inconsistency in level, mix and skills of library staff (right people in the right place); a perception that salary levels of staff are lower than in other university libraries, and the difficulties of working within a matrix structure.

In preparing a workforce plan it is also important to identify the key challenges that a library faces. At VU Library the main challenge is to develop a sustainable budget that supports the Library's service model which provides staff and services across 11 campuses which differ in size and which also have diverse student and staff cohorts. This is a particular challenge as staffing costs have been increasing faster than University income. Other challenges include the development of Learning Commons and working collaboratively with non-traditional library staff in the Learning Commons; competition for resources across the University; and implementing new library services. VU Library also needs more flexible staffing capability to be able to move quickly when required so that it can keep up with chang-

ing and growing expectations of clients. It is also challenging to keep up with and take advantage of technological changes.

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE LIBRARY**

The future direction of a library is often driven by the strategic needs of the parent organisation. Libraries should also be prepared to influence the future directions of their organisations, whether it is through representation on committees, policy or other means. Libraries are at the cutting edge of technology and staff are skilled to provide highly valued support and services in an information society.

At VU, the Learning Commons is the future direction of the Library. It is an approach that provides seamless, one-stop learning and educational support for Victoria University students and staff. The Learning Commons is a student space that encourages learning conversations between peers and the development of shared reflections around strategies of learning at Victoria University. The development of the Learning Commons is part of a wider transformation in the University toward a culture that is learner-oriented, learner-centred, flexible, collaborative, community building and university-wide. At Victoria University the Learning Commons model incorporates the inclusion of library, teaching and learning support, information technology, and student career services in the one physical space. Student rovers with a peer support role have been employed in the Learning Commons to assist with providing a seamless and student centred service.

The application of the Learning Commons model has produced a different service environment that has impacted the customer service roles currently undertaken by Library staff. These changes – including the broader introduction of student rovers and student assistants – are expected to result in a reduced requirement for library staff to be the frontline for customer queries along with changes to the delivery of reference and liaison services. As part of the approach to the Learning Commons VU Library is committed to getting the most value and flexibility from its collection, being more strategic and flexible in how it uses space, ensuring that technology is portable, and that staff can develop the specialist knowledge and skills required to perform their duties. In addition, Victoria University is likely to consolidate within its most profitable campus locations, thus requiring the library to seek more flexibility for staffing arrangements to support all of the Library/Learning Commons locations. All of these changes are challenges for developing a sustainable workforce for the future.

### **SERVICE MODEL AND WORK PROFILE**

What is your current service model? Does it meet the needs of the library? Is it sustainable? Do you need to move to a different service model? Where will the li-

brary be in five years? What are your growth areas? What are your declining areas? What is static? What is on the horizon that will inform your service model? These are just some of the questions that need to be asked to inform the development of a workforce plan.

At VU Library it is envisaged that students will become more integrated into the workforce and that there will be more collaboration and sharing of workspace with staff from other areas within the University. Library services will be more electronic and self-serve where possible and the user environment will be virtual as well as physical. The Library will also play an important role in institutional data. Client demands will determine services which in turn will be scalable and responsive to shifts in user demand at specific locations or delivery times. All of these factors will influence services, which in turn will inform the workforce planning process to determine the type of staff and service levels required, and to ensure that staff are skilled and capable to meet the ever-changing environment.

One of the main aims of developing a workforce plan and a staffing framework is to understand and analyse a library's current workforce to provide an accurate profile of the staff employed. VU Library undertook a detailed analysis of the Library staff establishment from December 2004 until December 2007. It examined such characteristics as age, gender, positions by classification and qualification, and qualification levels by gender. The number of staff and equivalent full-time positions at Victoria University Library has been fairly stable since 2004 (just over 100 equivalent full-time positions). This is in line with Victoria University staffing trends for ongoing academic and administrative staff.<sup>5</sup> The average age of VU Library staff at the end of 2007 was 44.9 years. This is below industry figures and also below the average age of Victoria University staff. Some key statistics of VU Library workforce profile include:

- 92.25% of positions require a qualification (TAFE Cert III & higher)
  - Unqualified (Year 12 or equivalent) 4.38%
  - TAFE certificate 39.07%
  - TAFE diploma 16.04%
  - Undergraduate/Postgraduate 37.14%
- 68.5% of Library positions are full-time
- Staff by gender has seen a slight increase of 3.3% in the number of male staff between 2004 and 2007 (74% female at the end of 2007)
- 54.48% of staff are over 45 years of age
- 14.18% of staff are over 54 years of age
- 17.16% of staff are under the age of 35
- 7.46% of staff are over the age of 60



## WORKFORCE PLANNING INITIATIVES

VU Library's workforce plan is made up of seven initiatives developed from an analysis of the data collated from the Library's operation plan, the University's strategic plan, the future directions of the Library, the Library's strengths and weaknesses, the challenges faced by the Library, identified key areas for growth, the Learning Commons service model, and from data collected from analysing the Library's workforce profile. An analysis was also made of other workforce plans available in the LIS sector in Australia to inform the methodology for the plan.<sup>6 7</sup>

### *Library structure initiative*

The Learning Commons model at VU Library demands a staffing structure that is both robust and flexible. At the same time the Library's budget must be sustainable to support the Library structure and service model. Having this in place enables the Library to quickly change and adapt to technology and the needs of library clients as their needs change. As such, the Library and its staff need to have strategies in place to deal with changes to positions, duties, and the skills required in performing them.

The Learning Commons and associated service delivery model, along with technological development, has identified several areas of significant growth and gaps that will affect the current and future staffing structure of the Library.

Some of these critical areas include:

- Further development of online services
- 24/7 service delivery
- Staff engaging with technology more on a day-to-day basis
- Staff acting as facilitators between Library clients and technology
- Reference and Liaison staff working more closely with faculty,
- Further embedding of user education into teaching, and involvement in curriculum development
- Support services for research

These areas of need become more critical as the Library continues to enhance its range of services. This is exemplified by the increased emphasis on online services and self-service services e.g. self-checkout and self-return, and unmediated inter-library loans.

The Library's website is also evolving. It is the most important access point for all Library services, including access to the collection (catalogue, e-books, electronic databases and online support services). The increasing reliance on electronic services and the rapid changes in technology means that the Library will need to further develop the knowledge and skills in this area to ensure future capability.

To move towards a more robust and flexible staffing structure the Library has put in place some short and long-term initiatives. Some short term initiatives in-

clude: reviewing positions as vacancies occur with a view to identifying opportunities to re-engineer positions; reviewing the duties of positions on an annual basis; reviewing the electronic information support needs of the Library to ensure that it is positioned to meet the future needs of the Library and its clients; and embedding positions for student assistants in the Library (this is part an ongoing commitment by the library to employ VU students in the Library to support the University's learning in the workplace initiative).

Some long-term initiatives include: ensuring that the Library (and its branches) have appropriate staffing levels, that positions are at the appropriate level, and that staff have the appropriate qualifications, skills and knowledge. In addition, the Library will continue to re-align sections of its structure to support the internal needs of the library as well as the University as required. Structural reviews may be required in response to University and campus changes. At every opportunity the Library will continue to maximise the use of new technologies and the opportunities these present to re-engineer positions and duties as required. VU Library has also undertaken to review, model, and cost staffing to develop structures that ensure the right mix of staff in the right place at the right time. These structures will be developed over time to ensure the use of more flexible modes of employment.

### ***Position titles and descriptions initiative***

Having consistent position descriptions and titles is vital to providing an efficient and effective staffing structure that reflects the business and operational needs of the Library, which is also balanced with client needs. VU Library provides a broad range of services across 11 campus libraries and requires consistency between similar positions to ensure staff flexibility to meet the changing needs and demands from clients no matter what campus they are on.

At the end of 2007 VU Library had approximately 134 staff in 102.2 equivalent full-time positions, of which over 60 had different position titles. This has since reduced to 123 staff in 99.24 equivalent full-time positions as of April 2009. Having a large number of similar positions with different titles reduces flexibility and makes the updating of position descriptions and duties an onerous task.

By reviewing position descriptions and titles and by making them more consistent, VU Library has been able to provide a clear distinction between the roles and duties of each position, and at the same time provide clear expectations to library staff on skills and qualifications required at each level. This enables greater flexibility with staff and ensures standardised duties for similar positions across all campus libraries. The reviewing of position descriptions and titles and making them consistent is an ongoing process. The challenge is to ensure that the position descriptions reflect the skill sets required to meet the business and operational needs of the Library.

All positions in VU Library are reviewed as vacancies occur through staff movement or natural attrition and are re-engineered to reflect the strategic needs of

the Library and the University on an ongoing basis. All positions are updated every three years so that they remain relevant to the needs of the Library.

### ***Recruitment initiative***

Victoria University Library aims to develop and recruit suitable and well-qualified staff to meet the continuing and emerging needs of its clients as well as fill identified skills gaps. VU Library wants a workforce profile that is highly skilled, efficient, flexible, and financially sustainable in the long-term. Recruiting staff with the appropriate skills and attributes will also assist with succession planning and reflecting the cultural diversity of the University community. When recruiting, it is vital that staff understand and are committed to the overarching framework that links all of a Library's practices. This framework requires staff to share a common vision, mission, values, practices, roles, strategy, culture, and recognition of achievement and development. These are linked to one or more of the following: the work team, work group, department, division, and organisation. The goal and challenge for the Library is to embed this framework on a continuous basis.

When a vacancy occurs, the manager or supervisor should always ask the following questions. Is the work essential to the operation of the work area or the organisation, or could it cease? Is the function or service currently being provided by another work area in the Library or organisation? Could other staff in the work area undertake the work or some of the duties? What would be the best way to structure the work? What are the budget and financial implications of recruiting, both short and long-term?

Considerable thought and preparation should also be given to the best time to recruit. Libraries, in particular academic libraries, experience busy periods at different times of the year. The recruitment process should be thought out properly with consideration given to the requirements of the position and the attributes required from applicants. Positions should be re-advertised if the initial pool of candidates is insufficient or if the applicants do not meet all of the selection criteria for the position. When recruiting it is important to consider the following:

- What skills are vital to the position?
- What personal attributes is the library looking for?
- What areas of training and experience are essential?
- Who is the target audience for recruitment? Is it local, national or even international?
- Where is the appropriate place to advertise? e.g. internal only, internal and external, on-line, in a newspaper or professional journal? Advertising vacancies both internally and externally ensures that the best person for the job is selected and contributes to the sustainability of the workforce.
- Always promote the benefits of working in your organisation

When recruiting it is important to know in advance the key personal attributes that are required in potential staff. Some examples sought by VU Library include:

- **Clear communicator** – able to exchange information easily and have strong interpersonal skills; a good presenter
- **Team worker** – able to work well in teams and achieve team goals together
- **Friendly & approachable** – able to build rapport with fellow staff and library clients
- **Self motivated** – able to work independently, performance oriented
- **Enthusiastic and positive** – demonstrate enthusiasm and a positive attitude. Employees who demonstrate these traits attain results!
- **Resilient** – able to work with staff and library clients at all levels and overcome barriers
- **Adaptable & flexible** – able to deal with environment and organisational change
- **Punctual & reliable** – at all times. This can impact on the team goals
- **Thinker** – strong problem solving skills; able to think strategically, analytically and critically
- **Interest** – demonstrated interest in position and the goals and objectives of the Library and the University
- **Professionalism** – demonstrated dedication and professional behaviour with a good understanding of Victoria University's values
- **Leadership** – ability to lead and take other staff on the journey.

#### *Student work experience initiative*

As part of Victoria University's Making VU strategy<sup>8</sup> of learning in the workplace and community, VU Library has an agreement with the Library & Cultural Studies Unit to provide guaranteed work experience placements for up to 20 of their students per year. VU Library offers the students a one or two semester placement. This arrangement gives the students valuable work experience and the Library also receives some value from the effort put into training the students. It is not uncommon for some of the work experience students to obtain casual student assistant positions in the Library and eventually an ongoing role. VU Library is also committed to supporting the placement of students studying to become professional librarians from other tertiary institutions.

The benefits of having students in the workplace include a demonstrated commitment to the University's strategic direction, building networks with educators, access to skilled graduates and a potential pool of casual and ongoing workers. This in turn assists with creating a sustainable workforce profile.

VU Library is also investigating the introduction of student traineeship positions into the Library. A variety of similar schemes and models is already occurring in various university libraries and organisations throughout Australia. The introduction of student traineeship positions demonstrates a commitment to student

work experience and also to the provision of opportunities for LIS students to gain valuable workplace experience. In 2008 VU Library also employed over 20 students as casual student assistants to assist with extending Library opening hours. These students were from a variety of courses. This strategy has been highly successful and was reflected in the results of the Library's 2008 client satisfaction survey where VU Library achieved an 80% customer satisfaction rating that put it in the top quartile of all Australian University libraries.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Staff capabilities initiative***

VU Library staff skills and capabilities, with technology as an underpinning link-enabler, are a strategic focus area for the Library. VU Library appreciates the current skills and knowledge of Library staff and their commitment to their jobs. However, as the Library moves forward it is vital that staff also take responsibility to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills to ensure their relevancy and to meet the business and operational needs of the Library.

The opening of Learning Commons at Victoria University is a strategic initiative that has had a direct impact on the focus for developing library staff skills and capabilities. VU Library is committed to assisting staff to build on their existing skills, preparing them for the future, as well as improving their marketability and employability. VU Library is also committed to supporting staff to obtain suitable professional qualifications. This is managed via a staff development committee responsible for overseeing the planning, budgeting and delivery of a targeted professional development program for staff. The challenge is for this budget to be sustainable given the increased demand for staff development. In 2006 an analysis of staff needs identified the following key areas for staff development: user support/ICT skills; leadership/management skills (including financial skills); electronic resources; learning commons; copyright; customer service; attending professional conferences/seminars, and web development skills. In 2008 a subsequent analysis identified the following areas for continuing library staff development: project management; web 2.0 related skills; HR related skills – job interviewing, applications, resumes; presentation skills, and interpersonal communication.

Having staff members who are suitably qualified and skilled to support the operational and strategic needs of the Library goes a long way to the development of a sustainable workforce. Work practices in the LIS sector have experienced rapid change in recent years, and continue to change and develop as technology offers new opportunities and challenges. Technological developments have subsequently had an enormous effect on traditional library work. It is now standard for services to be delivered online, with many services now self-serve.

The role of technology in work has meant that staff members are engaged with technology on a day-to-day basis. The library staff of today use email, the internet or intranet, blogs or wikis to engage with their clients, whether they be students, general staff, academics, or researchers. Web 2.0 developments have also high-

lighted the social importance of learning. With the rise of social communication tools such as Facebook libraries now face the challenge of using tools like this to communicate with and develop their “communities.” The emphasis and importance of technology in libraries has led to the development of electronic support service teams, and the associated need for staff to have well developed IT skills to support the provision and delivery of services and resources.

It is also important to support and encourage staff to undertake relevant study to further develop their qualifications and skills. VU Library has always valued and recognized LIS qualifications and supports staff in their personal and professional development. VU Library also recognizes and assists staff without formal qualifications and supports and encourages them to undertake relevant study. Where appropriate the Library will pay for staff to undertake qualifications as part of their continuing professional development. This is particularly aimed at the lower level staff without a formal qualification. This also helps to develop career paths.

A way to monitor the ongoing professional development of staff is to have a process that monitors the importance of the relationship between staff development and performance. A performance and development process can also be used to identify and support the professional development needs of staff and can feed into an annual training program.

The LIS profession is changing and the challenge will be to retain positions that require professional LIS qualifications as a minimum. As positions change and develop due to technology or business needs, position descriptions and selection criteria will be reviewed and changed as appropriate to incorporate more relevant qualifications (e.g. IT systems, web development etc.). The challenge is for library educators to develop curriculum that will meet the future needs of the LIS sector.

While Victoria University Library staff members are highly qualified, it is vital that the Library provides the resources to ensure the development of its future leaders. These leaders will provide direction and ensure that the Library remains relevant to the University community and continues to provide targeted and strategic services. However, the ageing of the library’s workforce is an issue. The library has a dedicated and long-serving cohort of staff; many have been with the library for over ten years. As some of these staff move closer to retirement the Library is at risk of losing a great deal of knowledge and experience. At the end of 2007, 14.18% of VU staff were over the age of 54 and 54.48% were aged 45 and older. This supports the need for multi-skilling staff to ensure that knowledge and skills are retained.

Up until 2006 VU Library also experienced a fairly low rate of staff turnover. However, since then there has been a noticeable increase in the turnover rate. At the same time the Library experienced some difficulties in attracting and recruiting staff with the appropriate knowledge, experience and skills. Turnover is likely to continue and possibly increase in the next few years. It is therefore imperative that the Library develop succession management strategies to offset the risks.

It is also important to support staff considering retirement. VU Library works closely with the University's Human Resources department who assist staff to explore more flexible working arrangements as they transition to retirement. This can include the use of pre-retirement contracts, job sharing, part-time employment and/or leave without pay.

Some short-term initiatives adopted by VU Library to ensure staff capability include the offering of short-term internal secondments to multi-skill staff to ensure that knowledge and skills are transferred between staff; calling for internal expressions of interest to fill short-term vacancies to provide opportunities for existing staff to develop their knowledge and skills; providing staff with the opportunity to rotate jobs; supporting staff to apply for secondments, either internal or external to the Library and University; supporting staff to undertake staff exchanges, either locally, nationally or internationally; and encouraging staff to participate in the University's Leadership Development programs. In the long-term VU Library will develop the strategies to communicate the knowledge, skills and key attributes for positions considered at risk.

There are critical skills and knowledge required for staff to succeed in positions, particularly in leadership roles. This is vital as libraries provide a client-centred business service that operates in a constantly changing and challenging environment that is also heavily influenced by innovative technological developments and shifts in the educational industry. To contribute and make a difference in the library of today and the future, a worker's skills base is required to be broader than the professional skills taught by many current library educators, who themselves are experiencing issues with an ageing workforce and lack of educators.<sup>2</sup> A review of the literature has identified the following areas that are considered vital for current and future staff and leaders:<sup>10, 11, 12</sup>

- Communication – including highly developed interpersonal skills
- Strategic planning
- Technology
- Cross-cultural skills
- Project management
- Ethics and values
- Ability to prioritize
- Organizational skills
- Diplomacy and tact
- Energy and motivation

To meet these challenges VU Library is committed to developing training programs that target the skills required and align them to job functions and business needs. The benefit of focused training programs targeting critical skills and knowledge include increased productivity and efficiency of staff and the ability to retain and attract staff by investing in their development.

VU Library like many libraries has staff that can be categorized as non-professional, para-professional, or professional. At the end of 2007 4.38% of VU Library staff were employed in non-professional positions, 55.11% as para-professional positions, and 37.14% as professional Librarians. These figures reflect the staffing profiles of university libraries across Australia.<sup>4</sup> To progress through the classification levels staff are often expected to meet relevant qualifications at each level. However, career paths are not always clearly enunciated. Career paths can be clarified by ensuring that position titles and descriptions, and the qualifications required, are consistent and clearly detailed.

### *Extended opening hours initiative*

In 2007, VU Library conducted a review of opening hours which revealed a number of areas for improvement in extending access, particularly on weekends and at a wide range of campuses. Feedback from the Library's primary users (students) indicated that they wanted longer hours of access most days of the week. The students indicated that their main library activities included PC use and printing; group work (discussion rooms) and places to socialise; books and borrowing (although statistics indicate that this activity is decreasing), and individual study. The students gave widespread approval for self-access or minimal staffing outside of core hours. Technical support and troubleshooting is their main priority.

In response, at the beginning of 2008 VU Library commenced a pilot project to extend library opening hours using student assistants. The challenge was to introduce student assistants into the workforce without alienating library staff. The subsequent success of the project has been partly due to the fact that student assistants were promoted as having a role complementary to current positions.

Student assistants are engaged casually for up to 12 hours per week during the semester (so it doesn't affect their study commitments) and must be a currently enrolled student at Victoria University. Some of the attributes required include completion of first year of study, well developed communication and interpersonal skills, basic IT troubleshooting skills, the capacity to deal effectively with students from diverse backgrounds, and experience working in a team or small group environment. VU Library is committed to ensuring that all student assistants are provided with the training and support that they need to perform their duties and where possible they are included in training sessions held for all Library staff and are invited to general Library staff meetings.

### *Cultural awareness initiative*

Australia has followed an active policy of multiculturalism since 1972.<sup>13</sup> The diversity of Australian communities is reflected in the Australian workforce of today. VU Library's workforce is typical in that it reflects the local community. VU Library's workforce also reflects the diversity of the University's student community.



In recent years many tertiary institutions in Australia have developed the international side of business and institutions like Victoria University now have a large cohort of international students. Having a diverse workforce and student community entails a commitment to ensuring that staff are informed of cultural issues within the University, and continue to develop their cultural knowledge and the understanding required to develop strategies for increasing the cultural safety of staff and students at the University. VU Library develops in-house cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication workshops and participates in University Staff College programs to increase the understanding of different cultures, to explore attitudes, beliefs, facts and myths and how they affect our perceptions. The Library also includes cross-cultural awareness in the staff induction process.

## CONCLUSION

One of the challenges for the Library of today is to have a knowledgeable and skilled workforce that is relevant to the business and strategic needs of the organisation. Workforce planning is a tool that can be used successfully to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce. By following the “workforce” plan do-review-and-improve process it is possible to develop a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. The analysis of a workforce and the identification of key skills and gaps can assist with the development of a model that employs strategic initiatives to provide ongoing support for staff to develop their knowledge and skills.

VU Library is the only unit within Victoria University that has developed a workforce plan to date. The Library is therefore well placed to meet the changing needs of the University, often at short notice. The commitment to maintaining a skilled and knowledgeable workforce can only lead to ongoing benefits for both the organisation and the individual.

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## **GROWING NEXT GENERATION LIBRARY MANAGERS – ARE NEW LIBRARIANS RELUCTANT TO STEP INTO MANAGEMENT?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Much has been written about the “greying” of the library profession and the need for comprehensive workforce planning in the face of significant retirement. <sup>1,2</sup> Recent publications<sup>3,4</sup> have suggested that new librarians are reluctant to take on leadership and management roles within libraries. Some of the reasons outlined for this reluctance include negative perceptions of current library managers and the desire to achieve satisfactory work-life balance. As libraries face the challenge of workforce retirement, particularly at a senior level, it is vital that strategies are put in place to encourage librarians to take the next step into management.*

*This paper will test the assumption that newer librarians are reluctant to move into management positions through surveys and interviews of librarians who have graduated within the last ten years. The data collected will establish whether this reluctance exists and if so, why. The authors will outline a number of strategies for ensuring a positive view of management is promoted and modelled within the library industry.*

*The paper will also report on the Stepping into Management Program, a strategy developed in Western Australia, to encourage younger librarians to aspire to management positions.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Like many countries around the world, Australia is experiencing a “greying” of its library and information workforce. According to statistics released by the Australian Government <sup>5-7</sup> there are 29,600 librarians, library technicians and library assistants currently working in Australia. Librarians make up about 48% (14,200) of library workers. The median age of a librarian in Australia is 50 (compared with 39 for all occupations), with only 14.8% aged 35 or under (compared with 39.3% for all occupations).

Gill Hallam<sup>1</sup> has conducted extensive research on workforce planning in Australia, including a national survey which shows that almost a third of current library and information employees plan to retire in the next ten years, and that the majority of these will come from senior and middle management positions. The ageing librarian workforce in Australia is similar to the situation in a number of other countries; see for example studies conducted in the United States<sup>8</sup> and Canada.<sup>9</sup> Although planning and development is essential at any career stage, the focus of this paper is on librarians who have graduated in the last ten years and their attitude about eventually working in management. This cohort was selected due to predictions about the retirement of a significant number of Australian librarians (particularly senior librarians) in the not too distant future and concerns about the reluctance of new librarians to aspire to management positions.

### **ARE LIBRARIANS RELUCTANT TO TAKE ON MANAGEMENT ROLES? WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?**

Ensuring that there are enough competent new library managers willing and able to take up positions as retirements occur is an issue recognised widely in the literature.<sup>10-16</sup> Nancy Rossiter says that:

...recruiting the next generation of library leaders is of critical importance. One roadblock to this recruitment effort is the negative perception of leadership positions from Generation X and Y librarians and the unwillingness of many librarians to aspire to positions of middle management...those in leadership positions need to address the problem and make leadership more attractive to nascent library leaders.<sup>10</sup>

Singer, Goodrich and Goldberg<sup>12</sup> also believe that it's up to current managers to identify librarians who are capable of taking on management positions and ensuring they are given the right opportunities to develop.

But how can they be identified if they are not interested in moving into management in the first place? Rachel Singer Gordon asks the question, "Why do we find that many librarians do not want to be managers?"<sup>13</sup> She says there is an unwillingness to sacrifice family and home lives. The image "of endless meetings, becoming embroiled in both internal and external politics, and spending all their time on administrative duties rather than frontline tasks" does not encourage newer librarians to aspire to management positions.

This perceived negative image of managers is reinforced in a 2008 blog post entitled "Sorry but you can't have it all" which claims that the "current generation of academic library directors need to better communicate that their jobs do occasionally involve long hours, but that there can be great rewards."<sup>3</sup> This blog post sparked a number of further comments, most notably in a follow up post entitled "But what if I don't want it all?" by Bivens-Tatum:

I was particularly irritated by the notion that library directors need to give us mere librarians a ‘dose of reality’... We Gen-X and Gen-Y librarians... know what reality is, thank you very much. Personal sacrifices, work-life imbalance, staying late, working weekends: many of us do that without either the title or salary of “director,” and to imply otherwise itself shows a disconnect from reality. The generational difference, if indeed there is one, is that perhaps the younger generation doesn’t see this sort of sacrifice as a badge of honor so much as a road to unhappiness and burnout.<sup>17</sup>

Bivens-Tatum concludes by suggesting reasons why some librarians are not interested in senior management positions which include having to deal with staff, spending 10 to 20 years in middle-management before promotion, and being more interested in working as a “librarian” than focussing on management and administration.

This focus on librarianship, as opposed to management, is reinforced by Rowley and Roberts who suggest there is “a sense that library and information professionals are reluctant to become leaders, not seeing this as their domain but preferring to focus on ‘professional’ library issues.”<sup>4</sup>

Gordon<sup>18</sup> has conducted two surveys relating to library management. The first surveyed current library managers and found that many respondents “accidentally” find their way into management. The second survey asked library staff to identify the good and bad traits of managers. As yet it does not appear that a survey looking specifically at new librarians and their views about working in management in future has been conducted.

## **NEW LIBRARIANS AND MANAGEMENT SURVEY**

The widespread retirement of current library managers will result in many opportunities for new librarians to progress up the career ladder, but do they actually want to?

A national survey to establish what “new” librarians think about working in “management” roles was designed in December 2008. The survey was developed using the online tool SurveyMonkey.com<sup>19</sup> and was distributed via a number of Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) electronic lists. Responses were collected over a two week period in January 2009.

In the survey design phase, colleagues were asked what defined a “new” librarian. Some thought it meant being within 0 to 5 years of graduation, others within 10 years of graduation and some felt it has nothing to do with years in the profession, but defined a way of thinking. For the purposes of the survey, a “new” librarian was defined as someone who had completed her or his first library and information studies professional qualification in the last 10 years.

“Management,” in the context of the survey, was considered as undertaking one or more of the following tasks; budgeting and financial management, managing staff training and development, policy development, human resources planning and management, organisational planning and decision making, managing facilities and building operations, and marketing and public relations. The focus of the survey is on library management, not leadership. While leadership can occur at any level within an organisation, management usually implies some responsibility for ensuring the work of others is completed. The differences between leadership and management have, of course, been the subject of much discussion<sup>15</sup> and are too lengthy to be debated here. The viewpoint held by the authors of this paper is that leadership skills are essential in managing effectively in today’s changing environment. If the library and information profession is to thrive and survive, managers who can influence, inspire, innovate, motivate and facilitate are required. It is no longer enough for managers to simply apply a “command and control” attitude towards management. This view is supported by others; see for example Rowley and Roberts,<sup>4</sup> Roberts and Black,<sup>15</sup> and Walton.<sup>20</sup>

There are four parts to the survey. The first collected demographic data about the respondents, such as their age and the library sector in which they work. Those in management roles were then asked a series of questions about their current job, and those not working in management were asked whether they would like to work in this area in future. The third part of the survey related to management training and the final section asked respondents to make any additional comments about librarians and management.

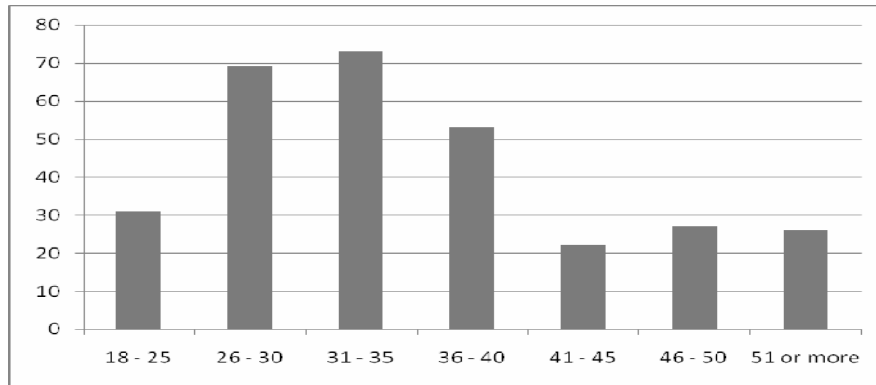
The use of electronic lists to distribute the survey facilitated access to a large number of potential respondents nationally; however it is acknowledged that as list members could choose to respond or not it is difficult to make generalisations based on the responses, as the results may be slanted. It is possible, however, to draw some indications and conclusions from the survey.

## RESULTS

### *Demographic data*

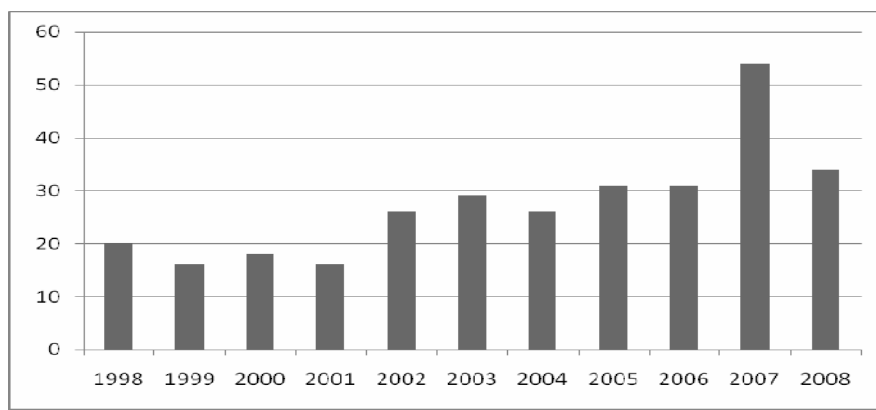
A total of 350 survey responses were received, 301 were fully completed. Incomplete surveys are excluded from analysis for the purposes of this paper. It is impossible to calculate the overall response rate as the potential number of respondents is unknown.

Of the 301 survey respondents, 173 (57.5%) were aged 35 or under (see Figure 1). Based on the statistics<sup>5</sup> mentioned above, this is approximately 8.2% of total librarians aged 35 or under currently working in Australia.



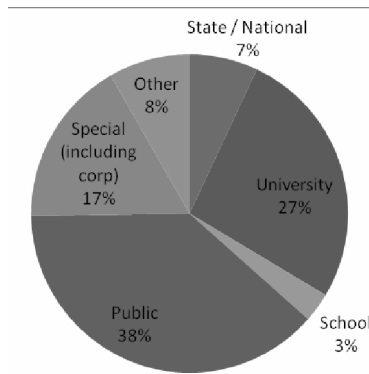
**Figure 1:** Survey respondents by age group

Of the 301 survey respondents, 176 (58.5%) completed their library degree in 2004 or later (see Figure 2). The most common completion year was 2007 (17.4%); the reason for this is unknown.



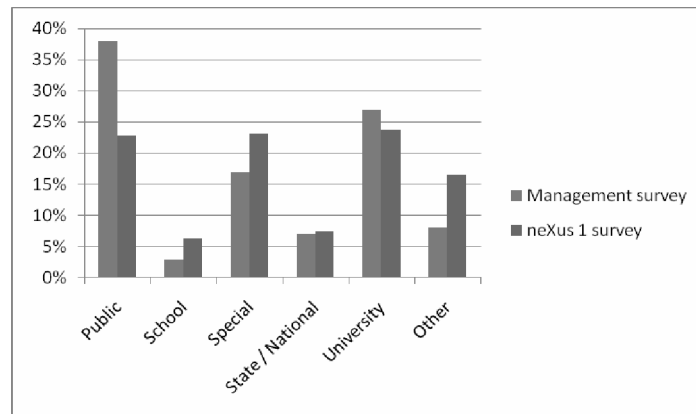
**Figure 2:** Survey respondents by library degree completion year

Survey respondents from all main Australian library sectors are represented in the survey (see Figure 3). The majority of survey respondents were employed in the public library (114 responses or 38%) or university library (81 responses or 27%) sector. There were very few responses from school librarians (9 responses or 3%).



**Figure 3:** Survey respondents by library sector

Australian government statistics on librarians<sup>5</sup> do not provide a breakdown by library sector, however comparisons can be made with data gathered for a much larger Australian library staff survey (neXus 1) provided by Hallam<sup>21</sup> (see Figure 4). The library management survey elicited a higher response rate for public libraries, a lower response from special and school libraries and a slightly higher response from university libraries.

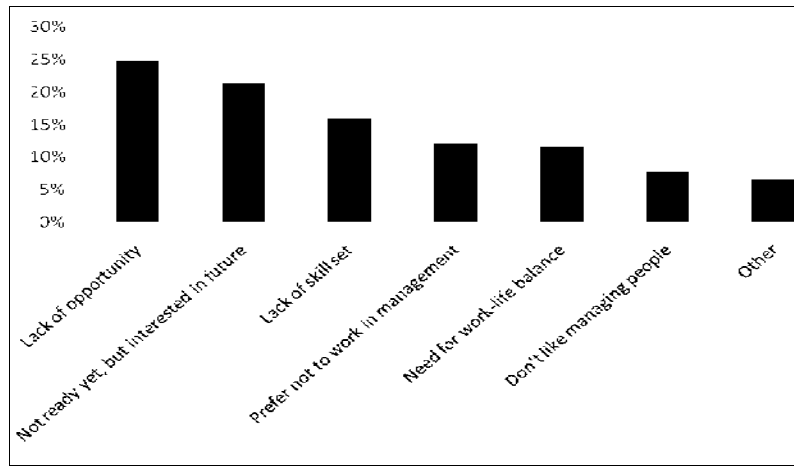


**Figure 4:** Survey respondents by library sector: comparison with neXus 1 survey data

#### **Respondents not yet working in management**

Of the 301 respondents, 196 (65.1%) reported that they were not currently working in a management role. The most common reason given for not working in a management role was lack of opportunity, followed by not being ready yet and lack of skills (see Figure 5).





**Figure 5:** Responses to “Why are you not in a management role?”

Of the 196 respondents not working in management, 135 respondents (68.9%) said they would like to work in management in future. The most common reasons provided for this included higher salary, natural progression from current position, the desire to contribute to decision making and to undertake interesting and challenging work.

Of the 196 respondents not working in management, 61 respondents (31.1%) said they would not like to work in management in future. Reasons provided for this included not being “suitable” for a management role, a desire to maintain work-life balance, and preference to undertake “librarian” work rather than the tasks associated with being a manager.

#### ***Respondents working in management***

Of the 301 survey respondents, 105 respondents (34.9%) reported that they were currently working in a management role. Of these 105 respondents, 93 (88.6%) were either mostly or completely satisfied in their role. A small number (12 or 11.4%) were not at all satisfied in their role. Reasons provided for this included not enough time to accomplish management tasks due to too many conflicting priorities, stress, and feeling too far removed from the librarian role.

Of the 105 respondents currently working in management, 7 respondents (6.7%) wanted to move out of a management role and 21 respondents (20.2%) said they were unsure whether they would stay in a management role. Reasons provided for this included lack of satisfaction with current position, the desire for work-life balance, and dissatisfaction relating to the management of staff.

Of the 105 respondents currently working in management, 65 respondents (61.9%) said they would recommend library management to others. Another 31

respondents (29.5%) said they may recommend it. Many respondents qualified their response to say that not everyone is “management material”.

Of the 105 respondents currently working in management, 9 respondents (8.6%) said they would not recommend library management to others as the pay does not compensate for the increased responsibility and not everyone is suitable or has the capacity to be a manager.

### ***Management training***

Overall, 120 of the 301 survey respondents (39.9%) had attended some form of management training. Of the 105 survey respondents already working in management roles, 31 (29.5%) had not attended any management training.

## **NEW LIBRARIANS AND MANAGEMENT FOCUS GROUPS**

An e-mail was sent to Western Australian librarians seeking volunteers to attend a focus group to further explore some of the findings from the survey and literature review. Six librarians attended a focus group in January 2009 at the University of Western Australia Library. The participants had all graduated with a librarian qualification sometime between 2000 and 2007. Four of the attendants worked in academic libraries and 2 worked in the state library sector. Only 1 of the 6 participants was currently acting in a management role, although another had some supervisory responsibility.

Participants were asked what traits or skills were required to be a successful manager. As expected, responses included management skills such as organisational and financial and the ability to present evidence, however participants felt that today’s manager also needed a number of leadership skills. These included the ability to create a vision, be inclusive, and be able to “bring a team along with you.”

The 5 participants not working in management roles all expressed an interest in doing so in future. The only participant currently acting in a management role said that she were not initially interested in moving into management because she preferred dealing with clients. However, when a three-month secondment became available, she was encouraged to apply by a colleague.

Participants were asked what they thought might discourage librarians from management roles. All participants agreed that there were some librarians who would prefer to “touch every book” than to have a more strategic role. Others perceive management as too much work for little reward and would prefer not to have the responsibility. Some participants said that they know librarians who are satisfied in their current position and are “afraid” of management. Comments included:

I think a lot of librarians love what they do, whether it’s in technical services, or working with the public, they like doing what they do and I think they’re more

afraid that if they become a manager that they're not going to be able to touch every book in the library and they're not going to be able to talk to every person that comes in and that's a barrier for a lot of people. They like what they do and they like managing themselves in what they do, but to take them out of that is very uncomfortable.

I have a colleague...who is one of the most organised people I have ever worked with...she's now...acting in a management role and she can't deal with the volume of what's pushed down to her.

All participants agreed that not everyone can be a manager, and that there were some librarians who are not suited to management because they find it difficult to see the bigger picture or deal with conflicting priorities. The majority of the participants in the focus group felt that there were plenty of opportunities available to move into library management in Perth (the capital city of Western Australia), but there were fewer opportunities in regional areas.

All participants said they would move outside of their current sector to obtain a management opportunity, although most of them would actually prefer to stay within their own sector, either because "that's what they know" or "it's a fabulous sector to work in."

Participants were asked for their thoughts on how to encourage librarians to aspire to management positions. Strategies suggested included mentoring, ensuring that a positive image of management is modelled, continuing with the Stepping into Management program (outlined below), continuing with the Aurora Leadership Institute,<sup>22</sup> and providing on the job training and development opportunities.

## DISCUSSION

The research conducted for this paper demonstrates that there are many new Australian librarians who are willing to take up the challenge of library management. Of the 301 new librarian who completed the survey, 240 (79.7%) were either already working in, or were interested in library management. Most of those already working in management roles (88.6%) were either mostly or completely satisfied in their role and 91.4% would or may recommend library management to others. Despite this, a number of themes have emerged from the 896 survey comments which demonstrate the importance of ensuring strategies are in place to encourage librarians to consider a career in management. It is clear that librarians need to be given opportunities to develop the relevant experience and skills to enable them to, firstly decide if management is right for them and secondly (if required), enable them to successfully transition into management.

### ***The importance of role models***

A strong theme that emerged from the survey and focus group was the importance of role models. There were a number of comments which illustrate the positive impact a role model can have, for example:

I've recently realised I want to be a manager... I left library school and never thought I'd want to manage anything at all, but it's working with the people who are managers and having a real feeling for what they do and respect for what they do and the way that they do it that has engendered that for me.

I have a fabulous manager at the moment and she is someone who would inspire me [to go into management].

However, there were many more comments which demonstrate the detrimental impact a role model can have, for example:

I see so few inspirational examples of managers, especially senior managers in my organisation, there is such a lack of good role models that management does not sell itself as an exciting option to me.

Managers at my library regularly work many hours of unpaid overtime, including weekends. This is not an attractive prospect.

I would be interested if it was the right role but even my manager has told me 'don't go into management' because it is very hard to please everyone and he feels he's the middleman between the directors and staff.

In order to encourage new librarians to take on management roles, current managers have a responsibility to promote library management in a positive light. Although working long hours and taking work home is necessary from time to time, it's important that the benefits of a career in library management are also promoted to balance the assumption that all managers work hard for little reward. The survey shows that many new current managers are highly satisfied in their role and they should share this satisfaction with new librarians.

Another, somewhat related, theme that emerged in the survey comments was that librarianship does not attract individuals to the profession who are "management material", for example:

I think to be a manager you need certain business/communication skills in this area that often librarians do not possess.

Perhaps the profession doesn't attract many people who have, or will develop, managerial and leadership skills.

Libraries do not seem to attract people that want / aspire to be managers. Perhaps the types of management opportunities available within our sector need to be better promoted and more widely understood to those considering entering this profession?

Previous research suggests that many librarians “accidentally”<sup>18</sup> or “reluctantly”<sup>23</sup> end up in management roles. As expressed by Baldwin, “a primary means of advancement involves assuming supervisory, managerial, or administrative responsibilities. The nature of one’s job is often dramatically transformed by the new tasks, the skills for which are not assumed automatically with the new responsibilities. One result is that good librarians or good staff can become mediocre or even bad managers.”<sup>23</sup> There is some probability that the survey respondents who have made the following comments have experienced an accidental or reluctant manager:

I only have to look up and see that most managers are insecure gutless liars who use management as a way of hiding the fact that they have very little real skills or abilities.

My general impression is that not all management knows how to manage.

I see managers as rather self centered and selfish, quite happy to leave the library in the hands of sometimes incompetent casuals who don’t have a background in libraries or much interest.

This reinforces the importance of role models. Librarians who enter into management accidentally or reluctantly can have a detrimental effect on librarians coming up through the ranks. “Librarians who entered the profession with no thought to becoming a manager...need to develop both an enthusiasm and an aptitude for management”<sup>18</sup> or they may promote a negative image and discourage new librarians from aspiring to management positions.

### ***Providing opportunities to develop management skills***

The importance of providing opportunities for new librarians to gain the right experience and skills to decide if a career in management is for them and to enable them to successfully transition into management is another strong theme that emerged through analysis of the survey and focus group comments.

A number of survey respondents commented on the lack of opportunities to gain experience in management, for example:

I find there are no opportunities to gain management skills at my organisation. While I dearly would love to start getting some relevant skills, I don’t have any chances.

I find it frustrating to move up the ladder as I don’t yet have the right experience but how am I supposed to get that experience without someone taking a chance?

Employers need to look at providing opportunities for librarians to develop management skills and experience. These may include providing acting opportunities when other managers are on leave, ensuring management training is offered, mentoring, and encouraging management and/or leadership development through in-

volvement in professional associations. Those interested in management have a responsibility to seek out these opportunities as well.

Mentoring, whether formal or informal, is a strategy which can be used to encourage new librarians to consider a management career. One survey respondent felt that:

The next generations of librarians / managers need to be mentored ...otherwise no one will want to move into management.

Once individuals who have management potential have been identified by existing managers, mentoring can help to define the skills needed to transition into management. Mentoring can assist with self-assessment, defining strengths and weaknesses, deciding if a career in management is appropriate and developing and achieving relevant goals.

Management training is important, both for incumbents new to management roles and those interested in moving into this area in future. This was strongly reflected in the survey through a number of comments, such as:

We need to offer more management training and librarians need to be prepared to do more training to get the higher level positions.

Anyone moving into management needs to develop a distinct skill set, different to what is provided in studying library and information studies.

Most management positions offered require skills that are not offered in a library degree.

Somewhat alarming is the fact that 31 (29.5%) of the 105 survey respondents already working in management had attended no management training. New managers and their employers must ensure adequate management training is provided. In addition, employers should provide on the job training and support for new managers to ensure they develop effective techniques and strategies for managing effectively. One survey respondent made the comment that:

Management training needs to encompass a larger practical component. It is all very well to tell someone how to conduct a performance review in theory, but to actually have to do so...when you are new at the job is very difficult.

The participants in the survey and focus group also commented on the importance of leadership skills in managing effectively. It is important that leadership programs, such as the Aurora Leadership Institute<sup>22</sup>, and other leadership institutes around the world as described by Mason and Wetherbee<sup>24</sup> continue.

### ***Stepping into Management Program***

The Stepping into Management Program was piloted in Western Australia in 2008 to address a perceived lack of appropriate training in the library profession for individuals interested in management roles. The initiators of the program were find-

ing that there were fewer applicants for management roles as retirements occurred. Many applicants had limited managerial skills or experience.

The program aimed to inspire librarians to consider a career in library management, encourage individuals to take a proactive approach to their own development, and to increase understanding of the skills required to become a successful library manager.

Twenty-one librarians participated in the course from across all library sectors from a range of age groups. The participants attended three morning or afternoon sessions (4 hours duration) held two months apart. Each highly interactive session featured a range of presentations and panel discussions. The topics covered included expectations, statistics, communicating at the right level and to the right audience, managing budgets and executive expectations, project management, internal politics, marketing, strategic planning, and staff and performance management.

Overall the sessions were rated highly by the participants with a score of 9.1 out of 10 on average for the course meeting or exceeding their expectations. The course participants felt that the course was relevant, stimulating and challenging. Comments included that it was a “wonderful opportunity to gain insight from high achieving practitioners” and it “filled a gap which exists for this type of training”. At the end of the training over 80% of participants indicated their desire to become a manager and that they intended to take proactive steps towards achieving this goal.

Based on the pilot, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) have indicated an interest in seeing the pilot progress into a national program run in every state and territory.

## CONCLUSION

The research conducted for this paper demonstrates that there are many new librarians interested in moving into management roles in Australia. The survey and focus group indicate that there are a number of factors which can impact on the decision to move into management including role models, mentoring, training, opportunities to gain management experience, and support. Through initiatives, such as the Stepping into Management Program, the library profession can work to ensure there are librarians ready and willing to step into management as retirements occur.

Further planned analysis of the survey results may reveal whether a particular library sector will be more affected by the lack of new librarians wishing to enter management roles in future. Further analysis will also look specifically at the “Gen Y” cohort responses to see whether there are generational differences towards the willingness to seek out library management positions.

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## FUTURE LEADERS: WHAT DO THEY THINK?

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### ABSTRACT

Objectives were to establish the context of leadership in UK public and academic libraries; to assess the views, perceptions and attitudes of recently qualified librarians to leadership skills; and to assess the implications for future library leadership. Interviews with key informants within the library profession took place to establish the leadership context. An online questionnaire investigating opinions on a range of leadership skills was administered to recent library graduates from Loughborough University, UK; 37 responses were received representing a response rate of 22.84%. The perceptions and views of current library leaders and recently qualified library professionals on leadership skills both coincide and differ in key areas. For example, senior leaders believe there are future leaders in the workforce but recent graduates are not confident in their own leadership abilities. One area of agreement is the centrality of communication skills. This study has highlighted the importance of leadership skills for librarians and the nature of these skills. It also has surfaced again the question of whether leadership skills are personality traits or whether they can be taught.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper describes a small scale research project designed to explore the leadership potential of recent master's graduates entering the field of library and information services in the UK. The research focused on opinions about the nature and level of leadership skills and awareness in two distinct groups:

- Current senior leaders of academic and public libraries

- Former students in the MA/MSc in Information and Library Management (ILM) programme in the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University, UK, who are at an early stage of their careers.

Research indicates that the need for leadership is more critical than ever as the senior management generation is reaching retirement.<sup>1</sup> A shortage of leadership talent has been identified, both generally and within the library and information services (LIS) workforce.<sup>2-3</sup> Library leadership programmes<sup>4-6</sup> exist but there is little research investigating the leadership potential and attitudes of either LIS students or those just commencing library work.

## LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership skills have generated much discussion, debate and analysis. For example, Boyatzis<sup>7</sup> developed a cluster of leadership skills needed by leaders at all organisational levels. Included in the skills needed by top level leaders were visioning; inspiring; entrepreneurship; conceptualisation; logical thought; oral presentation. In a more recent attempt to list leadership skills,<sup>8</sup> the ability to be emotionally compelling and to create resonance with others were identified as key. Included in these were self-awareness, active listening, compassion and empathy, and integrity.

Various commentators have also looked to establish leadership skills needed in the library sector. One study in the UK public library sector<sup>3</sup> identified vision, authority, political skill, ability to make connections and to carry staff forward as important. A broader approach was taken in proposing that all leadership skills revolved around influencing people in order to achieve objectives.<sup>9</sup> The leader has to sell the vision, motivate people, gain co-operation and develop partnerships. Another author has bundled leadership skills together under empowerment as the umbrella term.<sup>10</sup> A librarian from the special library sector in the United States<sup>11</sup> has proposed that core leadership skills are communication, modelling behaviours, developing others, recognizing the value of others, taking responsibility, and creating results.

Leadership skills have also been established by various different library stakeholders. A recent survey identified leadership skills from the perspective of senior library managers from UK and Australian universities.<sup>12</sup> The skills were grouped under contextual awareness, interpersonal, management, mental skills, and technical skills. Another study gathered the perspectives of Generation X librarians (born between 1965 and 1979) on leadership skills.<sup>13</sup> The majority of the skills they rated highly were centred on communication and interpersonal attributes. Some limited work has been completed with library students on their views on leadership skills. In 1979 a questionnaire about leadership styles and skills was given to library students; effective consultation skills were found to be the most

important.<sup>14</sup> In a further study, over a 6 year period, library students were asked to identify skills and qualities of good leaders. Awareness, initiative, foresight and interest in the workforce were identified.<sup>15</sup>

Another lively debate takes place around whether leadership skills can be taught. Some observers are convinced that effective leaders result from both inherent traits and carefully developed skills.<sup>16</sup> A library commentator<sup>17</sup> provides a contrary perspective, arguing that leadership skills are gained not through training, but through experience and the problems leaders overcome. The purpose of our small scale study was to gain a deeper understanding of leadership skills in the library sector.

### ***Methodology***

Two stages were used to gather qualitative opinion and quantitative data. Firstly, telephone interviews were conducted with eight key professionals within the LIS profession to gain insight and an overview from a qualitative viewpoint of leadership issues. They were selected by the authors because of their national profiles and informed views on the issue of leadership. The group comprised four public library and four academic library leaders in the UK. Their views informed the second stage of the research. To enable candid and unconstrained comments to be made, they were assured their responses would be recorded anonymously.

Secondly, we sought to obtain the views of a range of relatively new LIS professionals by asking for their impression of the need for various types of leadership skills and qualities. The list of leadership skills identified by Walton, Burke and Oldroyd<sup>12</sup> was used as basis for a five point Likert-scale questionnaire with 34 questions followed by four open-ended qualitative questions to enable the respondents to reflect on their responses (see appendix). The questionnaire was delivered online to alumni who graduated between 2001 and 2007 from the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University. Details of the questionnaire were sent to 162 alumni by e-mail or post, with a resulting response of 37 (22.84%). This was regarded as an acceptable response rate, but insufficient to conduct a statistical comparison by year of graduation. The respondents were a subset of all alumni, being those that had chosen to register with the Alumni association as available for contact. It may be inferred that this sub-set might be those more ready to engage with professional matters and therefore presumably have an interest in leadership. The results of the questionnaire are presented in Tables 1 to 5 below; for brevity, only the percentage choosing the categories “very great extent” or “great extent” is presented in ranked order.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Despite the wide concern noted in the literature about the quality of library leadership, some of the library leaders interviewed were not worried about the future leadership of the profession. Two of the university librarians interviewed suggested that many of the necessary skills were acquired through experience and that leaders would emerge in time while one of the public librarians felt that the work on leadership led by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council had demonstrated that there was quite strong leadership within the profession. One respondent thought that there might be a crisis in library leadership in five to ten years time, however, and three of the four public librarians agreed, focusing particularly on the inability of existing leaders and middle managers likely to move into leadership positions to think strategically and influence and engage with local authority agendas. Interviewees often made the point that a lot of staff lacked the ambition, drive and confidence to be leaders. A public librarian said:

I look at the librarians that I've got and they're very happy to be librarians. They perhaps want to be a senior librarian or a team leader but they really don't have the ambition to go higher up in the organisation and, of those, only a tiny minority want to go beyond libraries.

She also suggested that staff with ambition could take advantage of this and seize the opportunities available. Looking further ahead, many of the library leaders interviewed had more confidence in new and recent recruits to the profession. One public librarian described himself as "quite cheerful" about the calibre of recent recruits and a university library leader was "optimistic" about the future, indicating that there were several staff in his service with the necessary skills, personality and flair to be great future leaders. Another public librarian contradicted the point made above about staff lacking confidence, stating that she had no concerns about new recruits to the profession because "what I see is a lot more confidence in themselves which I think is a key part of leadership".

Analysis of the comments from those who responded to the qualitative questions at the end of the graduate survey questionnaire, however, would appear to support the view of the majority of the library leaders that librarians lack confidence in their leadership ability. Graduate respondents were generally quite modest about their leadership skills. When asked to comment on the extent to which they had the leadership skills listed in the questionnaire, words such as "moderate," "reasonable," "slight," "some" and "average" were common. One graduate suggested that s/he had "variable confidence," something that we suggest characterised the survey respondents generally. One respondent, though, was quite upbeat about his/her own skills but disparaging about those of colleagues:

I'm a far more experienced manager than most I have encountered in the public library sector – it is the worst led and most badly managed profession imaginable. The more mediocre you are the better it is for you: bean-counter heaven.

These comments appear to contradict those made by many of the library leaders interviewed who stressed that the LIS sector needed people with flair, imagination and self-assurance.

Perhaps the majority of graduates were being realistic, rather than self-effacing, about their leadership skills. Some had clearly given this issue some thought and had analysed where they felt they were deficient. One respondent felt that, although professionally competent, s/he lacked the “strategic thinking/visionary/inspirational aspects” which s/he considered essential for leadership. Another stated that s/he only “reluctantly” challenged ideas when “absolutely necessary or invited to do so because of my innate dislike of conflict,” suggesting that this “increasingly appears as a serious character flaw in a potential leader.” Evidence from Tables 1 and 2 suggests that the majority of graduates did not believe that these skills were as essential as some of the others listed. Only 60% of graduates responded that they thought “blue sky thinking” was of very great or great importance, for example. Similarly, the attitude of the graduates towards risk-taking was interesting. While one of the public library leaders interviewed commented that risk taking and an entrepreneurial attitude were becoming more important in the public library sector, Table 2 shows that just 46% of survey respondents felt that library leaders needed this to a very great or great extent. One graduate, while recognising that leaders have to be willing to trial new products if the service and the profession are to move forward, said “such risks can be dangerous in institutions where financial constraints are tight if the capital expenditure brings limited success.”

**Table 1:** To what extent should the library leader have the following management skills?

Skill	% Very Great or Great Extent
Negotiating and influencing	95
Strategic planning/thinking	92
Organisational skills	92
Change management	89
Time management	87
Staff management	86
Project management	84
Financial management, budget	81
Managing priorities in a context of time constraints	81
Ability to deal with performance issues	81
Process management	58

**Table 2:** To what extent should the library leader have the following mental skills/attitude?

Skill	% Very Great or Great Extent
Leadership – firmness of direction, decisiveness	92
Flexibility	92
Willingness to transform ourselves and our services; ‘the vision thing’	87
Ability to see an opportunity and act on it	87
Analytical and problem-solving skills	84
Creativity in relation to problems and new initiatives	81
Synthesising information from various sources	73
Blue sky thinking	60
Risk taking	46

The academic and public library leaders interviewed made the point that leadership is not just a function of position or status but is needed throughout the organisation. One public librarian suggested that this was the result of the development of flatter organisational structures meaning that staff throughout the library service have responsibility for, and ownership of, decision making on a day-to-day basis. Interestingly, given the comments about risk above, he believed this made them less risk averse, more interested in developing personally and more willing to stand by and learn by their decisions. Comments made in the graduate survey would appear to support this and, picking up on the importance of giving staff responsibility, one respondent stated that leaders needed the “[a]bility to ‘let go’ – the best leaders allow their team to use their own initiative (whilst still being supportive and guiding where necessary).”

When discussing the list of leadership skills identified by Walton, Burke, and Oldroyd, the university and public library leaders interviewed all primarily focused on the “Contextual Awareness” section. In particular, the “Ability to see the big picture and its local relevance” was considered vital and intrinsically linked to both “Awareness of trends” and “Political awareness and sensitivity.” This last skill was emphasized particularly by the public librarians interviewed. One suggested that although everybody had to deal with organisational politics wherever they worked, staff in public sector library services also had direct political contact with elected council members almost on a daily basis. Corporate skills were also highlighted in both the higher education and public sector contexts. One university librarian explained that this involved developing “close relationships with senior managers and having serious engagement with academic leaders” as well as understanding other peoples’ roles. As evident from Table 3, respondents to the graduate survey agreed that the majority of the skills listed under this heading were important.

**Table 3:** To what extent should the library leader have the following skills and capabilities?

Skill	% Very Great or Great Extent
Awareness of external trends in sector	97
Knowledge of university structure/ operations	92
Ability to see the big picture and its local relevance	92
Political awareness and sensitivity	62

Only 62% of graduate respondents felt that “Political awareness and sensitivity” were of great importance, however, in contrast to the views of the library leaders interviewed. A range of skills which could come under the heading “Communication skills” was highlighted by both the library leaders and the graduates. “Negotiating and influencing” skills were viewed by the library leaders as being intrinsically linked with political skills and of huge importance. As indicated in Table 1, the majority of graduate respondents agreed that they were essential. One university library leader suggested that they were vital to “get people on your side and make sure they support you.” Similarly, in the public library sector this kind of advocacy was stressed as fundamentally important, one library leader describing it as “relation management” and another stressing the importance of not being “isolationist.” Alongside this, partnership working was also identified as crucial by the public library leaders. Good communication skills with all stakeholders was also recognised as vital by the graduates with 100 per cent of them indicating that they thought library leaders needed these to a very great or great extent (see Table 4). Some graduate respondents also chose to highlight the communication skills which they felt were important when asked whether they thought anything was missing from the list in the survey, adding skills such as, “patience and tolerance,” “[t]he ability to deal with staff’s personal issues,” “[a]bility to manage consultation with staff and process feedback,” suggesting that they felt that leaders needed to be exceptional at staff relationship management. In addition, a few respondents mentioned that leaders needed the ability to inspire and motivate staff.

**Table 4:** To what extent should the library leader have the following interpersonal skills?

Skill	% for Very Great or Great Extent
Good communicating with internal/external ‘audiences’	100
Tact	89
Compassion, kindness and respect	79
Emotional robustness	73
Thick skin	65



Interestingly, none of the university library leaders made any reference to professional librarianship skills but two of the public librarians maintained that library leaders needed a mix of professional and managerial skills, one suggesting that they had to be able to understand the services that they represent. As shown in Table 5, a relatively high percentage of the graduate respondents agreed that leaders needed professional competence to a very great or great extent.

**Table 5:** To what extent should the library leader have the following mental skills/attitude?

Skill	% for Very Great or Great Extent
Awareness of trends and innovations in the LIS context	89
Expertise in professional competence	86
Familiarity with current technological developments.	78
IT skills	73

As noted in the Introduction, there have been various national initiatives to address a perceived deficiency in library leadership. The university library leaders were divided on the usefulness and efficacy of these. Two thought them expensive and of limited value while the other two reported that training course participants had been “really influenced” and had “found them invaluable.” The public library leaders interviewed all thought the Leading Modern Public Libraries programme had been useful and had had a beneficial effect, although one of the public library leaders interviewed felt that sometimes the wrong people had been sent just because there were places available, rather than because they had leadership potential and that the benefit in these cases was questionable. One of the public librarians, while acknowledging that the programme had been useful, still felt that it had been limited:

It gave people a bit more confidence but what it didn't do was give them that extra bit of 'oomph' which meant they could mix with the politicians, mix with strategic directors and chief execs and until we manage to do that, there will always be others who will take those top leadership roles.

Asked about local initiatives to develop library leaders, those leaders working in the university sector often referred to university-wide staff development courses available to library staff including leadership and management development courses, although these would not be LIS specific. One university library leader interviewed suggested that local, library-oriented cooperative training was possible and valuable, but commented that a “lack of interest and geography” made this difficult where he currently worked. Similarly, many local authorities run generic public-sector focussed leadership and management programmes.

The graduates surveyed were asked how they had acquired their leadership skills and the three most common responses were: experience; training; and, observing colleagues and senior management. Practical working experience, in particular, was identified as important in gaining the necessary skills although this had clearly been more comfortable for some than others, one respondent stating that s/he had acquired the skills through, "Being 'thrown in the deep end' to sink or swim!" and another through "learning by my mistakes or wrong judgement calls at work." This supports the comments made above on the importance of giving staff responsibility, even if it meant they made mistakes, because these could become development opportunities. Training and development, including Chartership, were also highlighted as valuable, one respondent explaining:

Chartership ... has been useful in providing me [with] 'space' and added motivation to reflect on weaknesses and strengths in strategy and policy.

Some of the library leaders spoke of the responsibility that they had, as service leaders, to identify and nurture leadership talent, one saying:

What I want to do is spot the people who have got a future and will do good things and you know that the time you invest with them will produce good things later on.

Many of the graduates also emphasised the importance of working with, or alongside, more experienced managers or leaders for the development of skills, one noting the value of "observing experienced and capable leaders, discussing policy options with them." Reading professional literature was also mentioned a number of times, particularly in relation to maintaining an awareness of trends within the profession. Three respondents stated that their educational experiences (including their Masters librarianship qualification) had enabled them to acquire theoretical and analytical skills, but the overall impression was that respondents believed that leadership skills were best learnt "[t]he hard way – getting it wrong sometimes, getting it right others – learning and adapting."

The graduate survey concluded by asking respondents whether they had any further comments about leadership in the library profession. A range of comments was received, some of them focusing on the extent to which leadership could be taught through library/information science degrees. One respondent said, for example:

I think leadership skills come with experience, and it may be quite difficult to teach more than the very basics in the theoretical environments like the ILM course. They are the kind of things that need to be taught through courses at work, or mentoring at work, so that they can then be put into practise on a daily basis immediately.

## CONCLUSION

We can conclude that there was some dissonance between library managers' and graduates' views of the leadership skills required by library leaders although both sets of respondents agreed that leadership was a quality vital to the profession and one which was increasing in importance due to changes in the internal and external environments within which libraries operate. The evidence from the graduate survey suggests, however, that those who might be expected to lead their organisations and the profession in years to come are not confident of their abilities in this regard. One of the university library leaders felt that having the right personality was key to being an effective leader and, specifically, having ambition and confidence was considered vital by many of the interviewees and yet these qualities were not particularly evident among the graduates surveyed. The numbers responding to the survey were small which precludes any rigorous statistical analysis by year but there did not seem to be any correlation between the graduates' opinion of the strength of their leadership skills and year of graduation. It might be expected, for example, that those with longer work experience would have had the opportunity to develop more of the skills listed, but this did not generally seem to be the case; respondents in all year groups were, by and large, reserved about their leadership talents.

Another area of disagreement focused on the skills of "Political awareness and sensitivity". Although all the library leaders interviewed emphasised that leaders have to be able to engage with organisational politics and/or political policies at a local and national level, the graduates surveyed seemed to be either unaware of this or underestimated its importance. Similarly, only 46% (the lowest percentage for any of the skills) felt that "Risk taking" was a skill that library leaders needed to a very great or great extent. The quote from one of the respondents in the results section above suggests that the term "risk" may be viewed by the graduates in a negative light, with connotations of danger and threat. In fact, as one of the public library leaders indicated, the public sector generally is increasingly trying to attract people with an entrepreneurial attitude, those "who can see an opportunity and are willing to take a bit of a risk to achieve it." Perhaps the language of the private sector, used increasingly in the public sector, was off-putting to many of our graduates working in public service organisations.

An interesting issue of debate picked up in some of the responses from both the library leaders and the graduates is the extent to which it is felt that leadership skills can be taught/learned. Some of the responses suggest that our respondents agreed with the adage that "leaders are born, not made" and yet there was considerable support for the notion that many of the requisite skills are acquired through experience. Leadership or management courses were also considered useful. Although the value of learning about leadership in an academic environment was queried, respondents did seem to think that students should be at least introduced to the concept of leadership on a theoretical basis; this basic understanding of

leadership could then be developed and enhanced through work experience and professional development courses and opportunities. One of the difficulties of teaching leadership in a classroom setting identified by some of the graduates was that it was perceived as essentially context-specific, one respondent noting “the exact mix of skills will depend on the sector.” This discussion raises the question of the implications of the results of this research for those of us educating the LIS professionals and leaders of the future. It is clear that students must be given an awareness of the importance of leadership within the profession and yet the skills mix required or considered desirable is daunting. While some can undoubtedly be acquired through training, others are more intangible and more difficult to pass on. As noted above, the library leaders suggested that confidence and ambition were the key to effective leadership, but the extent to which these can be gained through academic study is debatable.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire using the leaderships skills identified by Walton, Burke, and Oldroyd.

Using a Likert scale, questions 2-34 asked respondents to select from the following choices:

*Very great extent, Great extent, Moderate extent, Slight extent, Not at all.*

1. **When did you graduate from the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University** (*choices by year over the range 2001 -2007*).  
**To what extent should the library leader have the following skills and capabilities?**
2. Knowledge of university structure/ operations
3. 'Political awareness' and sensitivity
4. Awareness of external trends in sector
5. Ability to see the big picture and its local relevance

### **To what extent should the library leaders have the following interpersonal skills?**

6. Good communicating with internal/external 'audiences'
7. Tact
8. Compassion, kindness and respect
9. Thick skin
10. Emotional robustness

**To what extent should library managers have the following management skills?**

12. Staff management
13. Project management
14. Strategic planning/thinking
15. Negotiating and influencing
16. Time management
17. Change management
18. Managing priorities in a context of time constraints
19. Ability to deal with performance issues
20. Organisational skills
11. Financial management, budgets
21. Process management

**To what extent should the library leaders have the following mental skills/attitude?**

22. Leadership – firmness of direction, decisiveness
23. Flexibility
24. Blue sky thinking
25. Analytical and problem-solving skills
26. Willingness to transform ourselves and our services; ‘the vision thing’
27. Synthesising information from various sources
28. Creativity in relation to problems and new initiatives
29. Risk taking
30. Ability to see an opportunity and act on it

**To what extent should the library leaders have the following technical skills?**

31. Familiarity with current technological developments.
32. Expertise in professional competence
33. Awareness of trends and innovations in the LIS context
34. IT skills

**Open ended questions**

35. To what extent do you have the leadership skills listed above?
25. How have you acquired the leadership skills?
37. Are the leadership skills missing in the above list? If so what are they?
38. Please detail below any other comments you may have about the leadership skills needed by librarians.

**KEY FACTORS IN DEVELOPING AS A LEADER –  
THE LIBRARY SCHOOL, SELF-AWARENESS,  
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*While library and information schools are generally fulfilling their function of producing graduates who have the competencies and understand the content areas of librarianship, in designing curriculum, schools are ignoring research that indicates content knowledge and intelligence are relatively unimportant factors in achieving career success. Other professions, e.g., medicine and engineering, have been updating their curricula to encompass the “soft skills” of leadership and emotional intelligence, but library and information science graduates, for the most part must seek other venues to attain leadership competencies. Recent emphasis in leadership training focuses on self awareness and reflection, and also on understanding one’s temperament and strengths. This approach is seen as providing the self confidence needed rather than expending effort and training on eliminating weaknesses as is often the present practice. With this as a basis, participants prepare an agenda and strategic plan, and move into study and practice of areas of emotional intelligence, such as being able to regulate one’s own emotions, read other people, empathize, practice tolerance, understand group dynamics, and conflict management. It is urgent that educators recognize that academic content is not enough. It is time to also focus on process.*

**THE LIBRARY SCHOOL FACTOR**

The purpose of this section of the paper is to suggest that schools of library and information science (LIS) have focused quite strictly on the discipline of librarianship, that is, the way librarians approach their work, how they practice their craft and its competencies, and their role in society. Given that most library schools are in universities, are subject to various kinds of accreditation standards, and compete with other schools for students, it is relatively safe to say that they are fulfilling their mission of preparing new library professionals.

From 20 years of practice, and another 20 in library education, I have observed that graduates generally go to their first jobs prepared to practice, and to quickly assimilate and adapt to the distinctive customs, rules and policies of the agency that employs them. The overwhelming gap in their ability to do well, progress in

their jobs, and move into leadership positions lies in basic skills of dealing with difficult people, understanding and relating to supervisors, and motivating staff.

LIS graduates are extremely intelligent individuals but all along the way the assumption has been made by planners of LIS curricula that intelligence, of the kind measured by intelligence quotient (IQ) tests, equates with interpersonal skills. It does not. Library educators appear to have forgotten that no matter how technological the profession becomes, it is still a service profession and even those who do not interact much with the public still must maintain excellent relationships with their bosses and their staff. In my view, professional schools are missing the boat in their almost total neglect of interpersonal and leadership skills. Of course there are exceptions. Management is almost always a required course, and elements of this course frequently emphasize human relation skills. Then there is the occasional elective offered on leadership, interpersonal skills, group dynamics or human resources management, but since these courses are not required, they are not likely to attract the very persons who could most benefit.

Many LIS schools are ignoring research documenting that a high IQ in itself does not lead to strong professionals and leaders able to make a substantive contribution to a profession. For example, in a paper introducing the concept of emotional intelligence, Cherniss<sup>1</sup> refers to the Sommerville study, conducted over a 40-year span with 450 boys, which found that "IQ had little relation to how well they did at work or in the rest of their lives. What made the biggest difference was childhood abilities such as being able to handle frustration, control emotions, and get along with other people."<sup>1 (p5)</sup>

Cherniss cites another study initiated in the 1950s of 80 science Ph.D.'s at Berkeley which showed that social and emotional abilities were four times more important than IQ in determining professional success and prestige. The Berkeley graduates were assessed at graduation and again 40 years later when they were in their 70s. Their success was judged on the basis of their resumes, peer evaluation, and placement in such directories as *American Men and Women of Science*. Cherniss points out that if you are a Ph.D. scientist you probably need an IQ of about 120 to get a doctorate and a job in science, "but then it is more important ...to persist in the face of difficulty and to get along well with colleagues and subordinates than it is to have an extra 10 or 15 points of IQ."<sup>1 (p5)</sup> In other words, IQ is a useful predictor of what vocations you can enter but once you are in a profession, the IQ is not so important.

While the research is readily available, and while many library schools have phrases comparable to "Our graduates will be prepared to assume proactive leadership roles in the profession" in their mission and goal statements, it is simply unacceptable that currently the LIS curriculum is so devoid of leadership/interpersonal skills elements.

The deans I have talked with readily concede that these skills are important, but then follow up with a statement something like the following: "Yes, it is important but as it is, we can barely squeeze all of the necessary courses into 18 months or



even two years, so how could we possibly add even one required course in these soft areas?" These deans are ignoring the indisputable fact that MLIS graduates, no matter how "qualified," no matter if they do not have strong aspirations for leadership, if they cannot communicate and get along with their colleagues, supervisors and staff, cannot communicate with their boards and city officials, cannot work effectively in teams, cannot listen, and provide responsive services for stakeholders, then they have a very limited future in the information professions.

Librarianship is after all not the only profession that is having difficulty accommodating the vastly expanding body of knowledge in the discipline into a specific number of credit hours. Medical schools are a case in point. As early as 1993, a study found that virtually all medical schools offer courses encompassing interpersonal skills, and medical interviewing.<sup>2</sup> A 2008 Mayo Medical School report notes that:

Mayo's revised curriculum addresses the need to develop these attributes in part through its five overarching themes: basic science foundations, clinical experiences, leadership, physician and society, and principles of pharmacology and therapeutics. Three of these – clinical experiences, leadership, and physician and society – provide students opportunities to develop the interpersonal skills that are crucial to excellent patient care.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier, the University of Rochester School of Medicine set out to create a new educational model, as reported in the January 2002 Science Blog:

to instill in physicians the kinds of qualities patients want: trustworthiness, good judgment, good communication, and the ability to keep up-to-date with changes in the field.... changes to ensure physician competence in typically overlooked areas such as teamwork, interpersonal skills...and managing ambiguous clinical situations...." For patients, it's not enough to know that their doctor scored well on a multiple choice test" says...Ronald M. Epstein, M.D. [He] points out that sometimes, student doctors who perform especially well on standardized tests are especially lacking in such traits as empathy, responsibility, and tolerance...Last year, educators who visited Rochester as part of an accreditation inspection...found "no areas of concern – an unprecedented finding in American medical education." The team gave the curriculum a perfect score and praised the university's reforms as "innovative, bold, and highly successful."<sup>4</sup>

Rochester was awarded a half million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Foundation for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education for the development of an assessment methodology to evaluate the new curriculum, in the belief that Rochester might become a national model, not only for medical schools, but also "for other professional schools such as law or architecture."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, last year the engineering profession in the U.S. and Canada, led by Iowa State University, embarked on a very ambitious research project that would produce an integrated curriculum to improve engineering graduates' skills in

communication, leadership, and practical problem solving. Included is a consortium to provide face to face and distance workshops for faculty, and longitudinal research to assess the new curricula's impact on graduates' performance.<sup>5</sup>

As the Science Blog sums up the reform at Rochester, "the work...is an attempt to remind the healthcare industry that medicine is more than knowing the facts and demonstrating skill. 'Medicine, no matter how technological it is, is always a human enterprise'."<sup>4</sup> This is true for engineering, law and other professions, but it is especially true for the library and information profession.

With a few notable exceptions, the art of leadership and the practice of interpersonal skills/emotional intelligence are far from mainstream in the curricula of library and information schools. The various leadership institutes, workshops, and conference programs that are available do not fill this void. We need to move quickly to modernize curricula so that every LIS graduate will have the skills needed to move into the leadership roles demanded of professionals now and in the future.

### **THE SELF-AWARENESS FACTOR**

When leadership workshops and institutes for librarians began to proliferate in the eighties, and from then until now, the major emphasis has been on the traits of a leader (intelligence, vision, self confidence, consistency, etc). Other topics include leadership styles, major theories of leadership, and communication. Workshops and courses tend to focus on the process of communication: listening skills, building positive relationships, negotiating skills, dealing with conflict, and making presentations. A more recent topic is "working in teams" which evolved from changes in the way organizations manage their work.

The latest major change in emphasis deals with self knowledge and assessment. It has become well recognized that the first step in becoming a leader is not only acquiring a good understanding of one's preferences in dealing with people and in organizing work, but also a strong grasp of one's strengths. Leadership, the theorists say, is not just a matter of learning better presentation or listening skills, or being a visionary, although these skills are extremely important. To really change and develop our leadership potential we must first understand who we are, and begin an ongoing process of honestly examining our reactions to life situations, learning from mistakes, and practicing behaviors that are congruent with our natural preferences.

One test that has been used from the beginning in library leadership institutes is the Meyers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).<sup>6</sup> This is a very reliable test that measures one's inclination towards introversion and extroversion and is based on the work of Carl Jung.

The terms extrovert and introvert are used in a special sense when referring to the MBTI.

That is, people whose preference is extroversion draw their energy from action. They tend to act first, then reflect, then act further. If they are inactive, their level of motivation tends to decline. Conversely, those who prefer introversion become less energized as they act. They prefer to reflect, then act, then reflect again. They need time out to reflect in order to build energy. The extrovert's flow is directed outward toward people and objects; the introvert's is directed inward towards concepts and ideas. The MBTI sorts for preference, not actual ability, and individuals are considered the best judge of their own type. No type is considered better or worse than another.

The MBTI profile is very useful for understanding not only why one behaves and reacts in certain ways, but especially for understanding why colleagues behave as they do. This understanding can be a very powerful tool in improving relationships, and in accomplishing tasks. The work of David Keirsey, who has mapped four 'temperaments' to Myers-Briggs types, is also helpful. His book *Please Understand Me II* contains a simple questionnaire that is easy to take, and offers an in depth analysis of the various temperaments.<sup>7</sup>

Both the MBTI and the Keirsey temperament sorter are very useful for self knowledge, but even more compelling is a newer approach that advocates building on natural strengths rather than putting great energy into attempting to overcome perceived weaknesses. Buckingham<sup>8</sup> has reported on studies conducted by the Gallup Research Center over twenty-five years. This research has produced a program that helps people to identify their strengths and learn how to focus and perfect them. This approach was somewhat of a breakthrough in its assertion that corporations and non-profit organizations make two flawed assumptions about people. The first is that people can learn to be competent in almost anything, and the second is that each person's greatest room for growth is in his or her areas of greatest weakness. Buckingham maintains that these assumptions should be turned around and that organizations should assume that people have unique talents, and each person's greatest room for growth is in the areas of his or hers greatest strengths. How liberating this is for all of us! Why spend thousands trying to become a fiscal guru and when you really have not the talent nor the interest in that area?

The book, *Now Discover Your Strengths*, has a code that is the password to an online questionnaire called the "Strengths Finder Profile." This provides the participant with his/her five signature "themes" and the rest of the book gives suggestions on how to leverage your themes in improving your leadership skills.<sup>8</sup>

The self-analysis approaches described above are just three of the many instruments available to gain greater insight into one's temperament and strengths. Most leadership training currently goes a step further and engages the participant in profound self-reflection to gain understanding of his/her "authentic self". The next step is creating a personal leadership agenda with a strategic plan to accomplish it.

Warren Bennis<sup>9</sup> and Bill George<sup>10</sup> have authored two of the best "workbooks" to help would-be leaders through this process. In *Learning to Lead*, Bennis says

“Leaders know themselves; they know what they can do well. Part of their secret is that they have positive self regard. They know their talents, build on their strengths, and are able to discern how they can contribute to their organizations, their communities and the quality of life of those around them.”<sup>9</sup> (p27) He goes on to advise the would-be leader to first understand him/herself, be open to new experiences, solicit feedback, information, and ideas from others about successes and failures, and continually self-reflect.

Thus it is possible for anyone through reading and study to develop leadership skills, but a course in graduate/professional school would be most beneficial because it could combine with and relate to the practice of librarianship. Second best would be a week long immersion institute, or some ongoing version of this where participants have a chance to interact with mentors and peers. (Couldn't LIS schools do this?) If the current pundits are correct, lack of access to a formal training program need not be a major barrier to attaining leadership status. One begins with self-knowledge and reflection. There are hundreds of books and articles on every aspect of the subject.

### THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FACTOR

As discussed in part 1 of this paper, research tells us that intelligence is somewhat of a minor factor in achieving leadership status. Of course a certain level of intelligence is needed to obtain professional credentials, but once in a profession, factors other than cognitive skills are more important. These factors most definitely include technical or professional competencies practiced over a period of years, but the most important characteristic is emotional intelligence (EI), which in fact is a big part of almost every leadership theory.

Whether we are talking about leadership traits, various theories such as leadership styles, situational approaches, contingency theories, the path-goal theory, or transformational leadership, all contain some elements of EI. Emotional Intelligence can be defined as follows: *The capacity to perceive and regulate emotions in oneself as well as others or building relationships and using emotions wisely, reading people, and being aware of one's own emotions.*

In a recent research study conducted with 265 executives, directors, business owners and consultants, it was found that these leaders consider the following attributes most essential for success: vision, relationship building, people development, self awareness, empathy, and adaptability. These traits were rated more important than traditional leadership qualities such as financial acumen, external market orientation, and planning.<sup>11</sup>

In his best selling book *Primal Leadership*, Goleman<sup>12</sup> outlines four domains of emotional intelligence: self awareness; self management; social awareness; and relationship management. All four domains, says Goleman, are learned abilities, not innate talents:

Self awareness includes accurate self assessment and self confidence. The path to self awareness has been described in the second section of this paper, and the tools are readily available. If one takes the advice of Buckingham and focuses on strengths, not weaknesses, the self confidence is bound to emerge.

The second domain, self management, is also all about you. It includes emotional self control, transparency (trustworthiness), adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative and optimism. In this area, the concept of adaptability seems particularly important. Adaptability also embraces tolerance. Whether it is tolerance for those with ideas that conflict with your ideas, or simply tolerance of those who do not know how to empathize with others, especially you!

It is extremely important that with all of this self reflection, setting one's leadership agenda and strategic plan, that we do not forget that all success in leadership is dependent on how we are viewed by others, and how we are able to relate to and empower our staffs, our colleagues, and yes, our supervisors.

The third domain, social awareness, follows the second very closely and includes empathy, organizational awareness, and a service orientation. The key concept here could be a strong commitment to the mission/goals of the library you work for so that it is apparent that your loyalties are focused on the organization and not on your own career plans.

The final domain, relationship management, includes inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, being a change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, teamwork, and collaboration. As you move into this fourth realm, your self confidence will allow you to become a force in the organization at any level you happen to be. In the Sheldon annals of leadership, there are many (true) stories of how would-be library leaders have passed through these four domains. In the past, describing these paths to power did not have the benefit of the conceptual framework provided by Daniel Goleman and others, but his framework is a useful one for anyone who wants to systematically pursue a leadership role in the LIS or any other profession.

## CONCLUSION

At a time when library and information organizations are eagerly seeking new and strong leadership to assume the thousands of positions being vacated by retirees, it is perplexing that so many library/information educators still view leadership and emotional intelligence skills as "soft skills" that have at best a marginal place in an LIS graduate curriculum. Until LIS educators awake to their role in providing graduates who are self confident and eager to assume leadership roles, LIS professionals will have to seek out other venues to receive this training or develop their own programs of leadership study.

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## DEVELOPING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE – A WORKSHOP

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### ABSTRACT

*Definitions of leadership styles are provided and traits of leadership are described. Two assessment exercises are used to help determine both an individual's dominant leadership style and a follower's learning style. After a brief look at the research describing learning styles and leadership attributes, participants will explore their own leadership styles and discuss methods to develop or expand the traits they need to adopt if they are going to take leadership roles in their organizations. It is suggested that 75 minutes be allotted for the workshop. Appendixes include the objectives for this workshop, an expansion of the Blake/Mouton grid, a list of 50 traits and skills for leaders, sample discussion questions, and an evaluation form.*

### INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

At the present time, the library profession and its organizations are facing tremendous challenges within the workplace and within organizations. The current economic situation makes it very difficult to encourage and sustain membership in professional associations or to attract members to attend conferences. Yet, professional associations are excellent venues to hone leadership skills, and the profession needs strong leaders in hard times.

In 1790, Abigail Adams in a letter to Thomas Jefferson said, "These are the hard times in which genius would wish to live. Great necessities call forth great leaders." Because we are facing hard times, we need great leaders to come forward to create and develop our vision in this time of crisis. Many of these potential leaders are in the embryo stage. How do we find them and nurture them? The question of how one becomes a leader, born or made, continues to be debated. Some paths to leadership include:

- Born into the role: Kings and Queens
- Assassination: Sometimes a military coup, sometimes a crazed person
- Inherit the position: Different from being born into the role because a predecessor paved the way, e.g., your father was Henry Ford.
- Elected to it: By vote of membership may signal charismatic rather than rational choice
- Picked for it: Selection committee approves person.

- Learner leader: Apprentice-role in organization such as vice-president, president-elect.
- Ladder leader: Begin at the bottom, work way to the top.
- Trained for the role if not for a specific position: the symphony director, the football coach, the hospital director who learned, practiced, had their dream fulfilled.
- Title hound: Persons who seek the position's title and may have little idea about complexity of the assignment or whether they have the skills to carry out the leadership role.
- Oldest child: Sibling who tells anyone younger what to do and sometimes how to do it.
- Reluctant leader: Colleagues feel this person can do the job, even if the person is not all that interested.
- Process of elimination leader: No one else is willing.
- Accidental: Dot.com guru who, earning millions, has to manage an onslaught of revenue and employees.
- Sees the need: Someone moving into the vacuum, sometimes for survival.
- Right place at the right time: Self-explanatory – no leader can lead without being in the right place at the right time.

These are categories of leadership, and they are very broad. Our workshop on leadership takes a different and more practical approach, one that encourages identifying leadership styles and the attributes needed for leading. First, one must find persons who are willing to become leaders.

A well-known adage tells us, "The scenery only changes for the lead dog." Not everyone aspires to be a leader, and many remain pleased to let someone else stand in front and view the changing scenery. Some might say that in the library and information sciences profession, there are more who decline to lead than there are those who accept, let alone strive for a leadership role. Always being a follower signals a passive relationship to change, which does not improve our image, nor does it move the information profession forward. This passive stance will not help us improve our organizations nor help in regenerating the information profession.

We will begin with a definition of leadership and an assessment of a personal leadership style. A process is suggested to identify the learning styles of followers as a step toward enlisting them in a vision. Last, a list of leadership traits is provided to guide you in planning and building your leadership skills (Appendix C).

### **DEFINING LEADERSHIP: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T**

Before defining what leadership is, let's define what it is not. Leadership is not management. In a volume of essays on library leadership, Michael Gorman wrote:



The essential differences between management/administration on the one hand and leadership on the other are that the former is concerned with what is and the latter is concerned with what will be. One accepts the *status quo* (and often yearns for the *status quo ante*) and the other dares to imagine and to create the future.<sup>1(p74)</sup>

He finishes with “the manager/administrator strives to make the returns of the current system as great as possible whereas the leader seeks better alternatives to the current system.”<sup>1(74)</sup> If we follow Gorman’s description, leadership is the imagination to create the future, but what else is it?

Defining leadership is not a simple task because of its many facets. Since we are discussing leadership in professional organizations, we’ll look at the organizational role and the components of that role in helping us understand and develop our leadership skills:

In its essence, leadership in an organizational role involves (1) establishing a clear vision, (2) sharing (communicating) that vision with others so that they will follow willingly, (3) providing the information, knowledge, and methods to realize that vision, and (4) coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members or stakeholders. A leader comes to the forefront in case of crisis, and is able to think and act in creative ways in difficult situations. Unlike management, leadership flows from the core of a personality and cannot be taught, although it may be learnt and may be enhanced through coaching or mentoring.<sup>2</sup>

Leaders have a variety of styles in their personality core. In order to let you enhance your style, it will be helpful to analyze this style.

### **ASSESSING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE (25 MINUTES)**

In assessing your leadership style, we will be using a model developed by Blake and Mouton<sup>3</sup> whose work tested management of companies. The model can be used to help you determine which of their five styles would be your most likely approach to problem solving. They are:

- Country Club: Thoughtful attention to people so that one has a friendly, comfortable team.
- Impoverished: Minimum effort
- Team: Interdependence though a common stake in the outcome
- Organization Man: Balancing the work with morale of people
- Authority Obedience. Efficiency in operation

Blake and Mouton further describe these leadership styles in terms of how a person in each category would approach motivation, planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and appraisal. For a hint of your style, we will carry out a simple paper and pencil test at this time and discuss the five Blake and Mouton descriptors to help you analyze your responses (see Appendix B)

### **ASSESSING YOUR FOLLOWERS (5 MINUTES)**

For leaders to be successful, they must determine the best way to get their followers on board. If you understand how a person is most comfortable in learning, it will help you understand how they react to challenges in their environment. For this, we will use the learning styles described by Gregorc and Butler<sup>4</sup>. While their learning styles were developed some time ago, as recently as 2006 two researchers reported using Gregorc's Learning Styles Delineator to match these learning styles to student preferences for online instructional methods.<sup>5</sup> The styles are:

- Concrete sequential: Structured, practical, predictable, thorough (A person who works step-by-step, following specific directions, appreciating order and logical sequence, and preferring a quiet atmosphere.)
- Abstract sequential: Logical, analytical, conceptual, studious (Someone who deals with abstract ideas, theories, hypotheses, logical and rational, excellent decoding abilities with written, verbal, image symbols, views the overall picture or the final product from its inception.)
- Abstract random: Sensitive, sociable, imaginative, expressive (An individual who thinks with emotion, prefers experiencing opportunities within the total environment, likes working in small groups rather than working in isolation, sensitive to human behavior, and pays close attention to the nuances of the atmospheres and the moods of people.)
- Concrete random: Intuitive, original, investigative, able to resolve problems (A person who wants to know how things work, inquisitive and questioning of motives, likes to think out of the box, to experiment, prefers to go from question to answer without explaining the steps in between.)<sup>5</sup>

No person exhibits one of these all of the time, but most people are more comfortable with one rather than the others. If you want to lead concrete sequential persons, give them a checklist of steps to follow. You will want to engage abstract sequential persons in what the task entails and they will help you pick the best solution. Persons who are abstract random should be given the assignment to prepare the room for the meeting because they will make sure the air is neither too hot or cold, the chairs are comfortable, food is provided, and the light level is appropriate. You want to make sure the concrete random members of the audience are given a pencil and paper rather than an electronic device because they probably would take it apart to make sure it works.

Which would you say you are? Which would you say your best friend is? Your boss? Your siblings? This exercise can help you decide the best way to approach those in the group you will be leading. We now need to move to the descriptions and modifiers of leadership styles from the literature.

### **SOME LEADERSHIP STYLES, DESCRIPTORS, AND MODIFIERS (5 MINUTES)**

An often used textbook for teaching management in U.S. library education programs is Stueart and Moran.<sup>6</sup> In their section on leadership, they present James MacGregor Burns' two types of leadership: *transactional* and *transformational*. Burns describes transactional leaders as persons who exchange service with rewards for subordinates while the transformational leader gets subordinates to "transform their own self-interest into the interest of the larger group."<sup>6 (p332)</sup> If you were matching these to Blake/Mouton, you would consider transactional as "country club" and transformation as "team management."

Fred Fiedler's <sup>6(p333), 7</sup> leadership contingency model has three situational variables in place with their possible description in Blake/Mouton:

1. Leader-Member Relations: the degree to which group members like and trust a leader and are willing to follow him or her. (Organization Man)
2. Task Structure: the clarity and structure of the elements of the tasks to be accomplished. (Authority-Obedience)
3. Power Position: the power and authority associated with the leader's position. (Authority-Obedience)

Robert House <sup>6 (p333, 335), 8</sup> proposed a path-goal theory of leadership with four types of behaviors which have been matched to the Blake/Mouton categories:

1. Directive leadership occurs when specific advice is given to the group and clear rules and structure are established. (Organization Man) This one is also the most comfortable for Gregoric's concrete sequential learners.
2. Supportive leadership occurs when the needs and well-being of subordinates are considered. (Country Club)
3. Participative leadership occurs when information, power, and influence are shared. Subordinates are allowed to share in the decision making. (Team Management)
4. Achievement-oriented leadership occurs when challenging goals are set and high performance is encouraged. Achievement-oriented leaders show high confidence in subordinates and help them in learning how to achieve high goals. (Team Management)

He felt that any leader could use any of these four types but it depended upon the situation. His two most important were the personal characteristics of the workers

(experience, ability, motivation, needs) and the environmental factors including the nature of the work to be done, the formal authority system, and the work group itself.

### **LEADERSHIP TRAITS/ATTRIBUTES FROM THE LITERATURE (15 MINUTES)**

Does our brief discussion of leadership styles provide an introduction to the traits of leadership? Who has which traits of leadership? Were you born with them or do you need to learn them, and, if you need to learn them, whom will you ask to teach you? If so many are reluctant to step up to a leadership role, it may be that they have little knowledge of what traits they would need to lead or how to go about achieving them. We need to recognize the traits and attributes of leadership and to acknowledge how many and to what degree we have them. Leadership is a complex process. From our earlier definition and from the literature in library and information, we find that “Establishing a clear vision”<sup>2</sup> is important. Your vision is one that should grab your audience with your picture of what could and what should be. It needs to be sold to your followers so it will transform them and become a unified focus.

Our definition goes on to say “sharing (communicating) that vision with others so that they will follow willingly,”<sup>2</sup> Communication is the ability to organize meaning for those you are planning to lead. Communication is the articulation by whatever means to share the vision whether it is a picture to take the place or the thousand words. This communication must give them the information they need to accept your vision.

According to our earlier definition, as a leader, one must provide “the information, knowledge, and methods to realize the vision”.<sup>2</sup> To do this, one needs to recognize what information is needed and what knowledge the followers have or should have to understand the vision. Last they will need to know what must happen to realize that vision. In many cases, the methods have a price tag and where the funding will come from to achieve the vision must have some basis in reality. Lastly in our definition, leaders are responsible for “coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members or stakeholders.”<sup>2</sup> Finally, “A leader comes to the forefront in case of crisis, and is able to think and act in creative ways in difficult situations. Unlike management, leadership flows from the core of a personality and cannot be taught, although it may be learnt and may be enhanced through coaching or mentoring.”<sup>2</sup>

Blake and Mouton suggested that their main elements, each of which is an ingredient, a component, a facet of leadership, can be isolated and examined. All six of these elements, *initiative*, *inquiry*, *advocacy*, *conflict resolution*, *decision making*, and *critique*, are vital to effective leadership because no one can compensate for the lack or overabundance of another. They suggest initiative is needed for a

specific activity, to start or to stop it. Inquiry provides the leader with the facts and data needed, as in our earlier definition, to explain the activity or the leader's vision. Advocacy for Blake/Mouton is to take a position usually based on strong convictions. A strong leader resolves conflict with mutual understanding. Leadership applied to decision making relates to performance, and critique is the ability to solve operational problems and may involve giving feedback to one's followers.

Brooke E. Sheldon confirms the attributes of our definition by repeating the Bennis/Nanus qualities of vision and communication. She adds positioning, and self confidence to assess to what degree librarians in leadership positions have these qualities in her book, *Leaders in Libraries: Styles and Strategies for Success*.<sup>9</sup> In her study she added mentoring as an attribute of leadership. "Increasingly, in all professions, there is a growing awareness that the presence of mentors and role models can be a critical factor in one's career."<sup>9 (p51)</sup> Mentoring has two sides, the side of getting someone who is a great leader to help you learn to lead and the side of your becoming a mentor to others to help them develop their leadership skills. She suggests that leaders spot and seek out potential leaders to help them succeed.

Another attribute from Fiedler's Leader/Member Relations is trust. The leader must be accountable, predictable, and reliable. Trust is difficult both to earn and to keep, but essential. To build this one is accountable for one's actions. One should follow one leadership style most often or followers will be caught off guard. This gives followers a sense that the leader is reliable.

Self confidence is a very necessary attribute. You need to recognize your strengths and acknowledge and learn to compensate for your weaknesses.<sup>10 (p58)</sup> A really good way to compensate is to surround yourself with people who do very well what you can't do as well. This is a well known secret to success, but sometimes set aside if someone thinks that surrounding one's self with people who can't do as good a job will somehow make the leader look better. Another key to strong leadership is not worrying about who gets the credit. What is essential is to accomplish the task successfully. Bennis and Nanus also consider the context of leadership as commitment (working at your full potential), complexity (the ability to sort through chaos), and credibility (closely related to trust).<sup>10 (p6)</sup>

Another facet of leadership is the ability to initiate and sustain change. It is one thing to have agreement that change is necessary and even to implement change. However the real leadership skill is needed to make sure change continues rather than letting the program slide back into past performance.

The leadership traits discussed above are listed in the Appendix. Most of them would be difficult to quantify or evaluate.

**HOW DO YOU MAKE IT ALL WORK? (20 MINUTES)**

With the results of the self-test to help you identify your dominant leadership style, and a simple way to assess your followers' learning style, you can begin to match your future plans to the attributes you have. This will help you understand what you must gain. To start with a strong mentor to help you is an obvious way to begin, keeping in mind that you must plan to be a mentor to others once you are in your leadership role. Once you have chosen your mentor, reviewed your attributes and the degree to which you have them, you can decide how you will build your skills, remembering that a good way to practice is within your professional association.

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**APPENDIX A*****Leadership Workshop Objectives***

1. Participants will learn a workshop model for assessing leadership skills and will be able to use the elements to plan similar workshops.
2. Using the parts of the Blake/Mouton Grid, participants will be able to assess their leadership styles.
3. Using Gregorc's Learning Styles, participants will practice assessing the learning styles of others.
4. Participants will analyze the traits which they possess and those they should strive to achieve.
5. Participants will analyze an evaluation instrument for the workshop.

**APPENDIX B****Expanded Analysis of Leadership Behavior as Found in Blake/Mouton,  
*The Managerial Grid III: The Key to Leadership Excellence***

**Country Club Management:** The leader considers that the attitudes and feelings of the group are of primary importance and attempts to arrange conditions so that personal and social needs can be satisfied. This person dislikes conflict because it would threaten the warmth and approval of the leader. In sharing sessions, members of the group are encouraged to discuss things they enjoy talking about rather than bringing up controversial issues or differences of opinion. This leader will set a personal opinion aside to avoid negatives, smooth over differences, reduce tension, and alleviate pressures.

**Impoverished Management:** It is very difficult to consider people with these attributes as leaders because they care little for their co-workers or the task at hand. For all intents and purposes, they are "out of it" remaining withdrawn, only going through leadership motions. They appear to be bored and listless, keeping others at a distance, more bystander than participant. This leader gives broad assignments, avoiding specifics and expecting the group members to know their own tasks and to coordinate with each other.

**Team Management:** The team leader involves as many as possible in generating strategies for work and achievement allowing interdependence though a common stake in the outcome. Team members are committed to the project and there is a general sense of trust and respect, a "can do" spirit. Any conflict is managed by involving others early so additional information may be gathered and alternatives identified. Pros and cons are weighed. Work requirements are matched with personal capabilities or needs in deciding who is to do what and when.

**Organization Management:** Adequate performance is possible through balancing both the workload and the morale of the group. This leader wants to look good, be “in” with colleagues while keeping things on superficial levels and taking cues from others. After setting goals and objectives, individual assignments are made and then checked with the group members to make sure they agree with those decisions. Keeping conflict to a minimum by having routines and rules to be followed, this person avoids taking a stand and believes in compromise.

**Authority Obedience:** These leaders are hardworking, controlling, and domineering. They rely little on other members of the group, setting directions and expecting them to be followed, and making assignments for others to follow. They follow schedules and meet deadlines, and they place a high value on making their own decisions, and are rarely influenced by others.

## APPENDIX C

### *Leadership Traits and Skills for Leaders – Handout*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Vision (to be developed and shared with others) for visionary leadership.    | 12. Advocacy   |
| 2. Communication (to share the vision)  | 13. Conflict resolution (mutual understanding)                                 |
| 3. Information (knowing what is needed to help followers understand the vision) | 14. Decision Making  |
| 4. Knowledge (what do your followers bring, what do they need to learn?)        | 15. Positioning (sitting at the head of the table)                             |
| 5. Methods (How will the vision materialize, what resources, financial, human?) | 16. Self confidence  |
| 6. Conflict resolution (coordinating conflicting interests)                     | 17. Mentoring  |
| 7. Conflict resolution (balancing conflicting interests)                        | 18. Role Model   |
| 8. Creative (thinking in creative ways)   | 19. Trust (credibility)  |
| 9. Creative (acting in creative ways)   | 20. Accountable  |
| 10. Initiative  | 21. Predictable  |
| 11. Inquiry   | 22. Reliable   |
|   | 23. Commitment (working to full potential)                                     |
|   | 24. Complexity (working in chaos)  |
|   | 25. Change (understand change as it occurs, affects the immediate environment) |
|   | 26. Change (how to create a plan for change)                                   |
|   | 27. Change (how to initiate change)  |
|   | 28. Change (how to sustain change)   |



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 29. Risk taking (ability to make decisions in the absence of full information). | 41. Long-term planning  |
| 30. Understand the positive uses of power..                                     | 42. Engender broad support for issues                         |
| 31. Policy (communicating)  | 43. Involved in leadership as early as possible               |
| 32. Policy (negotiating)  | 44. Viewed as more influential by their peers                 |
| 33. Policy (clarifying)   | 45. Encourage extra effort from subordinates                  |
| 34. Policy (recommending options)   | 46. Showing others how to do things they don't know how to do |
| 35. Sensitivity   | 47. Able to make a speech                                     |
| 36. Perspective of the political environment                                    | 48. Able to lead a group                                      |
| 37. Strong ideological commitment   | 49. Able to manage a meeting                                  |
| 38. Sense of professional ethics  | 50. The hub of the university, city, school, and organization |
| 39. Social responsibility   |   |
| 40. Global view   |   |

## APPENDIX D

### *Sample Discussion Questions*

1. Given the opportunity to work with a group of aspiring leaders, how would you go about assessing their leadership styles?
2. What would you do to identify their learning styles?
3. Which of the traits on the list do you feel would be less difficult to acquire?
4. How would you go about acquiring them?
5. Which of the traits on the list do you feel would be more difficult to acquire?
6. Do you have any suggestions for how you would go about acquiring them?
7. How would you go about planning a continuing education session to help future leaders build their leadership traits?

## APPENDIX E

### *Evaluation Form*

1. This workshop was designed to provide a model for assessing your leadership skills. How well do you think the workshop did this?
2. Do you think you could carry out a similar workshop?
3. How well do the use of the Blake/Mouton grid help you with analyzing your leadership skills?
4. Will you be able to assess learning styles?

5. How well did the discussion of leadership traits help you understand those which you possess and those which you should strive to achieve?
6. For which trait(s) was your understanding enhanced by the suggestions of others in your group?
7. How effective is this evaluation form in evaluating the workshop?

## SUCCESSION PLANNING AND PASSING ON LEADERSHIP – APPROACHES FOR LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

*Succession planning is relatively new to professionals in the library and information science profession and even newer when applied to library associations. Little can be found in the literature, so we must borrow from the business, education, and health professions while designing our own models. How we identify potential leaders early in their careers, nurture them, and give them opportunities to practice leadership can be a major benefit to members of library associations. This article attempts to explain succession planning and to show its relationship to officers and leaders in library associations.*

### INTRODUCTION

Few would argue that for organizations and associations to thrive, they must have good leadership. According to Geroy, Caleb, and Wright, “every profession or discipline along with its representative organizations, is challenged to pass along the critical skills and normative elements of its culture, content, and process in order to ensure its survival.”<sup>1(p25)</sup> Recently, the keywords for passing along these skills have been *succession planning*, a term coined in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Henri Fayol.<sup>1 (p27)</sup> Following his fourteen management points could ensure that the tenure of personnel in business organizations remains stable.<sup>2</sup> After some time, the members of the education and the health professions began adopting succession plans to solve their problems when it came time for new leadership to assume their roles.

In the education world, the succession of administrators has become critical for school districts experiencing frequent changes in superintendents and principals. One of their approaches to succession planning is termed leadership forecasting, “...the proactive development and selection of school administrators.... starts with the end in mind by considering future vacancies, both known and unknown.”<sup>3</sup> Such planning means that positions would be filled with outsiders or insiders who were prepared and ready for a promotion rather than the opposite. This planning also has the better financial outcome of hiring the right people who were ready for the challenge rather than adding the cost of replacing someone who was inadequate in the position. Fallout from poor appointments included “lower productivity and morale among staff, unhappy parents, a tarnished school reputation, political

or legal mistakes that warrant repair by others and additional stress and work for supervisors trying to fix problems.”<sup>3</sup>

Librarians are now talking about succession planning in preparing for changes in management, but it is still in the beginning stages. Little can be found in the literature. In a search for recent articles in one database, over 200 citations were found for *succession planning*, but only two were in library periodicals, both in periodicals concerning library finances. The literature, whether from business, education, health, or libraries, focuses on the need for developing leadership skills in those who will be our successors, so that succession planning can prevent the obstacles described below by Hart can be minimized:

Succession is a disruptive event that changes the line of communication and relationships of power, effects decision making, and generally disturbs the equilibrium of normal activities. During the succession period, relationships are formed and negotiated, expectations between parties are confirmed or disconfirmed, conflicts may be confronted and resolved, and new leaders are accommodated or not in their work role and the new environment.<sup>4</sup>

In order to minimize the conflicts which could occur with unplanned succession, developing leaders to take over new roles means leader librarians should be in search of their successors. Up to a point, you can influence the selection; but we must recognize in many situations you will not get to pick your successor. In associations they may be elected; however this does not release us from the need to help find successors.

#### **LIBRARIANS AS LEADERS IN SEARCH OF SUCCESSORS**

Identifying potential library leaders in the profession has been aided in those organizations whose members have held institutes and workshops to prepare new graduates and new hires with the skills and the ambition to seek leadership roles as they gain experience. The first, Snowbird, was initiated by the American Library Association (ALA) President, Margaret Chisholm, who included in her vision the development of a leadership plan for the association. Her appointed committee's plan was to write a proposal for funding to hold a training institute. With the help of a public library director, Dennis Day, funding was granted by a vendor, and the institutes were established. Library school faculty and employers were asked to nominate potential leaders from their recent graduates and new employees. The week's training was led by acknowledged leaders in the field. Other institutes have followed a similar pattern.

State library associations have held or are holding leadership institutes for their members. In 2000-2002, the Stanford-California State Library Institute on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership held three leadership institutes on the Stanford University campus. Planned for 150 delegates, 2/3 came from all types of libraries within the

state and 1/3 came from other states and countries. These were designed to help answer the questions, "How are librarians preparing their organizations to survive and take advantage of escalating changes in information technology?" and "How does the profession identify and develop its next generation of leaders?"

The Texas Library Association (TLA) plans its annual sessions for five day institutes to train "Tall Texans." Key people from around the state and an outside facilitator conduct the training and serve as mentors. TLA units and employers of participants make funds available to help defray costs for attendance. A two-year commitment to a Personal Action Agenda is a requirement of attendance.

The Frye Institute, sponsored by Emory University and the Council on Library and Information Resources, is available for potential leaders in higher education who are nominated by a senior institutional officer who also makes an institutional commitment to the recipient. Fifty to sixty participants attend a two-week session, plan a year-long practicum project, and then attend a follow-up summary experience at the end of the year.

Harvard's Leadership Institute for Academic Librarians, in collaboration with a division of ALA, the Association for College and Research Libraries, hopes to increase the participants' capacity to "lead and manage." The program stresses the characteristics of effective leadership, addresses transformational learning, the roles and responsibilities in planning initiatives, and organizational strategies and change. Both of these last two institutes are more expensive for participants.

Canada's Northern Exposure in Leadership Institute has been sponsored over the past ten years by the University of Alberta. Held every two years, it is designed "to assist professional librarians to develop, strengthen and exercise their leadership skills so that they may be better equipped to formulate, articulate and achieve the future changes required by libraries into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."<sup>5</sup> Participants are nominated by employers, library schools, and library associations for their leadership potential, excellent communication skills, accomplishment in academic performance, and successful employment experience.

Another leadership program sponsored by ALA was launched to encourage minorities to enter the library profession. The \$5,000 Spectrum scholarships are allocated for tuition for the Master of Library and Information Science degree, and the program has since been expanded for doctoral degrees. Many library schools offer additional funding through scholarships and graduate assistantships for further support. Throughout the year Spectrum Scholars are provided many opportunities to network with each other and with library leaders through electronic discussion lists. Funding for travel and lodging is provided for Scholars to attend the Spectrum Leadership Institute at the completion of their first year of study.

All of these efforts have been planned primarily to develop leaders for the workplace, although training provided by ALA also aims to prepare future association leaders. ALA training can help individuals to lead other associations as well.

## **ARE YOU AND YOUR ASSOCIATION READY TO ENTICE NEW LEADERS?**

The next task is to decide if your association is ready to entice new leaders. One of the best ways to get started on the leadership path is to become a member or to chair a committee within an association. Association members who are in the position to make such appointments must feel comfortable in making these assignments. The author of this article is well aware of one particular section of one large association whose leadership was so reluctant to add new members to any position within their association that many potential leader members moved to another related section and dropped their previous membership. Your association members must understand the need to recruit new members, to recognize and identify their leadership potential, and to help them realize their ambitions. Only then is it time to look for those future leaders.

### ***Identifying potential leaders***

Faculty members in many schools of library and information science actively encourage their students to become members of professional associations and many of these associations have a student membership rate that is much less than regular membership. Students are also encouraged to attend professional meetings. This is usually more successful in a state association because the students might be able to afford the cost to attend rather than a national association which meets at longer distances with more costly travel and higher registration fees. If students are able to attend while they are students, they are usually good candidates to move into an active role when they graduate. Their finding funding to attend usually signals a true interest in the profession and the association. When students seem to have leadership qualities, their professors can offer some analysis of the student's desire and ability to start honing their leadership skills. When a professor brings students to the attention of the elected officers, it is usually an endorsement that these persons will be excellent members to target for attention once the student is employed.

Many students are able to fit a practicum or internship into their programs, and the employees with whom they work should also be able to discuss the potential leadership attributes of those under their supervision and can offer references. In some cases, the supervisor will take the student to department meetings within their institutions or ask them to go to local meetings outside the library. How these students go about networking at such events provides a clue to their communication skills and their leadership potential.

Newly elected leaders of associations have the most potential to place members in leadership roles. At the same time that they are setting goals for their tenure in their positions, they need to be made aware of the need to recruit and mentor these future leaders. Identifying leaders goes beyond asking friends and acquaintances,

past professors and employers for names; it means identifying the qualities the association needs. “Desire, interest, and willingness need to be at the top of the list of desirable traits.”<sup>6</sup> Richards also adds warmth and sincerity about your association’s purpose. He then suggests the candidate needs to be both capable and a self-starter with sufficient background knowledge and with good communication skills. Obviously one needs someone who will contribute to the association who, with appropriate orientation and training, can become essential.

Succession planning is an integral part of this process. Analyzing what the association will need in the immediate and long-term future are all aspects of this. Some questions to answer include the following. Do you need

- a creative thinker who can propose solutions to problems?
- a good fund raiser or maybe someone with personal wealth or corporate connections to help fund projects?
- a charismatic person to encourage an increase in membership?
- a person who represents a particular segment of the membership who will help balance the leadership team?
- a good lobbyist to talk with persons in leadership positions in the corporate world, government officials, other library administrators?
- a good representative to talk to the media about your association?

You need to be able to put any personal biases aside so that you can invite the “best and the brightest” who are the most likely to move your association forward. “An effective organization needs leaders who are mature and able to make sound decisions. They must also be able to weather the inevitable storms and deal with problems.”<sup>7</sup> Once you have identified potential leaders, you should try to analyze their leadership styles.

#### ***Where do they fit: identifying their leadership styles***

Many books have been written about leadership styles, noting that no person has one style consistently. However, a person is more likely to act one way most often. To act inconsistently from one’s usual style will confuse followers. When a dictator stops dictating and asks the group for advice on how to move forward, most in the group will be reluctant to offer suggestions, thinking it is wasted effort. Blake and Mouton<sup>8</sup> are favorites of mine. Their five styles are:

- Country Club: This leader gives thoughtful attention to people so that one has a friendly, comfortable team. The ultimate project may suffer if the steps to completion seem to act against the team’s sense of ease with the situation.
- Impoverished: It is very difficult to consider people with these attributes as a leader because they care little for their co-workers or the task at hand. This leader’s view is to exert minimal effort to accomplish a task with little care about the happiness of those in the workforce.

- Team: The team leader generates interdependence through a common stake in the outcome. Team members are committed to the project and there is a general sense of trust and respect.
- Organization: While this leader balances the workload with some attention to the morale of people, the ultimate goal is to accomplish the task.
- Authority, Obedience. These leaders might be described as dictators and their attitude is one of certainty that the path they have chosen is the best possible. Others involved should not interfere but should just carry out the plan as outlined.

When you discover in what role your potential leaders feel most comfortable, assign them to those leadership roles for their first assignments. Those who like to have everyone around them happy won't want to work on a plan to restructure the association, abolish committees, and reduce the size of the association's board and voting council. The organization person's vision might be the best plan, but it would take the team leader to sell it. The impoverished leader would not care if it did or did not happen and the dictator would upset those who did not agree.

Identifying leadership style is but one of several aspects in the evolution of new leaders. Most authors today say that a key component for success in developing new leaders is mentoring. One author believes "it takes a mentor to challenge leaders, prod them, and help them marshal the courage, energy and self-trust needed to meet the call's demanding dimensions. Without a mentor's help, few leaders would understand what they are capable of accomplishing."<sup>9</sup> We do all stand "on the shoulders of giants."

#### ***"On the shoulders of giants"***

Most attribute this phrase to Isaac Newton who used it in a letter to Robert Hooke in 1676 to whom he wrote, "If I have seen a little further, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." In fact, an earlier use was by a 12<sup>th</sup> century theologian and author, John of Salisbury who wrote, "We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their good stature add to ours."<sup>10</sup> It is our responsibility in succession planning and leadership identification to serve as mentors to our aspiring leaders. The goal of mentoring is to foster leadership development within the profession and the association. It offers opportunities for learning beyond on-the-job experiences. While a great deal of responsibility falls upon the mentor, much can be learned from the mentee. It is a form of continuing education for both and it requires energy and commitment from both.

One of the things that an association might offer is a training program for its mentors to help them understand how they will pass along their knowledge, and the knowledge of others. Because mentoring does take some time commitment, potential mentors must decide how they want to work with mentees. It can be in a



truly casual relationship where the mentee should feel free to call the mentor with questions. At the other end of the spectrum is the mentor who helps the mentee to develop the plan for moving into a leadership role. One mentor reported that, as an unexpected surprise, that most of his time was spent “talking about leadership, people skills, and relationships.”<sup>11</sup>

He also discovered that many times, if he asked the mentee what he nor she would do to solve a particular problem, the answer was exactly what he would have suggested and that his role seemed to be “validation that the mentee is headed down the right path.”

Mentors can be very helpful in identifying when a new leader is ready to take a leadership role and what that role should be. They will also be helpful in convincing the potential leader to accept the appointment.

### ***Convincing them to lead***

Succession planning will fail if potential leaders refuse to accept leadership roles. To convince them, it is always best to make an offer that can't be refused. The trick is to make a good analysis of where exactly they are in their professional careers so that the offer does not conflict with their day job. To ask a college professor to take on a major role when they are working night and day to prepare their dossiers for tenure review would not be good timing. On the other hand, someone who is tenured but wishes for a promotion to full professor might be delighted to take on a much higher level of leadership. Persons who have recently been given a promotion to a higher level in their positions will be learning that role and trying to cope with the accompanying stress will not wish to add to that stress, whereas someone who has been in a position for some time may be looking for some new challenge.

When the timing is right, the person who moves into leadership within the association will be entering an era of professional development and continuing education. Their new position will help them learn, and it will provide them the opportunity to encourage the professional development of others in the association. Succession planning means providing opportunities for leadership experience.

## **PROVIDING LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Training new talent in the workplace can be an expensive investment and it may be less favored than an investment in upgrading technology. It may be that the professional librarian is not being given much leadership experience in the workplace and will welcome this within the association. Leadership takes many forms: internships within committees, committee membership, chairing committees, holding elected office, and managing projects. Deciding which direction is best for an appointment requires a careful analysis of management style, which offer will

be most difficult to refuse, and the fit of the person to the position. Once the leadership experience is successful, it is important that this leader's qualities be shared with the wider world.

### ***Making the world aware of their leadership potential***

One way veterans in our profession can help young people take on leadership roles is to make the world around them aware of their leadership potential. This is more than introducing them to important members of the association at a yearly conference; it is the act of helping them with those activities which will increase their visibility.

### ***Helping them pass along their knowledge***

One library school dean in my early years as an assistant professor made sure that I had invitations to speak at conferences and to contribute articles to journals. He believed that getting proposals funded from outside agencies not only brought attention to the school, but provided a venue for practical research applications. When he was asked to edit a book on school librarianship, he invited me to write a chapter. In every case, it allowed me to share my knowledge with a wide audience.

### ***Conference presentations***

Getting on a conference program is often a challenge for budding leaders. Some conference planners are reluctant to ask speakers to present if they have no track record. Your endorsement of the expertise of the potential speaker can go a long way in getting them on the program. You can then help them with their presentation by reviewing their papers or their plans for presenting their information so that it will be interesting to the audience. If good communication skills are the mark of a great leader, helping them speak before an audience is a good part of those skills.

### ***Professional writing: research based and practical***

Many students think that their diploma means they will never write another paper or conduct any more research. Perhaps helping them set this misconception aside is a first step. Perhaps having them co-author something will help them get started also. Because of the tenure and promotion issues related to life in academic communities, many faculty members need to conduct research and publish in refereed journals. As an association member, it would be helpful to share the task by helping find persons within the association who have a population the researcher needs so that the researcher can conduct the research. At other times, if the association needs data collected and analyzed, you budding leader might be encouraged to undertake this for the association.

Many professional journals publish thought pieces that will address trends and issues in the profession. If a potential leader is able to write about a practical solution to a critical problem, it is another way to gain name recognition in the wider community and also demonstrate the ability to solve problems. Writing a professional book is a more difficult challenge because it requires more attention to detail and usually requires a much greater time commitment. However, as one dean did for his emerging leaders, if you are editing a book, you can have chapters written not only by recognized experts in the field, but also by some budding experts.

### ***New technology opportunities***

Technology offers many opportunities for emerging leaders to demonstrate their leadership skills within an association. They can be useful in helping the association membership who may be less interested move forward to use more sophisticated technologies. They can design online surveys to discover what the membership really wants. It could be they can suggest new ways to vote at council meetings and membership meetings, saving both paper and time.

## **CONCLUSION**

Succession planning as strategic planning for the association ensures that new leadership is ready to take over when others step down. The leaders-in-waiting have been well initiated by their mentors from the association membership. They have been given opportunities to practice leadership. In the end, your association thrives because it has excellent new leadership to continue the mission of the association for years to come. Your new leaders recognize that they are demonstrating their skills and accomplishments. Finally, the real winner will be your satisfaction in knowing that you have set these prospects on the right path, because you have raised them up, and by your good stature you and your association have added to theirs.

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## STRATEGIES FOR RE-SKILLING THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Interviews with the president of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), 20 heads of library and information centres; and 60 library/information science (LIS) professionals have revealed changing needs due to globalization and information technology. Different or hybrid services are now required, such as global access to resources, information literacy, e-learning, open repository, web development/services, and integrated library system. These call for a different class of skills or a blend of traditional and new skills. LIS professionals in Nigeria are not resting on their oars. Steps are being taken and more are on the way to meet the challenges. Strategies include curriculum review and continuing professional education as well as formal and informal mentoring, advocacy for support, collaboration and partnering at the local, national, and international levels. These efforts have yielded a measure of success though not without challenges, some of which are discussed. Additional initiatives are needed to develop skills in order to enhance operations and services.*

### INTRODUCTION

Information is the most valid commodity in the global information society. It is the master key to every aspect of development. The library and information science (LIS) professional serves as information translator striking a balance between the information and the users.<sup>1</sup> The two ends of the balance continue to evolve. In other words, the manner of information packaging and delivery evolved from stone and papyrus through print to electronic formats, delivered as closed access from cupboards, open access from shelves, and presently remote virtual or global access through electronic technology. Consequently, information users' nature and environment evolved from queuing up (to be served resources) through walking the aisles of shelves (to pick resources arranged in certain order) to staying in the comfort of their offices, classrooms or places of residence to access information, beating space and time. LIS professionals are continuously involved in self assessment to determine their ability to serve as translators between the information

and the users. Such self evaluation reveals a continuous need for LIS professionals to align themselves with the changes in the global information environment.

Thus, it is pertinent to examine the situation in Nigeria vis-à-vis the strategies taken to ensure a continuous evolution of LIS professionals to align with the global trend in operations, services and information formats. Information for this paper was gathered from literature and a number of telephone and personal structured interviews with key informants including the National President of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA); 20 public library, academic library, and special library heads of service; and 60 LIS professionals. Personal contacts were made at a workshop on "Access to Free Resources at Lokoja held on December, 2008 and visits to some libraries in the eastern part of Nigeria. The rest of the professionals were reached by sending the structured interview through electronic lists. There were 150 contacts which resulted in the 20 heads of libraries and 60 other professionals being interviewed. Some professionals were silent about the request, others indicated lack of interest, while the rest are of the view that re-skilling should be the prerogative of the young professionals, and therefore they did not grant an interview.

## TRENDS IN LIBRARY EDUCATION

Though internal training of LIS professionals in Nigeria was provided in 1941 through British Library Association credentialing from Ghana and Britain, indigenous training started in 1960 by the establishment of the first library school at the then University College Ibadan, now the University of Ibadan. Not long after the establishment at Ibadan, other library schools were established namely: Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria in 1968, Bayero University Kano in 1977, and University of Maidugiri in 1978. Their curricula were designed to provide basic general training for all libraries with a view to producing professionals who would organize and administer book collections relevant for Nigerian majority.<sup>2-5</sup>

Library services then followed the traditional units with a little variation depending on the type of users served. Such general operations and services as administration, collection development, technical services, bibliographic services, and community based services were rendered.<sup>6</sup> The increased demand for LIS professional to attend to the information needs of the increasing Nigerian population resulted in the establishment of more library schools between 1986 and 2000. The earlier schools also changed their nomenclature to reflect the changing needs of the information users informed by the adoption of information and communication technology as well as knowledge society. Most of them adopted the nomenclature, School or Department of Library and Information Science. The curriculum was reviewed to accommodate the informational needs of over 140 million Nigerians many of whom are literate in the sense that they can read all or part of a single sentence in any of the major Nigerian languages. Information needs therefore evolved to include information literacy.<sup>7,8</sup> To cope with the demands of the teem-

ing population, 882 library and information centres were established in Nigeria, managed by 15,000 LIS professionals.<sup>6</sup>

Though curricula were reviewed to reflect the needs of Nigerians, operations and services in LIS centres show little or no changes, however, automation was championed by special libraries followed by university libraries. Efforts to provide state-of-the-art information services in Nigerian universities started with the production of Union List of Serials in 1978 by the Committee of University Librarians of Nigeria (CULNU) and the adoption in 1994 of the Information Navigator Library Management (TNILIB) software provided by the Federal Government through the National Universities Commission. These efforts were met with problems which are not unconnected to the lack of information-communication-technology (ICT) skills. However, the struggle continued as LIS centres were undaunted. Hence, some universities and multinational LIS centres today can boast of automated and web-based globally acceptable operations and services. The questions facing the profession in Nigeria include<sup>9</sup>:

- are the numerous LIS professionals manning the centres really providing the needed services to the users?
- are they poised to meet the challenges of new employment demands especially where job opportunities have expanded to areas such as corporate bodies, electronic publishing, database management, web development, hardware and software management, Internet management, web content management, competitive intelligent analysis etc?
- can Nigerian LIS educators, LIS centres and by extension the employers as well as LIS professionals affirm that their products, operations, and services possess and apply the skills needed for today's and tomorrow's services?

#### **NEED FOR RE-SKILLING LIS PROFESSIONALS IN NIGERIA**

Brown<sup>10</sup> emphatically notes that survival in today's world of work is a function of what you can offer, your potential, and ability to be in charge of your career. Others<sup>11</sup> warn that LIS centres which persist in the traditional service model in this era of ICT driven environments, flat budget, and rising cost of resources may not succeed. Since Nigerian LIS professionals are part of the global community affected by the above factors, there is need for re-skilling. Observation as a member of LIS profession in Nigeria reveals that re-skilling of the professionals is needed due to various factors.

- **Insufficient skills to operate in digital era:** there is absence of ICT skills among LIS professionals.<sup>12</sup> This is the result of insufficiency in the formal training of LIS professionals. Most curricula are theoretically based and many of the library schools do not have the facilities to provide or engage students in practical training. However, views are expressed that graduates of

LIS are only prepared to be trained by providing them some understanding of the LIS operations and services that could be built upon during other training.<sup>13</sup> LIS professionals need more than what is taught in school to work effectively. One of the LIS professionals interviewed stated that there is almost an absence of new technology skills among Nigerian professionals especially the new ones. Further, educators expected to impart new skills do not possess requirement both in terms of facilities and knowledge. The curricula of some library schools lack the new skills in contents.

- **Environmental changes:** there are evolutionary changes in the way information is harnessed and developed using ICT. Long standing tasks are performed better through automation and web based technology. ‘Transformatory’ changes are visible as new functions are emerging through expanded and demand driven information society with more focus on user needs.<sup>14</sup> Environmental change is also perceived in the needs of employees.
- **Changes in users needs:** there are disparities among people in “economic, culture, geographical dispersion, politics and other physical challenges.”<sup>15</sup> Their information needs must be attended to. Again, the way and manner users seek information have changed. To them space and time should not be barriers while the era of print resources is becoming ridiculous.
- **Wider horizon of employment opportunity:** expanded job opportunities are available in corporations, consulting firms, information brokers, and Internet based centres. New roles such as competitive intelligence are evolving. More than traditional skills are needed to work in these environments.
- **Competition:** the cosy assumption that librarians know best and that users would supinely continue to accept the services they had always been given was no longer valid.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, new and diverse professionals are taking over LIS jobs and teaching users how to search for information. Thus, LIS professionals have to brace up with the challenges posed by them as well as commercial search engines which users consider as the first port of call when searching for information.<sup>17,18</sup>
- **Low budgetary allocation to information services:** despite the prime importance attached to information, many establishments provide little or no financial support for it. Where provisions are made, competition is intense for the limited resources among the units in the establishment. As such, service worth becomes the measure for funding.<sup>16</sup> LIS professionals are also required to acquire the skills for advocacy and fund raising to remain relevant in such a system.

## RELEVANT SKILLS FOR LIS PROFESSIONALS IN NIGERIA

LIS professionals are mindful of the needs for re-skilling as necessitated by the above evolutionary requirements. There is need for enhanced competencies and



skills to function in any information-enabled-environment such as banks, telecommunication organization, community based organizations, non-governmental organizations, international agencies, as well as employers of labour.<sup>3</sup>

Given the diverse nature of job opportunities and need to be relevant in the labour market, professionals have need for skills in both the traditional and new operations and services. Such skills as indicated by Okojie<sup>19</sup> and confirmed through the interviews conducted for this paper include ICT skills, information literacy skills, Internet search skills, fund raising, advocacy, marketing, and management skills. Others include indigenous knowledge and skills needed for knowledge management (open access repository/ scholarly communication), electronic information services, virtual libraries, and intellectual property/copyright laws. They do not deviate from the global LIS skills noted by other commentators.<sup>9-11 15-16 20-24</sup> Since these skills are not fully held by today's LIS professionals nationwide, many strategies are adopted at the professional, institutional, and individual levels to ensure continuity and relevance, over and above being poised for best practices in the global information society. Various strategies for re-skilling were identified in the interviews that were held for this paper.

### **RE-SKILLING THROUGH TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

The NLA organizes at least one annual conference and two workshops every year. At such programmes, national and international experts are invited to discuss and demonstrate contemporary issues in the LIS profession.

- an April 2008 training was organized on Lobby, Advocacy and Fundraising; 35 LIS professional from across the country attended
- there was a workshop on the Use of Internet by LIS professionals organized in March 2008, which 110 professionals attended.
- December 2008 witnessed a national workshop on Access to Free Resources attended by over 78 professionals.
- a highly interactive pre-conference seminar on copyright law was organized during the 2008 National conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at Kaduna. Colleagues from outside Nigeria were invited to share their experiences.
- in 2007 the NLA President had the opportunity to get re-skilled internationally with 9 other participants across the globe on Internet manifesto sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Her experience was shared with members during the 2008 National conference /AGM.

At the Sectional levels, workshops are organized based on the vision and mission of the Section for its members as well as the interest of the profession. The Information Technology (IT) Section has an annual workshop series termed Library and Information Technology Today (LITT). The aim was to identify areas of ICT

skill needs of the professionals in Nigeria and address it in this annual workshops. The LITT 2007 theme was “Automation that Works” attended by 35 participants while LITT 2008 revolved around “Web Development and Web Publishing” attended by 45 professionals.

The Academic Library Section has organized a workshop on “Effective Management of Academic Libraries”. It was attended by heads of academic libraries and their deputies. Annual workshops are held by the Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing Section of the profession. The re-skilling interest of this section is on contemporary cataloguing, classification, and indexing as well as global best practices in this technical area of LIS. The

Public Library Section has not been active in re-skilling efforts due to neglect of support by various state governments who are the funding bodies. As a result LIS professional employees in public libraries are not fully motivated for maximum productivity. However, they utilize training opportunities provided by other sections and the national body to re-engineer themselves for better job opportunities.

Institutions and LIS centres expose their staff to training at the national and international levels. For instance, the University of Ibadan sent 7 and 18 professional staff to the above respective trainings in areas of need. At the University of Nigeria, it was gathered that in 2008, over 25 professional staff attended national trainings/ workshops while 2 attended workshops outside Nigeria. All the LIS professionals at ABU are given at least one opportunity to attend training every year in the areas of personal and the Library’s need.

Many LIS professionals in the faculty do not attend training / workshop especially those organized at the national level. It was gathered that some do not show keen interest while others are ignorant of the availability of the training and its importance to their development. The theoretical nature of their teaching gives them leeway to read and teach new skills without deep understanding of their practical application.

Re-skilling efforts in the public libraries are not commendable. At the Imo State Library Board, only the Director and one other staff attended national training in 2008. Up to 5 of the 8 LIS professionals were able to attend National conference on ‘part-sponsorship’ in 2008. LIS professionals in public libraries in the south western Nigeria are more exposed to re-skilling opportunities than their counterparts in other parts of the country. The majority of LIS professionals who work with multinational organizations in Nigeria have opportunities for international trainings. This allows them to often act later as resource persons for some national training.

Other approaches include the following:

- Some LIS centres have training units which identify training needs of staff and negotiate for their actualization. Monthly meetings are held in some information centres to discuss skilling needs and how to achieve them.

- Professionals engage in self sponsored part-time training, self studying through online and offline tutorials and reading/ research.
- The National body of the Association encourages State chapters to engage in re-skilling through paper presentation during meetings. In this manner, the less privileged professionals are saved the trouble of travelling far distances for training.
- It is a policy in some institutions that trainees on return will expose other staff to the acquired skills.
- Employees are helped to develop their expertise in areas of interest through re-deployment to their units of interest where they are provided opportunity for retraining and skills enhancement.
- Opportunities are provided for young librarians to be aware and develop their skills through the institution of Young Librarians Award by NLA. Some LIS professionals who have worked for 5 years and below are sponsored to National conferences through this award. Furthermore, some individual professionals provide opportunity for LIS “professionals-in-training” (undergraduates) by giving them awards to attend NLA conferences. For example, the Badawi Annual Award of N50,000 went to two LIS undergraduates in Nigeria.
- Trainings are provided by donor agencies, software and hardware vendors on such areas as WINISIS software organized by UNESCO, use of EBSCO-HOST, use of E – Granary; ITOCA training on the use of HINARI, AGORA and OARE, use of Virtua and Alice for Window library software, and other free and fee-based resources. In that way, LIS professionals are explicitly or implicitly exposed to diverse and new skills.

## **RE-SKILLING THROUGH CURRICULUM REVIEW**

As a way of enhancing LIS professional skills, NLA set up a committee (Curriculum Review Committee) comprising teachers (lecturers) and practicing librarians to review the curriculum of library schools in Nigeria. Their report contains lists of courses library schools in Nigeria could teach with a view to empowering LIS professionals with the skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century operations and services. The idea is for the schools to be aware, select and develop their curriculum along the lines of the menu. NLA plans to sensitize heads of library schools on the need to adapt the developed menu.

At the West African level, a workshop on LIS curriculum was co-sponsored by the Swedish International Agency (SIDA) and NLA. In attendance were the Chair of IFLA African Section, all Presidents of West African Library Association, Heads of Library Schools in three Nigeria Universities and some practicing librarians. The aim was to create awareness of the need for curriculum review of LIS education in Nigeria to allow the development of LIS professionals who could face the challenges of new LIS operations and services.

Apart from the national efforts, different library schools have involved themselves in one form of curriculum review or the other depending on the needs of their environment as well as demands of the accrediting body – National Universities Commission.<sup>2 3 25</sup>

### **RE-SKILLING THROUGH PROVIDING INFORMATION ON OPPORTUNITIES**

An online discussion forum is available for all LIS professionals at the national, chapter and sectional levels. The NLA listserv (nla-online-forum) which was founded in July 25, 2002 has a total of 799 registered members. Through the forum, such information as sites where grants and other skill enabling facilities could be provided is made available to members. Diverse views on re-skilling issues are discussed. Literature is also posted to forum members. All LIS professionals are encouraged to join the forum. Through the use of electronic mail, individuals are engaged in mentoring by more experienced professional colleagues. There has not been an opportunity to organize any webinar or virtual training for members as the facilities and competencies are lacking. Information and lectures are not real-time; rather they are sent as mail attachments. By so doing the gap of distance as a barrier to mentoring is bridged.

The professional body maintains a website (www.nla-ng.org). Issues pertinent to the profession including reading list and other skill development opportunities are posted on the site. LIS professionals are encouraged to utilize the opportunity to be aware and enhance their skills. LIS centres also have websites where Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis are provided to help staff enhance skills. These are also used to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century services. Blogs are used by institutions and professionals to widen their skill horizon.

### **RE-SKILLING THROUGH COLLABORATION**

NLA partners with associate professional bodies to ensure the development of its members. Bodies like publishers, book sellers, software and hardware vendors as well as multinational organizations like the United States Embassy partner with the Association to ensure all-round development in the area of LIS training and re-training. Some LIS centres partner with international organizations such as MacArthur Foundation to expose their staff to international trainings.

Through networking, lobbying and advocacy for partnership, government at the national and state levels as well as other establishments are convinced on the need to sponsor and provide other logistics support for LIS professionals during national and international trainings.

Advanced skills are provided by library schools through the services of lecturers from related departments namely Mass Communication, Mathematics, Business Administration and other Media specialists.<sup>26</sup> Some LIS professionals in training are encouraged to study some inter-departmental courses to enhance their employment opportunities.

Many LIS centres and professionals enhance their skills through job exchange in the form of sabbatical leaves or swapping of staff. For instance many LIS professionals in Nigeria have attended the Mortenson Centre for International Library Programs.

LIS professionals in training are exposed to real world of work environment through industrial training of not less than one year in establishments they are likely to be employed. By so doing, a shift from theory to practice is achieved. Professionals become aware of the demands of the job and their incompetence.

## **RE-SKILLING ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR**

Though achievement may be relative, the NLA President affirmed that the Association has succeeded in sensitizing LIS professionals in Nigeria to the need for continuous re-skilling especially in the area of ICT development. National and international communities have become aware of the need to provide new skills for Nigerian LIS professionals through education or as partners. For example, three LIS professionals in Nigeria (National President of NLA, the National Librarian, Professor Zakari Mohammed) were invited to Paris on UNESCO Programme to discuss ways Nigeria LIS profession can collaborate with them to enhance all-round development of the professionals. Furthermore, collaborating with the National Commission for UNESCO in Abuja, ICT training workshop was organized for LIS professionals in 2007.

Partnering with the Goethe Institute of Germany and other private establishments in the country and Diaspora has allowed many LIS professionals to be trained in advocacy, networking and lobbying skills, Internet skills, free electronic resources etc. Communication companies like MTN, American Embassy to Nigeria and some banks such as Oceanic Bank PLC have demonstrated their support for enhanced ICT capacities of academic and school libraries. There are presently a handful of LIS professionals in Nigeria who have been re-skilled to perform 21<sup>st</sup> century operations and services. These groups of professionals act as trainers for others.

At the institutional level, many heads of LIS centres noted the following benefits resulting from the re-skilling initiatives :

- Improved worker skill which led to improved services to patrons and increased use of services provided in the centres

- LIS professionals are aware of their institutions' expectations vis-à-vis operations and services
- Library schools have bumper enrolment for their programmes as university admission seekers realize that the schools offer training needed by today's employers
- Management of institutions where LIS services are provided are willing to release funds for all the valued services and training due to improved and successful services in their information units
- LIS professionals champion many state-of-the-art ICT-based institutional operations and services. For instant at the University of Jos, the University Libraries play the leading role in ICT driven activities of the University. The Librarian at the Information Resource Centre of the US Embassy to Nigeria acts as the Webmaster for the Embassy.

Individual benefits are akin to the summary by Minish–Majanja<sup>15</sup> that there is expanded job market for ICT compliant LIS professionals. The employment sector needs versatile professionals who are able to “actually participate on detecting cues for relevant information, gaining / providing access to relevant information sources, searching and synthesizing data, repackaging information and adding any other value that enhances the effectiveness of the organization”. The strategies so adopted have enabled some skilled Nigerian LIS professionals to become self employed.

### CHALLENGES TO RE-SKILLING

Some of the challenges to the re-skilling efforts were identified by the National President of the Nigerian Library Association, V. Okojie. These include<sup>19</sup>:

- **Funding:** Participants to trainings are expected to pay for such unsponsored programs. The cost of participation does not only deter them but reduces the number attending. Thus, the Association becomes financially constrained to provide the needed resource persons and facilities;
- **Poor infrastructure:** Ashcroft and Watts<sup>9</sup> described it as digital divide. This manifests as low access to personal computers, unavailable and expensive Internet services, unreliable power supply, sparse telecommunications, low bandwidth and the fact that a majority live in rural areas where social facilities are lacking.<sup>26 27</sup>
- **Insufficient trainers:** Only very few human resource capacity builders are available. These few were exposed to international training by their multinational organizations, donor agencies or through their own efforts. They are under pressure of being required all the time to help the other professionals. Again, most of the professionals exposed to further trainings disappoint their

employers by changing jobs. In some cases the expected competences are lacking in the trainer. They cannot give what they don't have.

- **Apathy by traditional LIS professionals:** Many earlier qualified professionals with consolidated traditional competencies resist re-skilling initiatives. Some reject the training and discourage others from utilizing re-skilling opportunities.
- **Lack application of acquired skills:** Employers of LIS professionals lack the necessary environment for practicing and applying the acquired skills. This lack of practice dampens skill consolidation;
- **Sporadic changes in LIS skills:** Changes in needed skills for LIS operations and services have become so unpredictable that no sooner than one skill is acquired than it becomes obsolete. Professionals are in the business of acquiring one skill today while being at alert for tomorrow's skills;
- **Ignorance:** Many LIS professionals are not aware of the need to re-skill. For instance, LIS professionals in the faculty often deny the need to acquire new skills. In some cases the trainers turn out to be their students, whose contributions are seen as of less value. Again the faculty's mode of teaching—more theory, less practical – gives them opportunity to hide their ignorance while manoeuvring with theory acquired from text books.
- **Inadequate international support:** LIS operations and services struggle to catch up with international pace setters in developed countries. LIS professionals who are amenable to acquiring these best practices do not have access to international support.

#### **RECOMMENED PLAN OF ACTION TO TAKE RE-SKILLING FORWARD**

The insufficient number of LIS professionals exposed to re-skilling opportunities, a function of difficulties faced by the NLA, LIS centres, and individual professionals necessitates that more efforts should be made to increase opportunities and competencies available for them. The NLA President affirmed, however, that a window of hope exists given the increased interest by the private sector and international agencies to intervene in Nigerian LIS sector. Long and short term initiatives are taken by the NLA to ensure continuous reengineering towards achieving globally acceptable best practices. The ten point initiatives according to the President include<sup>28</sup>:

1. Convene a meeting of library and information professionals under the auspices of the Nigerian Library Association, National Library of Nigeria, and the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to asses the situation with a view to re-inventing, re-engineering, re-branding and marketing of libraries; affirming the important role of libraries and information centres in nation building; and declaring a state of emergency in the sector.

2. Urge the Federal Government of Nigeria to convene an urgent stakeholders meeting on the reform of the library and information sector.
3. Advocate for the establishment of a National Commission for library and information services which would coordinate library services in Nigeria.
4. Solicit private sector support for development of LIS sector by encouraging library and information science professionals to adopt the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model.
5. Develop guidelines and minimum standards for all types of libraries. The guidelines should clearly state standards for staffing, funding, services including ICT services, continuing education requirements, etc.
6. Review the library schools curriculum in collaboration with the LRCN
7. Promote Open Access and the use of free and open source software in Nigerian library and information centres.
8. Advocate deployment of ICTs in LIS work and enabling environments.
9. Encourage the adoption of resource sharing and networking models in libraries.
10. Publish manuals on advocacy, fundraising and other relevant skills.

The ten point plan of action led to the constitution of seven committees by the Executive of the NLA: Library and information Curriculum Review /Accreditation; Library Minimum Standards/ Guideline (Professional Ethics); Database Management/Website Management; Occasional Publications; Investment; and Continuing Education / Capacity Building Committees.

With the membership of the Committees comprising LIS professionals from all works of life, it is expected that everybody's interest will be protected. With the mandate to re-engineer LIS profession in Nigeria, their action will take the profession and professionals to greater heights. Further, professional centres should not relent in identifying NGOs that are willing to assist in human capacity development. Various sections of IFLA could also help through awareness campaign and initiating exchange programmes that will help developing countries.

## CONCLUSION

LIS operations and services in Nigeria started with print resources, but global changes informed by the information society, with the attending environmental changes, continue to revolutionize the information, the users and the needed skills. Globally LIS professionals are facing the challenges. Nigerian LIS professionals through their professional bodies, institutional and individual efforts have made giant strides in re-skilling. Success is achieved through curriculum review, retraining, collaboration, and awareness creation. The fruits of the efforts though unquantifiable now include: enhanced awareness on the part of professionals, increased skills in area of advocacy, fund raising, lobbying, marketing, knowledge management, electronic information services etc. The efforts are not without chal-



lenges, some of which are in the area of funding, infrastructure, apathy in the face of new development and continuous change in skills needed to work as LIS professional. More efforts are on the way as greater success is expected from them.

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**CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT –  
ITS ROLE IN THE CHANGING EDUCATIONAL  
AND QUALIFICATION LANDSCAPE OF THE INFORMATION  
PROFESSION; A CASE STUDY OF THE U.K.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Reviewed here are the implications for professional practice, education, training and development of the introduction of a mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) scheme by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the largest U.K. professional body for the information profession. The relationship between CPD and work based learning, the role of mentors, and the place of CPD within the wider qualifications landscape of the information profession, including formal frameworks such as the CILIP Framework of Qualifications are examined. More generic issues in relation to mandatory CPD are also assessed. Whilst this paper is a case study of the U.K., nonetheless, there are obvious global implications of such a decision, and these are evaluated within the context of the wider information profession, and the current fast-moving and volatile professional/qualifications landscape.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Evidence suggests that the information profession is experiencing a period of profound change in relation to its qualifications base. Many of the previously enshrined shibboleths of professional education, training and development are undergoing a fundamental re-examination. Barriers relating to qualification levels, to professional practice, and to career development are being circumvented or demolished. In a volatile climate of rapid change, continuing professional development (CPD) is necessary if professionals wish to keep abreast of new skills and knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

In July 2008 the Governing Council of the U.K. Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) voted unanimously to introduce mandatory CPD for active chartered members. CILIP is the leading U.K. professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers, with an active professional community of about 36, 000 of whom roughly 21,000 are members. CILIP was formed on 1 April 2002 as a result of the merger of the U.K. Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists.

Described as “potentially far-reaching” by the CILIP Chief Executive,<sup>2</sup> the scheme is envisaged currently (February 2009) as being “light touch” in scope, but nonetheless compulsory. It will be phased in gradually, beginning with the more recently qualified candidates. The timetable for the move is yet to be determined, as are the precise details. However, key features of the scheme are seen to be:

- ✓ No core curriculum or minimum time requirements
- ✓ Emphasis on simplicity; the scheme will be web-enabled to minimize effort and inconvenience and should require little extra work beyond the CPD most would choose to do
- ✓ It should be able to be mapped closely onto employers’ appraisal schemes
- ✓ No requirement for the compilation of a portfolio.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously, the implications of this decision need to be evaluated within a broader context, not only in relation to the education, training and development of the wider information profession in the U.K., but also globally. Moreover the perceived impact of Web 2.0 with regard to the breaking down or blurring of boundaries between differing sectors of the information profession, and between differing levels of practice, is equally a factor of some significance in any contemporary debate on the role and relevance of CPD in regenerating the information profession and stimulating fundamental change.<sup>4 5 1</sup> Moves towards the recognition of work-based learning, together with other governmental policy initiatives in the U.K. with regard to the skills agenda, such as the development of competency frameworks and occupational standards, with their concomitant impact on more traditional education and qualification frameworks are equally of relevance in this context. Explored here are issues in contemporary education and professional development for information practice, using developments in the U.K. as a case study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this review is to assess and explore the implications of the adoption of compulsory CPD schemes by professional associations within the context of the changing education and qualifications landscape for the information profession. The U.K. is seemingly unique in adopting a mandatory approach to professional CPD activity. The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) has a Professional Development (PD) scheme which is voluntary, but if entered, requires the individual to comply with and complete the programme.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the U.K. will be used as a single case study for the broader exploration of the issues indicated above, as it is apparently the first to introduce a compulsory scheme, and additionally, the researcher has considerable knowledge of and experience within the U.K. information and library education and qualifications landscape. Further support for this approach may be found in Yin’s description and justification of

the use of single case studies with an embedded design, that is, multiple levels of analysis within a single case.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, in addition to a systematic review of relevant literature, and as a means of obtaining the views, attitudes and perspectives of those involved, a questionnaire containing open-ended questions was devised and circulated to four key stakeholders in the CILIP decision, as outlined below; all four returned the survey. The questions can be seen in the Appendix. The respondents are identified solely by their relevant job title (either salaried or honorific), with the transcripts obtained being codified as follows:

- Chair, CILIP Task and Finish Group, Framework of Qualifications and Accreditation (TFG, FoQA) (I1)
- Head, Qualifications and Professional Development (QPD) CILIP (I2)
- Chair, CILIP Chartership Board (I3)
- Chair, CILIP Accreditation Board (I4)

The above were all members of an internal CILIP Task and Finish Group established by Council in January 2008, with the broad remit of reviewing the FoQA as a whole, but more specifically, to consider a series of recommendations made in an external consultants' report, commissioned by CILIP in 2007.<sup>8</sup> Framework of Qualifications (FoQ) is the term used by CILIP to denote the totality of its approach to professional qualifications and their accreditation.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the survey respondents have a continuing stake in the success of this CPD scheme in their respective roles as either CILIP employees or honorary officers with responsibilities for qualifications, training and development issues.

Ethical issues were an integral part of the design of this project. Participants were informed fully as to the nature and purpose of the research project, with permission sought and obtained with regard to recording and subsequent use of data. All scripts were analysed manually, with themes identified, coded and cross-checked for validity.<sup>10</sup>

## **CHANGING INFORMATION LANDSCAPE: DRIVERS FOR CHANGE**

As indicated above, the impetus for change in relation to both education and professional practice in the information world is seemingly emerging from several distinct but interrelated factors originating both from within and outside the information studies profession.<sup>5 1</sup> Briefly, technological drivers such as Web2.0, 3.0 or even 4.0<sup>11</sup> need to be viewed in conjunction with more generic developments with regard to the nature of the profession. Earlier work<sup>5 1</sup> outlined the premise that clear evidence exists of radical change within the information profession, not only that boundaries are becoming blurred or fused between differing sectors and levels of practice, but that there are now calls for a more fundamental rethinking of professional boundaries and divisions, leading to their demolition or demise:

We cannot look like individual silo professions... You don't hear people saying, "I'm a systems designer, or an architect or a programmer. They say, "I'm in IT". There is a place for specialists, but you need to see yourself as part of the whole. The current "divides" in information are unhelpful to an individual's career.<sup>12</sup>

Looking beyond the narrower information landscape, thus far this century, the U.K. has seen a fundamental re-evaluation of the relationship between formal education, employers and workforce development. Government initiatives such as the establishment of Foundation degrees,<sup>13</sup> the Treasury-led Leitch Review of Skills,<sup>14</sup> and post-Leitch, the establishment of the U.K. Commission on Employment and Skills (U.K.CES),<sup>15</sup> are all apparently resulting in a changing relationship between the employers and formal education providers such as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), resulting in a shift from supply to demand led education and training.<sup>1</sup> Such views were reinforced in the following statement by the U.K. Government Minister with responsibility for skills in October 2008, affirming that "We are committed to developing a demand-led skills system."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) lists 'employer engagement' as one of its key priorities. Included within this general topic area is the 2008 *Stepping Higher* report, outlining a workforce development strategy to be achieved via an employer-higher education partnership, with the twin goals of (1) designing and delivering HE courses in partnership with employers, and (2) increasing the number of learners in the workplace supported by employers.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the Open University, in partnership with the University of Derby, Cambridge University Institute for Continuing Education, University of London External and the Professional Associations Research Network, is working currently (January 2008 to July 2009) on a £1 million HEFCE-funded project, identifying exactly how HEIs can offer online competitive programmes in CPD. One of the six core strands of this project focuses on developing a "prototype CPD portal using Web 2.0 technologies to bring together multiple CPD providers through a single resource."<sup>18</sup>

### CPD IN CONTEXT

One of the difficulties in evaluating the arguments for and against mandatory CPD for the information profession lies in determining the precise meaning of the term CPD, together with its relationship to cognate topics such as workplace learning, reflective learning, Personal Development Plans (PDP), Human Resource Development and so forth. Difficulties in determining its precise meaning and therefore location in the wider skills and learning environment are arguably further compounded by the fact that it "has become the buzzword of late due to the ever-

changing nature of this [information]profession...how to go about the process can at times be confusing and cumbersome.”<sup>19</sup> (p806)

**CPD – general definitions:** In the U.K., the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the professional body for those “involved in the management and development of people”, defines CPD as

a combination of approaches, ideas and techniques that will help you manage your own learning and growth. The focus of CPD is firmly on results – the benefits that professional development can bring you in the real world.<sup>20</sup>

The CPD Certification Service, a U.K. independent body which supports all professional associations in CPD activity, offers the following definition:

CPD – Continuing Personal or Professional Development – is the term that describes a commitment to structured skills enhancement and personal or professional competence.<sup>21</sup>

**CPD definitions in an information context:** Turning more specifically to CPD in the context of the information profession, as indicated above, ALIA uses the term PD rather than CPD, defining this as

Participation in an activity which will enhance and/or increase our knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to our work...Our initial education provides us with our base skill set (our professional qualification), engaging in PD is about increasing and enhancing that base skill set.<sup>6</sup>

Whilst the American Library Association does not appear to offer a definition of CPD, nonetheless, in the scope note for the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress on Professional Education, is the following statement with regard to the role and purpose of CPD:

To creatively and successfully embrace new roles and opportunities, library staff continually need tools for transformation. Through continuing professional development, the individual can effect their personal growth, and through that impact their workplace and society.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, CILIP does not offer a definition at present.

Thus far, the definitions incorporate ideas about personal learning and growth, together with concepts of professional development, primarily in relation to the acquisition of relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies. Distinctions between these latter terms are not often made in such definitions, although as indicated in earlier papers, whilst the terms are often used in conjunction with each other, they have quite separate and distinct meanings.

This trend towards a broad understanding of the term CPD, is borne out by the CILIP stakeholders, each of whom were asked to supply their personal definition, resulting in the following wide range of ideas:



it's a realisation of the importance of learning about (and integrating where relevant) new developments, practices, skills into your own on-going professional practice in order to make better choices and more informed decisions and access more opportunities than a narrower or ageing skills-base would allow. CPD is an enabler of choice for individuals and a measure of competence, commitment and flexibility to employers. Information professionals, of all professions, need to be curious about the world. (I1)

a career(s) long active commitment to updating and extending professional knowledge, skills and competences through a range of formal and informal learning activities, which benefits the individual, employing organisations and wider society. (I2)

Planned improvement of professional knowledge and skills throughout your working life. (I3)

any activity – courses, conferences, reading or work-related – of which the purpose is seen by the participant as updating or increasing his or her professional knowledge. (I4)

**CPD and CPE** – Robinson and Glosiene discuss a range of definitions for CPD, offering as a summary statement:

Continuing professional development ... sometimes referred to as continuing professional education (CPE), in a library and information context, is the process by which library and information specialists maintain a competence throughout their careers.<sup>23 (p463)</sup>

Ritchie, rather than viewing CPD and CPE as synonyms, views the former as a broader term encompassing the latter, with CPD “Taking in all aspects of a professional’s role, and recognising that education is only one of the ways in which individuals continue to learn, grow and develop as professionals throughout their working careers and their professional lives.”<sup>24 (12)</sup>

### **CPD – RESPONSIBILITY AND BENEFITS**

This fusion of personal growth and professional development also highlights a key issue within CPD, namely the dichotomy between the perspectives of the individual and those of the employer with regard to responsibility for CPD and the benefits of this activity:

Individuals want employability, and for knowledge workers this means having up-to-date skills that make them desirable to employers. But bosses want to retain talent and to offer development and career progression that ties people to a career with their organisation. Many employers are wary of offering development that may make people too attractive to the competition... Employers want

to develop organisation-specific skills and the individual has a desire for transferable knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

There is evidence that this dichotomy holds true in the information and library context. The recent study of differing individual versus organisational views of CPD in New Zealand, found that

Balancing a library's needs with individuals' needs can be a complicated process, especially when budgets are restricted, or when the library is "just another service" offered by a wider organisation such as a local body. Needs as perceived by individuals vary from those perceived by their managers, and there is an overall lack of understanding across the profession about who should be responsible for what aspects of CPD, what should be offered, and who should be taking the initiative.<sup>26 (p582)</sup>

Moreover, the 2004 CILIP CPD Framework document whilst seeming to suggest that responsibility for CPD lies firmly with the individual, nonetheless concludes "that an effective partnership between an individual and an employer is essential if the overlapping aims of improved performance and individual career enhancement are to be met."<sup>27 (p5)</sup>

These perceived difficulties of achieving a balance between the needs of the individual and those of the employer are reflected in the responses of those surveyed. As one observed, there are potential

difficulties where employers are not convinced of the need for CPD, or believe it should be wholly focused on the tasks of the current post (I4)

Moreover, there are potential risks in the

failure to convince employers of the necessity for, or value of maintaining an up to date qualification (I4)

And additionally, that

members whose employers already have something similar in their performance appraisal systems ...[will not]want to repeat the process (I3)

Thus, there is a

need to ensure it is fully compatible with employers own in-house training and appraisal schemes (I2)

### **CPD, PDP AND E-PORTFOLIOS**

Nowadays, the individual usually has the prime responsibility for development of their own competence portfolio to ensure currency and applicability. There is a changed psychological contract between a professional and the employing organi-

sation such that there is now a 'joint responsibility' for career management rather than a 'job for life'.<sup>28 (p7)</sup>

In the U.K. there is seemingly a growth in expectation amongst younger professionals that they will be responsible for their own personal and professional development, which is arguably attributable to the introduction of Personal Development Planning (PDP) in HEIs. PDP is "a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development."<sup>29 (p1)</sup> From 2005/6 onwards, all HEIs were required to have in place a system for students to record their own learning and achievement and to "monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development."<sup>29 (p1)</sup> However, whilst it is mandatory for universities to provide such schemes, it is not mandatory for students to complete their own reflective learning portfolio. Edwards suggests that "in the same way that CPD is becoming a 'ticket to practice' in the professions, some level of 'coercion' is probably necessary to encourage students to undertake PDP".<sup>28 (p8)</sup>

The introduction of progress files coincided with

lifelong and personalised learning policy drivers propos[ing] that all learners should be able to develop, record, repurpose and transfer a wide range of information about themselves electronically, as they progress through different levels and episodes of learning, training and employment.<sup>30 (p1)</sup>

In pursuit of this objective, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) currently has as one of its five major policy strands, *Supporting PDP and Continuing Professional Development*, which lists twelve projects investigating and developing e-portfolio related tools and systems.<sup>31</sup>

The link between PDP in higher education and CPD in the workplace is made explicitly by the Higher Education Academy:

PDP by no means begins and ends in Higher Education. Professional development practices in the workplace such as continuing professional development (CPD) are based on many of the same principals[sic] as PDP.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, it is clear that CILIP also perceives this link, and wishes to build upon it by introducing the compulsory scheme for recently qualified candidates in the first instance, as they "will be used to a similar process if they are recent university graduates."<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the extent to which CILIP had developments such as e-portfolios in mind when devising their scheme is further evidenced by the insistence of the TFG that the mechanics of the scheme were to be web-enabled in order to minimize effort and inconvenience. A view endorsed by one respondent, stating

the system introduced needs to be quick and easy to use and up-to-date so members see it as being assistance [in] helping them reflect, evaluate and plan

rather than [a] time-consuming burden or extra administration on top of already busy lives. It should form part of the solution, not be perceived as part of the problem. (I1)

Similarly, the ICT platform was viewed as a potential danger in terms of the scheme's long term success, with two respondents listing this as the most significant risk for CILIP, with one remarking:

members need to be assured that the scheme...will have effective/accessible ICT to support it (I2)

## WORKPLACE LEARNING AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

CPD schemes are linked to concepts of employability, and therefore must be considered within the wider context of trends in workplace and reflective learning, together with developments in the relationship of generic skills and competencies frameworks vis-à-vis those specific to a profession. As Ritchie stated:

Workplace learning activities have an important contribution to make towards continuously improving the quality of our workforce and raising standards of professional practice. So the more we can recognise workplace learning as valid and useful and the more we can incorporate it into our planning as a training and professional development strategy, the more value we will get from it.<sup>24 (p12)</sup>

As indicated above, work-based learning is a central tenet of contemporary U.K. governmental initiatives with regard to education, employment and workforce development. It is beyond the scope of this paper to review all such initiatives in any depth here. Whilst HEIs were apparently slow to recognise changes in the learning environment in the workplace,<sup>33</sup> nonetheless, the role and importance of formal work based learning centred on HEI provision is well documented.<sup>34 35</sup>

However, increasingly in the research literature, a distinction is made between such formalised work-based learning, and the role of informal learning. More recently, emphasis has been placed on the further development of professionals via informal learning methods, with research findings revealing that across a wide range of professions, very few individuals cite any type of formalised study being important in the context of their professional learning and development, post-initial qualification.<sup>36-43</sup> Support for such views would appear to derive also from the work of Varlejs<sup>44</sup> and Ritchie, although the latter seemingly favours a fusion of approaches:

'workplace learning' signifie[s] the inclusion of all the different types of developmental activities associated with the workplace – both the formal staff development and training programs of our workplaces, and the less formalised learning opportunities which occur within our normal working lives.<sup>24 (p12)</sup>

Recognition that the boundaries between formal and informal learning are becoming blurred or more diffuse is shown in the trend towards the recognition and reward of competency based practice, either based upon possession of professionally derived competencies or those of more generic origin. The introduction of a pioneering non-graduate professional qualification by CILIP, the ACLIP,<sup>45</sup> recognising work-based and experiential learning and evaluated via submission of a reflective learning portfolio is one example of the former. However, as shown in the 2008 review of public library service standards in England, more generic competency based frameworks may pose a threat to vocationally derived qualifications, whether graduate or non-graduate.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, as Edwards observed,

Some futurists and radical thinkers, consider that the concepts of ‘qualifications’ and ‘professions’ may become obsolete. Instead, people will continually build their own personal portfolios of learning and development and access other learning in an open way on the internet. Each person will have a learning plan and ‘qualifications’ will become incidental markers along the way for those who need them.<sup>28 (p9)</sup>

Thus, the need to engage with employers, to demonstrate the continuing relevance of professional knowledge and skills within such a changing landscape and the necessity for CILIP-based qualification frameworks to address and, to a certain extent, counter the trends identified above were prevalent themes amongst the survey respondents. As one respondent observed,

for individual employers within the sector [the scheme] guarantees commitment to on-going learning and development for anyone having a CILIP qualification and that the qualification is not ‘set in time’ but a dynamic on-going commitment to further developing professional practice (I1)

Additionally the scheme

will help raise the profile and standing of registered practitioners with employers (I2)

and will make

it easier to persuade employers and the general public that information isn’t something “anyone can do” (I4)

Similarly,

it’s a very good selling point in getting across the message that our profession often requires incredibly wide-ranging skills and competencies and can cheerfully embrace a myriad of specialisms of extreme complexity. It’s a means of helping negate all the old unhelpful ideas of ‘anyone can do it’. They can’t, not without a lot of knowledge and skill, and that knowledge and skill needs kept up-to-date. That’s a good message to get across.(I1)

Thus, the scheme is a

demonstration of minimum professional standards maintenance, keeps the profession up with the times...[and]develops [an] individual's professional evaluation and reflection – thus encouraging everyone to take part (I3)

From the perspective of equipping the individual member appropriately within such a changing landscape, a compulsory CPD scheme

enhances personal competitiveness by demonstrating active engagement with learning across a range of topics/skills – professional and technical (I2)

Given that globally the information profession is unregulated,<sup>6</sup> there is no requirement to register on a CPD scheme to retain a professional qualification or to practice generally. This being the case, there may indeed be what one respondent describes as

A rump of members – older in attitude- who do not see the need to demonstrate and develop their evaluative and reflective skills, and professional knowledge, in a formal compulsory process (I3)

Therefore, mandatory CPD may

not [be] welcomed by members who do not see the need to keep up-to-date! (I2)

However

it puts us on a par with other cognate professions where the move to compulsory CPD has been growing for some time within their relevant professional bodies. To be respected as a profession and be taken seriously and valued as such we have to show we embrace the responsibilities of that as well as the benefits. (I1)

The same sentiment was expressed more bluntly and more succinctly by a candidate in the 2008 CILIP Council elections , “CPD is the badge of a grown-up profession.”<sup>47</sup> (p16)

Finally, there is a note of implicit warning for the future in the opinion of one respondent that

introduction of a mandatory (light touch) CPD Scheme is crucial to any employer engagement strategy and in my view to the long term future of CILIP. (I2)

## CPD – EDUCATION AND TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

In marked contrast to the views of Edwards outlined above, Chivers and Roscoe both document that a stronger focus on CPD by professional institutes has led to several related outcomes, namely:

- ✓ Demands for individuals to furnish evidence of periodic formal study via attendance on courses of varying lengths and descriptions
- ✓ Resulting from the above, a growth in providers of such education and training, including HEIs, professional bodies themselves and other newly established education and training providers
- ✓ Finally, trends towards professional bodies recognising and accrediting certain training providers via formalised schemes.<sup>48 41 49</sup>

Clearly, introduction of a mandatory CPD scheme is at least partly reliant for success on the existence of approved and relevant education and training. CILIP has a formal scheme for accrediting undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered by U.K. HEIs<sup>50</sup> using as criteria coverage of a specified corpus of professional knowledge, the Body of Professional Knowledge.<sup>51</sup> This is by no means a new development, but one which continues practice established by its two predecessor bodies, the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists. As Robinson and Glosiene observe, there is no

agreement, or consistency of practice, as to where, and by whom, CPD should be provided. Practice differs internationally, with CPD providers including national libraries, academic departments, professional organisations, government agencies, special interest groups and commercial providers.<sup>23 (p463-4)</sup>

In an attempt to establish a degree of consistency and in direct response to the trends outlined above, in 2006 CILIP introduced a Seal of Recognition scheme. Predating the introduction of compulsory CPD, this initiative “offer[s] a Seal of Recognition to CPD providers who can show that their courses and training activities address one or more areas of CILIP’s Body of Professional Knowledge.”<sup>52</sup> The Seal is not designed solely or indeed, primarily for large training providers, or to recognise formal programmes of study alone. As Taylor outlines,<sup>53</sup> a wide variety of programmes and providers are eligible. Arguably, the quality and quantity of accredited education and training provision are crucial underpinnings to the success of any CPD scheme.

## MENTORING

As the CILIP CPD scheme is to be rolled out initially for newly qualified members, the existence of adequate mentoring arrangements will obviously be a critical success factor. Hallam and Newton-Smith observe that “mentoring relationships

represent a form of continuing professional development that has the advantage of being supportive of an individual's learning needs and that 'socialises' a person into a profession.<sup>54(p155)</sup> Freedman distinguishes between what she defines as career and psychosocial mentoring,<sup>55</sup> whilst Clutterbuck<sup>56(p9)</sup> examines the degree of symbiosis in concepts of coaching and mentoring and warns that terms used in one country can have a very different meaning in another.

CILIP has a well developed mentor scheme, revised in 2008. Employing the Oxford English Dictionary definition of a mentor, the role of the mentor is explained as

Essential ... in CILIP's framework of qualifications [Mentors] are not expected to run training events or instruct candidates, but to help them realize their own potential through encouragement and direction.<sup>57</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Obviously, it is far too early to assess the implications of the implementation of compulsory CPD for the information profession in the U.K.. One fundamental factor in the success of this scheme lies in "*ensuring membership understanding and buy-in*" (I1). Thus, CILIP

Need[s] to phase implementation through a structured roll-out over a few years, regularly explaining the benefits, answering concerns and giving members adequate time and information to adjust. (I1)

Moreover, there is the

risk that members will walk away rather than comply(I2)

and of a

reaction by the membership against what they see as overregulation (I4)

Associated risks in relation to data security, ensuring compliance (together with the development of possible sanctions), in addition to issues of affordability for both the individual member and CILIP as a whole, are all matters of practical detail which, if not addressed adequately and appropriately, may result in failure of the scheme.

However, compulsory CPD offers the profession the opportunity not only to demonstrate equivalency with other professions, but also to move forward with confidence in an ever-changing landscape. It offers us the opportunity to market ourselves positively as highly trained and motivated individuals, abreast and ahead of the key information issues. Moreover, it serves as a solid foundation for an employer engagement strategy, ensuring recognition of the value of professional



qualifications and training, thus equipping CILIP to meet the rapidly changing needs of its members in a volatile environment.

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## APPENDIX

### *Interview Questions on CPD – Key Stakeholders*

- Q1. How would you define the term 'CPD' or 'Continuing Professional Development'?
- Q2. In your opinion, what are the potential benefits to CILIP in introducing a compulsory CPD requirement for all its registered members?

Q3. Do you think there will be any difficulties, dangers or drawbacks for CILIP in introducing such a scheme?

- If yes – Please would you list these below in order of importance, beginning with the most significant?
- If no – Please GO TO Q4.

Q4. In your opinion, are there any potential benefits to the information profession as a whole following on from the introduction of compulsory CPD for all registered members of CILIP?

- if yes – Please would you list these below in order of importance, beginning with the most significant?
- If no – Please GO TO Q5.

Q5. Do you think there are any drawbacks to a compulsory CPD scheme for registered practitioners, such as that being introduced by CILIP?

- if yes – Please would you list these below in order of importance, beginning with the most significant?
- if no – please GO TO Q6.

Q6. Is there anything you would wish to add on the topic of CPD and the information profession which has not been covered by the questions and answers above?

## **E-TUTORSHIPS AND E-LEARNING – RE-SKILLING LIBRARIANS FOR INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In university, research, and health institutions the need has become evident for high quality information literacy instruction in order to develop and support research, teaching and other services. The University of Bologna launched an Information Literacy Project in 2003 to improve information skills at all levels. Librarians were involved in a course of “training for trainers” and in the production of learning objects/tutorials for students and teachers. This experience was an interesting approach not only to a virtual environment, but also to the basics of pedagogical requirements for a good training course.*

*As a second example of this re-skilling effort, the experience of a course delivered in 2008 for hospital librarians as e-tutors on the Moodle platform is also presented. The critical aspects of this initiative within traditional Italian universities will be highlighted: the transition to a digital library-oriented profession is made difficult by national and local norms and behaviours. Moreover, technical aspects regarding barriers of access to e-learning content in a hospital/university context will be analysed. It has been a real struggle to develop new professional attitudes based on effective communication skills.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper analyses a specific area of new knowledge and innovative skills for librarians, and two experiences of promoting this change. Digital information, electronic resources, and virtual learning environments are the context in which academic/research/special librarians are working today. It is more and more difficult to meet users just by waiting for them inside a library. Moreover, information resources, despite an apparent ease of availability, are becoming very complex, widespread, and varied in quality. The need for support, expert searching, and information literacy teaching is felt to be essential. Thus the librarians' teaching role must be supported and enhanced. In many countries, and in a variety of contexts, learning and teaching information literacy has been developed within a virtual learning environment with the use of e-learning platforms and wikis, blogs and other features of Web 2.0. But for effective teaching it is not sufficient to have

technical knowledge of these instruments: a pedagogical background and training as trainers have proved to be essential.

Many similar experiences have been undertaken over the past years. The path followed in our case takes into account other countries' experiences; besides successes and improvements, critical aspects and difficulties are also presented. It may be that these difficulties would not be peculiarly Italian, and therefore a discussion of these circumstances can suggest innovative solutions.

## **E-LEARNING AND LIBRARIES**

Since the late 1990s, a large number of articles and books have shown the interesting connections between e-learning and the role of libraries. On one hand, the focus has been on the role of libraries and librarians' skills in the management of digital teaching objects, from providing metadata to managing digital repositories. The most prominent aspect of this area has been the role of libraries in embedding electronic resources in learning objects.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, librarians started to use broadcasting and television and later e-learning to teach information literacy and other subjects to library users. At a 1997 conference, the author first learned about the use of computers in distance education.<sup>2</sup>

One of the first international meetings devoted to this aspect was "e-Learning for Management and Marketing in Libraries" held in Geneva in 2003. In the keynote speech, John Ellison pointed out the critical aspects for a teacher providing distance learning:

Is is strongly recommended that professors gain experience by developing and teaching distance learning courses before attempting to develop a complete degree program. Time is such a critical factor when developing distance learning courses that the thought of committing to a complete degree program initially without first experiencing the hours and energy required to develop and teach one course is overwhelming. Any professor can conceptualize a complete library and information degree program on paper in a matter of minutes. But it is something else to be able to offer and deliver such a program with any degree of success without first experiencing the time and energy required to teach distance learning courses.<sup>3 (p19)</sup>

Other contributions within the same meeting highlighted social and technical problems; various distance learning methods and media were discussed.<sup>4</sup>

The Sixth World Conference on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning for the Library and Information Professions in Oslo in 2005 included many contributions that highlighted the importance of e-learning in the profession, and in particular for the delivery of information literacy courses.<sup>5</sup> More recently, the IFLA Education and Training Section established an E-Learning Dis-



cussion Group, which held sessions at the conferences in Durban and Quebec. In those sessions many experiences were presented about this subject.

## DEVELOPING TEACHING ROLES

There has been a growing awareness of e-learning as a powerful tool for improving information literacy teaching and, in general, communication with users. Mei-Yu Wang and Ming-Jiu Hwang<sup>6</sup> in their paper about “the e-learning library” refer to the most important learning styles and theories, with particular emphasis on behaviourism and constructivism:

Meanwhile, since maturing Internet technologies are capable of providing an unparalleled technological foundation for designing innovative interactions that are highly engaging, communicative and participative, to formally render models of discourse into cognitive tools supporting effective educational dialogue ... These approaches are also addressing the need for the e-learning library to implement theoretically founded interaction models and designs that incorporate learning theories.<sup>6 (p 412)</sup>

Therefore librarians have begun to understand not only the need to manage e-learning platforms and produce learning objects for users’ self-instruction, but also to explore the basics of pedagogy and teaching skills.

An American survey of mainly public libraries, *Trends in E-Learning for Library Staff*,<sup>7</sup> shows that by 2006 there was growing interest in e-learning, but that there was a perception by library staff of significant barriers of costs, staff time, and lack of expertise.

A few years later in England, the involvement in e-learning was one of the highest ranked professional skills in the JISC Attitudinal Survey, an annual survey conducted on at the University of Kent. It showed “that senior academic librarians believe that managing and promoting e-resources and e-content will be their main challenges over the next few years.”<sup>8</sup>

Among the key findings, the report says:

Head/senior learning and librarian staff from UK institutions feel best informed about e-Learning/VLEs and subjects relating to the library and content management and storage, and least informed about network capabilities, e-Research/e-Science and Green computing/ICT... The highest awareness of JISC funded activity is in the areas of access management and e-Learning/VLEs. Since 2007, there have been significant increases in the proportions of institutions aware of JISC funding activity in access management, open access and social software/Web 2.0.<sup>8 (p6)</sup>

It is because of this growing awareness of e-learning in the field that we thought that it would be of interest to present the experiences that we have led in the past years.

## THE BOLOGNA UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

In 2001 the University of Bologna started a large Digital Library Project, “AlmaDL.” In the second phase of the project, it was proposed to use part of the budget to for two related sub-projects: one aimed to develop a digital reference service and the other information literacy teaching. These proposals were inspired by a report that defined the scenario, the social aspects, and the new leading roles of librarians in the digital library era: Wendy Pradt Lougee’s *Diffuse libraries: emergent roles for research libraries in the digital age*.<sup>9</sup>

About information literacy she says:

What has changed in the learning environment?...First, technologies emerged that enabled distance-independent, asynchronous venues for instruction. These technologies were adopted not only for use in distance education programs but also for more generalized applications on campus. The second phenomenon was the growing pressure to rethink the academy’s approaches to teaching and learning, particularly with respect to the undergraduate community. These two forces have created a volatile environment, but one that offers tremendous opportunities for libraries.... How do these changing values and priorities in the educational experience affect the library and its roles in support of teaching and learning? Do traditional approaches of bibliographic instruction still resonate? While information sources and methods for finding information are still a useful component of library instruction, a broader construct of information literacy has emerged as a framework for effective information inquiry. This framework can provide a repertoire of essential skills that support students in new learning contexts.

What skills are necessary for information inquiry in the digital age? Is it possible to separate content skills from the tools that facilitate access? Has the basic function of inquiry changed as new analytic capabilities become available? A number of perspectives have been brought to bear in understanding these new dimensions of learning and associated skills.<sup>9 (p20)</sup>

The information literacy teaching sub-project funded two important initiatives. The first was a course on “Training for Trainers.” This course, taught by a consultant who has credentials in pedagogy and in psychology, and is an expert trainer, involved 64 librarians (out of 307 employed at the University of Bologna 2003). The course was for forty hours and repeated five times). A follow-up after one year reviewed the results in practice. The content of the course included:

- Basics of the communication theory

- Listening and communication techniques
- Learning styles and strategies
- Basics of teaching: course planning and management
- Learning and the group: learning agreement; expectation and motivation; question management; dealing with conflicts; group dynamics.

The training also included project work and a real course developed by the participants and presented by them to the teacher/consultant.

The report based on the questionnaire at the end of the course shows the following results:

- 59.52% of participants agree on the high coherence of course objectives and content
- 52.38% of participants consider the course useful
- 38.10% of participants consider the content difficult to implement at University level.

The follow-up seminar reviewed the initiatives developed after the course. Most librarians reported frustration, after a strong expectation of success and reward by the academic bodies and the students. Nearly all participants agreed with the fact that their students were not attracted to a course without credit “rewards;” but the only person entitled to assign credits in the current regulations of Italian universities is the professor or teacher of an official course. Therefore an agreement with a professor to assign credits to the attending students had to be made. This path has been followed in recent years with good results.

The second initiative has been the production of learning objects for basic information literacy (CIL modules) that can be attended by users in two forms: 1) in self instruction mode<sup>10</sup> or on the ATutor e-learning platform.<sup>11</sup> These two modes allow librarians to use the tutorials inside their information literacy programs or to recommend that students read and follow the modules before starting their research. There is also an English version of the tutorial for the foreign students.<sup>12</sup>

A short course was offered to encourage librarians to use the ATutor platform. But, in this context, the priority was to develop as many face-to-face courses as possible, so as to promote the use of electronic resources and complex searches. This choice is due to the wide variety of disciplinary content taught. Subject librarians and database experts may propose seminars on different subjects or approach and freely refer to the basic methodology or searching offered by the three online tutorials.

Presently, the University of Bologna Libraries’ Information Literacy website lists more than forty courses and seminars addressed to students and special user groups.<sup>13</sup> In many cases a professor sponsors the courses/seminars, and assigns credits to the successful students.

In the short term, the tutorials will be moved into the Moodle platform, managed by the University of Bologna E-Learning Centre. This change will give the librari-

ans the opportunity for a re-training course about the more complex e-learning environment. We hope that the course will give us the chance for a re-appraisal of the librarians' experience.

In general, librarians appreciated the "Training for Trainers" initiative; they saw the opportunity not only to renovate the old style "guide for library users" but also to enhance the utilization of electronic resources. Re-skilling has been felt as personally rewarding, but not sufficiently recognized by the Faculties. In fact, in Italian universities there are impassable barriers between "teachers" and "non-teachers," and any attempt by librarians to train users may be seen as menacing professors' privileges.

### **THE INFORMATION LITERACY FOR BIOMEDICINE E-TUTORS COURSE**

This course developed in a different context but was inspired by the same aims and objectives as the University of Bologna experience.

In 2004 the Emilia Romagna Region Health Authority financed a regional project called "ILB: information literacy in campo biomedico". The main objectives of this project were: 1) survey the perceived gaps in medical doctors' information searching skills; 2) identify the most essential sources, databases and search engines for hospital medical personnel among the ones available in the regional hospitals; 3) produce and deliver a blended learning course, taught by hospital librarians, to fill these gaps and expand hospital medical personnel information skills.

The third objective created a unique opportunity to develop a course for the hospital librarians about their new role of e-tutors.

In this case it is reductive to describe the aim of the course as supplying librarians with the general information about the e-learning platform. The content of the course, held in the Spring 2008, included:

- Overview of new roles for hospital librarians as trainers in virtual learning environments
- Basics about learning agreement, course planning and management
- Overview and practice of some Moodle collaborative tools: forum, calendar, homework; overview of the reports tools and other useful features
- Learning objects content evaluation
- Case studies exercises (i.e. examples of search paths for medical subject questions; medical doctors' skills assessment).

Most of the twenty-three hospital librarian participants have had experience as trainers for hospital staff (medical doctors, specialists, nurses and other health staff), especially in the areas of evidence-based medicine and evidence-based nursing. They normally teach more than three courses a year and spend quite a large part of their time performing expert online searches, such as systematic re-

views. Therefore the learning objects were perceived as a tool (nota) to present basic concepts to their trainees and a means of earning individual time and space for single questions, which it is not always easy in a classroom situation.

As an introduction, an overall analysis of the medical librarian's new roles was presented. Particular reference was made to the Medical Library Association US (MLA) descriptions of professional requirements:

Teaching ways to access, organize, and use information to solve problems is an essential and ever-widening responsibility of the health sciences librarian. Effective instruction entails not only knowledge of the structure and content of specific courses and technology but also an understanding of and expertise in

- learning theory and cognitive psychology,
- curriculum and instructional development,
- instructional systems design,
- educational needs assessment and analysis,
- learning style appraisal,
- instructional methodologies, and
- evaluation of learning outcomes.<sup>14</sup>

The course was organized in two face-to-face sessions of five hours each, and almost ten hours of online homework. A questionnaire and assignments were distributed and the work of each participant was monitored.

It was the first time that these librarians worked in a virtual learning environment, and the course itself, delivered through the Moodle platform, led them to consider the advantages and the problems of being "virtual trainees." In light of this lack of experience, more time was spent letting them explore and test the Moodle platform tools and features than assessing their ability to support a user in performing a good search, for example in EMBASE.

As a matter of fact, the course was quite successful from the point of view of the teacher-participant interaction and the case studies; but some technical problems occurred involving platform access by some participants located inside a hospital or a local health authority. Access to the platform and to the learning objects was the main problem encountered. Italian hospitals' information systems normally install powerful firewalls that protect health data and patient privacy. Moreover, personal computers are protected and cannot easily access external resources such as e-learning platforms nor use certain types of software. Therefore the hospital librarians had problems accessing the learning objects managed inside the Moodle platform of the Modena and Reggio University E-Learning Centre (CEA). Some personal computers also had no audio on board and headsets were not provided. Nevertheless, the short course was successfully completed, but hospital librarians asked for a refresher course in proximity with the delivery of the ILB e-learning course.

At the moment, the Santa Maria Nuova Hospital – the main provider of the course – is still not able to deliver it because of technical problems. For example,

the Flash® version installed by the hospital is not the same as that used in the e-course. We are looking forward to delivering the training in alternative locations to overcome the firewall and technical protections problems.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

In the different environments described, a great openness of mind and a true wish to learn new skills were found among librarians. The professionals' overall age was over thirty, but in general everybody was ready to learn new skills.

The main factors delaying the full development of information literacy programs and e-tutorship are the following:

- regulations and social conditions that prevent universities and other institutions from allowing librarians to deliver officially recognized training courses
- stereotypes and staff organization trends that prevent librarians from dedicating themselves to teaching and creating training courses

The technical aspects discussed in relation to the hospitals are problems for all e-learning courses, so cannot be considered as an obstacle for these particular objectives.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

In these experiences we learnt the importance of pedagogical and methodological issues coupled with technological innovation, such as those encountered in using e-learning platforms. The need is clear for awareness of the difference between face-to-face and online communication. Thus the clear statement of objectives, the learning path, and the learning agreements are essential elements to establish the relationship with trainees.

Re-skilling librarians to take on the roles of e-tutor does not imply only learning to be at ease in a virtual learning environment; it also requires librarians to assume the role and tasks of a mindful teacher.

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**GATHERING LEADERSHIP MOMENTUM  
ACROSS GREAT DISTANCES –  
CREATING AN ONLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*At the 2007 Mountain Plains Library Association Leadership (MPLA) Institute, held in New Mexico, USA, eight academic librarians formed an online multi-state, multi-generational community of practice. MPLA is a twelve-state library association within the United States. Using Google Groups™, the members formed an online environment called the MPLA Community of Practice for continuing development of the leadership skills presented at the Institute. These early-career librarians represent diverse educational backgrounds and work in libraries serving varied populations with differing disciplinary emphases. The group meets monthly with each member preparing and facilitating online discussions, complete with personal assessments, topical readings, and questions. The Google Groups™ site is also used to discuss library issues, including sharing innovative practices, identifying useful resources, and discussing workplace issues. The group has been successful not only at maintaining regular communication but also pursuing opportunities for continuing professional development. This paper highlights how librarians can develop and launch a peer-mentoring space using free online tools such as Google Groups™, Skype™, and Doodle™ from anywhere in the world. It also addresses current literature related to communities of practice, leadership topics discussed by the group, and personal stories about its impact on individual members.*

**INTRODUCTION**

How can an organization develop a library leader? Numerous library organizations across the United States have begun creating leadership institutes with the intention of developing leadership skills in our future library leaders. The Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA), a regional, twelve-state library organization located within the United States, is just one of these organizations which provide

training in the form of a five-day Leadership Institute for public, academic, and state librarians. Eight academic librarians had the inspiration to form an online multi-state, multi-generational peer mentoring community of practice at the conclusion of the 2007 MPLA Leadership Institute. This paper addresses how librarians from anywhere in the world can develop and launch their own virtual peer-mentoring space using free online tools such as Google Groups™, Skype™, and Doodle™. It also addresses current literature related to communities of practice, leadership topics, and personal stories of the group's impact on individual group members. We describe the technology resources our online group uses and provide information on how to access them.

## **LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS FOR LIBRARIANS**

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, libraries and associations began implementing leadership programs for librarians. The leadership programs' main goals were to develop leadership skills, increase diversity in the library field, and recruit new librarians for the future.<sup>1</sup> Leadership skills were not considered "desired skills or competencies" by the profession until the 1990s when the concept finally started appearing in the library literature.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the library profession still lacks a universally accepted statement that describes desired leadership skills for librarians. In 2004 Mason and Wetherbee found that there was no accepted "core set of competencies, experiences, or aptitudes... Library leadership has typically been described more in terms of stories about individuals."<sup>1</sup> While no standardized vocabulary about librarian leadership has yet emerged, much progress has been made in the field. Library leadership is now a popular topic in the literature and countless articles, books, and blogs have been published. Mason and Wetherbee's research shows that more than twenty-one library leadership institutes were established between the years 1996 and 2002. The MPLA Leadership Institute is cited among their list of programs with its primary objectives listed as "leadership theories and behavior, change, risk, power, diversity, collaboration."<sup>1(p199)</sup>

## **2007 MPLA LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

The MPLA community of practice was formed at the MPLA Leadership Institute at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico in Fall 2007. MPLA offers an annual Institute that is designed to help emerging leaders in the library community develop their full career potential. MPLA was founded in 1948 to assist librarians in their professional development by creating educational and networking opportunities. A regional organization, MPLA sponsors joint conferences with state library associations where librarians have the opportunity to learn from their colleagues in other states. At present, MPLA consists of 12 states in the United States – Arizona, Colorado,

Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

Any librarian is welcome to apply to the competitive MPLA Leadership Institute. Maureen Sullivan, an organization development consultant in the United States, has led the Leadership Institute since 2002. Among the concepts Sullivan teaches with her participative, inclusive style are interpersonal communication, group problem solving, and leading from the middle.

Topics discussed during the five days of the 2007 leadership session included:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Managing Differences
- Risk Taking
- Power and Influence
- Leading Change
- Commitment
- Groups and Teams
- Project Management
- Personal Planning

Mary Bushing, Library Consultant and Educator, was the Institute coordinator from 2002-2007. In a personal communication (2008) to the authors for use in preparing their poster for a conference (see note 12), she said that creating a community of practice was one of the Institute's broad goals:

Networking and creating a community of professional practice was a key element in the structure and development of the institute... A number of these individuals have said what a difference it made in their lives to belong to a group with an intense shared experience who are outside of the day-to-day work organization and local political environment.

Our MPLA virtual cohort marks the first time in five years that librarians have formed an official community of practice at the conclusion of an MPLA Leadership Institute.

### **FORMING THE MPLA ONLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

The Leadership Institute assembles librarians with common interests in leadership. For the 2007 institute, twenty-nine emerging leaders from MPLA's twelve state library associations came together as participants. Attendees were chosen for their leadership potential, previous leadership experience, and personal qualities that they addressed in an application essay.

Since there were many academic librarians at the Leadership Institute, we met in an after-hours session to become better acquainted. We did not really put a

name to what we wanted to accomplish, rather we instinctively felt the need to continue our discussions once we all went back to our institutions. The group shared common challenges of leading from the middle. Our main goal during the week of the Institute was to develop a mechanism to continue our conversations upon our return to our home institutions. We were concerned that we would quickly forget many of the leadership theories and tools learned once we returned to our hectic jobs. This decision resulted in the creation of an online community of practice. We realized that agreeing to “stay in touch” by informal networking would not be as successful as using an already established model like an online community of practice. Research shows that learning is a social process, which we learn at an early age when we attend school. Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave found that people “participate in frameworks that have structure. Learning involves participation in a community of practice.”<sup>3</sup>

### *What is a community of practice?*

People constantly “share knowledge” without even realizing it – both in our jobs and in our daily lives. For instance, it is often easier to ask a colleague how to conduct a simple task in the library like placing a book on hold than to read the manual or help guide on the Internet. In the same way, our group, much like other online groups, shares knowledge in multiple ways.

The term “community of practice” is based on the work of Barbara Rogoff, Jean Lave, and Etienne Wenger, all cognitive anthropologists. Wenger defines this as “communities in which there exists the sustained pursuit of shared enterprise.”<sup>4</sup> A community of practice is a self-organized group, based on collaboration among peers that consists of three essential parts: “the domain, the community, and the practice.”<sup>5</sup> In our case, the “domain” is the group’s common interest in library leadership topics and professional development opportunities. The “community” is our practice of meeting monthly online using Web 2.0 technology such as the Google Groups™ site and Skype™. Within our “community” we share knowledge and learn from each other. The “practice” means putting the knowledge that we have shared and learned from each other into practice by holding monthly Skype™ calls and collaborating to share our discoveries by writing articles for publication and preparing a virtual poster for ACRL. Developing a “shared repertoire of resources” is how Wenger further explains the “practice” aspect of a cohort. In our group, examples of this shared repertoire include advising one another about customer service issues, learning together about conflict management skills, and staying abreast of emerging technologies.

Wenger refers to a working team as a “living curriculum...but learning in a community of practice is not limited to novices. The practice of a community is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone.”<sup>6</sup> While the concept of a cohort initially referred to apprentices learning from masters, everyone in the group benefits from the exchange. According to Santo, knowledge sharing is not

just “water cooler talk, instead, these exchanges are necessary for building the trust required to express a genuine vulnerability – to admit that one needs new knowledge.”<sup>7</sup>

One of the ways to keep a virtual team healthy is by nurturing the group. Internal leadership within the group is the easiest way to maintain momentum and keep the group nurtured and balanced. In our case, the group leader, Danielle Theiss-White, had the inspiration at the Leadership Institute and planted the seed for the cohort. The coordinators at the Institute nurtured the idea and prompted us to form a team that they in turn would join to monitor our progress. Even though they do not participate within the group each month, they do encourage us as we submit publications and give presentations, and they offer support and suggestions as needed.

Leadership within a team takes many forms, for many roles are present in a community of practice. Each month we have a different facilitator, providing each member with the opportunity to lead us in a discussion using Skype™. The facilitator selects the topic, assigns readings, and sets an agenda. In this way each person has a chance to affect change within the team. If one person objects to how a meeting is being run or the type of questions being asked, then he or she can change the course of the call for the next session.

Other leadership roles within the virtual team include the overall group leader who organizes the professional development activities, keeps the group on track by sending reminder emails before each monthly meeting, and ensures there is a facilitator lined up each month. Each of the members is a “resident expert” on various topics such as government documents, special collections, children’s libraries, assessment planning, reference, web 2.0 technologies, and collection development. According to Wenger, “these roles may be formal or informal, and may be concentrated in a core group or more widely distributed. But in all cases, leadership must have intrinsic legitimacy in the community.”<sup>8</sup>

## **COLLABORATION USING WEB 2.0 TOOLS**

Web 2.0 tools have transformed libraries and the way people communicate with each other. Examples of Web 2.0 software include blogs, podcasts, wikis, and social networks, such as Facebook and MySpace. Librarians in professional associations, such as IFLA, are the perfect audience for creating a community of practice. Librarians have always belonged to associations and attended conferences to share best practices and knowledge with other librarians. But lately more and more librarians are meeting “virtually” on social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, or Twitter, and the current economic climate makes these cost effective forms of professional development or continuing education very attractive. Thanks to the plethora of Web 2.0 tools, librarians can now collaborate with other libraries worldwide with a click of a mouse button. According to Eliza-

beth Nelson, a knowledge analyst, “librarians have demonstrated a unique willingness to share knowledge with others, as revealed by the sheer number of organizations devoted to librarianship and the close-knit networks of communication they engender.”<sup>9</sup>

Social networking is not only the latest fad in libraries, but has become the way the “global village,” or the Internet, operates. Facebook and MySpace and other social networking sites are where our library users communicate online and are important avenues for librarians to network with other librarians. In a December 2008 survey the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that the number of adult Internet users with a profile on a social networking site “quadrupled in the past four years – from 8% in 2005 to 35% [in 2009].”<sup>10</sup>

Sharing information with other libraries by contributing to discussion boards, blogs, or online space such as Google Groups™ is gaining popularity in the profession. According to David Warlick, “It has become more important than ever...to actually practice lifelong learning. And one way of doing that is to stay connected to the community of practitioners in order to get the latest information, the latest techniques.”<sup>11</sup> It used to be that “staying connected” meant reading the latest issue of a popular library science journal. Now, instead of merely consuming information, librarians are producing information as well. It is not uncommon for librarians in all types of libraries to create their own blogs or record podcasts and embed them into their online catalogs. Creating an online community of practice is another revolutionary approach that is gaining popularity in libraries as well as in the business world.

### ***Free Online Tools***

Have you recently met library colleagues with whom you would like to collaborate but whom you cannot meet face to face? What free or inexpensive tools are available to help facilitate this process? Recent social networking and business networking applications have expanded the ways in which groups can meaningfully communicate and collaborate across great distances. Many of these technological resources are free or inexpensive and easy to use, which also increases the potential for participation by many members.

Librarians can develop and launch a virtual peer-mentoring space using free online tools such as Google Groups™, Skype™ and Doodle™ from anywhere in the world. Countless collaborative technologies that are now available allow for authentic partnerships across geographic and institutional barriers. Technology resources used by our online group and information on how to find them online are provided in this section.

**Email** serves as an electronic way to communicate asynchronously with groups and individuals. In particular, the team used it to communicate after the Leadership Institute and continue to use it to receive notifications and updates to the group space.

**Google Groups™** is a free, online Google product that is extremely easy to implement for a group space such as an online group. With Google Groups™, users can easily start online discussions, create web pages, and share files with a preselected group of people. The MPLA cohort uses the online workspace to share documents – such as articles and discussion questions – for monthly discussions on various leadership topics. It also provides a collaborative workspace so that each group member can edit documents on their own time.

**Skype™** is a free service that enables users to place telephone calls over the Internet. It is an easy and free solution for conference calling, which greatly enhances online discussion. Skype's™ conferencing capabilities complement online discussions and engender a personal connection amongst members. One of our members commented, "The monthly conference call keeps our network connected on a personal level. There is a spontaneous and conversational approach to in-person communication that spurs creativity in a way that formal writing simply does not." (Heather)

**Doodle™** is an online event scheduling and polling software. The MPLA group finds this especially helpful for coordinating multiple schedules over different time zones. A group member commented on the use of free technology: "Learning about the various ways to communicate (for free!) using Skype,™ Google Groups,™ and Doodle™ has been beneficial for me as a library professional, and I have taken the lessons learned from this group experience back to my work environment and shared with others and they have started using them as well." (Danielle)

#### **NEWCOMERS IN THE PROFESSION: ABOUT US**

All eight members of the virtual team have worked in a professional academic position for less than twelve years, with most working in the profession for only a few years. The group was formed on the basis of desiring to learn leadership skills, to network with other academic librarians from other states, and to keep the knowledge learned from the MPLA Leadership Institute fresh in our minds. We are a multi-generational group of eight, with the youngest being a millennial and the oldest a baby boomer. [See Appendix for names and university affiliation]. One of the group members commented on the group size: "The size of our group is ideal because of our busy schedules. If it were smaller, those who aren't as active from time to time would be more noticeable. If it were larger, it would be more difficult to coordinate our calls." (Karen)

### ***Group Mentoring and Coaching***

Members of the group often find themselves offering advice for how to handle certain situations or problems. Team members “coach” each other by sharing knowledge about their specific library or state library association. We originally formed our cohort to discuss leadership topics on a monthly basis and have recently covered topics such as academic leadership, conflict resolution, library budgetary issues, and teamwork in libraries. The facilitator prepares two to three articles for reading as well as questions and/or a personal assessment for the month. Group members prepare ahead of time for the monthly discussion and are ready to discuss the topic at hand when the facilitator calls everyone using Skype™. We utilize Google Groups™ for preliminary discussion before the meeting, using this group space very similarly to a course management system like Moodle, WebCT, or Blackboard. Several members have contacted each other for personal career advice such as when to move to another position in the library organization, how to get an appointment to a committee, or for advice about tenure review. At any one time a member may serve as a mentee to one group member and as a mentor to another. One member noted, “Although we have different areas of expertise, we all work in academia and are benefited by the insight of our peers.” (Heather)

### **MONTHLY SESSION EXAMPLES**

#### ***February Discussion Topic: Teamwork in Libraries***

Sample Readings:

- Garber, P.R. and Mock, D. “Team Intelligence: Getting the Most from Teams in Your Organization” and “Reintroducing Teams” *Pfeiffer Annual 2004* (179-185).

Questions posed to group for online and Skype discussion:

1. What were some of the lessons you learned as a result of your experiences with teams?
2. How can you apply these lessons to future team efforts?

#### ***March Discussion Topic: Conflict Management***

Sample Readings/Assessment:

- Conflict Management Style Assessment
- Bragg, T. Ten Ways to Deal with Conflict. *IIE Solutions*. 2004, (36-37).
- McNamara, P.L. Conflict Resolution Strategies. *OfficePro Magazine*.2003. [http://www.iaaphq.org/ResearchTrends/Conflict\\_Resolution\\_Strategies\\_OfficePRO\\_AugSept\\_2003.htm](http://www.iaaphq.org/ResearchTrends/Conflict_Resolution_Strategies_OfficePRO_AugSept_2003.htm)



Questions posed to the group for online and Skype discussion:

1. What was your conflict management/negotiating style determined from the assessment?
2. Did it change or remain the same?
3. Do you deal with conflict differently at home versus at work?
4. Describe one conflict situation at work. How did you deal with it? Were you successful?

***April Discussion Topic: Academic Leadership***

Sample Readings:

- Strathe, M.I. and Wilson, V.W. Academic Leadership: The Pathway To and From. *New Directions for Higher Education*. 2006, 134, 5-13.
- Reyes, V. The Future Role of the Academic Librarians in Higher Education. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*. 2006, 6(3), 301-309.
- Young, A.P., Hernon, P., and Powell, R. R. Attributes of Library Leadership: An Exploratory Study of Some Gen-Xers. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. 2006, 32(5), 489-502.

Assignment:

The initial assignment is to take a look at academic leadership, then discuss how it differs from general, traditional leadership scenarios. This could be a paragraph discussing how traditional leadership resources and studies did not fit your academic situation, a look at your initial impressions of leadership on campus and how they have changed over time, or just point out similarities/differences between academic leaders and those in the outside world.

***Re-skilling and Technology***

The monthly meetings start with a “round-robin” where each group member discusses what is currently happening at his or her library. Many of us have learned about emerging technologies, new research projects, or upcoming conferences by listening to the members describe their current projects. For instance, several of our group members have started using LibGuides™ and Libstats™ after learning how these tools are used by other libraries in our group. We have also determined that several members of our group are interested in collaborating on professional research, and a subgroup has been formed to facilitate this process. One team member stated, “Group collaboration is yet another leadership skill to master. It is encouraging that we have persevered with the group for this number of months, already working toward achieving some of our goals that we outlined back in November.” (Erin)

The cohort recently created an online poster for the 2008 Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Spring Virtual Institute describing our journey to-

gether.<sup>12</sup> Additional conference presentations include a collaborative workshop that five of us presented at the Kansas Library Association Conference in spring 2009.

### **BENEFITS OF THE MPLA ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

MPLA team members cite many benefits from working together over the past two years, such as professional development, continuing education, professional networking and mentoring, and growth in technology knowledge. One member stated: “this free online activity provides many of the benefits of expensive travel and conferences, insight, shared experiences, and mentoring. Often at the big conferences, this is difficult to find, but we have a group already assembled by the MPLA experience. I hope this group continues the activity” (Robert). A team is more knowledgeable collectively than one person. People can share experiences, best practices, and innovative technologies that are implemented at their libraries. For all of us, the MPLA Leadership Institute is not just a memory or a conference bag filled with papers and notes that quickly gets shoved away and is forgotten. Instead, due to our efforts, we are part of a network of supportive colleagues who continue to be engaged in working together on goals and sharing professional information.

### **CONCLUSION**

The MPLA cohort has remained successful for almost two years and members continue to work together on research projects, conference presentations, and committees. Finding and making the time to meet, outside of normal work hours, continues to be the greatest challenge for our group as we struggle to find a consistent monthly meeting schedule. Our group continues to utilize free Web 2.0 tools to conduct virtual meetings and hopes to grow and learn about new issues concerning library leadership. The group will continue to seek direction from current research in the areas of communities of practice, leadership development, and ways of communicating new knowledge. By embracing emerging technologies, our goal is to enhance the MPLA community of practice experience. This group stands as an excellent example of what a small group of individuals interested and committed to professional growth can accomplish.

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#### APPENDIX: MPLA TEAM MEMBERS

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heather.collins@washburn.edu

**Danielle Theiss-White**, Assistant Professor, General Reference Coordinator,  
Kansas State University, dtheiss@ksu.edu

### ***Organizations***

Mountain Plains Library Association  
<http://www.mpla.us/>

MPLA Leadership Institute  
<http://www.mpla.us/leadership/index.html>

Ghost Ranch, New Mexico  
<http://www.ghost ranch.org/>

### ***Technology***

Doodle™  
<http://www.doodle.ch/main.html>

Google Groups™  
<http://groups.google.com/>

Skype™  
<http://www.skype.com>

## THE SMART ONES – ONE-PERSON LIBRARIANS IN IRELAND AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Little is known about one-person librarians (OPLs) in Ireland, let alone their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs or their experience of it. As the sole information provider in their respective organisations, however, they need to be at the forefront of knowledge acquisition in order to provide a high quality service. This research project examines, by adopting a phenomenographic approach, the qualitatively different ways in which OPLs understand and experience CPD. Semi-structured interviews with qualified librarians, who were selected through a purposive sampling strategy, were the main source of data collection. The present paper reports on the preliminary results of the pilot study conducted in summer 2008. Four categories of description regarding the conceptions of successful CPD were identified: work-related, career-related, profession-related, and personal-development. Furthermore, two distinct ways of experiencing different methods of CPD emerged: subject-specific and library/information-specific. It remains to be seen if the main sample confirms these findings.*

### INTRODUCTION

Continuing professional development (CPD) has been acknowledged as one of the most important tasks in many professions today. Library and information professionals should be at the forefront of CPD for their own good and for the good of the organisations and customers they are serving. As An Chomhairle Leabharlanna/The Library Council<sup>1</sup> stated in their key report “Joining Forces,”

Professional education should be relevant to the practising needs of library and information service staff and should reflect their diverse needs in a consistently changing environment... The lack of provision for CPD is a major barrier to the development of libraries and information services.<sup>1 (p175)</sup>

One-person librarians (OPLs) in particular might find CPD challenging. Their position within an organisation is unique in that that they cannot participate in professional development the same way librarians employed at a larger library can, yet they are usually the sole information provider in an organisation. Webb<sup>2</sup> found that “the independent information broker/consultant and the individual working as

a 'one-person library', i.e. having sole responsibility for the operation and development of a service with little or no assistance, may feel at times that the most difficult thing for them to achieve is continuing self-development."<sup>2 (p81)</sup>

Furthermore, unless a newly graduated library professional already has an established interest in a specific area while at library school, he or she very often only specialises on the job and can only gain professional maturity in the workplace through CPD.<sup>3</sup> So if we agree on the importance of CPD and if we want to provide librarians with CPD opportunities, then we need to understand what CPD means to people in that profession. This research project aims to understand OPL's qualitatively different ways of understanding CPD.

Following an extensive literature review in the fields of CPD, lifelong learning, library and information studies (LIS) in general and studies on OPLs, the research questions have been narrowed down to:

- What are the Irish OPL librarians' conceptions of successful and effective CPD?
- How do OPLs in Ireland experience different methods of CPD?

## METHODOLOGY

The importance of meaning is at the centre of this research. The purpose is to investigate OPLs' perceptions of CPD as stated in their own words, reflecting on their own experience of this phenomenon. The research approach adopted is therefore a phenomenographic one, as this allows an inside view into so-called "second-order perspectives," which Marton describes as "people's ideas about the world (or their experience of it)" and our statements about those ideas and experiences.<sup>4 (p178)</sup> According to Marton and Booth,<sup>5</sup> phenomenography is not a method in itself, but "rather a way of ... identifying, formulating, and tackling certain sorts of research questions... particularly aimed at questions of relevance to learning and understanding in an educational setting."<sup>5 (p111)</sup> Its key message is that "each phenomenon, concept, or principle can be understood in a limited number of qualitatively different ways."<sup>6 (p31)</sup>

A phenomenographic researcher asks questions which are designed to extract experiential and conceptual descriptions, thus prompting reflection in the study participant. A conception has two aspects: a meaning (referential aspect) and a structure (structural aspect). The referential aspect can be found by what a person is saying, the structural by paying attention to which elements of the phenomenon the focus is on, often involving linguistic markers, such as the use of singular or plural.<sup>7</sup> These conceptions are then grouped into categories of descriptions, which in turn will manifest themselves across different situations and therefore form "a kind of collective intellect."<sup>4 (p177)</sup> This is sometimes referred to as "outcome space" and shows the similarities and differences between categories of descriptions. An outcome space is usually of a hierarchical nature.

The focus during data analysis is not on the individual, who may hold different views about one single phenomenon, but rather on the differences between conceptions of phenomena.<sup>8</sup> The aim is to explore the range of meanings within a sample group, as a group, not the range of meanings for each individual.<sup>9 (p323)</sup> One area of LIS in which phenomenography could be used, as suggested by Limberg,<sup>10</sup> lies in the context of lifelong learning, which is at the heart of the present study. This focus on lifelong learning has been replicated in phenomenographic studies of other professions, such as Collin's study<sup>11</sup> on design engineers' conceptions of workplace learning and Åkerlind's<sup>12</sup> inquiry into academics' conception of their own growth and development. The study reported here is the first using this approach in the context of CPD and one-person librarianship in Ireland.

The phenomenographic interview differs slightly from other qualitative interviews in that the interviewee's answers to a few set questions direct the course of the interview. The emphasis is on the participant's experience of a phenomenon and the researcher encourages reflection with follow-up questions. This ensures that meaning is being understood by the interviewer, which in turn validates the statements made.<sup>13</sup> A phenomenographic researcher provides all interviewees with the same opening scenario with a limited set of questions, allowing the participant to introduce new ideas, which the interviewer can then follow up.<sup>14</sup> An interview schedule (see appendix I) was used, but questions were not asked in the same order every time.

Purposive sampling is widely used in phenomenography. These studies usually employ a sample size of 20 to 30 participants.<sup>15</sup> During the literature review, I identified several variables that could influence participants' experiences, such as gender, location, level of experience and work setting and drew up a grid (see Table 1) allowing for maximum variation. I am aware that some of the cells in this grid might not be filled at the end of the data collection process for lack of interviewees; others might hold more than one name.

**Table 1:** Sample matrix

Rural				
	Male		Female	
OPL experience	0-2 years	2+ years	0-2 years	2+ years
	Type of library		Type of library	
Academic				
Special				
School/public				
Corporate				
Health				

## Urban

	Male		Female	
	0-2 years	2+ years	0-2 years	2+ years
	Type of library		Type of library	
Academic				
Special				
School/public				
Corporate				
Health				

The geographic spread did matter, in my opinion, as this could impact profoundly on people's access to formal CPD activities. I therefore divided them into an 'urban' group and a 'rural' group with 'urban' comprising major cities, such as Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick. Also, I tried to strike a balance between Leinster and specifically Dublin, where I assumed most librarians would be based in line with the demographic makeup of the country, and the other three provinces. Most people live on the east coast.

Categorisation of libraries posed a challenge. The problems arising when compiling samples from different LIS sectors was acknowledged by Spiller, Creaser, and Murphy,<sup>16</sup> who investigated libraries in the workplace. They found it extremely difficult to avoid cross-classification, as some institutions would naturally belong to more than one sector. Furthermore, I decided on two different levels of experience (0-2 years, more than 2 years) in order to distinguish between librarians who had recently started in OPLs and those who had more years of service. The cut-off point of two years was chosen, because of anecdotal evidence, which had revealed that many librarians felt it took them two years to be established in a new workplace.

There were neither official databases nor statistics<sup>17</sup> on librarians in Ireland in general, nor on OPLs in particular, which I could have consulted. I resorted to interviewing all OPLs, who answered my 'calls for participation' (see appendix II), which I had placed in an Irish LIS journal and online resources, such as the library.ie website and several mailing lists. The University of Sheffield granted ethical clearance.

This study was limited to the Republic of Ireland, as Northern Ireland fell into another jurisdiction with its own unique circumstances. Also, only qualified librarians were contacted. Another bias was towards membership of the Library Association of Ireland (LAI) as only members could subscribe to mailing lists. This was overcome by asking OPLs to pass the call for participation on to OPLs known to them, who were not LAI members, which resulted in more librarians contacting



the researcher. Data collection of the main sample started in September 2008 and is still ongoing at the time of writing.

The results presented here are based on a pilot study which was conducted in June and July 2008. Three librarians, one male and two female, who were known to the researcher beforehand, agreed to be interviewed. All three OPLs were based in Dublin and were chosen on grounds of availability and diversity. They were also active members of various committees of the LAI and worked in a variety of settings: one was employed at an academic fourth level institution, one at a government agency and the last one in a corporate organisation. The level of administrative support was unique to each post – the first had one clerical officer, the second no other staff member and the third one library assistant. Their level of experience of working as OPLs ranged from nine months to two years with all three having held different posts before starting in their current employments. All three librarians had no immediate financial gain through their participation in CPD. Interviewees 1 and 2 participated in a Performance Management Development System (PMDS) run by their respective employers; interviewee 3 did not.

The researcher contacted each interviewee individually by email. Upon agreement, they received an information sheet, which outlined purpose, procedure and any potential problems they might encounter during the interview. This was followed-up by correspondence confirming the location and date of the meeting. Two of the meetings took place at the interviewee's workplace – one in the actual library, one in a meeting room. The third interview was held in a café attached to a local public library (not the participant's workplace). The researcher tested the interview schedule, her interviewing technique and the recording machine by taping all interviews, which lasted between 40 and 50 minutes each and transcribed them verbatim using word processing software. Additionally, she kept a diary with field notes and some personal reflections. Each librarian signed a consent form and the researcher emphasised at the beginning of the interview, that they could withdraw this consent at any stage. Each was informed that a copy of their interview transcript would be provided on request. After the interview, the researcher thanked each librarian again by email.

## RESULTS

There are neither fixed guidelines nor textbooks available to the novice researcher on how to conduct phenomenographic research, but Ashworth and Lucas<sup>18</sup> offered some instruction on how to ensure validity of results:

- The researcher should tentatively identify the broad objectives of the research study, the phenomenon under investigation, recognising the meaning of this area may be quite different for the research participant.

- The selection of the participants should avoid presuppositions about the nature of the phenomenon or the nature of conceptions held by particular ‘types’ of individual while observing common-sense precautions about maintaining ‘variety’ of experience.
- The most appropriate means of obtaining an account should be identified, allowing maximum freedom for the research participant to describe their experience.
- In obtaining experiential accounts the participant should be given the maximum opportunity to reflect, and the questions posed should be based on researcher presumptions about the phenomenon or the participant, but should emerge out of the interest to make clear their experience.
- The researcher’s interviewing skills should be subject to an ongoing review and changes made to interview practice if necessary. For instance, stylistic traits which tend to foreclose description should be minimised.
- The transcription of the interview should be aimed at accurately reflecting the emotions and emphases of the participant.
- The analysis should continue to be aware of the importation of presuppositions, and be carried out with the maximum exercise of empathic understanding.
- Analysis should avoid premature closure for the sake of producing logically and hierarchically-related categories of description.
- The process of analysis should be sufficiently clearly described to allow the reader to evaluate the attempt to achieve bracketing and empathy and trace the process by which findings have emerged. <sup>18 (p300)</sup>

The interview questions were as open as possible with follow up questions allowing the interviewee to reflect on their experience. Each interview took different directions depending on the focus of attention of each librarian. The researcher tried to put her own understanding of CPD aside during the interviews and while conducting the analysis. Care was taken with the transcripts to ensure an exact copy, which included recordings of emotion or gestures and facial expressions, where appropriate.

In reading and re-reading each interview individually and then all of them in a row, several distinct conceptions emerged and were grouped together, constantly checking for possible contradictions and confirmations. This preliminary analysis of the interviews in the pilot study already revealed some variation. The researcher identified the following categories of descriptions answering the two research questions. At the end of each, she tried to formulate an outcome space, which shows the categories of descriptions and the relationships between them.

Question 1: “What are the Irish OPL librarians’ conceptions of successful and effective CPD”?

Category 1: Work-related conception of CPD – CPD is successful and effective if related to the current job

Category 2: Career-related conception of CPD – CPD is successful and effective if related to career perspectives

Category 3: Profession-related conception of CPD – CPD is successful and effective if related to values and status of the LIS profession

Category 4: Personal-development conception of CPD – CPD is successful and effective if related to the development of the professional and personal self

Each conception has referential and structural dimensions, as outlined above. Each of them will be examined in turn.

*Category 1: Work-related conception of CPD*

Three elements form the referential dimension of this conception:

- CPD helps to do current job better  
CPD is very much seen as a means to find solutions to everyday problems.  
*“So I like the... ‘quick fix’, ‘quick fix’ courses... Yeah, and you want to learn that now. I mean I see something I need more educational and I want to do that now and then go back to my job and work better at my job.”* [interviewee 1]
- CPD helps to provide a better service for customers CPD improves the quality of the library service.  
*“So I think the fact that I was able to come back here and get really stuck into that whole backlog of cataloguing and being able to implement what I had learned and I had, you know, notes and sheets and guidelines and guide sheets and whatever to help me do that from the course, yeah.”* [interviewee 2]
- CPD as a means to keep abreast of new technologies Librarianship faces new challenges and an OPL needs to know about these.  
*“You can be happy in your job, but I think even if you’re staying in a job for years, you know, the world around you doesn’t stand still. There’s still a huge amount if that you to keep up-to-date with”* [interviewee 2]

Now we turn to the structural dimension, which stresses the internal object-subject relation. The focal awareness in this conception is on CPD as an object that can be manipulated for current employment in today’s time. The librarian uses it as a tool to ensure quality of service and to safeguard it to a certain extent against redundancies. CPD is an external object.

*Category 2: Career-related conception of CPD*

This conception has two referential dimensions:

- CPD helps with getting a new job (future dimension)  
In order to qualify for a new job, a librarian needs CPD to show his or her awareness of current matters.  
*“I was asked in interviews about CPD and how to keep up-to-date with current issues and I think that’s where it’s important.”* [interviewee 1]

- CPD provides a set of transferable skills  
CPD enables OPLs to expand their skill set.  
*“And I think a lot of employers think of that as very good transferable skills and it’s also of benefit to them. And obviously then, any training that helps you to do your job better, you know, you’re going to have more of that experience and so on your CV afterwards, so it’s gonna help you in any kind of future jobs you go for.”* [interviewee 2]

Here, the focal awareness is on CPD as an object that can be manipulated for future employment in a future point in time. An OPL might engage in it with a view to either move out of the library into another position within the organisation or into another post in another library. CPD is an external object. But it also has a connection to the current post and therefore to conception 1.

#### *Category 3: Profession-related conception of CPD*

Category 3 has two referential dimensions:

- to enhance image and status of the profession and ensure its survival CPD is a vital prerequisite for the profession’s future.  
*“... but CPD is essential to bring [librarianship] somewhere... be somewhere else... I mean librarianship, I think, is very much at a crossroads at the moment and it’s, it’s reinventing itself and dealing well with the electronic revolution and all, but where it’s going after that, I don’t know...”* [interviewee 3]
- to keep standards high and develop the profession  
CPD is seen as a measure to ensure high standards.  
*“But I think, you know, the onus is on us to... to develop [our professional status] within our own profession to keep the standards very high, to not let it slip down and for all of us to continually try to develop the profession and ourselves within it.”* [interviewee 2]

In category 3, the focal awareness is on CPD as an internalised object to a certain extent. It is still seen as a means to get something, but is also embedded in learning within the profession. There is also a link to conception 4.

#### *Category 4: personal-development conception of CPD*

In category 4 I found three referential dimensions:

- CPD is fundamental to being a professional  
Here CPD is seen as an essential component of professionalism.  
*“My current line manager is not very active in pursuing [CPD], so I’m motivating myself. So I’m lucky in that I have an interest in motivating myself and my own professional development.... You have to be a professional and adult about it yourself.”* [interviewee 1]

- CPD is essential for professional knowledge and development Professional knowledge needs to grow after initial education.  
*“... one thing that’s most obvious for us is involvement in professional organisations. And that would be a key thing for me and obviously it’s, it’s hugely important, I think, when you work in, especially, on your own, because that kind of network and those connections that you make a very valuable and supportive for you.”* [interviewee 2]
- CPD is part of self-development  
 Not only is CPD important for the profession, but also for the librarian’s own personal development.  
*“But I suppose, it’s just being involved in the association, you’re just more... involved..., but you feel much more part of the whole library world, being actively involved, being on the committee, organising events for your peers and being involved in all of that, I think, gives you a great sense of being part of this community rather than just attending them or looking in from the outside... I think it’s very good for your own personal growth.”* [interviewee 2]

Finally, the focal awareness in this conception is on CPD as an internal object in that that it is part of personal learning of the librarian. This conception goes beyond the immediate professional context and includes the image one has of one’s own standing in the world. It indicates professional as well as personal growth.

It could be argued that these four categories are hierarchical with category 2 incorporating category 1, category 3 including category 1 and 2 and category 4 encompassing categories 1 to 3. You cannot have conception 2 without thinking about conception 1, as you need to have an understanding of your current work in order to see where you want to go in future. So the outcome space illustrating the different meaning structures would be as follows (↑ means “is included in”):

**Table 2:** Outcome space of conceptions of successful and effective CPD



Question 2: “How do OPLs in Ireland experience different methods of CPD?”

Here, the researcher identified two categories. To distinguish the focus of the different methods of CPD, she will use ‘formal’ for organised, official CPD, that carries some form of accreditation, e.g. a certificate; ‘non-formal’ for organised, but unaccredited CPD and ‘informal’ for all other CPD.

*Category 1: subject-specific CPD*

The driving force behind this conception is time. A problem, which has arisen out of work-related circumstances and usually in the librarian's respective subject area, has to be solved quickly. So the focus is very much on the outcome, which has to be of a 'quick fix', practical nature rather than a prolonged academic exercise. Interviewees, who expressed this conception, stressed the importance of hands-on CPD, be it formal, as in a workshop, or informal, where a knowing colleague was contacted. Forms of CPD mentioned here are professional training courses (formal), training supplied by suppliers/vendors (non-formal) as well as networking (contacting other librarians either by phone or email) and 'private research' (looking up information on the Internet), searching and reading journal articles and books for specific topics in a targeted search (informal).

*"I suppose one of the main things is how easy it is to implement it when you're back at the workplace." [interviewee 2]*

*Category 2: LIS-specific CPD*

Here, the emphasis is on more future developments. This need is satisfied by either LIS-specific CPD or by tapping into neighbouring areas, such as management, often with a view to either improving a service or making oneself more knowledgeable. This category is described as more theoretical and shows attention to the wider interest of the profession. Forms of CPD mentioned here are further studies at degree level (formal), but, interestingly, courses to a lesser extent than above. Furthermore, interviewees listed networking, meetings, being involved in the association (at committee level), membership of the association, browsing and reading online sources for keeping up-to-date with developments within the profession and for job offers (informal).

*"I mean I would see something developmental, training that you might need to do as things that are along the more kind of management, strategy, leadership type things." [interviewee 2]*

*"I'll get books related to library and information studies, you know, for projects I'm working on here or whatever and I tend to read them, you know, on the bus to work or at home at weekends, 'cause I just don't really find the time." [interviewee 2]*

**Table 3:** Outcome space for different methods of CPD

Con-ception	Foci of Variation			
	Content focus	Motiva-tion focus	Outcome focus	Forms of CPD focus
↓				
Subject-specific CPD	Content of CPD measure reflects the subject area of library or organisation	A problem has to be solved quickly (on a need-to-know basis)	‘quick fix’, rather than ‘academic’ hands-on, practical easy to implement highly practical has to be applicable to the workplace <i>strong outcome focus</i>	Formal: professional training courses  Non-formal: training supplied by suppliers/vendors  Informal: networking (contacting other librarians either by phone or email) and ‘private research’ (looking up information on the Internet), searching and reading journal articles and books for specific topics (targeted search)
LIS-specific CPD	Content of CPD is reflects LIS-specific issues	Wider interest in the profession Also to develop as a librarian  <i>strong motivational focus</i>	More academic and long-term  theoretical  more management skills	Formal: further studies (academic degree); courses to a lesser extent than above  Informal: networking (contacting other librarians either by phone or email), meetings, being involved in the association (at committee level), membership of the association, browsing and reading online sources for ‘keeping up-to-date’ with developments within the profession and for job offers

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

These findings are based on a very small sample and it remains to be seen if the main cohort validates, expands or rejects these results. Yet they already display some interesting results. Phenomenography was chosen as the research approach to examine librarians' conceptions of CPD. One librarian can have more than one conception in relation to the research questions. OPLs in this pilot study hold four different conceptions of what successful and effective CPD means to them. They also distinguished between subject-specific and LIS-specific CPD. The researcher tried to show the relationships within both sets of categories of description and established two outcome spaces.

While the emphasis of official CPD policies by both employers and library associations is often on formal CPD opportunities, such as conferences and courses, there might be a need to for creating more alternative, informal opportunities. The librarians in this study highlighted the value of having a network of LIS practitioners. Networking could occur in person or by electronic means (e.g. electronic lists, e-mails) and it is also the most important part of seminars, conferences, and courses:

*"It's important in the social networking aspect of things, just, even if you don't learn anything, you meet people and you sort of see other people than your own, you know, you sort of see a lot of other people, so it's extremely important in that sense."*  
(interviewee 3)

*"Because working in a one-person library, you lose out on the interaction with somebody else who's interested in the same area, so it's good to get out there and meet others. And even at CPD courses."* (interviewee 1)

*"... was very, very useful for me, the content of the conference itself, but the networking and the people I met, that was the best part of it."* (interviewee 2)

With regard to barriers, the pilot study found that these librarians had no lack of funding, but that there was a certain limit to how much they could spend on courses, particularly on those outside Ireland. The time aspect featured as well, not in terms of getting time off, but that the workload and work commitment didn't always allow them to leave the library. One librarian, employed in a private company, also reported a culture of indifference towards CPD at the workplace. All three emphasised being able to go to a course if "I could make a case for it". Interviewee 3 stressed the importance of proving the monetary value of the course to the company.

The economic situation of Ireland has changed dramatically since the pilot study was conducted with many librarians in danger of losing their jobs after a decade of a booming economy. There might be fewer formal CPD opportunities and the level of engagement in all forms of CPD might be even harder to sustain now. Yet never can CPD make a greater impact on individuals' lives, the service they provide and the profession as a whole. It is hoped that this study will contribute to research in the LIS field and to help inform CPD providers in Ireland and



beyond about what CPD means to people in the profession, especially to those practitioners who work on their own.

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## APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. As you know, the purpose of this research project is to understand one-person librarians’ (OPLs) perceptions of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and how they address their own CPD needs. It will last approximately 1 hour. Please remember that you may withdraw from this interview at any stage and that you are free to not answer any questions you feel are too sensitive. For data collection purposes, I would like to record this interview. If, at any stage, you feel uncomfortable with this, please let me know and I will stop the recording. I will also note some comments by hand. All information will be confidential and only be used in the context of this dissertation. Neither your name nor organisation will appear in the thesis or any publication deriving out of it nor will they be disclosed to a third party. I will send you a transcript of this interview if you are interested in it. You are welcome to comment

on any mistakes and/or omissions I made during the transcription process. If you don't have any questions, I'd like to start by asking you...

***Interview schedule:***

1. What is your understanding (perception) of the term “Continuing Professional Development or “CPD””? (Prompts: When you hear the term, what comes into your mind? How do you think your employer defines CPD? Your colleagues? Do you agree/disagree?)
2. Please describe a situation in which you felt a lack of knowledge (an information need) and of an example of CPD that helped you to address this perceived need. (To find out: What kind of CPD does the participant engage in? Ask for more examples) Prompts: What worked for you? What didn't? Which was the best? Which one the most useless? The most recent? Why do you think it was the best/worst experience? What was the critical thing? How do you judge whether CPD is “any good”?
3. Who in your opinion is responsible for CPD in a one-person library? Why? (To explore the role of professional associations, the library school, employers, own role) Prompt: Is there an official CPD policy for the library/organisation in place?
4. What barriers, if any, did you as an OPL experience with regards to CPD? Prompt: What are the problems? What incentives are offered by the employer?
5. Reflecting on your own experience, how important do you think CPD will be for your own future/for the future of the LIS profession? Prompt: What recommendations would you make?
6. Coming back to my first question: What is your understanding (perception) of the term? What does the term “CPD” mean in your view? Prompt: Is there anything you would like to add?
7. Is there anything else you think I should have asked you?

***Background questions:***

1. Background on LIS education/non-LIS qualifications
2. Membership of professional associations
3. How long LIS professional?
4. How long OPL?
5. First job as OPL/First job after initial LIS education? OPL by choice?
6. What kind of OPL? (Maybe get some background on organisation, work and employment conditions, library specifications/category of library, reporting to LIS professional?)

Are there any questions you would like to ask me? Thank you very much for this interview!

**APPENDIX II: CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS*****One-person librarians sought for research project***

Are you working as an OPL (One-Person Librarian)?

Are you the sole qualified information professional in your organisation, perhaps assisted by clerical or para-professional staff?

Are you in charge of a public, academic, school, special (either corporate or non-for-profit) library or information centre somewhere in Ireland?

Would you be able to grant a fellow OPL one hour of your valuable time for an interview?

I am interested in OPLs' views on and experiences of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Because of the reflective nature of this project, you might gain some personal and professional benefits. CPD has been increasingly on the agenda of LIS practitioners and thinking about one's practices might initiate new ways of pursuing CPD. You don't need to be a current member of any professional association.

All the information you give me will be kept strictly confidential and neither you nor your organisation will be identifiable. This study has been approved of by the ethics review committee of the Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield.

If you like to know more about this project or know of someone who might be interested, please contact me, Eva Hornung, by email at [e.hornung@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:e.hornung@sheffield.ac.uk) or by phone [...]. I am based in Dublin and can travel to any place in Ireland at a date that suits you. Thank you for taking the time to read this!

## A UNESCO AGENCY OFFERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS GEOGRAPHICAL AND GENERATIONAL BORDERS

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### ABSTRACT

*UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and its International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange programme are using training, networking, and online learning resources to develop skills and leadership among marine science information staff of varying ages and backgrounds internationally. The paper employs the framework of IFLA's Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section's guidelines, "Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Best Practices," to check the extent to which this UNESCO/IOC programme reflects the IFLA Section's quality continuing education guidelines. In addition, UNESCO/IOC's effort to foster professional development and retention of marine science information professionals working in decentralized and widely dispersed locations is considered in reference to the themes of the Section's 2009 satellite conference in Bologna.*

### INTRODUCTION

How can intergovernmental organizations contribute to the development of libraries and information centers and their personnel, even where there is no hierarchical relation between them and each participating national organization? This paper looks at the efforts made by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), specifically its International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) programme. The objective of the IODE programme is to stimulate the management and exchange of data and information on a regional and international scale in the subject domain of marine/ocean science and oceanography. As an important component in the programme, marine science information managers (librarians) are offered opportunities and products for continuing professional development. The information professionals involved can be quite young or very experienced. Their backgrounds can be study and/or experience in information management, in ICT applications, or in marine science. The combination in

one information manager of skills in all these domains is of course desirable but not realistic.

## BACKGROUND

The IOC's International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) was established in 1961 to enhance marine research by facilitating the exchange of oceanographic data and information between participating member states and by meeting the needs of users for data and information products. Whereas IODE focused initially only on oceanographic data, the IOC decided in 1987 to add marine information management to the terms of reference. During the past 49 years, IOC member states have established 80 oceanographic data centers. In addition, a network of national coordinators for marine information management has been created. Established in 2005, the IOC Project Office for IODE, based in Oostende, Belgium carries out activities in order to:

- develop, strengthen and maintain IOC/IODE ocean data and information management training programs and training tools;
- provide an environment ('think tank') where ocean data and information experts and students can work, meet and discuss;
- develop, host and maintain IOC/IODE's ocean information systems and related public awareness tools;
- promote collaboration between all expert levels active in ocean data and information management, including scientists, data managers, other IOC (and JCOMM or WMO) programs and projects and other users;
- provide a laboratory environment for the development and beta testing of ocean data and information management technology.

More information is available from <http://www.iode.org/>.

### *Information management in IOC/IODE*

Marine science libraries have an important role in promoting information about the marine environment: information provision to the policy makers – educating the next generation of environmental stewards; attracting a future environmentally concerned workforce and generating an ocean literate public that understands the value of the ocean and can make appropriate decisions to protect it. At the research level, the practice of publishing one's research progress in peer reviewed journals, thereby sharing the newly acquired expertise with others is and has been for centuries, the basis of scientific progress. Libraries have been the caretakers and managers of this printed knowledge. On an international scale, networks of libraries and information centers have provided access to ever wider collections of information including the so-called "grey" literature. Today's users of marine in-

formation include research scientists, policy makers, students at all levels, educators, industry and businesses. Marine information management centers interact with marine data managers to deliver information products, e.g. data that has been processed and interpreted.

***IODE capacity building: The Ocean Data and Information Networks strategy***

During the late 1990s IODE designed a new way to assist with the development of capacity. This new “strategy” is based upon these four elements:

1. providing equipment;
2. providing training;
3. providing seed funding for operational activities of newly created data centres and marine libraries; and
4. work in a regional context, addressing common (regional) as well as individual (national) goals.

This new strategy has been implemented as “Ocean Data and Information Networks” or ODINs. The first region where the new strategy was tested was Africa (see <http://www.odinafrica.org>). Later similar networks were created in the Caribbean/Latin America (<http://www.odincarsa.net>), European countries in economic transition (<http://www.iode.org/odinecet>), Indian Ocean region, Western Pacific region, Black Sea region, the Pacific Islands.

In terms of marine information management, the ODINs have focused on providing access to international research literature, creating the Open Science Directory, developing and sharing holdings databases of participating libraries, and sharing resources between participating libraries.

An important service of the ODIN projects has been the creation of human as well as institutional networks that make it possible to easily and informally share library resources, such as inter-library loan, sharing expertise by mailing lists, etc. ODINs have also sponsored membership in professional librarian organizations such as the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (<http://www.iamslc.org>).

An evolution related to resource sharing in recent years is the technology allowing the development of full-text repositories of scientific literature. IODE has thus embarked on the development of the OceanDocs project (<http://www.oceandocs.net>). The information managers and librarians of the participating institutes assist the researchers with the submission of their publications. They also participate in developing regional directories of marine professionals which are part of the Global Directory of Marine (and Freshwater) Professionals (<http://www.oceanexpert.net>).

## PROVIDING QUALITY CONTINUING EDUCATION

The ODIN projects are self-driven: the participating countries and experts determine the institutional, national and regional priorities through regular (mostly annual) assessment and planning workshops where successes and failures are reported, and where adjustments to the work plan are discussed and adopted. International experts play an advisory role and IOC/IODE facilitates.

The self-driven nature of the ODINs empowers the participating individual experts to determine the further development of their institutions as well as of their own careers. Most participants have become more vocal and have gained more confidence in their own capacity, leading to more active participation and increased visibility at the national and international level.

Whereas marine librarians in developing regions worked largely in isolation, the development of ODINs has led to the creation of social networks between the participating librarians. This has even led to the creation of additional networks at the national or regional level. The networks allow not only resource sharing but, more importantly, promote learning through the sharing of expertise and experience. In addition, ODINs have been instrumental in providing formal continuing education for information staff.

The following description of the ODINs' training programme is presented within the framework of "Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Best Practices,"<sup>1</sup> found on the IFLA website at <http://www.ifla.org/en/cpdwl>.

**Regular learning needs assessment.** Up to 2009, training courses have been organized with a regional focus (ie, separate courses for each ODIN). The contents of these courses were always decided in close cooperation with the target group and based upon their needs to effectively participate in the activities of the ODIN projects. Then experts were invited to contribute knowledge and teach. Thanks to support from the Government of Flanders (Belgium), since 2009 the IODE program is able to organize a wider range of training courses on a more regular basis and on a multi-regional scale. In order to assess training needs, to prioritize and to enable cost-effective planning of courses, the IODE Project Office has created two web-based surveys through which oceanographic data managers or marine information managers can identify their training needs. On the basis of the results of the surveys a course program is prepared and implemented. Participants may be sponsored (by IODE or others) or self-supported. The advantages of this new approach are several: (1) better response to changing training needs; (2) promotion of south-south and north-south cooperation.

**Broad range of learning opportunities, structured in modules to cover topics from introductory through advanced.** In accordance with this general principle and in order to achieve its objectives, IODE offers learning opportunities at the regional and international level. Especially since the mid-1990s, technological development, especially on the Internet, has been considerable, but most librarians in



developing countries have not been able to further develop their skills as needed. Accordingly a core component of the ODIN strategy is the upgrading of skills of participating librarians, especially in new applications of information and communication technology.

IODE offers learning opportunities mainly in two formats:

- Live training workshops
- Learning through the Internet, using materials collected in the system named OceanTeacher

These two formats function in synergy:

- Expert teachers (resource persons) can check in OceanTeacher before a training workshop if relevant training and study materials are already available that can be adapted and updated to serve in the coming training workshop;
- Participants (trainees) can use OceanTeacher to familiarize themselves with subjects that will be covered in the training event in which they will participate.

One of the major objectives of IODE is to assist member states to acquire the necessary capacity to manage marine data and information and become partners in the IODE network. It is only when IOC member states have acquired this expertise at the national level that they can become an active partner in IODE and thus share their data and information with the other members of the “IODE family.” The training does not only teach the principles of data and information, but also promotes the use of “standards” amongst all IODE centers and thus achieve interoperability between these centers.

Training activities are hosted by IOC member states or are organized at the IOC Project Office for IODE in Oostende (Belgium). Training workshops have generally been organized for groups with a particular level of expertise: starters or more advanced learners. However, this simple principle (best practice) is hindered in practice by the heterogeneity of participants that cannot be avoided when international networks are set up: participants can differ substantially in age, language, ambitions, background and expertise (natural scientists versus librarians, experience mainly with printed documents or with ICT, and so on).

The importance of training has led IODE to develop OceanTeacher, mentioned above. The objective of OceanTeacher is to provide training tools and study materials for oceanographic data and information management. These are used during IODE training courses but can also be used for self-training and continuous professional development. The OceanTeacher web site has two components:

1. The “OceanTeacher Digital Library” contains software, quality control and analysis strategies, training manuals, and relevant IOC documents. Content for the Digital Library is contributed by an increasing number of experts.

2. The “OceanTeacher Training Curriculum” is a collection of outlines, notes, examples, and other documents used in conjunction with the Digital Library to organise training programs.

Over the years this system has been running on various computer platforms, starting from CD-based over a traditional, classical, static html web site to an open access contents management software platform. The development of the part devoted to information management has been summarized elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> At the end of 2008 the contents have been transferred to a semantic media-wiki platform.<sup>3-5</sup> IODE chose the wiki-based technology framework as it is an increasingly popular technology used for group-based knowledge writing and sharing. However OceanTeacher has chosen to use a managed rather than fully open system. Only registered users can submit content. This submitted content is subsequently quality controlled by editors. Content providers and editors are experts recognized as such in the IODE community. OceanTeacher is mainly a digital library of materials. When new material is added, this is directly classified according to the subject. This structure assists users in browsing and selecting the contents.

According to best practices, learning opportunities should be offered in modules structured to cover topics from introductory through advanced. Thus also study materials should be offered in an additional structure for browsing, one based mainly on level from introductory through advanced. This would be difficult or impossible to realize with a collection of hard copy study materials. A digital system can be more flexible and powerful. A computer system based on a content management system allows the producers and editors to create more than one view on the contents. Therefore, this opens a road for future development.

Content for the Training Curricula is traditionally prepared by the lecturers participating in the training courses. IODE training courses are organized either at the IOC Project Office for IODE in Oostende, Belgium (<http://www.iode.org/ostend>) or hosted by member states. The technology framework for the OceanTeacher Training Curricula system is Moodle (see <http://moodle.org/>).

**Building expertise in continuous education.** Best practice in continuing education assigns program management responsibility to someone with expertise in education. In balance with the priorities of the IODE Program and the considerable investments in infrastructure and facilities (hardware as well as software) related to training, a staff member has been designated at the Project Office to manage activities related to training, including further creative development and implementation of tools such as content management system for study materials (OceanTeacher), digital video, and so on.

**Dissemination of information about continuing education.** Information about continuing education should be widely disseminated, according to the “Principles.” The IODE program has been applying several methods to communicate

with their target audience about activities and resources, including of course communication related to training opportunities and products:

- Newsletters are made available in electronic format. Examples are “Window” (for Africa) and “ODINCARSA Newsletter” (for Latin America).
- Several email lists.
- Several web sites. In addition to <http://www.iode.org>, ODINs have established their own web sites.

**Ensuring high quality continuing education activities.** Efforts are made to align the learning objectives and tools with identified needs. This is realized for instance through:

- assessment of needs through the Internet, involving potential trainees, managers of the regional IODE networks, experts, and so on, as mentioned above;
- advice provided by formal groups of experts, for instance the IODE Group of Experts on Marine Information Management (GE-MIM), in their yearly meetings;
- feedback from ODIN planning workshops.

Course instructors are experts in their subject domain, mainly practitioners in scientific information management. Best practice means that training activities should follow principles of instructional design and learning theory and course instructors should be experienced and able teachers. Here we face a problem, as not all invited instructors combine subject expertise with significant teaching expertise. Individual feedback from trainees is invited after every training course and the results are taken into account by the IODE management for future planning.

**Recognition of continuing learning.** Continuing learning activities should be documented in some consistent way and should be recognized in hiring or promotion decisions. This principle is not directly applicable in this case, as IOC/IODE has no hierarchical relation with the professionals participating in a training session. Nevertheless, in the spirit of this principle, members of an IODE network (one of the “ODINs”) who perform remarkably well in training events and in other international activities are selected and officially assigned as mentors or leaders of projects and follow-up activities. In addition, within the framework of the ODIN projects, persistent under-performers may be removed from the project by the partner institution management after consultation with the ODIN project management and IODE Secretariat.

**Budget allocation for staff development.** A reasonable part of the institutional budget should be earmarked for staff development. This principle is not simple to apply to IOC/IODE and the participating libraries and professionals. In other words, here we do not deal with the internal management of staff development within a particular institutional library. Nevertheless, by extension, we can state

here that a considerable part of the budget of IOC/IODE is earmarked for training activities. In addition, one of the objectives of the ODIN projects is to promote the role of data and information managers at the institutional level. If successful, this may then also lead to a more active staff development policy for data and information managers.

**Working hours provided for continuing learning.** Best practice requires that employers give staff paid time off – about 10% of work hours – to attend workshops, conferences relevant to their jobs, for in-service training, for other educational activities, and for informal learning projects. In the case of IOC/IODE the partner institutions send trainees to IODE training courses which take place during working hours.

**Evaluation of continuing education offerings.** Continuing education offerings for staff development should be evaluated. Immediately after each training session, each participant is invited to write a brief structured evaluation of the various courses and instructors. Furthermore, recurring contacts with the same trainees – in some cases over several years – allows a less formal exchange of ideas concerning training needs and their practical realization. Besides the trainees, also experts in the formal IODE Groups of Experts or in the Council evaluate regularly training offerings and concrete products like OceanTeacher. At least for the activities on information management, a bottleneck on the road to better quality is the budgetary limitation (time and funds).

**Examination of the efficacy and outcomes of continuing education offerings.** The efficacy and outcomes of staff development programs should be assessed regularly. As an extension of the evaluation of the continuing education offerings mentioned above, IOC/IODE continuously examines effectiveness and outcomes. This leads to improvements, to higher efficiency of the programs and products developed. Examples of how this effort has evolved are the following:

- from *ad hoc* somewhat improvised training workshops in various locations to more streamlined training in a well equipped and well maintained training center (the IOC Project Office for IODE in Oostende, Belgium);
- from no collection of training materials provided by external consultants, over collections of files on disk followed by a classical web site, to a digital library on the Internet, based on a state-of-the-art content management system.

## **HOW DOES UNESCO-IOC-IODE ADDRESS THE THEMES OF “STRATEGIES FOR REGENERATING THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSION?”**

**Challenging existing organizational structures.** One of the primary general aims of UNESCO is to stimulate co-operation on an international scale. Also IOC/IODE assists member states to establish or improve a functional national infrastructure with adequate staff when this is lacking or deserves improvement. One of the efforts is to upgrade and to empower the marine science libraries and information centers to become valuable partners in marine science centers, with more assertive roles and functions than only the collection of printed documents for the local scientists. In the course of recent years information management has climbed in status, coming closer to the respectful position that is occupied by numerical data management. This evolution is partially caused by the rapidly increasing importance of ICT in information management. Implementing the required facilities requires other skills and these are respected highly. On the other hand, the transition from traditional libraries to digital information centers is not a smooth one in many cases, due to conditions that are known quite well in the information world:

- Many information managers are still quite dependent on separate, more or less external computer/ ICT centers and experts.
- Some traditional librarians at the end of their career are not enthusiastic about or able to embrace new ICT.

**Developing retention strategies.** Retention of trained data and information managers in marine science centers is of course desirable. As in many similar contexts, this cannot be achieved easily. In most developing countries government salaries are low in comparison with those in the private sector. As a result staff trained by IOC/IODE is frequently “headhunted” by the private sector, by other organizations, or promoted out of the information specialty within their own institution to a more senior position.

**Developing leaders.** Training employees to be good leaders is desirable in many cases but not easy. Many even doubt that leadership can be learned. In the case of IOC/IODE, a few training sessions and more informal contacts cannot “upgrade” employees to become valuable managers / leaders. However several trainees have clearly emerged as natural leaders and have contributed substantially to the active development of their ODINs. In addition efforts are made in contacts with information managers to convince them of the following ideas related to management and leadership, in training courses with practical exercises and assignments:

- Taking over ICT from ICT experts partly into one’s own hands, in own management, offers advantages, certainly in the long run.

- The skills required to make clear and convincing presentations in a scientific environment, supported by computer and digital projector, are not only desirable for top management but also for information managers.
- Information managers who perform well are given a role as “leader” or at least as mentor and resource person in some concrete project that is going on in some regional network.

**Creating a positive work environment.** A positive work environment fosters productivity and is therefore desirable, for employee as well as employer. Also here IOC/IODE cannot directly intervene in the work environment of the employees in the marine science centers. Nevertheless efforts are made in the following ways:

- better computer facilities and access to Internet
- higher status of information management
- training courses and workshops as well as opportunities for continuous learning and functioning in a more international context.

**Teambuilding.** Feeling that one is a valuable member of a good team also fosters productivity. IOC/IODE considers training courses and workshops as teambuilding events. Furthermore, the “team” is enlarged from the local national center to a regional, international “team”.

**Mentoring and coaching.** IOC/IODE encourages the mentoring and coaching. Experts from marine science centers and from universities serve as mentors to guide information managers in the network. Gradually this role is taken over by leading information managers of the ODINs.

**Involving professionals in professional associations.** IOC/IODE recommends that information managers who participate in one of the networks join professional associations such as the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (<http://www.iamslc.org>). Within the framework of ODINs, membership in some cases is sponsored by the project.

**Re-skilling.** The evolution from traditional librarians working with printed materials to more contemporary and assertive information professionals working with ICT tools and methods is unavoidable. The efforts made by IOC/IODE in this context are described above. The hope is that the workshops and online training serve as vehicles for “re-skilling.”

## CONCLUSION

The programme for International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO stimulates the management and exchange of marine data and information on an international

scale. An important component in the programme is offering opportunities and products for continuing professional development to information managers in the subject domain of marine science. This training environment is exciting and challenging due to factors like

- the international scope and heterogeneity of the expert trainers as well as trainees and
- the application of information technology which is evolving quite fast.

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**WOMEN'S CAREER PROGRESSION  
IN U.K. ACADEMIC LIBRARIES –  
ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND MANAGEMENT CHANGE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates women's success in academic libraries, and identifies career paths and potential barriers to career progression. Influenced by a feminist perspective, twelve interviews were conducted with women holding senior management roles to gain personal accounts, experiences and observations. Qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews is supported by some descriptive quantitative statistics. Results show that good management appears unrelated to gender. A mix of skills is essential, people skills being most important. The glass ceiling should no longer exist. Formal succession planning practices are not evident; however, efforts are made to ensure women develop professionally. Mentors, role models and networking are important to increase confidence and encourage career progression. Women still lack confidence in their ability, and aspirations can be closely linked to family choices. Barriers still exist for women, including children, mobility, and a culture of long hours. Flexible working has increased but not at senior levels. A positive change has occurred in management styles and organisational structures. Women are gaining promotion, with significant numbers holding senior roles. Flexible work, training opportunities, mentoring and support have increased. Improvements are needed with childcare, flexible working at senior levels, confidence, and training opportunities.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The research idea originated from a group called *Women in Libraries (WiL)*. *WiL* was a feminist network that emerged in the United Kingdom (U.K.) in 1980, when few women were in senior roles libraries and development opportunities were limited. *WiL* aimed to act as a pressure group for women in the profession, to improve the position of women through career development and working conditions.<sup>1</sup> *WiL* ceased in 1990. Women in the U.K. library profession today appear successful, with many holding senior roles. This research investigates the extent of women's



success, their achievements and any persistent barriers. The study focused on women in academic libraries in the U.K. only, considering their career progression and the impact they have made on the profession in the U.K.

Key areas include:

1. Management traits – to discover if women incorporated masculine traits to gain success or had a different management style emerged;
2. The glass ceiling – has it been broken? If so, what had brought this about?
3. Mentors/role models – were they necessary to women's success;
4. Barriers – to identify any barriers and their affect on career progression;
5. Flexible working – to determine whether this was available.

Interviews were conducted with twelve women in senior management roles in academic libraries to provide a detailed outlook of the current landscape, identifying changes in management, career paths, and potential barriers. The decision to focus on one sector was a practical one due to time constraints.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Management traits*

Trait theories are discussed as a concept whereby there are specific masculine/feminine traits associated with management styles. Stereotypical masculine traits are identified as being decisive, assertive, driven, competitive, objective and logical, whilst feminine traits are supportive, sensitive, caring, cooperative, good communicator and flexible.<sup>2-6</sup> Writers consider how women adopt masculine traits to gain acceptance as a manager and thus exert a more powerful, successful image.<sup>7, 8, 3, 5</sup> Women have been advised to compromise their abilities, using male techniques.<sup>9</sup>

It is argued that women managers can change organisational cultures, increasing equality and gaining respect and admiration for their feminine traits as a more appropriate style of management.<sup>8, 4</sup> On the other hand, Moran<sup>10</sup> discusses the problems of linking new styles of leadership with being female, arguing that applying specific traits to one gender is ineffective. Harriman<sup>2</sup> asserts that "in reality there are few, if any, trait differences between women and men managers...labelling [some] traits as masculine may be a misnomer [as] they may simply be the traits of high-level managers". Tanton<sup>11</sup> emphasises the importance of removing gender stereotypes to ensure women's relationships at work are positive.

### *Mentoring/role models/networking*

Links have been made between mentoring and career progression.<sup>12-13</sup> Simon<sup>8</sup> found mentoring was beneficial for women. Previously mentors have mostly been men due to the lack of women in senior roles.<sup>2, 8</sup> The literature promotes the pres-

ence of women in senior roles in order to encourage women at lower levels and enhance opportunities.<sup>3 14</sup>

Networking is important in order to gain information, contacts, professional support, for career planning, and strategy making.<sup>3 14</sup> Limerick and O'Leary<sup>15</sup> stress the importance of networking over mentoring due to networking being more reciprocal and not based on hierarchical relationships.

#### ***Flexible working / barriers childcare/long hours/mobility)***

The literature discusses experiences of job sharing, highlighting flexibility, particularly for women with children, and argues that job sharing is possible at senior levels.<sup>16 17</sup> However, "Britain is dragging its feet in relation to the introduction of flexible working arrangements".<sup>18</sup>

Paull<sup>19</sup> highlights that "the prevalence of women in part-time work continues to be a distinguishing feature of female employment," and that the presence of children has a greater impact on women's hours than that of men's. However, the long hours culture creates the need for managers to spend considerable hours in the office.<sup>5 20</sup> The Fawcett Society, the U.K.'s leading campaign for equality, asserts that the U.K. has a culture where the hours you put in prove "your commitment to the job".<sup>21</sup>

Childcare responsibilities still largely rest on women.<sup>2 20</sup> Jones and Oppenheim assert that "only when men take on sharing the task of bringing up children will women be able to shatter the glass ceiling in U.K. libraries."<sup>22</sup> Simon<sup>8</sup> argues that having children has a detrimental affect on women's careers. It is estimated that "45% of women face some kind of workplace discrimination or unfavourable treatment due to pregnancy."<sup>23</sup>

A further barrier is mobility. Jones and Oppenheim<sup>22</sup> assert that "moving to a new location was sometimes more significant to women's careers than taking a career break."

#### ***Career development***

White et al.<sup>24</sup> provide a model of stages in women's careers involving ambitions, success, decisions about motherhood and the family/career conflict. Tharenou<sup>25</sup> found that family structures were linked to career advancement of managers. Training is important in helping women advance careers, particularly for women returning to work after a break.<sup>22</sup>

Powell and Butterfield<sup>26</sup> discuss men's aspirations at work, including salary and career progression, whereas women's include personal satisfaction and work-life balance.

Women have underrated their abilities and have been unwilling to apply for promotion; today, however, women are gaining confidence.<sup>7</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The research is influenced by a feminist perspective, and applies methods that take women's experiences into account and places women's reality at the centre of the study.<sup>9</sup> Feminist methodology is an interactive process, without the artificial object/subject split between researcher and researched, and includes more personal involvement.<sup>2,7</sup>

Interview questions were e-mailed to participants prior to interviews, giving time for reflection, and aiding recollections of past experiences, a method used successfully in previous studies.<sup>9,28</sup> Participants were sent copies of transcripts for verification of content, increasing validity.

Limerick and O'Leary<sup>15</sup> stress the importance of feminist management research, as it goes "beyond masculine models". This study supports this philosophy and the use of feminist methodology in "raising the profile of women's views, achievements and management practices."<sup>15</sup>

### *Interviews*

Participants recruited held senior roles in U.K. academic libraries as this sector had seen noticeable career progression amongst the female workforce.

The sample was purposive. Adler et al.<sup>9</sup> validate this, also resisting a representative sample that generalises women's experiences, thus ensuring their research reflects a subjective approach. Interview contacts were gained through a mailing list posting, internet and literature searches and recommendations.

A thematic analysis of the literature provided recurrent themes that both aided in the formation of interview questions and later data analysis. Questions were mainly open ended to encourage depth. Additional questions were added if further concepts arose. The majority of interviews were conducted in person as the "overwhelming strength of the face-to-face interview is the 'richness' of the communication that is possible."<sup>29</sup>

The research complied with the University of Sheffield ethics procedures and permission was sought from participants to record interviews.

A thematic analysis of the interview data was conducted. The literature review was used to establish themes to aid the coding of the data. Transcripts were coded by drawing out quotes and grouping them together, as relevant to each theme. A spreadsheet was used to organise the data. Breaking the transcripts into "readily analyzable units"<sup>30</sup> ensured data was accessible and could be communicated effectively, aiding data management.

The analysis was an iterative process. Themes were compared and contrasted to those found in the literature and previous interviews. Reviewing the data alongside the literature added further validity.

***Statistical evidence***

Statistics of women in senior management roles within U.K. academic libraries over the past 30+ years were consulted. Due to the lack of statistics highlighting the gender split in senior management roles, the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) membership institution and delegate lists were used.<sup>31</sup> These documents provided a break down of the number of women managers at each point in history in academic libraries.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION*****Statistical Evidence***

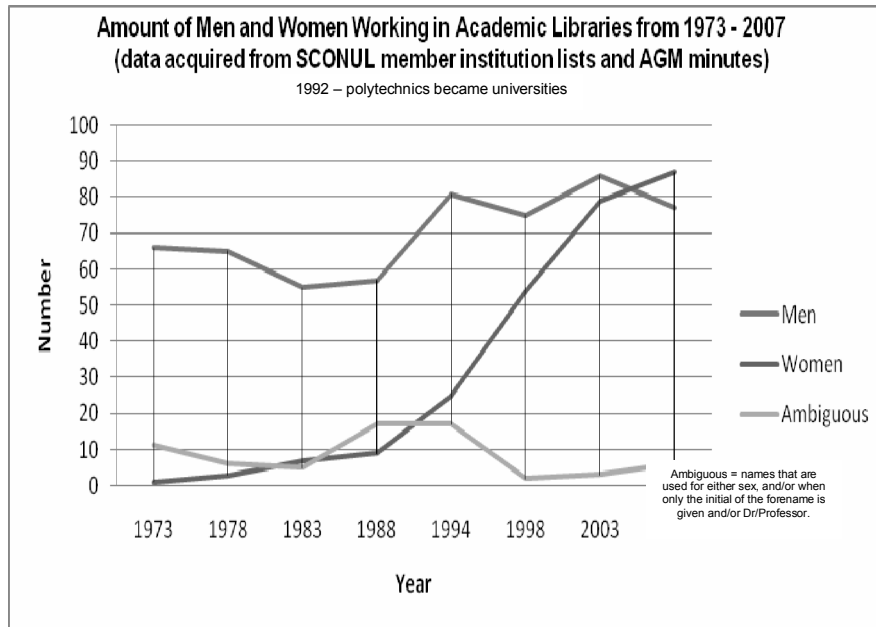
It was important to identify historical changes in the number of women working in senior management roles within academic libraries. SCONUL membership institution and delegate lists<sup>31</sup> were available for the years 1994, 1998, 2003 and 2007. Prior to these dates, annual general meeting minutes that listed member institutions and delegates for the years 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1988, were used. The delegates named on these documents held senior roles.

Determining the sex of some delegates was problematic as names could be held by either sex, or only the delegate's initial was given, or Doctor (Dr) / Professor (Prof) was provided without a forename. This was reduced through internet searches, leaving only a minority ambiguous. The ambiguous names were recorded to ensure awareness of their presence.

A significant change was found over the years in the amount of women holding senior positions in U.K. academic libraries as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

**Table 1:** SCONUL membership 1973-2007

<b>Year</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Ambiguous</b>
1973	66	1	11
1978	65	3	6
1983	55	7	5
1988	57	9	17
1994	81	25	17
1998	75	54	2
2003	86	79	3
2007	77	87	6



**Figure 1:** SCONUL membership 1973-2007

## DISCUSSION OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS

### *Management traits/organisational structures*

Skills associated with a good manager were wide ranging, for example, communication; strategic, organisational and common sense. The majority of participants insisted these skills were not gendered. This concurs with the literature, “women no longer gender-type the role of manager” and that “women generally have a more androgynous view of managers.”<sup>6</sup> The most important skill identified was people skills (75% / 9 responses). In the past people skills, such as communication and listening, have been stereotypically feminine. This highlights a change in the way stereotypically feminine skills were perceived in the past: as opposed to traits being seen as passive, they were seen as strong leadership skills.

Another skill discussed was a willingness to develop people (25% / 3 responses). This topic re-occurred throughout the interviews, with participants asserting the importance of developing staff. *WiL* highlighted this area as lacking in the past and the increased amount of women in senior roles may have contributed to the extent of staff development available today.

In terms of a good manager, all participants placed emphasis on the individual bringing their strengths to a position, regardless of gender. All interviewees

stressed good managers “transcend gender” (Interview 11) and the relevant and appropriate skills associated with management could be found in both men and women.

Participants stressed observations as an important means of acquiring management skills. Seventy-five % (9 responses) of participants’ past mentors/role models were male. This concurs with the idea of a “management prototype,” whereby managers have similar traits, regardless of gender, as suggested in the literature.<sup>2,14</sup> Most interviewees had observed male managers, yet still incorporated stereotypically feminine traits into their management style, showing that a blend of skills is most effective.

Regarding organisational structures, although hierarchies were still in place, many of the participants had found ways of working with the structure and encouraging team work and participation. There was a general consensus that hierarchies were needed as “ultimately you have to have people making decisions, but you can still be very consultative and encourage participation” (Interview 2). A new style has appeared which includes a mixture of hierarchical and flattened team working structures. This removes the concept of structures being gendered as it incorporates a mix of what is deemed both masculine and feminine, possibly due to more women holding senior positions.

When participants were asked “as a woman, what positive changes have you made to management/organisational structures?” the majority of interviewees insisted changes made were as individuals, not as women. There was a strong emphasis throughout interviews of matters being unrelated to gender, therefore refuting stereotypes and gender differences. However, changes identified by interviewees included flexible working, positive role models, and encouraging participation (less hierarchy), all of which could be deemed female orientated. Many of the original aims of *WiL*, including provision of positive role models, job sharing, staff development, changing attitudes, closely mirror the changes women in senior positions today have implemented/achieved. Although *WiL* no longer existed after 1990, those aims still remained in the profession with women still striving to achieve them and many successfully doing so.

*“have deliberately experimented with less hierarchical groups...I think my main thrust has always been trying to get the engagement from all levels of staff “.* (Interview 2)

*“I think as a woman and as a mother as well, particularly to show that you can get there by hard work and determination if you want to...I think it shows that it is possible to juggle home and work life and still be successful”.* (Interview 3)

*“I have thought about issues such as providing structure and opportunities for people in all areas of the organisation...to provide some career progression...because I think that is something in the past that has been lacking”.* (Interview 1)

### **Promotion**

Most interviewees felt the glass ceiling was not an issue. This is reinforced by statistics (Table 1; Figure 1) which highlight more women in senior positions than men today (2007 statistics – 87 women / 77 men). This contrasts starkly to 30 years ago when women in senior roles were in the minority (1978 statistics – 3 women / 65 men). A small number of participants suggested that any glass ceiling was created by women themselves, through family commitments or confidence. However, seven of the twelve participants (58%) had family commitments and still achieved a senior role. It should not be assumed that all women have similar aspirations and those with family commitments who are not managers, may have willingly made that choice.

Interviewees were asked what contributed to this increase. Many suggested the change happened when polytechnics became universities in 1992. Statistics reinforce this, in 1988, 9 women held senior roles, in contrast to 25 women in 1994 (Table 1; Figure 1). The number of women then dramatically rose thereafter. Further suggestions were culture changes, legislation, and the fact that libraries are female dominated. That women were rising in a profession where their numbers were already dominant seemed natural.

*“The fact is that it has always been a female dominated profession [and] if other obstacles were relaxing, which I think they were in the 90s, there was a whole raft of women ready and able to rise”. (Interview 5)*

### **Succession planning**

Succession planning was discussed to discover what plans were in place to ensure the positive changes that have been implemented were maintained and the continuing success of women, particularly at a time when “the age profile of...staff is such that a number of key senior post holders are coming up to retirement age” (Interview 2). No formal procedures were in place, despite some participants stressing they had requested it (Interview 9). Three participants asserted that succession planning was something they were “actively trying to manage” (Interview 12). All participants stressed an integral part of their role was to develop staff and “encourage them to progress” (Interview 11) and there was emphasis placed on future managers needing to see the bigger picture (Interview 9, 10, 11).

Participants discussed the need for management training and highlighted how they “use opportunities when they arise or create opportunities for...women to gain management experience in some way where interest and/or potential is shown” (Interview 10). This area is particularly important as one participant stressed there “seems to be a dichotomy between good librarian skills and good managerial skills...and many librarian jobs don't provide the necessary opportunities for learning management” (Interview 11). Although all participants were keen to encourage staff to develop, not all placed emphasis on developing staff to suc-

ceed within that particular institution, with one participant stating “we need to ensure that there are enough good ambitious people in the sector to do the senior jobs in the future, but there should be movement between institutions” (Interview 4). Overall, there was a general consensus that many young women in the profession had potential and were ambitious and managers were providing necessary support and encouragement to ensure they gain future senior roles.

#### ***Mentors/role models/networking***

Mentors and role models were discussed as important, with the majority of participants having had mentors or role models. Responses to the gender of the mentor/role model were mixed. Drawing on their own experiences, the majority of mentors/role models had been male (75% / 9 responses). Some of the interviewees (41% / 9 responses) did feel that women identify more with women and therefore female mentors/role models were important. Wilson<sup>12</sup> agrees, asserting that “a female mentor can...give a positive incentive through illustrative success.” Interviewees asserted mentoring benefited women by increasing confidence, offering encouragement, and helping careers to progress, with one participant stating “I think I would probably always go out of my way for people trying to make it and I probably do that more for women because I think they sometimes need that boost more” (Interview 9).

Networking was stressed as important, for friendship, support and sharing good practice. This is supported in the literature with Davidson and Burke<sup>14</sup> highlighting information exchange, collaboration, professional support and encouragement as distinct advantages of networking. Some interviewees (3 / 25%) drew attention to the strong network within libraries, asserting “in terms of libraries...there is a very good sort of camaraderie and collegiate feel” (Interview 12).

#### ***Aspirations/confidence***

Participants felt there was little difference between men and women’s aspirations, however family commitments were identified as having an affect on women’s aspirations. It was suggested that women’s “primary identity [is] with their family” (Interview 10) and women tend to “put their families first” (Interview 3). This would affect aspirations as women may concentrate on ways of combining work and family life which may not include focussing on promotion, in comparison to men who often don’t have the burden of childcare.

All participants stressed they had progressed in their careers by grasping opportunities and taking on challenging and interesting roles. Career plans were seen as a “boy’s game” (Interview 9). It is possible therefore to aspire to management whilst remaining adaptable, flexible and taking on new challenges.

Participants emphasised women’s low confidence, and how they often “need encouragement to develop and progress their careers” (Interview 1). It was suggested that “women tend to be more reluctant to apply for something unless they



are confident they can do it" (Interview 1) and that "women are less pushy and less able to push themselves forward" (Interview 6). Although there are more women at the top, more networking, mentoring and development opportunities, participants observed many women still lack confidence.

### **Barriers**

Participants highlighted potential barriers for women, such as long working hours and caring responsibilities. Participants emphasised the "burden of the childcare rests with the mother" (Interview 9) and "taking a career break is the biggest barrier" (Interview 3). A number of participants felt they would not have reached senior level had they taken significant breaks, with those that had children only taking a small amount of maternity leave before returning to work.

The benefits of flexible working to parents are evident. Some interviewees (41% / 5 responses) stressed that flexible working was useful for both women and men and felt that "if you give people the flexibility...then they are far more likely to put the effort in" (Interview 2). The Fawcett Society<sup>21</sup> reiterate, stating, "where employers offer flexibility around hours, everyone benefits – female and male employees". Some participants (33% / 4) highlighted that flexible working was not prevalent within senior roles and there was a "prejudice against flexible working in a management position" (Interview 11). This ensures fewer female role models working flexibly in management. "The path to more acceptance of flexible work could...be achieved more seamlessly if there were more managers as role models"<sup>20</sup>

Mobility was highlighted as a barrier (50% / 6 responses). The ability to move increases job prospects. Today both women and men have careers which can result in "families...being torn apart by the fact that they are having to live apart in order to progress their careers" (Interview 3).

### **Future**

A third of participants (33% / 4 responses) felt no further improvements were needed, as women had opportunities and were achieving goals. The remaining participants, however, commented on childcare, flexible working, confidence and training. They stressed that many issues also applied to men. When comparing these future targets with the original aims of *WiL*, there are similarities. Although the achievements of women in the library profession are both noticeable and impressive, some issues remain.

## **CONCLUSION**

Investigating U.K. academic libraries today, we see that opportunities are afforded to women. The glass ceiling, in effect, has been shattered, with approximately 87

women (out of 170) holding senior positions, in contrast to 3 women (out of 74) 30 years ago. It is difficult to identify whether this change was a natural progression or a direct result of women in the profession. In any case, the success of women in U.K. academic libraries constitutes a revolution.

Significant changes have occurred in management and organisational structures. There has been a move away from the stereotypical competitive, aggressive male management style to a blend of skills, with a strong emphasis on the stereotypical female people skills. Good management is not attributed to gender and both male and female managers are ensuring they listen to staff and communicate effectively – the gendering of skills is unnecessary.

Effort is made to develop staff, through mentoring and training opportunities. This is shown through the informal practices in place for succession planning. Women managers ensure staff are provided with encouragement, support, and training to enable them to develop and progress into future senior roles. They see many young female librarians showing potential.

Organisational structures have evolved. Hierarchies still exist, but are more flexible, incorporating team work and collaboration. The changes identified suggest women have made an impact, through introducing development opportunities and a more blended, flexible, collaborative style of working.

Mentoring is recognised as beneficial to all. Increased networking is also apparent, providing opportunities to share good practice and increase knowledge. Aspirations of women and men are not dissimilar, but it is important to recognise that not everyone's goals are the same. Although some women's aspirations are affected by family commitments this is not necessarily a barrier. Participants in this study show that having a family and reaching senior management is possible, but the importance is placed on individual choice.

Despite the opportunities afforded to women in the profession, the issue of confidence is still apparent, with some women doubting their abilities. Wider ingrained social values may need considering. Although many women today are confident, it is difficult for years of societal values to disappear, which may influence confidence.

Although interviewees did not dwell on encountering obstacles, there is evidence that barriers prevail. Many also apply to men. Mobility is an issue. As professional jobs become limited, the ability to move becomes vital. Childcare still poses the greatest issue affecting women's career progression. The women in this study with children show it is possible to successfully combine work and family life. This is, however, dependent on support available, individual drive and determination.

Flexible working has become an established practice and has provided opportunities for women to combine work and family life. This is not prominent within senior management, but a significant change in working patterns is noticeable overall with a reduction of the strict 9-5 regime.

U.K. academic libraries have undergone changes in management and organisational structures, with increased promotions, flexible working and development and mentoring opportunities. Although the successes are apparent, work is still required with respect to women's place in society and the burden of childcare responsibilities, more flexible working at senior levels, women's confidence and opportunities for further training. The intensity and scale of these issues may differ from that in the 1980s, but nonetheless they still prevail.

#### ***Recommendations for change***

- The burden of childcare on women would reduce if it were easier and more acceptable for men to take on this responsibility. Different professional bodies need to work together and lobby U.K. government to implement changes.
- Senior managers need to think positively about flexible working by having the imagination, creativity and exercising good practice.
- Increased availability of leadership training that places emphasis on building confidence.

#### **Recommendations for further research**

- Research into succession planning, identifying practices in place and their effectiveness.
- Similar research drawing comparisons to men's career progressions along with comparisons with different library sectors.

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**CAREER, SKILLS, AND PROFESSIONAL DILEMMAS –  
A FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMATION-DOCUMENTATION  
TRANSFORMATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Findings from a study of Portuguese information-documentation professionals point to a major concern: career management in an age of uncertainty and its impact on professionals' dilemmas, for both new and old generations. With the intent of learning more about this profession in different generations, the following research question guided this study: what conflicts and dilemmas exist between the new information society skills and the demands of constructing a life-long career? To address this question, the study relied on interviews with librarians who have been working since 1973. The respondents came from research libraries and public libraries. The findings from this study highlight the experiences and expectations of professionals of maintaining professional success, and show how they have faced their difficult decisions as they planned their careers. These decisions concern how to deal with career choices and to manage professional training and skills development. This analysis may contribute to understanding inter-generational discourse relating professional and personal concerns.*

**INFORMATION-DOCUMENTATION CAREERS IN AN AGE OF  
UNCERTAINTY**

The information-documentation profession (synonymous with the library/information science profession<sup>1</sup>) faces aspects of career management, skills development, and professional transformation, which result in a great number of occupational changes, skill transitions, and dilemmas in an adult life-cycle. One of the main change issues discussed within the professional community is a new agenda for professional strategic positions.<sup>2</sup> There is a need for a broader discussion about levels of competencies and concrete outcomes, strategies of professionalization across realities that emerge from labour market, academic research, and organizations' needs, recognising what unites the I-D sector as a whole. As Margaret Procter says, "the need for a common sense interpretation is vital because of the nature

of public policy *per se*, and so it seems appropriate to consider public policy more generally...Consequently, ‘opportunities for agenda-setting come and go,’ windows of opportunity open briefly and then close again.”<sup>3</sup> (p24)

The trends identified by a national study of I-D competencies in Portugal<sup>4</sup> are related to the themes of prioritization of practice and skills in work place conditions, learning conditions, professional development, and European I-D certification practices.

Two implications of these findings should be underscored:

- a) In the “Knowledge Economy”, the importance of the nature of skills underlying innovation processes, stages and contexts is highlighted with strong consequences in employment levels and demands in the labour market. Tether, Mina, Consoli, and Gagliardi<sup>5</sup> suggest different investigations which can be also applied to the I-D sector: skill compositions and innovation performance; how librarians learn to manage innovation; and job polarisation, exploring cross-sectional categories of workers over time, rather than following the careers of individual workers (an exploration of longitudinal work-history).

This was the first motivation to carry out a national study of old and new generations of I-D professionals’ transitions, giving voice to lessons on career adaptability<sup>6</sup> and I-D forms of *protean and boundaryless careers*<sup>7</sup> in Portugal

The *protean career* focuses on achieving subjective career success through self-directed vocational behaviour<sup>8</sup>. Individuals who hold protean career attitudes are intent upon using their own values to guide their career. The *boundaryless career*<sup>9</sup> focuses on crossing both objective and subjective dimensions of career at multiple levels of analysis, including organizational position, mobility, flexibility, and work environment.

- b) The analysis of professional discourse, especially in the process of constructing their professional identity through language practice, living in the tension of reconstructing professional identity under changing core skills conditions.<sup>10</sup> These discourses may express emotions and identity struggles in a context of rapid changes. We note that many adults make career choices in the midst of life and work transitions. Identities are constructed within, not outside discourse and it is necessary to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites with specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies<sup>11</sup>. In fact, the meanings of career and career development must be understood through the historical and cultural location of these constructions and across relationship contexts. As Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton suggest, “it is because identity is problematic – and yet so crucial to how and what one values, thinks, feels and does in all social domains, including organizations – that the dynamics of identity need to be better understood.”<sup>12</sup>(p.14). Following Giddens,<sup>13</sup> self-identity is concep-

tualised as a reflexively organized narrative that forms a complex mixture of conscious and unconscious processes of identity regulation and identity work. Of critical importance is the linking of discourse to processes of self-identity formation and reproduction within a generation. Additionally, it is recognized that groups develop a professional culture<sup>14 15</sup> that also needs to be studied together with career development.

It is clear in the literature<sup>16-18</sup> that career development can be understood as an enumeration of consecutive jobs and training, reflecting personal initiative and ways to guarantee employability though life. The concept of *employability* is used in the sense of sustainable employability: not only be able to secure a job but also to manage one's career so as to remain employable throughout life. People need to be more reliant on their own career self-management and be prepared to expect other forms of career paths, incorporating a wide range of strategies to achieve four goals<sup>19</sup>:

1. *charting the institutional landscape* – a process of intelligence-gathering whereby people acquire understanding of two aspects: opportunities in the world of work (especially concerning attributes, credentials, skills and aspects of performance) and decision makers profiles which affect careers;
2. *identifying gatekeepers* – institutional decision-makers that can affect career outcomes by their influence on current and future career steps;
3. *implementing career strategies into broad types* – influence (concerned with optimising contacts, skills and experiences) and positioning strategies (active network development to benefits of social support; choice of job move; investment in training and educational qualifications valued in labour market and finally, job content innovation linked to the enlargement of task environment)
4. *Evaluating the effectiveness of those strategies in a recursive and dynamic process*, reflecting on past experience in order to select strategies for the future. This evaluation implies a self evaluation about success and desired outcomes.

The career success theme has been studied since 1909<sup>20</sup> in a multitude of views<sup>21</sup>. In this study, we consider it as an outcome of a person's career experience

Competencies management assumes a crucial role in career success<sup>22</sup> based on six career competencies: *career-actualization-ability*, the degree to which employees are capable of realizing personal goals and values in their working career; *career reflection*, reviewing one's own desires and values; *work exploration*, orientation toward matching one's own identity and competencies to the required values in a specific work situation; *career control*, career-related planning and influencing of learning and work processes; and *networking*, setting up relevant contacts. In a *boundaryless career*, the emphasis is on inter-organizational mobility and unpredictability and also on individual (internal and external) marketability (beliefs



in one's value to his/her current employer and to other employers) and proactive personality<sup>9</sup>:

- *Knowing why*, relating to career motivation, personal meaning and identification, career expectations, and career strengths and weaknesses, allows individuals to decouple their identity with their employer and remain open to new possibilities and career experiences.
- *Knowing whom* is also important because it refers to career related-networks and contacts, including relationships with others on behalf of the organization. The result is the development of career communities with benefits for career support and personal development. Mentoring experiences<sup>23</sup> between librarians can provide access and visibility to novice members of the profession. At *Lisbon Conference on the future of learning (2008, December)*, the role of networking and learning communities in organizational contexts, including I-D, was discussed, also mentoring as a part of the development of individual skills.
- *Knowing how* is related to career relevant skills and knowledge which are accumulated over time and contribute to both the organization and the individual knowledge base. This skill is transportable across organizational boundaries and it is oriented towards continuous learning.

One framework frequently used to categorize career success is a theoretical distinction between the *objective* and *subjective career*<sup>24</sup>. Objective career is directly observable, measurable and verifiable by an impartial third party (pay, promotions and occupational status), while the subjective career is only experienced directly by the person engaged in the career and includes reactions to actual and anticipated career across a broader time frame than one's immediate job satisfaction and a wider range of outcomes (sense of identity, purpose and work-life balance).

Heslin<sup>21</sup> identified four prevalent ideas about career success:

1. Objective outcomes are adequate proxies for success; presumably even beyond the managerial and professional contexts in which most career success research has been conducted.
2. Job and career satisfaction adequately capture the breadth of dimensions upon which people react to their careers.
3. People are similar in their concern about the success they attain in the objective, compared to subjective domain.
4. People conceptualize and evaluate their career success only relating to self-referent criteria, such as their career aspirations.

This author suggests three areas for improving career success measurement: research into what employees want; research about how people in different career contexts conceptualise their career success; and the adoption of more qualitative methods.

In I-D literature, it is important to mention the work of Catherine Mathews<sup>25</sup> about becoming a chief librarian through the analysis of transition stages in an academic library leadership. This study used the model transition cycles to analyse job transition. It considered the stages of transition associated with psychological and social impacts upon the individual making the change and the organizational impacts at the micro, mezzo and macro levels within the organization: preparation stage; encounter stage; adjustment stage and stabilization stage. However, as Franklin<sup>26</sup> pointed out, in the field of career development, we have various explanatory models of adult decision-making and transitions, but none details the intra-personal mechanisms of change or offers detailed techniques to get a person into the critical action stage.

Another topic to be mentioned is the crisis in human resources in libraries (shortage of librarians, aging workforce, loss of professionals and crisis in library and information science education). One important reference in research in the I-D area is the work of Barbara Burd,<sup>27</sup> who studied work values of academic librarians and the relationships between values, job satisfaction, commitment, and intent to leave. Also, the work of Dole and Hurych<sup>28</sup> provide useful reflection about the effects of the Information Age in librarians' values, forcing professionals to re-think ethical performance.

Certainly, these topics represent useful and necessary variables to be explored in the I-D career, especially in analysing its conflicts and dilemmas.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The *Portuguese Observatory of I-D Profession* (2006- ) was a project to study I-D professionals' image and implications for the profession, following the trend expressed by Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson.<sup>29</sup> Image norms may influence career choices in every stage of an individual's career. As these authors explain, the role of image has received limited attention from academics and it is a theme to explore because "individuals develop three separate...sets of image perceptions, each of which may shape image norms and influence career decisions ... occupational stereotypes...self-image...relationship between their own image and an organization's image."<sup>29(p319)</sup>

Our project used quantitative and qualitative data to study I-D professionals' self-image, but also users' perceptions. Variables like attitudes towards work, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment were studied. The first data was collected in 2005/2006<sup>4</sup> and the intention was to create a micro-laboratory of ideas to innovate strategically through national professional associations, helping novice and expert professionals to deal with strategies of readiness for change.

A follow-up study was conducted in 2007 and the results will be reported in June 2009 at the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares (Spain). With the intent of

learning more about I-D careers in different contexts from the perspective of old and new generations of professionals emphasizing the I-D skills life-cycle as an important variable to career transitions, we formulated the following research question: “*What conflicts and dilemmas exist between the new Information Society skills and the demands of constructing a life-long career?*”

Professional dilemmas are understood to be the point in one’s career at which it is necessary to make difficult choices, sometimes against existing beliefs and traditions within professional practices. The answer to dilemmas may be creative and even when people think they are merely continuing a settled tradition or practice, they could be developing, adjusting and changing it. When a professional develops new skills it is necessary to adjust beliefs and practices and sometimes this change is simultaneously an internal conflict in terms of traditional career decisions. Combining these two dimensions of research provides a new context for study of I-D career patterns.

To address this question, the study relies on interviews questioning self-directed career management forms and boundaryless forms of librarians of Portuguese public and research libraries in order to investigate career success outcomes since 1973. We interviewed ten professionals of both types of institutions, representing professionals who have generated relevant outcomes to the profession in Portugal. Four of them are chief librarians; two are now retired but still maintain links to professional arenas; four are junior librarians. The interviews lasted one hour and were guided by a semi-structured schedule; participation in the research was voluntary. Research participants ranged in age from 30 to 73 years. The chosen institutions also represent cases of institutional prestige and other cases of less importance in the sector. The framework that was used in the study is illustrated schematically in Figure 1.

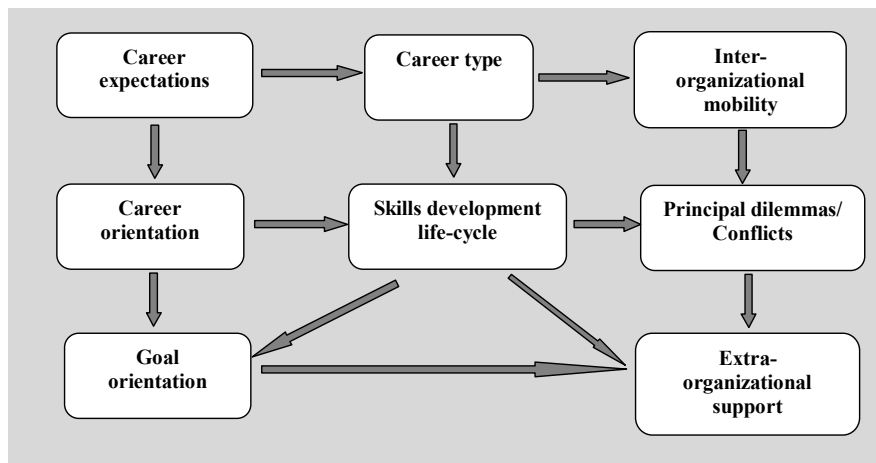


Figure 1: Research framework

Questions focused mainly on six career areas: career expectations; career orientation; goal orientation; career type; inter-organizational mobility; extra-organizational support; and the relationship between these themes and strategies for maintaining balance between old and new skills in a life-cycle approach (Table 1). The transcribed interviews were analyzed using the comparative approach.<sup>30</sup>

This study followed a narrative-based approach combined with aspects of interpretative biography.<sup>31</sup> It was our intention to obtain narratives about professionals' trajectories creating four typologies by different generations (age cohorts): *professionals since 1970*; *professionals since 1980*; *professionals since 1990*; and *professionals since 2000*, using self-organizing maps<sup>32</sup> for establishing transitions moments with their particular conflicts and dilemmas. These four transition dates – 1970, 1980; 1990 and 2000 – allowed a more direct assessment of career pathways linked to marks of Information Society in Portugal, namely in Portuguese libraries. In assessing professional trajectories, we focus on Denzin,<sup>31</sup> who believes that personal stories are constructions which do not necessarily correspond to factual truth and that it is only when life transitions are retrospectively told in stories and given meaning that they really happen and transform the self.

According to Cowan,<sup>33</sup> any transition is a long term process that includes a change identified by two points of view: the actor (their human capital, their experiences) and the system. To reconstruct this process, it is necessary to have a *crossroads narrative, representing an intra-temporality – the narrative of a lived moment*<sup>34</sup> comprising what Kegan<sup>35</sup> calls the “*hidden curriculum of hidden life*,” determined by transitions due to a continual need to belong, control, master, renew, and take stock.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 1:** Interview schedule

Topics/dimensions	Questions
<b>Biographical notes</b>	Date and birth local
<b>Biographical story</b>	Family context School, training and professional trajectories
<b>Career expectations</b>	Forms of career success expected at beginning, middle and end of career
<b>Career orientation</b>	Professional anecdotal incidents, conflicts, beliefs, traditions and dilemmas Choice within profession Professional satisfaction/ dissatisfaction

Topics/dimensions	Questions
<b>Extra-organizational support</b>	Important persons/organizations and contacts
<b>Career type</b>	Protean/boundaryless forms
<b>Main professional transitions in Information Society ; inter-organizational mobility</b>	Reasons for transition; Strategies for career management Success and failures Change management
<b>Skills Cycles</b>	Main Skills (definition and time duration) Skill self-image Facilitators and barriers constraints Personal and professional impacts
<b>Life-course and the meaning of I-D profession</b>	Visions of profession and career fields

While the focus in this paper is predominantly on I-D career transitions, the on-going research reports various results that are briefly mentioned in the study findings.

**FINDINGS**

This paper reports a selection of findings from the on-going research. Table 2 synthesises these results showing its main features.

**Table 2:** Synthesis of main findings of the research

I-D Professionals generations	Transition Patterns	Professional dis-course about career dilemmas	Career orientation and Outcomes	Skills life-cycle
Professionals entering the ID profession in the 70s	Transition motivated by tasks and work conditions and career stages adjustments. Transition frequently hap-	Career planning with a strong feeling about the impact of unanticipated consequences. Success associated	Protean career Engagement in professionals issues (associations). Strong professional identity.	Traditional skills and abilities Skills confidence. Long learning cycles.

I-D Professionals generations	Transition Patterns	Professional discourse about career dilemmas	Career orientation and Outcomes	Skills life-cycle
	pened in a predictable order. Transition periods last about three years. Majority intend to have a later life engagement with work in libraries.	to congruence between organizational results and individual results. The role of leadership in career development is highlighted.	A mixture of great and low expectations at career beginning.	
Professionals entering the ID profession in the 80s	Transitions motivated by opportunities offered by the enlargement of the national librarianship system due to Information Society demands. Transition periods last seven years	Career planning with aspiration to promotion-pride. Success associated with opportunities to have new experiences inside or outside library and rapid promotion. The role of organizational dynamics is highlighted.	Protean career Engagement in Information Society themes. Strong professional identity. Great expectations at career beginning.	Traditional skills and ICT skills. Passive observation of the Emergence of new skills. Dependence of organizational initiative for training. Medium learning cycles
Professionals entering the ID profession in the 90s	Transitions motivated by best organizational positions=inter-organizational mobility. Transition periods last 5 years	Career management linked to continuous training. Success associated with library technological innovation/results. The role of individual's networks is highlighted.	Protean and boundaryless career Engagement in organizational mission's and values Strong professional identity. Great expectations at career beginning.	Activity interests based on specialisation areas. Importance of skills self-evaluation and anticipation of training needs. Short learning cycles.
Professionals entering the ID profession in 2000	Transitions motivated by loss of job, short-term contracts and negative career thoughts. I-D considered a transitory career.	Employability skills linked to strategies to be known in the job market- <i>prevention pride</i> . Success associated with variety of experiences in group or at individual level in a short period of time. The role of chance is highlighted.	Boundaryless career. Engagement with life-long learning strategies Weak professional identity. Low expectations at career beginning.	Variable occupations Self-efficacy and personal construction of portfolios of competences and skills for multiple contexts. Short learning cycles: series of mini-stages across functions and organizations

## DISCUSSION

We have attempted to link the societal changes in work context in the last thirty years to the conceptualisation of the information-documentation career as a changing profession. In the light of these changes, the narrative view provides precious data for examining upcoming professional scenarios. Scenarios are a starting point for exploring I-D work. Emerging themes in changing circumstances call for different kinds of actions and responses and the capacity for creative action is very important for professional groups' strategies.

The emphasis on career dilemmas is a first step towards providing a framework for empirical research that requires a holistic view about individual/organizational contexts, changes and developments. There is a need for new perspectives that focuses on developing all dimensions of professional actors within a social landscape. Old and new professional generations will actively participate in the future of the profession and will determine new actions in new contexts.

Our discussion invites analysts of the I-D profession to pay greater attention to an emergent issue – identity formation of new professionals, incorporating within their conceptual frameworks an appreciation of the dynamics of boundaryless careers. For that purpose it is important to examine their career trajectories in some detail and over time.

Where the future of the profession is concerned, research has a major part to play in the process of attracting, retaining I-D professionals and promoting their image. This can be illustrated by the results obtained for the new generation – “Professionals since 2000.” These results indicate that two factors – the image of the profession as a transitory career and a weak professional identity – influence the image and career strategies. It is for this reason that we feel these new professionals must be the foremost priority for mentoring activities. Forming new professionals is a complex process, so it is therefore important to give and to know best practices of career transitions, to save others from giving up belief in a professional future. In this respect it is important to note that much research still has to be done into the possibilities and effects of using inter-generational narratives in academic curricula.

## CONCLUSION

Returning once more to our initial research question, in regard to the dilemmas lived in transition patterns, skills transformation, and type of career, some specific conclusions may be highlighted:

- This research emphasises the role of career variables in mediating the relationship between professional generations' expectations, dilemmas and skills change. Moreover, the career dimension is revelatory of the relevance of individual variables in career success. There is no strong evidence that skill cy-

cles changed significantly for the three first cohorts. Only the new generation is capable of changing skills more quickly.

- We conclude that for these professionals significant differences do appear between cohorts due to their insights about career transitions patterns and skills management.
- This study points to important differences between professionals that had began career before the implementation of the national Information Society strategies (1997) and professionals that initiated activity in the last ten years. Combined with other factors, these have impacted differently in individual careers.
- Finally, the study has shown that there was significant change in career dilemma patterns between the four generation groups. For example, amongst mature adults, principal dilemmas were career planning with a strong feeling about the impact of unanticipated consequences. New generation choose as main dilemma employability skills linked to strategies to be known in the job market.

Older I-D professionals showed overall satisfaction with the career outcomes and orientation and displayed fewer dilemmas along their career. This implies that those involved in vocational choices are likely better able to cope with problems and have changed skills accordingly with organizational needs

Future research could continue this line of research by examining the effect that career management and skills management has on a variety of different variables within the domains of evaluation of performance and general self-efficacy and practices.

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**LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE GRADUATES  
FROM SPAIN –  
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND WORKFORCE ENTRY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Professional training and workforce entry profiles of Library and Information Science graduates from Spain are analysed. For this purpose 105 alumni who had graduated from the Library and Information Science (LIS) Diploma course at the University of León between the years 1993 and 2007 were surveyed and the results analysed in order to identify further professional training undertaken, professional profiles, and professional career paths. These results were compared with those obtained from a series of interviews conducted with information professionals employed in León, and with results of another survey of professionals working in other regions in Spain. The aim was to improve the LIS degree curriculum at the University of León.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In Spain – and in Europe in general – higher education is immersed in a process of change. Compliance with the Bologna Treaty has implied a structural revision involving the disappearance of the previous university qualifications of diploma holder and graduate, to be replaced by the qualifications of bachelor's degree and master's degree. In Spain, this has meant the gradual implementation of a four year Library and Information Science Degree, substituting for both the Library and Information Science Diploma (three years), taught since 1978, and the Information Science Degree (two years), taught since 1994.

At León University, the Library and Information Science Diploma course has been taught since the academic year 1990–1991. Given the impending disappearance of this diploma course, we felt it was appropriate to review the professional achievements of those students who have graduated in this subject at León University over the past fifteen academic years.

## AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research was to undertake an analysis of Library and Information Science Diploma graduates in terms of their further professional training, professional profiles, and professional career paths. The purpose was to improve the LIS degree curriculum at the University of León. Survey subjects comprised graduates from the past 15 academic years (1993-2007) at the University of León. Data were collected using a survey designed especially for this purpose and distributed to a random selection of 300 graduates. The survey was dispatched by post and/or electronic mail on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008. By March 31 2008, 105 completed questionnaires had been received, and graduates from all 15 academic years were represented among the replies.

The questionnaire was divided into 13 sections covering the following points:

- Sex
- Age
- Disability or special needs
- First course year and year of graduation
- Degree of satisfaction with the training provided by the University
- Employment status during Diploma studies
- Current professional employment status
- Years between graduation and entry into the workforce
- Professional activity following graduation: further education and training, job-seeking, preparation for public examinations, etc.
- Library and Information Science graduate professional training profiles
- Assessment of professional employment opportunities
- Evaluation of competences necessary to fulfil professional obligations, and level to which these were developed during University studies
- Personal employment history

At the same time, interviews were carried out with information professionals; specifically, those who had acted as supervisors for the obligatory work experience component (practicum) included in the Diploma and undertaken by students. These professionals were employed in León at the following institutions: the Municipal Archive, the Provincial Historical Archive, the Public Library, the University Library, the MUSAC (a museum of art) Library, the Caja de España (a bank) Information Centre, the Editorial Everest Archive, and the Hullera Vasco-Leonesa (an energy company) Information Centre (La Robla).

Likewise, the opinions of prestigious professionals working outside the province of León were collected using a structured questionnaire. From a total of 25 questionnaires sent to information professionals selected for their diverse profiles, 17 were completed and returned: 6 were received from university or specialist library directors, 4 from archive directors, 3 from public library directors, 2 from

documentalists, 1 from a project director and 1 from the director of an information services company.

The questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

- Name
- Company
- Post
- Location
- University qualifications
- Company or institution information: Status, Sphere of Influence, Sector and Number of employees
- Number of Library and Information Science graduates employed by the company
- Principal criteria applied when employing Diploma holders
- Professional training profiles for Library and Information Science graduates
- Evaluation of competences necessary to fulfil professional obligations, and graduate proficiency in performance of professional duties
- Suggestions for improvement

It should be noted that the competences established in both questionnaires were an adaptation of the European Council of Information Associations guide "Competencies and aptitudes for European information professionals."<sup>1</sup>

Both questionnaires are included in the appendices.

## **DIPLOMA GRADUATE SURVEY RESULTS**

With regard to demographic data, it should be noted that there was a wide age range among the 105 respondents, and that over 80% were women. This latter fact reflects the customary predominance of women among the Library and Information Science Diploma student body.

Regarding entry into the workforce, we are able to supply the following data. In response to the question concerning students' employment status whilst studying, 40 graduates replied that they had combined paid work with their studies, and 25 of these had been working in jobs related to their studies. In contrast, 65 graduates replied that they had concentrated exclusively on studying. Given that some graduates had not sought employment immediately following their graduation, they were asked if they had studied for public examinations or had undertaken further study. Of the 105 Diploma holders, 38 replied that they had entered the Information Science Degree programme.

In an assessment of professional career opportunities, 2% replied "a lot," 28% "quite a lot," 50% "some," and 20% "few." In terms of years between graduation and employment, of the 61 replies obtained, 18 respondents cited less than a year, 24 said 1 year, 14 replied 2 or 3 years, and 5 responded over 3 years.

Of the graduates who completed the questionnaire 80% are currently employed in posts related to the field of information and documentation: 32 are employed without a contract, with a grant (scholarships); 63 in the public sector; and 27 in private companies.

The public sector is also the main employer in the results of a survey sent in 2006 to the associates of the Spanish Society for Scientific Information (Sociedad Española de Documentación Científica-SEDIC), the main association for the information sector in Spain.<sup>2</sup>

In the section concerning personal employment history, the majority of graduates who completed this section mentioned having been employed on scholarships or on temporary work experience contracts

Respondents felt that the Diploma had provided adequate preparation for professional employment as an archivist, a librarian, a documentalist, a corporate information manager in private companies; and secondarily as an expert in information literacy (teaching basics of information technologies), a digital content manager, and a media information manager.

Concerning competences necessary to fulfil professional obligations and the level to which these were developed during university studies, all the competences listed were highly rated, with a predominant score of 4/5 on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum). The perceived importance of the competences was rated more highly than was the graduates' achievement as a result of studies, with a predominant score of 3.

Competences perceived to be of highest value were related to global management of information, information search and retrieval techniques, elaboration and dissemination of information, information and communication technologies, and modern languages. Likewise, interpersonal skills were also highly rated, that is, interaction with clients and service users, institutional communication and relations, creativity and adaptability, etc. The observed results are similar to those of the project directed by Moreiro.<sup>3</sup>

## PROFESSIONALS INTERVIEW AND SURVEY RESULTS

Interviews and surveys of professionals yielded the following opinions:

When contracting a Library and Information Science graduate, the main criterion considered was their university education. Only professionals working in private companies or specialised institutions gave more weight to specialised training or specific practical skills related to the particular post in question, and to the candidate's ability to adapt to the working environment.

In terms of graduates' professional training profiles, there was general agreement that current training primarily prepares students for employment as librarians and documentalists, and to a lesser extent, as archivists and information literacy experts. Preparation for employment as digital content managers, media informa-

tion managers, corporate information managers and cultural consultants, and managers was considered secondary.

Turning to the competences necessary to fulfil professional obligations, and graduate proficiency in performing professional duties, the professionals surveyed agreed with the graduates' positive evaluation of the 23 competences listed, with a predominance of scores equal to or over 4 on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum). With regard to an assessment of graduates' proficiency in performing professional duties, scores were slightly lower.

In particular, the most highly valued competences were those related to information search and retrieval techniques, management and organisation of information, information and communications technology, modern languages, and interpersonal and communication skills both within the organisation and with clients. The professionals and academics at the meeting held in León confirmed the same view.<sup>4</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Despite the bias—which we are aware may exist—arising from the fact that those most inclined to complete the questionnaire were the graduates currently in employment, it is nevertheless possible to confirm a high rate of entry into the professional workforce. The situation is confirmed as well by the results of the survey sent to the Spanish Society of Documentation and Scientific Information (SEDIC) associates.<sup>2</sup>

Time taken to obtain a first post was not prolonged, although it is also true that graduates felt obliged to accept scholarship posts or temporary work experience posts for longer than was reasonable. This same workforce entry situation for Library and Information Science graduates has been reported in the majority of studies carried out in Spain.

Most graduates are employed in traditional posts: archivists, librarians, documentalists; these are the most highly rated professional profiles, especially that of librarian. Graduates working in the public sector predominate, although a significant percentage of graduates are also employed as documentalists and/or corporate information managers in private companies.

**Table I:** Importance of the competences

COMPETENCES	<i>I-G.</i>	<i>LDU-G.</i>	<i>I-P</i>	<i>LDU-P</i>
Information search and retrieval	5	3	5	5
Interaction with service users and clients	5	3	5	4
Knowledge of the profession	4	2	5	3
Information and communication	5	3	5	3

technologies				
Management, administrative, economics and marketing techniques	4	2	4	2
Project and planning management techniques	4	2	4	2
Content analysis and information organisation	5	3	5	5
Digitization and electronic media	5	2	4	3
Identification and assessment of information	5	3	5	5
Global information management	5	3	5	4
Information management techniques (cataloguing, etc.)	5	4	4	4
Elaboration and dissemination of information	5	3	5	3
Collection management	5	4	5	4
Production and publication techniques	4	2	3	3
Document preservation (storage, restoration, conservation, etc.)	5	4	3	3
Teaching skills	3	2	4	3
Knowledge of the business world	4	2	4	1
Institutional interpersonal skills	4	2	4	3
Oral and written communication	4	3	5	4
Team skills	5	3	5	4
Creativity and adaptation in problem solving	5	3	4	3
Modern languages	5	3	5	3
Interpersonal communication skills	4	3	4	4
Other (please specify)				

I.-G. Importance for Graduates LDU-G. Level of Development at University for Graduates

I.-P. Importance for Professionals LDU-G. Level of Development at University for Professionals

The fact that all the competences listed are highly rated is a reflection of the versatility of the Library and Information Science Diploma qualification. This finding has also been reported in other, similar, studies, such as that carried out by Tejada Artigas and Rodríguez Yunta, comprising the first survey of members of SEDIC in 2001.<sup>5</sup>



Nevertheless, the level of proficiency achieved by graduates in these competences was always awarded a slightly lower score, and the same result is observed when professionals are questioned on graduates' proficiency in competences at work. However, professionals are more positive in their score than graduates. We feel that the new study plans, designed in accordance with European Space for Higher Education guidelines,<sup>6</sup> which place greater emphasis on "know how," will help to redress this imbalance.

Those surveyed and interviewed were united in specifying the need to prioritise student training in information skills, especially computer management skills, and also emphasised the need to possess a good operational command of English and a working knowledge of the world of private business. Almost all the speakers at the meeting held in León in October 2008 insist on the necessity of a better command of computer skills as well as of communicative skills, both in Spanish and English.<sup>4</sup>

The new Library and Information Degree course designed and proposed by the University of León promotes the acquisition of the competences in question. Competences related to information searching, retrieval, management and organisation, prioritised by the survey respondents, will represent a significant proportion of the subjects proposed in the new degree course. Similarly, information technology skills and knowledge concerning the world of private business will be consolidated via the introduction of various core, obligatory, and elective courses. Finally, we feel that it is essential for students to have good operational control of English. We start from the assumption that students enter their degree course with an intermediate level of English, and the aim will be to promote English language courses at an advanced level that would be eligible for elective course credits.

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## APPENDIX I: GRADUATE SURVEY

**INTRODUCTION:** The aim of this questionnaire is to gather information from graduates on competences and entry into the workforce, in order to design the Library and Information Science Degree course study plan. We appreciate your co-operation, and guarantee the anonymity of all replies received.

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** please indicate your reply below with an "X". In some cases, you will be asked to choose between "yes" and "no", and in others, to indicate your level of agreement (from 1 to 5, where 5 indicates highest level of agreement). Should you wish to change a reply, please circle the incorrect response, and mark a different box.

<b>Sex:</b> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Age</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 <input type="checkbox"/> +41
<b>First course year</b>	<b>Year of graduation</b>
<b>Degree of satisfaction with the education and training received at the University:</b> Very <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonably <input type="checkbox"/> Quite <input type="checkbox"/> Not very <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Please mark your employment status during your university studies:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time student <input type="checkbox"/> Employment related to studies <input type="checkbox"/> Employment unrelated to studies	
<b>Present Professional situation</b>	
Continuing education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment related to studies	<input type="checkbox"/>

Employment unrelated to studies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking first post	<input type="checkbox"/>
Currently unemployed, but have worked previously	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed, not seeking work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How many years did it take following graduation to find your first post?</b> (Only applicable if employed in a post related to studies)	
<b>After Graduation ...</b> (Mark an "X" in as many boxes as necessary)	
I sought employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enrolled on the Library and Information Science Degree course	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enrolled on another degree or diploma course	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enrolled on a Master's degree course	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enrolled on a Doctorate course, DEA or thesis	<input type="checkbox"/>
I obtained another grant	<input type="checkbox"/>
I studied for public examinations	<input type="checkbox"/>
I undertook further training related with my Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
I undertook further training in the new technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>
I studied modern languages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A graduate in Library and Information Studies is capable of fulfilling the following professional posts</b>	
Archivist	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural consultant and manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Librarian	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Documentalist	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-university teacher	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
University lecturer	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Information literacy expert	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Digital content manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Media information manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Corporate information manager in private companies		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)		
<b>Assessment of professional opportunities for Library and Information Science graduates</b>	A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Quite a lot <input type="checkbox"/> Some <input type="checkbox"/> Few <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Level of importance of the competences listed below, and level to which they were developed at university:</b>		
	<i>Importance</i>	<i>Level of development at university</i>
Information search and retrieval	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Interaction with service users and clients	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of the profession	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Information and communication technologies	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Management, administrative, economics and marketing techniques	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Project and planning management techniques	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Content analysis and information organisation	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Digitalisation and electronic media	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Identification and assessment of information	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Global information management	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Information management techniques (cataloguing, etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Elaboration and dissemination of information	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Collection management	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Production and publication techniques	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Document conservation (storage, restoration conservation, etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Teaching skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of the world of business	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional interpersonal skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Oral and written communication	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Team skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity and adaptation in problem solving	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Modern languages	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal communication skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Personal employment history following graduation</b> (Please list posts held related to the Diploma)		
<b>Special needs</b>		
Did you suffer any disability whilst studying for the Diploma?	Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes to the above, did you receive support?	Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes to the above, what kind of support did you receive?		
Did you need more support than was offered?	Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes to the above, please specify		
Did you need special educational support whilst studying for the Diploma?	Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes to the above, did you receive support?	Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes to the above, what kind of support did you receive?		
Did you need more support than was offered?	Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes to the above, please specify.		

**APPENDIX II: PROFESSIONALS SURVEY**

**INTRODUCTION:** The aim of this questionnaire is to gather information from professionals on competences and entry into the workforce, in order to design the Library and Information Science Degree course study plan. We appreciate your co-operation, and guarantee the anonymity of all replies received.

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** please indicate your reply below with an “X”. In some cases, you will be asked to choose between “yes” and “no”, and in others, to indicate your level of agreement (from 1 to 5, where 5 indicates highest level of agreement). Should you wish to change a reply, please circle the incorrect response, and mark a different box.

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Company:</b>	
<b>Post:</b>		<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Qualifications (if different from the University Library and Information Science qualifications listed below)</b>			
Diploma in Library and Information Science	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Degree in Library and Information Science	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Doctorate or Master's degree	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other Diplomas	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other Degrees	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other Qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Company or institution information</b>			
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed		
Sphere of influence	National <input type="checkbox"/> Autonomous region <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal		
Sector:	Library <input type="checkbox"/> Historic archives <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative archives <input type="checkbox"/> General documentation centre <input type="checkbox"/> Specialised documentation centre <input type="checkbox"/> Company archives <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural institution <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach services <input type="checkbox"/> Educational centres <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		
Number of employees	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-50 <input type="checkbox"/> +51		

<b>Has your institution or company contracted a Library and Information Science graduate recently?</b>	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Please indicate the importance of the following criteria when contracting a Library and Information Science graduate</b>	
	<i>Importance</i>
University training received during the Diploma course	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
University training received on the Degree/Postgraduate course	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist training related to a specific post in your institution or company	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Specific practical skill related to a particular post in your institution	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Adaptability to the working environment	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>A graduate in Library and Information Studies is capable of fulfilling the following professional posts</b>	
Archivist	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural consultant and manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Librarian	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Documentalist	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-university teacher	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
University lecturer	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Information literacy expert	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Digital content manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Media information manager	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Corporate information manager in private companies	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

<b>Importance of the competences listed below in order to fulfil professional obligations, and graduate proficiency in performance of professional duties.</b>		
	<i>Importance</i>	<i>Level of development at university</i>
Information search and retrieval	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Interaction with service users and clients	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of the profession	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Information and communication technologies	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Management, administrative, economics and marketing techniques	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Project and planning management techniques	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Content analysis and information organisation	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Digitalisation and electronic media	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Identification and assessment of information	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Global information management	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Information management techniques (cataloguing, etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Elaboration and dissemination of information	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Collection management	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Production and publication techniques	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Document conservation (storage, restoration conservation, etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>



Knowledge of the world of business	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional interpersonal skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Oral and written communication	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Team skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity and adaptation in problem solving	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Modern languages	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Suggestions for improvement</b>		

**THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS –  
JOB SEARCH IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND WITH  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*We examine international career opportunities for new library professionals who are entering the workforce during a time of economic decline. Through a survey of websites and job listings, a review of current literature, and discussion with librarians working in the field, the paper targets two attractive global career possibilities: library jobs with academic institutions in the Persian Gulf and jobs with international organizations. English language library job opportunities in Abu Dhabi, Doha, and Dubai are outlined and brief summaries about each location are provided. Opportunities with the United Nations and UNESCO are described and the application processes for each organization are explained. Both sections offer information about the highlights and potential drawbacks of these opportunities. We conclude that by working in an international setting, new librarians will regenerate the profession through cultural and professional exchange and gain experience that will remain valuable throughout their careers.*

**THE JOB SEARCH FOR NEW LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS**

The current economic climate forces librarians to postpone retirement, and widespread hiring freezes make it necessary for new professionals to consider all career options. As library students, we learn about the triumvirate of school libraries, public libraries, and academic libraries. Special libraries, archives, and art librarianship are also addressed, but the number of job opportunities is rapidly shrinking. Given that library students today are globally aware, some expand the scope of their job search internationally. Employment abroad is both personally rewarding and an important component in regenerating the library profession. In the interest of sharing potential opportunities that have come to our attention, this paper outlines two international library career options experiencing growth despite general economic decline: working in the Persian Gulf and working with international organizations. Both of these possibilities offer new librarians unique but transferable skills that can be shared with colleagues in one's home country.

## A LIBRARY JOB SEARCH IN THE PERSIAN GULF

### *An emerging academic hub*

Just forty years ago the rolling deserts of the Persian Gulf were sparsely populated. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), formerly six separate states, gained independence in 1971 after the discovery of oil and natural gas jumpstarted the economy.<sup>1</sup> That same year, Qatar also gained independence and benefited from the discovery of these natural resources.<sup>2</sup> Over the last four decades, the economy in the Persian Gulf has grown rapidly.

In the last ten years, a concerted effort has been made to diversify the economy in the Gulf Region. Officials hope to provide young people with access to high quality education so they will be prepared to fill positions in government and industry. They also hope to draw international students to the Gulf area. The demand for education continues to attract internationally accredited academic institutions from around the world. Although a six-year oil boom leveled out during the second half of 2008, English language academics continue to develop in Doha, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).<sup>3</sup>

In the Arab world, traditional centers of study such as Beirut, Baghdad, and Cairo have been disrupted by political instability and war.<sup>4</sup> Qatar and UAE enjoy relative political stability and, for the time being, a significant amount of oil wealth. These factors make it possible and important to invest in higher education. As more internationally accredited universities open in the Gulf, English language academic librarian positions will follow.

### *Employment for English language academic librarians in the Gulf*

The majority of universities in the Gulf operate in English, so there are an increasing number of job openings for English language librarians. Library jobs in the Gulf are similar to those anywhere in the world, but the benefits are enticing. Depending on the university, salaries are comparable to that of a professional librarian in the United States, but they are not taxable in the Gulf. Employees are offered an annual travel stipend to return to their home country, free private schooling for children, and a furniture allowance. At one university, employees agree to a three-year contract and upon completion they are offered a three month's salary bonU.S., a flight home, and a relocation allowance. Though benefits vary from institution to institution, these benefits are not uncommon.<sup>5</sup>

For some Westerners, a move to the Persian Gulf sounds drastic. "Even though UAE is a very moderate country, it still has many strong ties to Muslim values and there are strict rules and consequences for not following them."<sup>5</sup> The same is true for Qatar. In some areas it is illegal to live out of wedlock with a partner. There are also very strict regulations regarding drugs and alcohol, so it is important to be aware of the laws and to be prepared to respect them. In addition to the cultural differences, some librarians may also be concerned about the attention this region

has received for human rights violations.<sup>6</sup> There is an increasing consciousness of this issue and projects in Qatar and Abu Dhabi have begun to address the violations.<sup>7, 3</sup> Contributing to this region's focus on education has the potential help improve the standard of human rights.

Foreigners also imagine a place where only men can be hired for jobs, intellectual freedom is limited, and life, in general, is "mind-numbingly boring." This is not the case. Women are hired for academic positions and intellectual curiosity is encouraged.<sup>7</sup> Numerous job postings indicate that learning Arabic is encouraged and acquisition of the native language would only enhance discovery and the chance to make local acquaintances. Generous vacation time also allows for ample opportunity to travel throughout the region and to take advantage of the Gulf's central location. Flights to Asia, Europe and Africa are feasible, reasonably priced, and much shorter than they would be from the U.S.

More importantly, a move to the Persian Gulf gives new professionals a chance for adventure and innovation. In the case of the Abu Dhabi's Masdar Institute of Science, still under construction but to be opened in fall 2009, the dean stated that the selection of students "is not an easy thing...They are not coming to an established lab, established libraries and dormitories. So we want mature people who understand the challenges and also understand the opportunities."<sup>7</sup> These are precisely the opportunities that new professionals must seize in order to have the chance to implement new practices. In well-established institutions, positions tend to be clearly outlined and room for innovation may be impeded by existing protocols. One American librarian in Abu Dhabi said "the best part of my job is the amount of freedom I am given here. If there is something new that I want to try here, my boss is more than willing to let me do it. There are a lot of things I have learned here, probably a lot more than I would have learned staying in the United States."<sup>5</sup>

### ***The education system***

There are two types of universities in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar: public universities funded by the government and international universities from around the world. Due to the multitude of international companies in the Gulf region, there is a high demand for graduates from internationally recognized academic institutions in the local workforce. Rather than going through the complicated accreditation process starting with non-accredited institutions, many international universities including those from the United States are "filling the gap" by opening outposts in the Persian Gulf.<sup>5</sup>

In UAE, about one-third of Emirati students attend international universities.<sup>8</sup> Tuition in public universities is free for citizens of UAE. Though the official language is Arabic, public and private universities operate in English. Besides American universities, there are also institutions from India, Europe, and elsewhere in Asia. Though they often run independently, these academic institutions

are housed in complexes with a unifying name. In Dubai there is International Academic City and Knowledge Village, in Abu Dhabi there is University City and in Doha, Qatar the complex is named Education City. Their central location between Asia, Africa, and Europe draws students from around the world. Many of these international universities receive financial incentives from the government and frequently, construction of the buildings is financed by the government. In many cases, the government offers a sum of money to pay for start-up fees.

### ***The application process***

From application to employment, the process can take anywhere from three to six months.<sup>5</sup> Many library job sites list a variety of openings in the Persian Gulf (<http://www.lisjobs.com/>, <http://www.libjobs.com/>, <http://www.higheredjobs.com/>). For a jobseeker without extensive knowledge of the Gulf region, sifting through job ads can be difficult. The next section presents the general structure of higher education in three of the major academic hubs: Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, and Doha, Qatar. Each section lists universities that are currently open and universities that will be opening in the next few years. Generalizations about each location are based on an interview with an American librarian in the Gulf region and the authors' observations from research.

### ***Education City: Doha, Qatar***

Operated by the Qatar Foundation, the aim of Education City is to "develop people's abilities through investments in human capital, innovative technology, state of the art facilities and partnerships with elite organizations, thus raising the competency of people and the quality of life."<sup>9</sup> Education City is home to seven foreign universities including The Virginia Commonwealth University, Weill Cornell Medical College, Texas A&M University, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Northwestern University, and one national program, the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies. Each program has its own library. A central library that will serve all of the universities and the Qatar community is projected to open in 2010.<sup>10</sup>

While Qatar is a fairly traditional country, classes at Education City are mixed gender.<sup>4</sup> The picturesque campus was designed by the world renowned Japanese architect, Arata Isozaki.<sup>11</sup> One American working in the UAE says that life in Qatar moves at a slower pace than in Dubai or Abu Dhabi.<sup>5</sup> Northwestern University's website offers a wealth of information on working in Qatar at <http://www.qatar.northwestern.edu/employment/Default.aspx>. The "Guide to Northwestern Life in Qatar" offers practical advice about settling into the area.<sup>12</sup>

***University City: Abu Dhabi***

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, sits on one-tenth of the world's oil reserves.<sup>13</sup> Though it has taken Abu Dhabi somewhat longer to introduce foreign institutions, it appears that it will quickly entice prestigious universities. New York University recently signed an agreement to open a liberal arts campus (projected for 2010) after they were offered fifty million dollars in addition to construction and operational fees.<sup>4</sup> Other universities that will join University City include the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, opening in fall 2009. A number of universities have already opened, including Johns Hopkins University and France's Sorbonne University.<sup>4</sup>

Abu Dhabi is quieter than Dubai. With a population of about 900,000,<sup>14</sup> traffic is not as intense.<sup>5</sup> With projects in the works to build a branch of the Guggenheim and the Louvre art museums, it appears that Abu Dhabi will continue to expand as a cultural center.<sup>4</sup>

***International Academic City: Dubai***

The academic environment has also been growing in Dubai. Knowledge Village, a one kilometer campus centrally located within Dubai, was an earlier effort to "develop the region's talent pool and accelerate its move to the knowledge economy."<sup>15</sup> Knowledge Village proved to be a mix of educational institutions of varying caliber.<sup>4</sup> International Academic City is a new complex with nearly twenty-five national and international universities and it is operated in conjunction with Knowledge Village.<sup>16</sup> The University of Michigan is one of the newer additions that officials hope will inspire other prestigious universities to follow its lead.<sup>17</sup> Rochester Institute of Technology recently opened a graduate program and will take undergraduate students by 2010.<sup>17</sup>

George Mason University's Dubai campus plans collapsed in February 2009 when their partner in Dubai, a private educational investor, withdrew some funding. Additionally, George Mason struggled to get enough students of the same caliber as their students in the United States, which would compensate their accreditation. While this has caused for alarm amongst other universities, it is important to note that partnerships with the Emirati and Qatari governments have been successful thus far as they are motivated to diversify their workforces and are not "gambling."<sup>18</sup>

While it is difficult to determine what will become of Dubai, it is clear that the world-wide economic crisis is taking a toll on Las Vegas-like city known for its indoor ski slope and luxury hotels. Because of Dubai's early economic focus on tourism, rather than education, it has taken a hard hit. Whether or not other American Universities in Dubai will continue to operate remains to be seen. As of March 2009, the University of Michigan remains optimistic, claiming that they selected programs that have a competitive edge in Dubai. Additionally, they plan to take another year to start paying back loans that they accrued to open the campus.<sup>18</sup>

## A LIBRARY JOB SEARCH WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### *International organizations*

International organizations are typically divided into two categories: inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Although international organizations have been in existence since the 1800s, the terms “inter-governmental organization” and “non-governmental organization” were not popularized until 1945 with the foundation of the United Nations. Today there are more than 44,000 international organizations in existence.<sup>19</sup> “The growth of non-governmental organizations has been almost exponential as the growth of the Internet and has sometimes been seen as part of the process of globalization.”<sup>20</sup> (p2) Although some argue that IGOs and INGOs can be imperialist and exempt from international law, there is now such a large variety that it is increasingly difficult to categorize these organizations. Inter-governmental organizations are characterized by the Yearbook of International Organizations as “based on a formal instrument of agreement between the governments of nation states;” “they include three or more nation states as parties to the agreement;” and “they possess a permanent secretariat to perform ongoing tasks.” The website [www.ngo.org](http://www.ngo.org) defines NGOs and their common attributes as follows: “A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level. NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bringing citizen concerns to Governments, advocating and monitoring policies and encouraging political participation through provision of information. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations system differs depending on their goals, their venue and the mandate of a particular institution.”<sup>21</sup>

### *The role of librarians in international organizations*

The appeal of working for an international organization involves several factors. Someone seeking a job with an international organization should be prepared to enter an entrenched bureaucratic framework. Still, some library professionals may be attracted to the structure and historical legacy that these organizations represent. Then, there is the romantic ideal of living and working abroad and being involved in something greater than oneself. There is the desire to expand one’s horizons beyond the stereotypical “Ugly American” from William J. Lederer’s 1958 novel. There are also concrete advantages to employment with organizations that offer opportunities for growth abroad and at home. It is common to complete a stint abroad and then move into a new position in one’s home country within the organization, whereas, with an organization like the Peace Corps, returnees have to start a new career. Even after leaving an international organization, the skills gained are transferable and help expand one’s resume. The salary and benefits in

these organizations are often generous and include perks such as relocation costs, language training, and extended annual leave and opportunity for regional travel.

The proliferation of international organizations has created a flood of information that needs to be collected, catalogued, disseminated, and archived. This information includes financial reports, briefing papers, case studies and programming suggestions and they can be organized by topic, country, or by the issuing organization. One example of growing awareness for the importance of this information is The University of Colorado at Boulder's collection of archival materials on human rights NGOs from the 1990's that was later bought by Columbia University because "These materials were identified as vitally important documents to help understand the human rights movement."<sup>20 (p5)</sup> Library jobs with international organizations will continue to offer librarians a vital role working on new projects. Many IGOs and NGOs are subsidiary organizations of the United Nations, so the United Nations is a logical starting point to explore careers for librarians with a professional interest in international relations.

### ***United Nations national competitive recruitment process***

To view employment opportunities for Libraries and Information Management, apply for vacancies, and to create and update a personal history profile, interested applicants can go to <http://jobs.un.org>. However, with these positions preference is given to internal applicants and those who have already taken the national competitive recruitment exam. Therefore, new professionals with less than five years experience should begin with the application process for the "P2" professional positions at the United Nations, which involve a series of filters beginning with the age and nationality requirements, followed by the application process, then competitive examinations, and finally ending with an interview. The United Nations does not hire for library positions every year, so prior to the application process, applicants should check the website to make sure the Library Occupational Group is listed at <https://jobs.un.org>, or for entry-level positions recruiting for the examination at <http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/welcome.htm>. Librarian titles are not yet listed for the 2009 exam, but there are positions open in the related Information Technology field. An entry-level library position is described as follows on the Employment Opportunities with the United Nations information brochure:

Services include management of an archival collection of United Nations documents and publications in print and electronic formats, production of databases and reference service to a wide range of clients. The information produced and provided by library staff is used by delegates, Permanent Missions, United Nations staff members, as well as by specialized researchers, while enabling all librarians in the United Nations system to function as a user-oriented network. The UN libraries also support the world-wide network of depository libraries, which assist in disseminating United Nations information.<sup>22 (p3)</sup>



The expected date for an examination will also be listed and applicants must be younger than thirty-two years of age on the 31 December during the year of the exam. There will also be a list of participating countries for the National Competitive Recruitment Examination and applicants must have citizenship in one of the inadequately represented member states in order to apply. There are currently forty-three countries listed including<sup>23</sup> the United States which is often on the list of inadequately represented countries. Applicants must be fluent in either English or French and it is advantageous for a prospective employee to speak any of the other official languages of the United Nations which are Arabic, Chinese, Russian, or Spanish. If a potential applicant is not yet thirty-two, their country is listed, and they speak either English or French then they are eligible to complete the online application. One additional point of interest is that "...the General Assembly has set out clear directives aimed at promoting the appointment of women as one of the objectives of the recruitment policy, with a view to achieving a more equitable balance of men and women in the Secretariat...In order to attain the latter goal, equally qualified women will be given preference in recruitment."<sup>22 (p7)</sup>

### ***The application and examination***

The six-page P-11- Personal History application can be found online at <http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/download.htm>. The areas covered include language knowledge, educational background, employment, references, country of origin, and all relevant coursework.<sup>24</sup> The application is due in October of each year, though early submission is encouraged. Once submitted, each applicant will receive an application number. If admitted to the written examination, they will be notified and their application number will be posted online by the end of December. The written examination is divided into two sections, one forty-five minute general paper to test drafting skills, followed by a three hour and forty-five minute hand written paper which tests the knowledge of the applicant's specialization. A librarian who took the exam in 2006 described the process on his blog, Marcus' World, and suggested that applicants "think about the role of libraries in large global organizations; think about how electronic access is changing libraries; and, finally, consider your general philosophy of librarianship."<sup>25</sup> There are also sample exams for review posted on the website prior to the exam. The exam takes place in February each year at a number of UN sites throughout the world. Candidates successful in the written examination will be invited to an interview. Finally, candidates successful in the interview will be placed on a reserve list of qualified candidates and they may be called to serve at the Dag Hammarskjöld library of the UN headquarters in<sup>26</sup> New York or at another duty station in Africa, Asia, Europe, or Latin America.

### ***Salary and benefits***

Although the application process is extensive and highly competitive, the United Nations is looking for lifelong employees and once hired, there seems to be little incentive to leave. The annual starting salary is between U.S.\$43,662 and U.S.\$55,924; there is a post adjustment; and there is an annual dependency benefit of U.S.\$1,780 for each eligible child. Other dependency benefits include annual education and travel grants for each eligible child for employees who are assigned to a duty station outside of their home country. For employees outside of their home country, home leave travel expenses are covered every two years and employees may receive an assignment and later repatriation grant, removal of household effects, and rental subsidies up to 40 percent. For all UN staff members regardless of station, there is a pension fund, medical and dental benefits and thirty days of annual leave.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Subsidiary UN opportunities***

The United Nations is the umbrella organization for many other divisions including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), among others. On the NCRE application form (P-11) there is a question that asks “Other agencies of the United Nations system may be interested in our applicants. Do you have any objection to your personal history form being made available to them?”<sup>24(p4)</sup> However, the NCRE application is not necessarily the gateway to all UN agency jobs and many agencies have their own application process.

### ***UNESCO Young Professional Programme***

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded in 1945 and now contains 726 field offices around the world. Its function is described on the website “...as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse – for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge – while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields.”<sup>28</sup> The Young Professional Programme is a fixed term contract of one year upon appointment at the UNESCO Paris headquarters. The first nine months is a probationary period followed by renewable fixed-term contracts of two years if the evaluation is satisfactory. Following the program, Young Professionals are required to work in a field office after two to three years with the organization. The base salary and benefits are the same as those for entry-level positions throughout the United Nations system.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Application process***

UNESCO has application restrictions similar to the United Nations. Applicants for the Young Professional Programme must be under thirty years of age before December of the year they are applying their country must be on the list of under-represented countries and they must speak either English or French, with additional knowledge of Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, and/or Russian as an asset. This program is a highly competitive process with only ten applicants selected each year, from all over the world. If the basic qualifications are met young professionals are encouraged to request the application from the National Commission for UNESCO in their home country during the recruitment period (usually between March and April). Once the have applications are submitted, twelve applications from each country will be selected and passed on to the Bureau of Human Resources Management of UNESCO. Then a committee will evaluate the applications based on “professional and international experience as well as their language skills and other relevant knowledge and abilities.” The short list of applicants will be interviewed and will undergo language exams to test their knowledge of English and French. The selected ten applicants will receive a letter of appointment soon after the interview process and they will receive training to enhance their professional development and prepare them for service.<sup>30</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

In today’s uncertain economic climate, it is clear that new professionals must consider different approaches to the job market. Embarking upon a professional life in an international setting will open new opportunities and provide future librarians with a broader worldview. The experiences that they gain in these positions – whether they choose to work for an intergovernmental organization for life or complete a three year contract in Abu Dhabi – will prove to be rewarding and will promote cultural understanding.

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## TOWARDS A NEW LIBRARY PROFESSIONAL – REFLECTIONS ON THE QUALITY LEADERS PROJECT – YOUTH

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### ABSTRACT

*It has been argued that public libraries in the UK are in terminal decline. In terms of personnel the current workforce is aging and is unsurprisingly failing to attract new professionals in a climate of continuing de-professionalisation. One commentator pointed out several years ago that public libraries are “sleepwalking to disaster”.*

*This paper details how the Quality Leaders Project – Youth (QLP-Y) has delivered a working model that equips new library professionals with the skills and expertise to improve library services – in this particular case study, to socially excluded young people – bringing about management development through service development. After consultation with a large number of young people in their library authorities, Quality Leaders developed “audience development activities” which engaged young people with libraries in new, exciting and relevant ways, encouraging informal learning.*

*QLP-Y acknowledges the lack of innovation in the information sector and notes that public libraries are failing to engage their communities. It acknowledges that new library professionals need political skills to improve advocacy. Often innovation is blocked, symptomatic of a culture of resistance to change. The structure of QLP-Y discourages this by co-opting key strategic personnel in the local authority as “mentors” and “sponsors” to facilitate change.*

### CONTEXT

Over the past decade or so, public libraries in the United Kingdom have had a relatively high profile in the media. Often the debate – whilst continuing to celebrate public libraries as a force for good in our society – focuses on negatives. This criticism has not been without foundation. Commentators have pointed out that poor management and a lack of innovation are characteristics of public libraries.

Charles Leadbetter, for example, has argued that

Good public services need top quality senior management. Yet management development for libraries has been neglected. Most new graduates from library

schools do not go into public libraries and a core of senior librarians, recruited into public libraries 20 or 30 years ago, is on the verge of retiring. Public libraries face a shortage of management talent.<sup>1</sup>

It is certainly true that many public library authorities, perhaps mindful of this lack of “management talent” have been recruiting senior staff from backgrounds other than libraries, like the retail sector or marketing. This at least acknowledges, rightly or wrongly, two areas that public libraries have not been strong in – income generation and publicising the work they do. With increasing financial constraints on local authorities, there is growing tendency to employ staff without a library or information science qualification, as they are less expensive than workers with formal librarianship training. Naturally, this fact will serve as a disincentive for people to undertake such a course of professional study. Leadbetter takes this pessimistic view further, going on to say that in his opinion, public libraries are “sleepwalking to disaster.”<sup>1</sup>

Another report, *Building Better Libraries* states from the outset that

for many potential users the outmoded design and poor location of some library buildings is a deterrent in itself. We need innovative solutions to make them relevant again.<sup>2</sup>

Others have pointed to the poor quality of materials held by libraries, and argue that this is why their usage is declining. Again the question is one of relevance of libraries, where people can purchase books more cheaply than ever before, and that libraries have been relatively slow in embracing the download culture. Attempts by libraries to engage people without books, for example ICT training, or other informal learning sessions, have sometimes been viewed with suspicion. Pressure groups such as *Libri* reported a

significant trend for senior librarians and library policy makers...to no longer see providing books as a prime responsibility... We see this as an excuse for the failure of public libraries to deliver what the public wants. Further, we believe that the public library will fulfil all its social roles if it does books properly: a good modern stock for reading and reference, available at times convenient to the public, and in premises which are welcoming, clean and decent.<sup>3</sup>

This is an argument that has had plenty of currency recently: that reading, and bookshops have experienced a resurgence in interest and libraries have failed to capture this new voracious audience for literature. Critics have pointed out that bookshops often have coffee shops on the premises and this café culture is conducive to the reading experience. Contrast this attitude with public libraries, where consumption of food or drink has traditionally been frowned upon, and where loitering, particular amongst socially excluded groups like the long term unemployed or homeless people has been actively discouraged.

There is, I think, a more abstract reason behind the decline in fortunes of public libraries. The very order and formality of some of these institutions is at odds with the disorder and informality of our lives in the early part of the twenty-first century. Whilst this rather old-fashioned image is reassuring to some: old spinster shushing librarians and row upon row of immaculately presented stock, it can be overwhelmingly off-putting to others. For many years librarians have appeared – in popular culture at least – as the gatekeepers of, rather than facilitators to, information. The librarian as guardian of information is simply unacceptable to the so-called “Google generation”, where it does not matter if the user cannot spell a search term accurately – the technology offers suggestions.

Our profession needs to move beyond mere reductionist critiques of this state of affairs, “no-brainer Google search, bad, controlled vocabulary, good”, for example. It strikes me that the very essence of librarianship is that it provides a very human face to an increasingly labyrinthine, and impersonal information society.

Concerns have been raised over the fall in visits and that the number of items being issued is in freefall – so much so that the decline could be terminal should it continue to fall at such a rate over the next few years. Finally, the very definition of public libraries is under contestation, with traditional library spaces re-branded in some areas as *Discovery Centres* or *Ideas Stores*. The argument here is that “library” is such an ideologically loaded term that it has ceased to be useful or helpful, in bringing in new customers.

Naturally, the U.K.’s professional association, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), has responded to these criticisms as best it can through the channels available to it. However, CILIP does at least have a duty to make sure that the library and information science (LIS) courses it accredits contain content relevant to the needs of new professionals. Just as important, is the need to ensure that the skills of new professionals are attractive to prospective employers in the sector.

Whilst this may seem a rather downbeat view of the current situation, I would argue that it provides many exciting opportunities for the development of new library services, and correspondingly, many opportunities for the development of new library professionals, via new LIS courses in order to achieve this.

## **QUALITY LEADERS PROJECT – YOUTH**

In a profession that clearly needs new ideas, initiatives are required that have the vision necessary to ensure that public libraries remain a relevant and necessary force for social change. The Quality Leaders Project – Youth (QLP-Y) is one such vision, which aims to bring about “management development through service development.” The “service development” in this project is the creation of a definite public library offer to young people, targeting in particular those who are socially excluded. Library provision to these groups of young people is at best patchy, at



worst, nonexistent. The message being sent out to young people is clear: if you are a teenager, and literate, you are welcome in the library. If you cannot read – and even more heinously, do not behave according to the moral code of whichever member of staff is present – you are, by default, most unwelcome. QLP-Y exists partly to make ALL young people welcome by meeting the needs of a previously neglected user group. Management development takes place because

the meeting of unrecognised or under-recognised needs requires new or enhanced services, and new and enhanced services require new skills and know-how (including new management know-how). Acquisition of these new skills will create a level playing field for staff who have not been able to reach management positions, thereby enhance their ability to reach senior management positions.<sup>4</sup>

QLP-Y was managed from the Department of Applied Social Sciences based at London Metropolitan University. It was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which provides grants that encourage engagement with some of the most vulnerable people in the country. QLP-Y recognised that whilst library professionals generally have the technical skills necessary to perform their duties, they often lack more specific skills, such as youth work, or more general customer service skills, that would enable them to promote a library offer to young people. Equally, whilst we should expect youth workers to be good at engaging young people, they are not always equipped with the skills to best promote the value, and transformative potential, of libraries and information.

QLP-Y recognised that the best way to achieve this skills exchange would be by bringing together workers from public libraries and youth services. Three local authorities took part in the project: the Boroughs of Barnet and Haringey in North London, Lincolnshire in the East Midlands and my local authority, Portsmouth City Council, on the south coast of England. Each authority's project was headed by Quality Leader (QL), who led a team made up of library and youth workers, and partners from other agencies. These agencies were diverse: from social services, to education workers, from community wardens to the voluntary sector.

The initial partnership between libraries and youth services would enable both groups to deliver relevant and exciting services to young people, primarily by putting young people in control, an increasing demand of national agendas around youth work. For example the government paper *Every Child Matters*, states that

every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.<sup>5</sup>

To achieve this, in Portsmouth, 300 young people were consulted around the city. The majority were not users of libraries and would not be tempted to use libraries in their traditional form. We were also careful to ensure a majority of respondents were from "hard to reach groups." These groups included young people excluded

from mainstream education, asylum seekers and refugees, and children in residential or foster care. We asked them what sort of activities they would like to undertake in libraries and then developed these ideas into “audience development activities.” This term marks a departure from the notion of “reader development” and was preferred because for many young people with low-level literacy skills, “reading” (and often even the word, “library”) would be barrier – real or imagined – to usage. However, the central philosophy of the project is that once young people were actively welcomed to libraries, undertaking workshops of their own design, they would continue to use them, having felt a sense of ownership of their library.

QLP-Y provided a budget to each participating authority of £10,000, split roughly in half between providing workshops and providing any special equipment needed to carry out the audience development workshops. However, it was not so much the money, but the process of developing the activities, that was important.

Despite the protests from traditionalists referred to above, dismayed by the move “away from the book,” public libraries have always promoted informal learning, and the audience development activities undertaken in Portsmouth libraries from 2006-2009 as part of QLP-Y continued were no exception.

### ***Web design workshops***

A group of young people were given training in website design, including a brief intro to Web 2.0. After this workshop, a group created a wiki for the Portsmouth Teen Reading Group, allowing young people to post reviews and discuss library issues electronically. The advantage of this technology is that it brings the library offer to many diverse locations and provides relative anonymity for the contributors, allowing young people to express themselves in ways they might not feel comfortable with in a traditional library setting. The wiki was successfully moderated by the young people, proving a point that once young people are given real responsibilities, they will act responsibly.

### ***Poster designs***

In the Central Library, a group of young people regularly congregated, creating some issues for the library staff. It was clear they valued the space that library provided and they wanted to design a poster so that they could actively promote the library amongst their friends. We recruited a local design company and the group came up with a number of suggestions. In the end posters were produced to be displayed in alternative, youth-friendly settings. Additionally, flyers were produced that could be passed on to young people across the city. This peer-to-peer promotion has been far more powerful than any traditional publicity that we as a service could come up with.

***Art project***

In partnership with social services, all Portsmouth's children in residential care produced original works of art that were displayed in the Central Library. The exhibition was opened by some prominent local figures and attended by the artists. Letters of congratulation were written to each young person by the city's elected official for Culture. After the exhibition, the paintings were framed and handed back to the young people. The exhibition was covered by the local news media, who were extremely positive. One local writer pointed out that the quality of the work, and the creativity involved, was a welcome antidote to all the prevailing negative stereotyping of young people.

***Martial arts***

A group of young people, excluded from mainstream education, attended informal learning sessions in a local youth club. They sometimes appeared in the nearby library during their break times, and would enjoy watching martial arts video clips on *You Tube*. The group was particularly interested in Bruce Lee's martial art of *Jeet Kune Do*, so with the support of QLP-Y we were able to organise a series of training sessions with a qualified instructor in the library. The sessions were also open to local young people not currently engaged in employment, education or training. These young people were then able to follow up their interest in martial arts with books and other printed information. The project was so successful that the youth club subsequently received additional local funding to provide further sessions.

***Magazine production***

A group of manga enthusiasts attended a workshop led by a professional artist. Over 40 young people attended at the Central Library and it was clear that there was a lot of creative talent in the group. They decided they would like to produce a magazine of their own, containing original manga and articles, entitled *Yatta!* We provided the young people with their own office space within the library, which they painted and furnished with items of their choice. We were also able to provide them with training by a graphic designer in *Adobe InDesign*, an industry standard desktop publishing package. The group meets every Saturday and they have been in control of the project from the outset, organising their own editorial board and rules.

***Intergenerational project***

A group of school pupils assisted an older group of blind and vision-impaired people to download books, newspapers, magazines and health information on specially adapted MP3 players. The sessions also included lunch, so there was a real social aspect to the sessions and the group were able to get to know each other

really well. The young people initially received disability awareness training and gained an understanding of the information needs of the older group. The blind and vision-impaired group gained an understanding of the issues facing young people. The technology purchased has been put to good use, with the project running several times since the original sessions.

## **INNOVATION AND NEW PROFESSIONALS**

QLP-Y acknowledges the lack of innovation in the information sector and notes especially that public libraries are failing to engage many communities in a relevant and meaningful way. This lack of innovation cannot be solely blamed on financial resource constraints. For far too long, I would argue that public libraries in the U.K. have nurtured a seemingly homogenous user group, overwhelmingly white, middle class and female. This group of core library users can feel threatened if other groups are welcomed into the library so there is always a delicate balancing act between the need for the library service to be “open to all,” as enshrined in the 1964 Public Library Act, and for the need to avoid negative criticism from active users who may write to their local politicians if they feel their library is being overrun with “undesirables.” This homogenous and often very articulate core group, like the library workforce, is aging, so there is some substance in the pessimistic views on the sustainability of a public library service (and maybe, a publicly funded library service in the U.K.).

Innovation can be actively opposed by some groups of library workers, symptomatic of a general culture of resistance to change in the sector. If this resistance is led by senior managers, it can become destructive, making it very difficult to win hearts and minds of frontline workers. QLP-Y acknowledges this, using a structure of “mentors” and “sponsors” to assist the Quality Leader in service development.

My mentor was my line manager, acutely aware of the need for an improved youth offer and equally aware of the resistance from some library staff to working with young people. The inclusion of mentors and sponsors was a necessary part of the project which provided a framework to facilitate change by putting the QL in contact with key decision makers in the service to make things happen if there was any resistance from colleagues.

My sponsor was the council’s Head of Culture, who was able to put me in contact with potential partners, as well as facilitating a series of training workshops for all library staff in youth work. This training was rolled out over a number of weeks and was valuable in getting frontline workers “on-side.” The training was naturally delivered by the youth service and it is fair to say that they learned as much about libraries as the library staff learned about young people.

Additionally, my political skills were developed by the sponsor when he suggested I organise a seminar on the issues around libraries and young people. This

was attended by elected officials and other council agencies, as well as library and youth worker staff. Members of the QLP-Y steering group, university academics, also made presentations to the group and the seminar, although necessarily challenging, was universally well received.

QLP-Y proposes a model of activist librarianship that inevitably will make some library workers feel uncomfortable. Promoting the need to engage with young people to colleagues can be challenging in a society that is all too quick to demonise youths by equating them with criminality and social irresponsibility. The new professional/library activist needs to understand the circumstances that lead young people to be marginalised in the first place. We also need to deal with the simple fact that whilst public libraries have been successful at engaging children from birth to primary school age, they have been less successful in retaining this engagement as young people move through secondary education. Library workers must therefore shoulder some of the responsibility when teenagers (and any other socially excluded group) are further marginalised.

To address the lack of innovation in public libraries, QL's took part in a Master's-level module at London Metropolitan University in Innovation and development in information services. This course recognised that innovation and change, is a continual and necessary part of any successful library service, and that continuing professional development should ideally take place on a theoretical level as well as in the workplace.

The thirteen week course comprised various lectures and seminars around the politics of information, globalisation, equalities and change management. I felt that the course covered crucial areas of librarianship that were neglected in my original LIS studies. Certainly, the very subject matter of the politics of information, or the act of being an unashamedly "political" librarian, is at odds with the traditional notion that libraries are neutral or apolitical spaces. These myths of neutrality have been interrogated elsewhere, but essentially, everything offered in a library, from the book collection to the services provided and the communities served, is obviously influenced by political decisions.<sup>6</sup> These decisions will emerge at the highest level in the values of the local authority but will trickle right down to the values of frontline library workers.

I make no apologies for being an advocate of a politicised "critical librarianship", and there is a need for a greater understanding among new library professionals of the human rights model of librarianship, particularly in an increasingly globalised world. Toni Samek has written such a guide to this socially responsible paradigm that

aims to encourage library and information workers and other stakeholders in information and knowledge societies to participate locally, nationally, and internationally in dialogue, collaboration, organisation, empathy, decision-making, practice, philosophy and policy development to promote the amelioration of social problems.<sup>7</sup>

This model of transformative librarianship is one that many professionals are uncomfortable with. How many of us have heard colleagues in public libraries complain that they “are not social workers,” or actively tried to eject someone from a library who may not correspond to their notion of acceptable behaviour? So called “professional issues” are covered in very general terms in LIS courses, like censorship, freedom of information, intellectual freedom and library ethics. However, once in the workplace, there is a danger that new professionals become very quickly institutionalised, adhering rapidly to the routine and structures of the organisation.

The New Professionals Discussion Group has two particular concerns in its mission statement that we ignore at our peril: “public libraries are not developing fast enough,” and that the “social role of the library [is] not so much at the forefront of debate at working level.”<sup>8</sup>

We need to ensure that new professionals have the skills, and the resilience, to negotiate the complex information needs of an increasingly globalised world. This means that incumbent library workers, the not-so-new professionals, should act as the sponsors and mentors to the professionals of the future, encouraging the development of an exciting and relevant public library service and one that has a central, transformative role in society.

Further information about the Quality Leaders Project – Youth can be found at The Network’s website, <http://www.seapn.org.uk/qlp>.

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**SKILLS FOR FUTURE AND CURRENT LIBRARY  
AND INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS –  
PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN NEW DELHI**

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**ABSTRACT**

*New Delhi academic librarians were asked to rank traditional as well as new skills needed for future library and information professionals. For this study, skills were identified based on the published literature. A simple web based questionnaire was administered to 25 academic librarians in the city of New Delhi, India. Twenty librarians responded and it was found that the majority are not fully satisfied with the present skill sets of the new information professionals. The study showed that communication skills were perceived as the most important skills required for emerging information professionals, followed by information-communication-technology (ICT), management, organization, research, marketing and negotiation skills. Ninety-two per cent of the librarians stated that re-training was essential especially in the areas of ICT applications for professionals already working in libraries. The study highlights the need to reinforce education and training programmes in the country to turn out fully skilled future library and information professionals, as well as to update current practitioners' skills.*

**INTRODUCTION**

“Library is a growing organism” – so states one of the laws of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. As libraries grow, changes are inevitable. Changes sweeping across libraries have never been so pronounced as seen in recent times with the advent of ICT applications in libraries. Phenomenal changes are seen in the way users access information and how libraries are managing their information resources in the present era. These changes are also affecting library and information science (LIS) professionals in new ways as never before. The professionals of today need to be skilled in many ways.

In India, a large number of library schools churn out graduates, post-graduates, and PhDs in library and information science. Additionally, certificate and diploma level students are also produced by many institutes thus making available a large potential workforce for the library and information services sector. While this potential workforce is knowledgeable about the LIS discipline by virtue of their education, the question remains whether graduates are skilled enough to launch them-

selves in the workplace, that is, the modern libraries and information centres of today.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Librarians and their professional bodies have identified a range of skills and these have been grouped or classified in a number of different ways. For example, one of the classifications categorizes skills as either professional or personal.<sup>1</sup> Authors have emphasized the importance of different skills but what could be generally agreed upon is that information professionals in new library environments need hybrid skills or should have multiple skills. Nicholas Joint states that generic skills such as cataloging and indexing formed the bedrock for LIS professionals in the traditional library whereas the skills required in the digital library are more heterogeneous, fluid, and fast changing.<sup>2</sup>

Stephens and Hamblin<sup>3</sup> have identified skills required by the library and information management sector in academic, pharmaceutical, school/college, public, law, health, business, government, non-profit, and banking libraries. LIS education programmes in India do not particularly aim at producing library professionals for specific libraries such as academic libraries, special libraries, corporate libraries, etc., although students can elect projects and paper topics that focus on specialized areas. Many of the skills such as the core and ICT skills that emerging library professionals acquire through their academic programmes are common to any type of librarianship, although specialized LIS programmes are desirable. It is only in recent years that courses such as Post Graduate Diploma in Library Automation and Networking, which is a more specialized course, have been introduced in some universities.

Academic libraries constitute a significant proportion among the various types of libraries. The present study focuses on skills largely within the context of academic libraries. With regard to the skills needed for the academic library professional, Morgan<sup>4</sup> has dwelt on core skills which are grouped under credibility with academic staff, teaching and training, IT related skills, and management skills. As credibility with academic staff deals with status, academic degrees, subject knowledge, etc., which are more qualifications than skills, these have not been considered for the present study.

As shown above, LIS professionals need a variety of skills, and various authors have through different studies attempted to identify these. Fisher<sup>5</sup> categorizes them broadly as professional information skills and generic skill, as shown in Table 1.

Another study on skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century LIS professionals analyses four skills using innovative developments in library and information services, grouping them under the metaphors of mountain climbing, jumping, orienteering and endurance, and suggests that the range of skills should be fostered both by education and in the workplace.<sup>6</sup>



**Table 1:** Fisher's skills needed by information professionals

Professional Information skills	Generic skills
Knowledge Management Information architecture ICT skills Technical (traditional) professional skills	Project management **Planning and evaluation People management Research skills Bids and proposals
Subject expertise Collection management Collection description Technical (traditional) professional skills	Critical skills Thinking **Planning and evaluation Analysis Problem solving Research
Information technology Design Application Systems User support (problem solving)	Leadership General management Communication skills Strategic management People skills Financial skills
Service Development User information Surveys Service impact analysis Planning and evaluation** Promotion and marketing*	*Promotion and marketing Design appreciation Presentation skills Multi-professional appreciation

Continuing professional development (CPD) is essential in order to adapt to the changes that are happening in the workplace, especially libraries, so that library professionals can remain valuable in their jobs. A survey carried out among information professionals in the health and energy/oil sectors to understand professionals' attitudes toward CPD and to identify their transferable skills revealed that computer skills, communication and interpersonal skills, technical skills, management skills, and teaching skills were selected by the respondents as those that they considered to be transferable to other sectors within and without the information profession.<sup>7</sup>

While a large number of universities offer BLIS, MLIS and other higher education programmes, there are a very few organizations that give short term courses on emerging areas for continuous professional development. Nyamboga<sup>8</sup> lists organizations involved in training of library and information professionals in India. These include the Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre [presently National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources], Documentation Research and Training Centre, Information and Library Network, National

Information System for Science and Technology, and Developing Library Network.

There are several studies that have assessed the information skills of the respondents themselves, be it LIS professionals or students.<sup>9-11</sup> But there are few studies that seek to survey librarians about their perceptions of the information skills required by new information professionals, particularly in developing countries. Here an attempt has been made to fill that gap by studying librarians presently working in academic libraries in the city of New Delhi, India.

## METHODOLOGY

There are a number of academic libraries in New Delhi; however, for the present study 25 select librarians were chosen to explore their perceptions of skills needed by future information professionals. A web based questionnaire using QuestionPro ([www.questionpro.com](http://www.questionpro.com)) was prepared. The 25 librarians are mostly library heads, senior or middle level librarians of academic institutions, including universities, colleges, and institutes of higher learning. Their e-mail addresses were obtained, and the link to the questionnaire was sent to them.

Out of the 25 questionnaires sent, 20 responses were received. These have been analyzed with the aim of determining opinions about the skills required by future library and information professionals, as well as new skills needed by those already in the field.

**Table 2:** Questions posed to the respondents

1. Do you think the emerging or new LIS professionals are skilled enough to work in the modern libraries of today?
2. Are LIS courses in India imparting the necessary skills to the students to enable them to work in modern libraries of today?
3. Some skills identified for emerging library professionals are given below. Kindly rank the skills you perceive as most important to less important ones.
  - a. Research skills
  - b. Marketing skills
  - c. Communication skills
  - d. ICT Skills
  - e. Negotiation skills
  - f. Management skills
  - g. Training skills
  - h. Organizational skills
4. Kindly list below the professionals skills that you feel are essential in emerging information professionals.

5. Do you think working LIS professionals of today are skilled enough to handle the operations in the changing work environment of today's libraries?
6. How important do you think are re-skilling of working LIS professionals necessary?
7. Are the short term training courses conducted for working LIS professionals by different organisations in India adequate?
8. Does your library provide any in-house continuing professional development programme for your own library professionals?
9. Please list the areas in which you feel the information professionals in your library can work better with training?

To understand what the librarians perceive about the importance of the various skills, we selected eight and asked the respondents to rank these skills. The choice was made by consolidating lists of skills that have been identified in various studies.<sup>12</sup> There were eight skills that were repeatedly discussed in the literature and that also corresponded with the insight of the authors of the present study.

## RESULTS

### *Are emerging information professionals well prepared?*

Out of the twenty respondents, 50% of the respondents felt that the emerging information professionals are skilled enough to work in the modern libraries of today to some extent only. Twelve percent felt that they are not skilled enough and only 37% felt that the new professionals are skilled enough. Since 12% have stated that new information professionals are not skilled enough and 50% feel that they are skilled enough to some extent only, it can be deduced that the majority of respondents are not fully satisfied with the skill levels of the new professionals.

The respondents were also asked if the LIS courses in India are imparting the necessary skills that enable graduates to work in modern libraries. Half of the respondents' (50%) perception is that it is to some extent only that the LIS courses in India are imparting the necessary skills to the students that enable them to work in modern libraries of today. Another 25% clearly stated that the necessary skills are not being imparted.

From the foregoing, it is seen that, firstly, the majority of the librarians are not fully satisfied with the skill sets of the new information professionals and secondly, majority of them feel that the library schools are not imparting all the requisite skill sets. In view of the responses on these two counts, there is an urgent need to revisit the curriculum and make suitable changes so that a skilled workforce can be produced by the LIS schools.

Table 3 gives the ranking of the eight skills by the respondents. From the table it can be seen that the communication skills have been identified as the most important skill required by the emerging information professional even ahead of the ICT skills which has been identified as the second most important skill. This is followed by management skills, organization skills, research skills, marketing skills and negotiation skills.

**Table 3:** Ranking of skills new professionals should have

Rank	Skill
1.	Communication skills
2.	ICT skills
3.	Management skills
4.	Organization skill
5.	Research skills
6.	Training skills
7.	Marketing skills
8.	Negotiation skills

In addition to the ranking of the skills given in Table 3, the respondents were also asked to name any other skills that they thought were important for emerging information professionals. Although none of the respondents identified any other new skill, the respondents pointed to certain qualities that new information professionals should have such as innovativeness, keenness to learn and explore new and emerging developments, self-propelling behaviour, and a positive attitude. This highlights that in addition to knowledge and skills, librarians also look for certain personal qualities in emerging information professionals.

#### ***Re-skilling of the current LIS workforce***

LIS professionals presently working in libraries have completed their education more than a decade ago and need to be provided training on various aspects that have emerged during the last decade, particularly in the area of ICT applications. These library professionals are “digital migrants” but are serving users many of whom are “digital natives.” To bridge any gap between the two and also to enable coping with the changing digital environment, training of existing LIS professionals is essential.

With regard to the re-skilling aspect in the present survey, it was found that 93% of the respondents felt that re-skilling of the working LIS professionals is necessary and the rest thought it was not very important. None of the respondents mentioned that it is not required. This clearly shows that periodic training is to be

imparted on new developments to the working professionals to enable them to function in the modern library environment in an effective and efficient manner.

The respondents were asked whether the range of short-term training courses for working LIS professionals conducted by different organizations in India is adequate. Forty-three percent of the respondents stated that the courses were adequate only to some extent, whereas 38% stated that the provision was adequate and 18% stated that it was inadequate. From the responses, it is clear that the majority of the respondents feel that the existing short-term training courses provided by the different institutions in India are not adequate.

When asked about the provision of in-house professional development, it was found in the present study that about 69% of the libraries offer in-house training programmes and the remaining libraries do not offer any in-house training.

#### ***Areas identified for training/skilling***

A library has several operations to carry out which could include routine house keeping operations or others such as rendering information services. The final question asked the librarians to list the areas in their libraries where their staff can function better with training. Though this can be specific to libraries concerned, still eliciting this information could give an overall picture on such areas that need attention by trainers. A number of areas/aspects as given in Table 4 were identified by the respondents.

**Table 4:** Current staff training needs

	<b>Areas in which training is needed</b>
1.	Library automation
2.	Reference service
3.	Networking
4.	Digitization & Digital Libraries
5.	Open Source Software
6.	Handling e-resources
7.	Managerial skills
8.	Web based information services
9.	Negotiation
10.	Internet search and access

## DISCUSSION

In view of the responses to the questions about what skills are needed by new professionals and whether library schools are teaching them adequately, the results show that there is an urgent need to revisit the curriculum and make suitable changes so that a skilled workforce can be produced by the LIS schools. It is rather interesting to note that communication skills have been rated ahead of other skills, particularly ICT skills, because given the technological wave that is sweeping across the libraries and given that many libraries in India today fall short when it comes to automation, it was expected that ICT skill might be rated as the most desirable skill. In other developing countries, ICT frequently heads the list. Mahmood and Khan<sup>13</sup> reflect the varied ICT skills required by the LIS professionals in Pakistan by carrying out a needs assessment. Adomi and Anie<sup>14</sup> have assessed the computer literacy skills of professionals in Nigerian University libraries. A study on the ICT skills among the librarians in engineering educational institution in Tamil Nadu shows that the LIS professionals are acquiring considerable basic ICT skills, but they are limited with regard to network based services and library skills.<sup>15</sup>

The literature abounds with papers about the need for ICT skills among LIS professionals in various countries. However, since the present study is limited to the city of New Delhi, it can be said that ICT trained staff are easier to come by. Training centres and better quipped educational facilities are relatively more available. Therefore, it is understandable that ICT skills are ranked after communication which in many other studies has also been identified as a vital skill. But it is surprising to note that negotiation, a skill closely related to the communication, has been ranked the lowest. The ability to negotiate can be considered to be an important skill, as libraries are increasingly negotiating with e-publishers for access to e-resources. Ashcroft has identified, among other skills, negotiating as important in order to address issues of purchasing and collaboration. Purchasing is no longer a simple process, as the bundling of subscriptions to e-journals is increasingly the norm for obtaining the best deals.<sup>16</sup>

In a populous country like India, which has a large number of working and emerging information professionals, there is a need for educational institutions to come forward and provide a greater number of courses in emerging areas of LIS. It can be inferred that there is a need to strengthen short course offerings for practitioners as well. The fact that 69% percent of the respondents' libraries offer in-house training seems a rather healthy sign and shows the realization among the library heads about the importance of training the library's staff on-the-job. A combination of such onsite and offsite training can keep the staff motivated as they are skilled to perform in the changing work environments. In-house training is a cost-effective way of providing continuing education to the staff of a particular library. The training can be provided by a knowledgeable and skilled in-house staff member who might have undergone training for a particular skill. For example, a staff

member who has learned installation and operation of software can impart that skill to the rest of his or her colleagues in the library by providing an in-house programme. The other way is to have on-site training provided by an expert in a special area. Such onsite training cannot only be cost effective but can also be focused on the specific requirements of the library concerned.

It is interesting to note from Table 4 that a majority of the areas identified as those in which librarians need further training are related to ICT and its applications. This is in sharp contrast to the skills that the respondents perceive as important for new information professionals, that is, communication skills (Table 3). This highlights the perception that new library professionals are clearly lacking in communication skills whereas existing staff are lacking in ICT skills. As is the situation worldwide, ICT skills among the working professionals in libraries are lacking in India too.

## **CONCLUSION**

Librarians and library heads are the key decision makers when selecting library professionals for their libraries. So, understanding their perception of skill sets that are required by new information professionals is useful not only for education and training institutions to modify their curricula, but it is also useful for new information professionals to understand the expected skill sets in the employment sector and assess their own skills and bridge any gap that may exist between the two. From this study, it is clear that the librarians who responded are neither fully satisfied with the skills sets or the new information professionals nor with the education and training programmes that are expected to impart such skills. This makes it necessary that curricula of LIS programmes in India need to be revised and such revision needs to be done more frequently. Although the University Grants Commission model curriculum is revised only after long intervals, the education institutions need to update the curriculum at least once in two years. There is also a need for drawing up specialized course curricula for different types of librarianship such as academic, corporate, law, health, and so on. It may not be possible for one institution to provide different librarianship programmes owing to constraints, but different library schools could focus on specializations in librarianship and go on to become centres of excellence in that domain. Moreover, the library schools should focus on communication skill which clearly has been accorded importance ahead of ICT skills for the future information professionals. Most library schools have realized the importance of imparting ICT skills but the ICT topics and skills taught should be constantly upgraded so that the new information professionals acquire the latest ICT skills. The institutions providing short term training courses should revitalize such courses by adding more contemporary courses and modifying existing courses to meet changing library needs. Further, more and more insti-

tutions need to conduct such short term training courses so as to have a wider outreach.

The present study is limited in size of sample, scope, and region. There is a need to carry out similar studies on a larger scale in order to have a deeper understanding of perceptions of librarians about what skills are required by information professionals in the future. This study paves way for that.

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**PATHWAYS TO NEW ACADEMIC LIBRARY PRACTICES –  
SOUTH AFRICAN EXPLORATION TOWARDS 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
ACADEMIC RESEARCH SUPPORT**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper reviews the characteristics and skills of a future generation of research librarians as identified and reflected in findings of recent substantial surveys and studies. A South African joint university libraries project, funded by Carnegie Corporation [sic] of New York, has as its aim the strengthening of library support for academic researchers through the development of research librarians more knowledgeable about their subject domains and research processes, and differently and more highly skilled, than present subject reference librarians. Recent studies highlight the importance of new knowledge, skills and attitudes for the enhanced credibility of research librarians as partners on the academic research team.*

*Professional workplace realities in South African academic libraries, however, indicate that wide gaps in knowledge, skill and attitude, ascribed to a complex legacy of the past, must be narrowed before such partnerships become generally possible. The paper considers how such transformation might be achieved in a South African context, and proposes as yet untested but feasible options that might support and contribute towards establishing research partner librarians, thus also contributing to improving research throughput and productivity in academic institutions, a South African national imperative.*

**INTRODUCTION**

... if we were to design a system to address the needs of digital scholarly resources, it would certainly be different from the library... The[se] managers – be they called librarians or not – would be responsible for building and maintaining the multiple partnerships with scholars, learned societies, content creators, publishers and, above all, with each other across the globe, that would support persistent access to high-quality research resources.<sup>1 (p20)</sup>

This paper addresses the challenge of “retro-fitting” professional librarians for increased credibility. A joint Carnegie Corporation-funded Research Libraries Consortium (RLC) project,<sup>2</sup> in place at the Universities of Cape Town, KwaZulu-

Natal, and the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (“Wits”), has focused, in 2006-2009, on developing three interdependent elements of research support at the three participating institutions. These elements are:

1. a Research Portal;
2. the Research Commons (a physical space particularly for the ‘one stop’ support of young researchers); and
3. a cohort of mid-career Research Librarians more knowledgeable about the research process in different disciplines, and better skilled in collaborative and support activities with researchers, than their subject/reference librarian counterparts. By mid 2009, 36 librarians will have each participated in a two-week local residential Librarians’ Academy and 15 of these will have further participated in internship programmes for six to eight weeks each at major university libraries in the U.S.A. Collectively these “Carnegie research librarians” have formed, at each institution, a core team for developing a new, higher level support relationship with graduate research students and academic faculty researchers.

### DO RESEARCH LIBRARIANS GO IN DEEP ENOUGH?

When research librarians surf the web, do they surf in the deep sea swell of the disciplines they serve, browsing the online or print journals, following the breaking news of research and publications on relevant websites? Or do many, as Mann<sup>3</sup> suggests, stop with the known facts, easily retrieved by applying competent search and retrieval techniques to the vast range of resources, almost entirely online, that are their daily stock in trade in all academic and research libraries?<sup>3 (p 4-5)</sup>

(The present author has anecdotal evidence that some South African librarians are no different. Confronted with reading Bill Bryson’s popular history of science, *A Short history of nearly everything*,<sup>4</sup> which some RLC Academy participants found a challenging task, one queried, “Why do we have to read something we know nothing about?”)

Mann argues a strong case for applying the sophisticated skills of the cataloguer to the research information environment, and for the research librarian to be aware of, and follow up on, “relationships, interconnections, contexts and integration.” Referring to the differences he perceives between “scholarship” and “quick information seeking,” he maintains that

Getting a researcher efficiently *from* what he or she asks for *to* what is available in a research library is a much more complex operation than most librarians realise; it is also more complex than too many library managers themselves seem to understand. Most of it cannot be done remotely through searching the open internet, no matter how much under-the-hood programming underlies the utopian ‘single search box’.<sup>3 (p 4)</sup>

## ASERL COMPETENCIES

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) Education Committee developed and approved in 2000 five comprehensive competencies for research librarians,<sup>5</sup> stating that “the research librarian

1. develops and manages effective services that meet user needs and support the research library’s mission;
2. supports cooperation and collaboration to enhance service;
3. understands the library within the context of higher education (its purpose and goals) and the needs of students, faculty, and researchers;
4. knows the structure, organization, creation, management, dissemination, use, and preservation of information resources, new and existing, in all formats; and
5. demonstrates commitment to the values and principles of librarianship.”

These statements, each enhanced with detailed activities and attributes, profile a research librarian with intellectual curiosity, flexibility, adaptability, persistence and the ability to be enterprising; with excellent communication skills, and personal commitment to lifelong learning and career development. Such a librarian would go, intellectually as well as technologically, beyond the basics of competent information-seeking for known facts, and apply high level skills and abilities that would include

- professional competence in the traditional fields of metadata and the newer fields generated by digital librarianship and data curation;
- broad and specialised knowledge of a domain, and the initiative to update that knowledge proactively and to think laterally across domains; and
- the will and initiative to engage with researchers in their domains.

## WHAT DO RESEARCHERS WANT?

In the years 2006-2009, five major studies on research libraries and librarians have collectively presented challenges for far-reaching change in the abilities, attitudes, behaviours and service provision activities of academic research librarians.

### *1. Ithaka’s 2006 Studies of Key Stakeholders in the Digital Transformation in Higher Education*<sup>6</sup>

This study reported on large scale surveys undertaken to study attitudes towards transition to an electronic environment. The report shows that faculty increasingly valued electronic resources but perceived themselves to be *decreasingly* dependent on the library for their research and teaching<sup>6 (p4-5)</sup> and although scholars reported

general respect for libraries and librarians, “the library is increasingly disintermediated from their actual research process” – in other words, researchers no longer used the library as a gateway to information.<sup>6 (p30)</sup>

The Ithaka studies have tested three “roles” of the library: purchaser, archive and gateway.<sup>6 (p5)</sup> The role as purchaser was most highly rated by faculty, whereas that of gateway has varied more widely and fallen over time, as tables in the report reflect.<sup>6 (p6 8-12)</sup> Responses also varied significantly by discipline – more than 80% of faculty in humanities generally saw the librarian’s role as having greater continuing importance than did social scientists (round 70%) or scientists (60%), and within these very broad groupings again, there was substantial variation (e.g. between sociologists and economists).<sup>6 (p 6)</sup>

Librarians’ 2006 perceptions of their own roles were very different from faculty perceptions: over 90% of librarians listed their role of gateway for faculty as very important and almost as many expected it to remain very important in five years. The authors pose the question that, if librarians viewed the gateway function as critical but faculty in certain disciplines found it to be declining in importance, “how can libraries, collectively or individually, strategically align the services that support the gateway function?”<sup>6 (p6 11-12)</sup> The report also concludes that different disciplines have dramatically different needs, interests and priorities...a ‘one size fits all’ solution will not, in fact, fit all.<sup>6 (p30-31)</sup>

## **2. Researchers’ Use of Academic Libraries and their Services**<sup>7</sup>

This 2007 British report listed the seven roles of research librarians that were most highly ranked out of 13 options by researchers, and identified as likely for five years into the future:

1. Custodian of print-based and digitised archives and special collections. (72%);
2. Managers of institutional repositories of digital information (61%);
3. Administration (purchase and delivery) of information services (59%);
4. Subject based information expert (core role: 46%; ancillary role: 33%).

More researchers in arts, humanities and social sciences valued the subject-based expertise of librarians than did researchers in the sciences. A significant, though smaller proportion of researchers envisaged subject-based information experts from the library being embedded in departments or research groups, either as a core or ancillary role. Some librarians surveyed saw librarians in a future role working in the “subject communities” they served, working with researchers on projects, or in an advisory role. The report suggests that “The role and location of subject and research librarians is clearly a matter that needs to be discussed further between the library and research communities... The researchers we talked to frequently expressed the opinion that their subject librarian fulfilled a vital role in their working lives.”<sup>7 (p43-46)</sup>

Other top roles of research librarians were:

5. Teacher of information literacy and related skills (42% core, 39% ancillary);
6. Manager of the vast datasets generated by e-research (33% core, 27% ancillary);
7. Technology specialist facilitating electronic access to information resources (34% core, 37% ancillary).

The survey also showed that some researchers thought librarians should carry out other more technical support functions; as reported above, from the Ithaka study, the research librarians surveyed did not always agree with researchers, and the roles that they saw for themselves <sup>7 (p46-56)</sup> included:

- providing library-based advice or formal training to researchers; and
- providing library-based skills development for researchers (including guiding researchers through the process from simple information management to information dissemination, but recognising that this may be perceived as an intrusion on the research student-supervisor relationship).

### **3. NYU 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library Project <sup>8</sup>**

In this 2007 study, conducted for New York University Libraries, expectations of the roles of research librarians are embedded throughout the report. Most researchers expressed high expectations of librarians and the compilers of the report felt it was difficult to identify the core priorities that best served the most people. However, researchers did not always express confidence in the specialist subject knowledge of the librarian:

- “I am skeptical that a librarian would actually be able to select a set of books that would be more useful to me than one selected by another computer scientist;”
- “I often feel the suggestions of librarians are too broad.”<sup>8 (p20-21)</sup>

### **4. No Brief Candle: Reconceiving Research Libraries for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century <sup>9</sup>**

This Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) report comprises proceedings of a 2008 symposium and a “series of provocative essays.”<sup>9 (p v)</sup>

Smith highlights six trends in the academic research environment which she believes are likely to shape scholarship in the next decades, and therefore reflect something about the resources scholars will use, how they will use them and in each case what the implications for research libraries may be:

- ascendance of science;
- development of digital humanities;
- emphasis on process over product;
- “mobile and ubiquitous” computing;

- data deluge; and
- rising costs and changing funding models – so that the library on campus must “continuously demonstrate its value.”<sup>10</sup> (p4-18)

Luce,<sup>10</sup> writing about the emergence of e-research, believes that the characteristics of e-science (i.e. working on problems that have only become solvable in recent years with improved data collection and data analysis capabilities) fundamentally alter the way in which scientists carry out their work and “will require a corresponding change in the ways in which libraries serve scientists’ needs.”<sup>10</sup> (p42) He describes key roles for the research library, indicating that “the level of knowledge and engagement required goes well beyond knowledge of the literature – requires being a trusted member of the community with recognised authority in information-related matters. This new paradigm entails shifting library foci from managing specialized collections to emphasizing proactive outreach and engagement.”<sup>10</sup> (p44) Changes in research libraries must be driven by and reflect the needs of the research communities they seek to support, and the challenges facing research libraries are “to articulate and advance our role and unique capabilities into the virtual laboratory environment.”<sup>10</sup> (p48)

### ***5. Scholarly Information Practices in the Online Environment*<sup>11</sup>**

This OCLC Research report was published in January 2009. The authors present in depth analyses across subject domains of the scholarly information activities of searching, collecting, reading, writing, collaborating and the so-called cross-cutting scholarly “primitives” of monitoring, note-taking, translating and data practices. They have thus “derived a framework of scholarly information activities ... to serve as points for comparisons across domains ... to advance understanding of the information work of scholarly communities.”<sup>11</sup> (p6-7)

In an extensive table at the end of the report, the authors highlight “potential collaborative or shared services.” This table effectively offers a checklist for developing enhanced services in the research library, many of which also feature, explicitly or implicitly, in the earlier studies described above. As the authors suggest, “Opportunities for development are continually presenting themselves, while many longstanding challenges remain.”<sup>11</sup> (p37-42)

## **THE SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT**

Complementing points made in the studies described above, Andrew Kaniki, Executive Director, Knowledge Fields Development at the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), has recently highlighted new areas in the research environment in South Africa in which research librarians (and most specifically the RLC project participants) should become informed and proactively engaged:

- Issues related to South Africa's international research competitiveness, reflected in ISI citation ranking, analysis and interpretation; measuring and providing evidence of progress and/or regression in international competitiveness;
- Use of *ISI Web of Knowledge* and *Scopus* for collection and interpretation of indicators, including citation metrics that are discipline specific;
- Provision of support for the NRF application processes (researcher rating system & grant applications);
- Provision of information and guidance on who is involved in the system (nationally and internationally);
- Identification of potential reviewers (for NRF rating of researchers & grant proposals);
- Establishing a liaison with institutional Research Offices;
- Engaging with pre-evaluation of research outputs – especially books (checking accuracy of data reported, especially bibliographic information);
- Facilitation of appropriately completed submissions for Department of Education research publication subsidies;
- Assisting researchers with research integrity – data sources; references, etc.;
- Becoming engaged in the field of scientific data preservation and management.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Foundations and future directions for South African academic and research librarians***

Librarians in South Africa attain first level professional graduate qualification by one of three four-year degree paths which incorporate widely differing combinations of academic, professional and technological course content and structure of majors. Entry-level and middle-level cohorts of professional librarians in academic and research libraries move to post-basic LIS graduate studies most commonly through coursework Honours and Masters degree programmes, in professional rather than academic studies, such as management and information/knowledge management. It is apparent, for example from applications for more senior posts at Wits as a typical South African academic library, that few librarians return to an academic subject discipline to complete a Masters degree by dissertation. Fewer still embark on professional LIS studies after obtaining a PhD in an academic discipline, as Rentfrow<sup>13</sup> describes of herself.

South African LIS graduates acquire theoretical knowledge in courses *inter alia* on information studies, and knowledge and information management. In the workplace this knowledge is not always internalised, nor is sufficient subject domain knowledge or high level technological knowledge retained or transferred from undergraduate studies, to support academic subject librarianship, digital librarianship or academic research for higher degrees. The general absence of substantial underpinning knowledge for effective research collection development and



high level professional practice in support of scholarly information activity, presents a major challenge to academic research library managers. This also points to South African professional LIS education as a legacy product of South African education in general, particularly education for black South Africans, during half a century of apartheid philosophy.

Major academic institutions in South Africa aspire to move higher in the international 'league tables' of universities by increasing their research output and the status of their researchers. Studies such as those analysed above show it is critically important that effective research librarians understand the widely different needs and approaches to research and information resource access expressed by faculty in different disciplines; this is an area of knowledge and experience beyond academic subject knowledge in itself. These studies highlight the very considerable gap between the skills and activities of South African research libraries and librarians in support of institutional research activities, compared with those reflected internationally.

A number of the authors in the Council on Library and Information Resources report have persuasive views on new directions for LIS curriculum content and new forms of basic professional education for future research librarians. Rentfrow has expressed frustration that "discussion on digital humanities and thematic research collections is left ... to advanced classes concentrating on digital librarianship. The topics should be addressed in any class with students possibly interested in working in a research library." She offers extensive proposals for completely restructuring design of programmes and research library services for digital humanities: "What is needed for the research library of the future are librarians-scholars prepared and trained by degree programs that require rigorous scholarship, publications and teaching as part of training. One model might be a separate track designed specifically for academic librarians..."<sup>13</sup> (p62-64)

Luce has made the same points for provision of research library services for rapidly expanding e-research and e-science.<sup>10</sup> (p43) Dillon<sup>14</sup> has suggested a pedagogical model built on design and project experiences, a studio-based curriculum that builds the skills and knowledge required to participate intelligently in the changes affecting libraries. This would include working with projects involving real clients, a testing ground for ideas and potential solutions, providing the emerging professional with opportunities to hear from the field, work with an expert, and offer concrete responses. "Coupled with a strong theoretical education in human information interactions, we would educate a class of professionals equipped to grapple with the ill-structured problems faced by academic libraries at this time."<sup>14</sup> (p56-57)

These proposals do not, however, address the problem of "retro-fitting" early or mid-career professionals. Without advanced knowledge and new skills to support academic research trends toward e-research, e-science and digital commons, and new practices such as data curation and access to complex digital resources, the gap will widen and librarians in South African academic research institutions will be in danger of becoming less rather than more able to engage with researchers.

Beyond numerous CPD short course offerings, mostly in the form of sporadic workshops and symposiums, there is no South African framework, outside of the Master's and PhD degrees, for recognised post-basic specialisation. The question to be asked is therefore, where and how do professional academic librarians expect to acquire knowledge in a discipline-specific domain, or high level technological knowledge and skills for digital research library practice as described above, and thus move towards credibility as partners in the research enterprise?

Recognising this as a crucial question, the Carnegie RLC Librarians' Academy was developed as a post-basic academic initiative for meeting the challenge for intellectual development of research-skilled and competent professional academic librarians in South Africa. During the two-week programmes in 2007 and 2008, participating librarians were exposed to more than 30 high level academic presentations on research in all its forms, from a wide range of disciplines. They also met in daily work groups, including reading circles, to discuss pre-selected articles on what Rentfrow has called "big ideas,"<sup>13 (p63)</sup> and were each required to propose and write up, with some counselling, a relatively short research project for potential publication in a South African professional journal.<sup>15</sup> On their return to their home institutions, the Academy participants, anchored in the Research Commons, have formed a core for future research librarian practice.

South African academic and research library managers are challenged to provide library support for high level academic research, substantially in a digital environment, or they run the risk of becoming irrelevant to the research endeavour: "I have far more specialist knowledge than the librarians. As long as the library continues to provide the materials that I need for research and teaching, I am more than capable of finding what I need, either in print or electronically."<sup>16</sup>

The Carnegie RLC project, and the Librarians' Academy in particular, have made explicit the need for graduating librarians to be far better educated to meet these high level needs of academic researchers. Given the intake of most South African library schools, this may be a generally unrealistic expectation at the first level of qualification.

### *New pathways to CPD for South African research librarians*

Extrapolating from the model of the Academy programme and discussions arising from it, other possibilities arise. Dillon's "studio" approach referred to above suggests an application for innovative post-basic CPD. Other potential interventions, ranging from what can be embedded in the institutional workplace, to proposed changes at a national qualification framework level, include:

- to implement on-the-job guided professional self study, reading programmes ("reading circles") and writing circles, to instil initially a greater awareness of and critical debate around current developments and issues in research libraries;

- to design and implement coaching or shadowing programmes within or between university libraries, to spread the scarce skills as widely as possible; to attract visiting international consultants to do this;
- to recruit and employ, possibly on medium term contract, a parallel band of “new” librarians to work in research libraries side by side with the existing traditional subject librarians, specifically to engage with researchers and coach new skills;
- to engage institutionally with academic staff across disciplines to create and teach customised in-house short course programmes for upgrading knowledge and high level skills. These might include introductions to broad and narrow disciplines and discipline-specific research issues, and skills such as statistics and dataset management. Active participation in such courses might be a performance management requirement;
- to negotiate, as a performance management requirement, full participation by all professional librarians in institutional courses on research methodology which target graduate students;
- to incorporate the acquisition and application of knowledge for all professional academic and research librarian posts as a performance management requirement. This might be an annual quota of events including exposure to subject knowledge through reading appropriate source material; attending public or in-faculty research presentations; subscribing to and participating in relevant interactive professional networking websites such as electronic discussion lists, blogs, etc.; presenting at professional meetings; and publishing in the professional literature;
- In the area of formal qualifications at a post-basic level, to work with appropriate South African qualifications bodies, together with academic libraries as employers, the library schools and the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) to develop a graduate LIS specialist qualification, to be accommodated in the Higher Education Qualifications Framework.<sup>17</sup> Specialisation curricular clusters for advanced academic subject and research information work, could be compiled.
- To encourage research librarians to acquire PhD degrees. Those who have PhDs have been identified as playing an important role in raising the quality of academic library support for institutional research: for example, echoing Rentfrow,<sup>13</sup> the Dean of Research at the University of the Western Cape told the RLC Academy, “many more of our librarians must themselves come to hold PhDs ... good specialist research librarians get PhDs” and “can do almost everything a good supervisor can do for a PhD student.”<sup>18</sup>
- to design new research librarian job specifications for academic libraries and promote buy-in from all institutions, for example through pressure from local and national professional academic library bodies, following the recommendation of the CLIR:

- University administrators and librarians should consider creating new training and career paths for professionals going into the area of scholarly communication. New leadership programs need to be developed that reflect the rise in collaborative research and integrate support services such as those provided by research libraries into the process and methodologies of research.<sup>9 (p11)</sup>

Academic library managers have a vital role to play in the retrofitting endeavour. Identifying and setting performance goals for acquiring new knowledge and new skills, and embedding these in a supportive and challenging work environment is one area of responsibility; another is identifying and promoting, within the academic institution, new collaborative and partnership roles for research librarians. Relationship building at individual, school and faculty level is the ongoing responsibility of every research librarian, but it is the library director who has the greatest peer influence in institutional academic and research management circles, and must therefore “walk the talk”.

Finally, and controversially, it has been proposed (as for example in the studies referred to above) that professional LIS qualifications should not be mandatory for appointing to research librarian specialist posts, and that professional and technological qualifications or skills can be added as required on the job:

Hiring only staff with a master’s of library and information science (MLIS) degree is unlikely to bring in the breadth of skill and experience that is needed... We need new career paths for people who want to work in academic libraries, and we need the means to support them.<sup>9 (p3)</sup>

The successful research library of the future will have a staff composed of many types of librarians... Scholars with PhDs, MLIS-holding librarians, hybrids with both degrees, and others with neither degree will all have a role to play. Some will be housed in the library, some in academic departments, and some in teaching centers. Some will be unmoored consultants.<sup>13 (p65)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This paper has used the argument of several recent major international studies to highlight significant changes that must take place for South African academic research librarians to establish institutional credibility and an internalised understanding of the research process. The intellectual and collaborative relationship between research librarians and the academic researchers they should support, in order to remain relevant within the research environment, has yet to be institutionally established in most South African university libraries, and new, high level skills sets need to be acquired, or implemented from the knowledge base of post graduate theoretical studies, before this can realistically be achieved.

The Carnegie RLC project Librarians' Academy has provided an intensive but relatively short term and narrow-based model emphasising that academic research librarians should proactively work to acquire the scholarly habits of the academic researcher, and read, identify and explore research issues, writing these up for peer reviewed presentation and publication as routine ongoing behaviours. As indicated above, the Academy has delivered, through two iterations, a base of over 30 academic librarians as a seed bed in their home institutions. Wider and more ongoing interventions are required and some possibilities, largely workplace supported CPD, have been outlined. No interventions can however have a lasting effect unless these are internalised:

rather *more* is needed than for LIS professionals to promote their expertise more widely if they to [sic] aspire to involvement at the strategic and policy-making level. For many in the profession this is likely to entail the cultivation of *new attitudes* and the learning of new kinds of skills: *and opening up to new ways of thinking...* [present author's italics]<sup>19</sup>

The burning question remains:

But how do we balance a conservative, risk-averse nature with the need to respond to a changing environment... we need to experiment and develop opportunities for work in new sectors or new alignments with different organizations.<sup>9 (p2)</sup>

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