



Leading Ideas 14 (May 2000)

Keeping the Pace: How Librarians Retool for Changing Times

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Editor's Note

The changing day-to-day work of librarians and library staff has led to a re-evaluation of professional competencies. Particularly, rapid changes in technology are leading to an emphasis on professional retooling. In addition to the pressure of continuously developing new skills, a technology-savvy populous is demanding immediate and convenient access to information and has much less patience for instruction. Meanwhile, libraries continue to offer the traditionally core services of selection, organization, searching, and retrieval of information. This issue of *Leading Ideas* takes a glimpse at how changes in the profession--which maintains its historical focus of connecting people with information--have impacted several librarians.

In her article, "[New Jobs for Old: Librarians Now](#)," GraceAnne A. DeCandido compiles and synthesizes the professional profiles of seven librarians. These librarians describe how they came to librarianship as a profession and how they have kept pace with the increasing technological demands. As described in their interviews, technology has shaped the way that many traditional library functions are carried out--not replaced them--and enabled libraries to provide entirely new services. This article focuses on an issue that challenges the entire profession--how to help seasoned professionals stay current with their skills while integrating the talent and fresh perspective of a new generation.

I hope you enjoy the personal tone and insight shared through these interviews.

Sincerely,

DeEtta Jones
Editor

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New Jobs for Old: Librarians Now

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"for all who moveth doth in Change delight" ~ Spenser

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Stories

We use stories, and we need stories, to explain our lives to ourselves, and to each other. So when searching for a shorthand phrase to describe the way we work now, I heard in my head the magician of the Aladdin tale crying, "new lamps for old!" and so it was.

Of course, what Aladdin's princess unknowingly handed over to the evil magician was the magic lamp, seemingly worn and battered but possessed of a genie with the power to grant any wish. Over and over again, in the interviews with librarians that form the basis for this publication, they said that while the form of their work had indeed changed, the substance remained the same. Tools metamorphosed, but the ancient tasks of access, service, organization, and preservation remained. So the lamp of librarianship does indeed contain a genie who takes as many forms as Robin Williams in the Disney movie. That genie is reflected in the human face of librarians, who have met and mastered the new.

The sources for the following document are e-mail, telephone, and in-person interviews with about 50 librarians across North America (and, in a few cases, far beyond). Of those, about 38 responded in great detail to a series of questions. Most were academic librarians, but I also heard from public librarians, school librarians, and librarians in consortial or special libraries.

The full [questionnaire](#) I used is reproduced as an appendix to this document. I was trying to find out: How did you get to where you are? How did you learn what you needed to know? How do you perceive your job? What is it that you do every day?

Fundamentally, I wanted to describe what caused the changes in the workplace, what prepared people for those changes, how they mastered the new skills needed to cope with change. Then I wanted to know what these new jobs were and who were the people who filled them.

The rest of this document explains and explores the following ideas:

- The great changes in librarianship come from the rapid and widespread advances in technology.
- Librarians see the vast changes in their workplace reflected in changes in their personal lives.
- They have taught themselves what they needed to know through reading, research, contact with colleagues in person and at conferences, and dogged persistence at the school of hard knocks. For the most part, they did not take formal classes to learn what they know.
- There are many new professional titles, but librarians old

and new, no matter how they described their jobs, strongly adhered to the basic ethos of librarianship, that of connecting people with ideas.

- As a group, they are characterized by deep and abiding personal and professional interests, often in fields that may appear to have little or no relationship to each other.

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The spring of change

The source for the radical change in the work lives of librarians is technology: automation, telecommunications, the Internet. Not only has developing technology changed the way we do things like cataloging and processing, it has changed the ways we think about the work we do. Even more than that, technological innovation has provided the means and created the need for jobs that did not and could not exist before. Metadata librarian, distance education librarian, systems librarian--these kinds of titles represent work that is new.

Except that it isn't. While I seized on the metaphor of Aladdin's lamp as a hook on which to hang my thoughts, I have been intrigued by how the new jobs fit the philosophy of the old. The metaphor has played out consistently in the conversations I had with the people I interviewed. The people who do these new jobs, even when too young to have done the old ones, see themselves as librarians and their work as the work of librarianship--even those whose degree may not include the word "library." The *ethos*, that which defines a community or culture, remains remarkably constant. That ethos is the connecting of people to ideas.

New technologies do not make people change. People respond to the technologies and bend them to the reasons and purposes they see behind their jobs: the organization of information, access, service, preservation. The radical changes have come as librarians have changed their work lives in response to these new tools, but the tools did not replace fundamental values. The interviewees for this document see technology in service to those values.

Most of the changes these librarians described fell into two categories: (1) using technology to provide traditional services in a new way and (2) providing new services made possible by technology. An example of the first category might be "reference chat," real-time interaction with a reference librarian on the Web. An example of the second is the proliferation of distance learning librarians--those responsible for providing library services to students who might never be physically present on a campus in a particular geographical location.

This kind of survey self-selects: with rare exceptions, you only

receive responses from those who choose to respond. That played into what I was searching for, however. It meant that people who had thought deeply about change--had integrated it into their expectations about how their work life would be and would continue to be--were the ones who replied. Overall, their responses were characterized by fierce energy and by joy.

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How it was

The outpouring of response was remarkable. A great deal of my work life is spent online, but never in my years of sending queries via email have I received so numerous a series of generous and open-hearted replies. People wanted to talk about this, and they wanted to talk about it a lot.

Most of the respondents, as befits the current demographics of librarians, were aged 45 to 55. However, many were far younger, and the mix of male and female was about one in four. In several of the longer interviews, I chose to talk to people fairly new to the profession (less than five years) and fairly young (under 35). What is remarkable is not how different they are from older, more experienced librarians, but how similar.

I was specifically interested in documenting how people learned what they knew, how they adapted to changing circumstances, and how they viewed themselves and their institutions. I was not interested in hearing how much better it was in the old days, and, indeed, my questions seem to have weeded out the contingent that might have gone on about that at length. One public librarian did say rather wistfully that her job didn't seem to have much to do with books anymore. Even among the most technologically committed, however, that wasn't always the case.

One of these folks has written a Regency romance novel; one has invented a new methodology for measuring the quality of public library service; another sent me a picture of himself in front of the Toon-Town Library in Disneyland. The overall impression is of an extraordinarily strong-minded group of people who have found multiple pathways to making their jobs in libraries successful.

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Multiple roles

Not only were job titles many and varied, but the work these titles represented was varied, too. No correspondent admitted to having only one actual job assignment. The number and levels of responsibilities set upon one individual were often quite large. We'll take a look at some of the job titles and roles librarians find

themselves in, how they got there, and what made it possible.

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A life that changes

These librarians expressed a fair amount of chagrin as they contemplated the place they thought they would be in their careers and the place they actually were. Many said they thought that in their 40s or 50s they would know their jobs completely, and would come to their desks each day with some sense of mastery. They were bemused in their current assessment of their daily work, which presented learning challenges and new opportunities literally almost every day. Some thrived on this immediately, others learned to do so, forced by circumstances and their own obvious drive.

Toni Lohman, the collection management librarian of the Virginia Beach Department of Public Libraries, described it this way: "When I was younger I believed that by age 45 or 50 I'd have mastered my craft, so to speak, and would have little left to learn. Instead, I have to work very hard to keep up with changes, in fact it's far more difficult than learning to become a librarian ever was. However, I'm grateful for the constantly changing workplace because I'm never, ever bored."

Most of these librarians had worked in different types of libraries during their careers. Those who had decades of academic library experience often began their careers in public or school libraries, and some of those whose careers had been mainly in public libraries had some academic or other kind of library experience. And some found inspiration in having had other careers: several credited their ability to think in different ways with having served in the military, or in working in other bureaucracies like education or health care. Sometimes those bureaucracies served as a model to mold themselves against, and sometimes as a caution as to what not to do.

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What made them ready

The overwhelming response to "what prepared you emotionally for change" was "nothing"--usually followed by an exclamation point! These respondents were unequivocal that there is no way to prepare oneself for constant change, it's just "LIFE!" as one of them wrote. Others, however, had different responses. The reading of science fiction was cited more than once as an emotional tool to help one imagine change. Great personal changes--divorce, separation, moving, death of a loved one--were mentioned too. Respondents would say that radical changes in

their personal lives often happened at the same time as professional changes. Two people noted that restaurant work--managing and waitressing--taught service, negotiation, and people skills.

Some librarians clearly felt that it was in their own natures to respond to change. They described themselves as "restless" or "easily bored." One said simply, "I was born this way." Another public librarian described it thusly: "My job has been to help everyone else catch up with me. I will always be in a different place from the folks around me....My colleagues see me as the Pied Piper of new services." Others laid it to nurture: intellectual and creative parents who encouraged the same in their children, or being part of a military family that moved often and constantly remade itself to new environments. And then there was the librarian who wrote, "I grew up in a family of nine children and had to learn to go with the flow."

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How'd you learn what you know?

The range of educational background and on-the-job skills learned was extremely broad. Stephanie Walker of the University of Toronto had one of the most interesting backgrounds. She began her undergraduate career in computer science, switched to English and went on to earn an M.A. in it, and then went to library school. She describes her background as "a perfect fit" for the work she does now.

There was an interesting thread of yoking together studies or interests that might not be seen as compatible, not only computer science and literature, but film studies/folklore/comparative literature for one respondent and history/psychology/government/international studies for another. Other undergraduate or graduate concentrations include--besides the classic history or literature majors--computer science, anthropology, wildlife biology, mining engineering, registered nursing, and elementary education. The ability to draw knowledge, inspiration, and skills from a variety of sources--from former restaurant jobs to one's own children--was another point bringing these disparate people together.

Nearly all respondents mentioned reading and listening as ways they learned what they needed, and nearly all counted conferences, talking and working with colleagues, and online sources as places to learn. While occasionally a formal course was mentioned, that is not the chief way these people are expanding their skills. They are learning where they are, in part because "where they are" includes cyberspace, and many more venues are available to them. The change in the air--the feeling that what

they need to know is out there and that they can find it--is breathtaking.

Cyberspace is not their only campus, however. As mentioned above, the ability to find what they need to learn from what is at hand is a key skill, and they all have it to so intense a degree that no one actually mentioned it. It pulses through their replies, however, and its existence as a skill--"I can learn what I need to know"--needs to be reiterated. It underlies everything that follows in this document. It is the key idea.

I tried to find ways of describing another key idea, that of cascading change. Each technological advance leads to another and then another. One can only keep up if engaged in a kind of learning spiral: master this, and then this, and then that. It's an idea that none of the interviewees articulated, and yet which undergirds virtually every conversation we had.

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What do you do, exactly?

A "Very Large Array" of titles (to steal a phrase from astronomy) tried to capture and illuminate the kinds of work being done, but did not always succeed. Some people, it must be said, didn't have titles, and most would fail miserably at that classic sound-bite test of describing your work in one sentence. Some of the titles seem familiar, albeit with a twist: Instructional Technology Librarian, Associate Librarian Systems and Reference, Associate Director for Library Information Technology, School Librarian, Skokienet Librarian. Other titles are very different indeed: Metadata Librarian, Electronic Services Librarian, Digital Resources Librarian, Networked Resources Education Librarian, Head of Distance Library Services, Supervisor of the Cyber Center. One librarian telecommutes to his job in another state.

As these librarians talked about their work, however, what stood out in boldface was the multiplicity of skills needed, and how removed many of them were from what might be thought of as common to library work. No one is doing only one job any more. And while no one feels quite in command, this is seen as exhilarating rather than terrifying--mostly.

There is a body of skills, and a mindset, clearly identified with librarianship that is taken for granted: those skills and attitudes include service, access, bibliographic knowledge, organization of information. Beyond that, however, librarians stressed the need for familiarity with vendor contracts and grant proposals, accounting principles, political savvy, negotiation skills. There is a much greater emphasis on technical and systems skills on top of all of this. And yet many people seem not only to be coping but

thriving.

The people most successful and satisfied are those who have integrated the traditional library principles of access, retrieval, preservation, and reference seamlessly into new formats and new environments. They do not perceive a divide--it's not there for them.

They are also serving an ever-larger pool of people. In academic libraries, there is more and more service to people in their community who are not necessarily students. Some university libraries function as the local research collection, sponsor informal ties with public and school libraries in their communities, and invite local residents to use their collections either gratis or for a nominal fee. Universities with distance learning departments are finding new and myriad ways to serve students who are present on campus only occasionally or not at all. Several of the interviewees for this document are charged with the responsibility of providing library services to distance learning students.

Some of those students, and other patrons young and old, are surprisingly clueless about the use of a computer, to say nothing of how to frame a reference query, stressed reference librarian Jo Manning of Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida. Strategies for teaching necessary skills from mousing to searching are developing rapidly. In response to the title of this document, Manning wrote "The old ways of doing things have got to be augmented by the skills necessary to survive this new, fast-moving age of high-tech tools. We cannot, however, go back to Aladdin and the new lamps for old, [we cannot] throw away the hard-earned lessons of the old jobs. Our attitude and our professional philosophy make us different from the Information Technology professionals."

This is not a scientific or quantitative survey. It was meant to be a snapshot in time, a way to get at and tell the human stories behind the obvious and massive changes in the daily work lives of librarians now at the beginning of the 21st century. It was an extraordinarily rewarding project for the writer to find so large, so open, and so articulate a group of correspondents. Not only do these folks provide hope for the profession with a remarkable level of good cheer, but they were seeding the tools and skills of librarians in venues not always associated with them.

I hope you enjoy their company as much as I did.

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Profile: Carol Anne Germain

"I came to this as a 'first' second profession."

Carol Anne Germain teaches. Hers is not a regularly scheduled course, but she teaches in various university classes and on the fly, as it were, in the library. At the University at Albany, she and her colleagues are developing an information literacy program that will include interactive, web-based tutorials. As Networked Resources Education Librarian, she knows that "students often come in late, unorganized, and panicky. Listening to them and trying to work with them can really make their experience different." She writes of the rewards of seeing students--when she gets to work with them more than once--grow in their knowledge of how to use reference materials. She pays attention to public relations and has written grants for materials like balloons ("Welcome University Libraries") and stress balls ("Research Relief: University Libraries").

Germain works in a flattened hierarchy where there is no head of reference. Each of the eight members of the Reference Department is responsible for one of the tasks the head of reference used to manage. Representing the department is a task that rotates annually.

Germain credits her work as a waitress in another part of her life with teaching her valuable skills: patience, providing service, paying attention. In response to change, she says that librarians often manage change more easily than others "because we have the concepts down." Such change can be drastic to those in "mid-semester, mid-dissertation, mid-life." She sees her role in part as mediating that change for her patrons and for herself. "I came to this as a 'first' second profession," and is an unabashed promoter of what she does: "I love my job!"

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Profile: Kevin W. Bishop

"Librarianship transforms itself in response to the tools at our disposal."

In his first professional library position and 15 months into his job, 29-year-old Kevin Bishop is the Campus-Wide System Coordinator for RPInfo, the internal gateway to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's websites. His job involves rather more work with disparate departments and offices than those of his fellow librarians at RPI. He's an active creator of websites for various offices, assists with the faculty laptop training program, and teaches web page authoring classes.

"What I learned in library school deeply informs what I do as a web developer," Bishop notes. He says that his skills as an

information architect facilitate the organization of campus-related information. While he feels that his work tends to place him at one remove from other RPI librarians, he has helped set up a professional organization aimed at supporting the work of campus-wide webmasters, HighEdWeb, <http://web.stlawu.edu/highedweb/>.

He clearly loves that his job involves a bit of everything: coding, management, relations with the entire campus community. But the things that he loves are a source of frustration, too. On a daily basis, for RPInfo, he's "it." He feels that a first professional job with an engineering school is a good starting place, noting that he had some concerns about being a humanities person (folklore, film studies, comparative literature) at a technical school, but those concerns have since dissipated.

Bishop doesn't feel like a typical librarian, he says, in part because his job is so different from those of his colleagues. On the other hand, what we see more and more is that no job is typical, at least, among the stalwart pioneers of "New Jobs for Old."

He embodies a near-universal characteristic of these librarians--a need to learn, and to keep learning. As he points out, a web developer needs to keep up, because things change almost weekly. He is professionally concerned with developing technology and with web accessibility issues, and both of these areas are in constant flux.

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Profile: Ramona Holmes

"If librarianship is to have a place, it is up to us to make that place."

Ramona Holmes serves two masters at the University of Texas at Arlington: she's the metadata librarian responsible for creating and maintaining the library website and she coordinates the electronic resources in the cataloging department. She even reports to two supervisors. Instead of finding this troublesome, she sees herself as the bridge connecting cataloging to metadata. She feels strongly that cataloging needs to take back technical mastery of its processes, and she is working toward that reconciliation.

Holmes, 31, is a Native American (Choctaw) librarian who worked for 11 years as a paraprofessional before getting her degree. She took her first HTML course as an English major undergraduate, as much a key to the new world as any indicator one can find.

She speaks soberly but thoughtfully about the divide between

herself and librarians who earned their degrees in the 1970s and 1980s. The many and varied kinds of new technology mean that for her older colleagues, "the learning curve is steeper and the frustration level higher."

She notes that she hasn't used a card catalog since she was 12, and that her generation tends to "do what we need to do and then move on." She credits older coworkers with slowing down the planning process enough to see things "that I never even thought about." Holmes sees her role as planning, theory, philosophy, and cognitive practice: the managerial marriage of cataloging and IT. "If librarianship is to have a place," she muses, "it is up to us to make that place," basing her remarks on a saying from Gandhi that she says she tries to live in all ways: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Not only does she look forward to the possibility of continuing her research for a Ph.D., but she wants to be a library director, because only there, she says, can she bring the two halves of her work together and move them forward.

In our conversation, I couldn't help but mention how astonishing it was to me to hear a new librarian see a professional path so clearly and mark it as her own. If young women new to the field can already see themselves as directors, we have indeed come a-ways along the path of righteousness.

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Profile: Jo Manning

"It is the best job in the world, and I am very lucky to do what I love."

Jo Manning has had one of the most varied careers of any of the interviewees. At 59, she worked more than 20 years as a corporate librarian for Reader's Digest, Citibank, and ABC News, when she returned to academic librarianship. Now a "freelance reference librarian" at Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida, Manning spoke eloquently about the differences between the corporate environment, where pretty much everything was done for the patron, to the university environment, where the emphasis is on teaching and directing. When she worked at the University of Miami, which also serves the local community (for a \$5 fee, anyone can use the library), she found she performed many of the functions of public library service. Sometimes it seemed on a busy weekend there were hardly any students to be seen. In Florida, she notes, "Everyone in this area is entitled to use the libraries at the state universities and county community colleges.... The public's right to know should be honored. Real librarians with a sense of mission--especially in these times, when the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor is yawning wide--have to do all they possibly can to help."

Manning muses that some librarians accustomed to the more deliberate pace of academic libraries even so recently as a decade ago find the speed and intensity, to say nothing of the technology, daunting. She says they have only two choices: "retire early, or start learning, fast."

When talking about specific skills, Manning is deadpan but sober. "I can read," she says, citing her skill at interpretation. "I can type," a resurgent skill particularly when trying to teach those who had never touched a keyboard. "I listen to people, I don't interrupt...I have an excellent memory." Manning, who has strong searching skills honed in a corporate environment and has taught bibliographic instruction formally and informally for years, cites these basic skills as the most important in her career. "We cannot throw away the hard-learned lessons of the Old Jobs," she says in direct reference to the Aladdin story of our title.

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Profile: Jo Ann Carr

"Listening is not a skill in which I have received formal instruction but I keep practicing and critiquing this skill."

Jo Ann Carr is the 47-year-old director of the School of Education Center for Instructional Materials & Computing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Key to her efforts is the current attempt to "maintain parallel physical and virtual services and environments." She administers a center that provides library, media, computing, and instructional networking support for School of Education programs. Because the center has clearly integrated information and technology, she has a role in integrating technology in the teacher education curriculum.

Computer classrooms, production areas, and computer lab provide spaces to preview, study, and utilize word processing, spreadsheets, graphics production packages, desktop publishing, statistical software, web development software, digital video editing, desktop conferencing, listservs, and video streaming. She notes that as she moves toward seeing herself more as an educator than a librarian, the education faculty view the success of the center as an attribute of librarianship--librarians know how to organize knowledge, make connections, and provide analysis.

Carr most values skills in management, communication, and analysis. "Speaking and writing [in] courses throughout my educational career as well as through experience and practice (and subjecting my writing to editors and to the naïve reader test)" have served her well. "Listening is not a skill in which I have received formal instruction but I keep practicing and critiquing

this skill. Analytical skills are probably the skills in which I received the best preparation in my library education. Learning how to catalog a title, identify strengths and potentials of reference sources, and conduct a reference interview are all critical to being able to look at a situation and determine individual facets, identifying needs, seeing relationships, and predicting outcomes."

She continues, "I still connect people with information, but now it is more often by developing and providing a technological structure or relationship or program than by locating a fact, citation, or source."

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Profile: Catherine Doyle

"Reading science fiction made me used to thinking about things in a different way."

When asked what it is that she does, University Librarian Cathy Doyle replied "assist people to get the resources they need to do their jobs." By working to establish a Teaching Learning Technology Roundtable at Christopher Newport University (CNU) in Newport News, Virginia, she's been able to provide technology training on campus for faculty who need it as well as assist them to integrate technology into their classrooms. When she first responded to the ARL questionnaire, her library had just seen the opening of its first coffee shop, and characteristically, she found it a plus, getting to see a lot of people not normally seen in the library, and to promote library services in another way.

Even being University Librarian is not Doyle's only job. She's Director of CNU Online, the University's distance education program. She was chosen for that position, she says, "because the library was seen as a place that was well-administered, placed a premium on service to students and faculty, and was totally neutral in the campus turf wars."

There's no large central public library in Newport News so the university library serves that function. About 20 percent of the library's circulation is to patrons in the community. The large military population in the area uses the library to complete their own distance education assignments. Doyle manages information services to a large population beyond CNU students and faculty.

She finds science fiction a source for inspiration about change. As a lifelong science fiction reader, she says "I am used to thinking about things in a different way!"

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Profile: Kay Weiss

"While some of the tools are different, the goal is still the same: to connect people with the resources they want and need."

It's hard to do better at describing "new jobs for old" in the public library than what Kay Weiss, director of the Burlington Public Library in Burlington, Iowa, did herself.

In the last week I have made changes to the library web page, worked at the public service desk, met with the City Manager about proposed facilities expansion, attended a dinner honoring one of our Board members for his long-time support of the arts, planned a public presentation, created two materials lists for the Library's display in the annual community home show, consulted with the Library Board president about attending a public event, provided a listening ear to a staff member about to undergo an invasive medical procedure, pulled some outdated reference materials for discarding, sent letters of thanks to all firms that responded to a request for information about fundraising support, requested that the Administrative Assistant order some items to complete a run of microfilm in our local history collection (a need discovered while helping a patron use a particular resource),...talked with several citizens about the Americans with Disabilities Act and our facility needs,...negotiated with the advertising representative from the local newspaper about advertising in a special spring supplement, chatted with the library's architect about our proposed project (and his new baby),...discarded old food from the staff room refrigerator.

When asked what skills were most useful to her, she said "Listening, analysis, synthesis, consensus building," and then added--disarmingly, given the above paragraph, "I am still learning these skills."

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New Jobs for Old: Librarians Now

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Bytes from the front

The following is a series of vignettes. Some illuminate the workplace, some the path to that place. Each adds a piece of the mosaic of librarianship.

There's no hierarchy in the flattened organization at Arizona State University Library - all professionals report to the dean. Without consistent leadership, Lisa Kammerlocher observed, it was difficult to maintain direction and momentum, so Councils were formed. She's currently the chair of the Academic Program Support Council. As such, her job is to move agendas forward, and those include keeping the faculty informed of what resources are available and training faculty to use them. Her library supplies intensive levels of research support and instruction for faculty and for upper-level students. A wide array of electronic resources available for research means that she must figure out how to deliver instruction in their use. **"Research support remains constant. Delivery changes."**

Richard Dearden, Science Librarian at the University of Tasmania, was our farthest flung correspondent. He's held five positions in 10 years as a librarian, and feels that technology makes "face to face user help more important than ever." He sees his task as manager to encourage playing around with ideas--keeping the team agile was the way he put it--and to try things out even if they fail. **"I have to be attuned to people's needs (even when they are unable to articulate them),** and to respond as effectively as possible."

Rich Edwards, Instructional Technology Librarian of Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington, stressed the need for flexibility as he strove to be a one-stop clearinghouse for technical training and support. He sees his job as to keep up with what's

possible and then to find flexible solutions that work for everyone involved. He noted that patience and the ability to see beyond the specific tool are necessary skills. **In his own effort to help me put a human face on change, he sent me a photograph of himself in front of the Toon-Town Library in Disneyland.**

Stephanie Walker, 34, has only been a professional librarian since 1995. At the Faculty of Dentistry, one of the 40 libraries of the University of Toronto, **she has completely revolutionized the library, moving it from a manual card system to automated serials check-in** and management of overdues. She manages the website for the Faculty.

The head of distance library services at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Johanna Tunon, finds herself pushing parameters to get some form of library training to all students, site-based or virtual. **Early this year, her university and Broward County began the construction of a joint research library--perhaps the first shared effort between a public library and a private academic library.** Her charge is to provide bibliographic instruction for all of NSU's 7,000 distance students and to ensure that accreditation issues that relate to library services for distance students are dealt with appropriately.

Nora Quinlan, the Assistant Head of Distance Library Services at NSU, moved to her current position after 20 years in rare books librarianship. Her job is to identify library resources for off-campus sites as well as library resources and institutions with which NSU is developing joint programs. The major transition from rare books to distance library services made a key change in Quinlan's thinking about her work. **She now sees the accessibility of library resources any time, any place as a necessity.**

Carol Cooke, of the Health Sciences Library at the University of Manitoba, was fresh out of library school five years ago, and trying to set up a Gopher. Now 34, she's developed over 100 pages for her library's website. She sees all library projects as connected to the Internet in some way, but also says "the more technology I have to deal with the more I return to library theory to resolve problems." She describes the gap she sees between herself and older colleagues this way: **"[To me] the Internet is just another medium. More senior colleagues see it as a separate entity."**

"The thing is to not get too caught up in current reality," says Frank Cervone, Associate Director for Library Information Technology at DePaul University in Chicago. He's been a librarian for a bit over five years. His division is responsible for the hardware and software in libraries across all of DePaul's six campuses, and feels it is crucial "to provide service in ways people actually care about." **From staffing a reference desk to providing**

"reference chat" on the Web, Cervone sees the divide between old-school and new-school librarians as not necessarily related to age, but driven by mindset. He views this as a dangerous and critical time for libraries, one in which the value of our sources and services needs to be shown and promoted.

Cynthia Wolff, Coordinator of Digital Applications at Brooklyn Polytechnic, sees web applications as increasing human interaction rather than reducing it. "In my experience," she says, **"[the Web increases] the need for librarians to work more closely with their users.** Over the years, my job has changed from someone passively performing a solicited service to one that involves reaching out to our users and collaborating with them." Wolff trains faculty and students in the use of the digital library and she also trains staff in using new applications as they become integrated into everyday work.

Lorre Smith, Librarian for Digital Library Initiatives in Albany, New York, is the initiator of new projects regarding digital formats and digital libraries. She is also implementing Geographic Information Systems and providing copyright education for the university community. **"In my work, libraries have become more about organizing information in all formats.** I see this as a fundamental change from libraries as organizers of books and buildings. I do not see these functions as mutually exclusive, and part of what I do is work with other librarians to talk about the seamless integration of information resources in all formats to provide information services."

The Assistant Director for Information Technology and Planning of North Dakota State University Libraries, Mark England, who spoke honestly about the emotional and psychological pressures of change, said that **he is inspired by old pictures of the Dakota prairie**, the old mining claim shacks and sod huts. He tries to imagine the work and the suffering that it took to get from there to places with indoor plumbing to a university and then he is "inspired to do more."

Lois Weinstein, Executive Director of the Medical Library Center of New York, sees running her nonprofit organization very much as a small business. She's currently engaged in looking at real estate for off-site storage, inventory, and environmental systems. She credits being downsized, being a single parent, and **a passion for both technology and for science fiction** as preparing her for the world of customer service, marketing, and business practices she now inhabits.

Pat DiTata, district librarian for a school district in Upper New York State, notes that while books are her first love, "sometimes information via computer is the better way to go." In charge of both elementary and high school libraries, she describes the

biggest change in her work this way: **"I now expect that we will be able to find sufficient information on any desired subject right here in our library** or be able to access the books or articles needed via the library system" using online databases, CD-ROMs, the school network, and the Internet.

The Cyber Center is the computer lab in the central library of The Queens Borough Public Library in New York City. Donna Ciampa is the Center's supervisor, overseeing five librarians, nine support staff, 48 personal computers, and 24 printers. She trains, teaches, plans programming, and manages hardware, software, and book collections for the Center. She worked as an administrative assistant in the private sector for 25 years before entering library school, and feels that this background made her very comfortable with office technology and with a wide spectrum of people and industries. She finds using electronic resources to be as natural to her as use of print resources is to librarians who have been in the field longer. Ciampa says "new jobs for old" means a **"crossover into uncharted territories...[challenging] those entering the profession to redefine librarianship and not lose sight of where it came from."**

Denise Garofalo is Director for Communications Resources in a five-county area of New York State with 71 library sites. **"Who'd have known five years ago we'd have librarians specializing in email reference or web resources?"** she mused, saying she had not realized how much things would change: "both how I do my job and just what that job is." She manages relations with telecommunications companies, database vendors, ISPs, and the web team. She owes her ability to cope with the rapid acquisition of new technical skills to her background in English: "I can listen, I can take direction, and I can read."

Carole Fiore, who provides consulting for library services for children, teenagers, and their caregivers in the state of Florida, describes the biggest change and challenge in her work life now as "working outside the library field to make libraries a priority with other people." She makes presentations to non-library professional organizations, departments of health and of education, community colleges, university research groups, and health care groups. She stressed the importance of planning and evaluation, because the number of projects competing for attention and resources in library systems does not allow for time to think and process information--that has to be built in via a strong foundation. She praised her state librarian as one who allowed innovation even at the risk of failure, and she cited her colleagues, too **"working with so many other talented librarians, we drive each other to do our best."**

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The interviewees

Kevin W. Bishop, Campus-Wide Information System Coordinator, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York.

Jo Ann Carr, Director, School of Education Center for Instructional Materials & Computing, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Frank Cervone, Associate Director for Library Information Technology Services, De Paul University, Chicago, Illinois.

Donna Ciampa, Supervisor of the Cyber Center, Queens Borough Public Library, New York City.

Carol A. Cooke, Resource Development Librarian, Health Science Library, University of Manitoba Libraries, Winnipeg, Canada.

Richard Dearden, Science Librarian, University of Tasmania Library, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.

Pat DiTata, Librarian, West Canada Valley Central School, Newport, New York.

Catherine Doyle, University Librarian and Director, CNU Online, Christopher Newport University, Newport News, Virginia.

Wilfred (Bill) Drew, Associate Librarian, Systems and Reference, SUNY Morrisville College Library, Morrisville, New York.

Rich Edwards, Instructional Technology Librarian, Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington.

Mark England, Assistant Director for Information Technology and Planning, The Libraries, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Carole D. Fiore, Library Program Specialist, Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

Denise Garofalo, Director for Communications Resources, Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, New York.

Carol Anne Germain, Networked Resources Education Librarian, University at Albany, New York.

Denise Habib, Electronic Services Librarian, Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries, Rockville, Maryland.

Marilyn Hanley, Coordinator and Head, Library Information Systems and Technology Services, University of Massachusetts at

Amherst.

Thomas J. Hennen Jr, haplr-index.com, Racine, Wisconsin.

Lisa Kammerlocher, Chair, Academic Program Support Council/Social Sciences Liaison Librarian, West Library, Arizona State University, Phoenix.

May Knapp, School Librarian, High School Library, New Paltz Central Schools, New Paltz, New York.

Toni Lohman, Collection Management Librarian, Virginia Beach Department of Public Libraries, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Jo Manning, freelance Reference Librarian, Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida.

Vincent A. Munch, Larchmont Public Library, Larchmont, New York.

Nora Quinlan, Assistant Head of Distance Library Services, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Frances Roehm, SkokieNet Librarian, Skokie Public Library, Illinois.

Karen G. Schneider, Assistant Director for Technology, Clifton Park Public Library, New York.

Lorre Smith, Librarian for Digital Library Initiatives, Science Library, University at Albany, New York.

Johanna Tunon, Head of Distance Library Services, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Elaine J. Vitale, Media Services Librarian, Fanshawe College Library, London, Ontario, Canada.

Stephanie Walker, Faculty Librarian and Webmaster, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Lois Weinstein, Executive Director, Medical Library Center of New York, New York City.

Kay Weiss, Director, Burlington Public Library, Burlington, Iowa.

Cynthia Wolff, Coordinator of Digital Applications, Bern Dibner Library, Polytechnic University, Brooklyn, New York.

And about half a dozen anonymae.

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Bibliography

While most of what appears in these pages comes from the interviewees themselves, a few articles provided the basis for some of my searching and some of my thinking.

Balas, Janet L. "A Librarian's Work Will Never Be Done." *Computers in Libraries* (November/December 1999): 46-50.

Griffiths, José-Marie. "The New Information Professional." *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science* (February/March 1998): 8-12.

Rible, Jim. "The Librarian as Campus Webmaster: Careers Merging?" *Computers in Libraries* (November/December 1999): 18-22.

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The questionnaire

Below is the questionnaire I sent to academic librarians. The versions for public, school, and other librarians varied slightly.

Academic questionnaire

The focus in this ARL document is on people: to tell the stories about what people are doing now. I will want to know how you came to be where you are, and what skills you needed to get there. We know the library workplace has changed radically. This document is to put a human face on the choices and paths we have taken.

The questions are meant to be open-ended, to encourage you to think widely and share deeply. The answers to these questions will form the basis of my writing. Based on your responses, I will choose three or four people to interview in depth on the telephone.

This is not a scientific or a sociological survey. It is meant to be a collection of stories rooted in a particular time and place: manifesting the human faces behind all the data about change.

The following questions are similar, but not exactly the same, as the set of questions I am sending to librarians in public library settings, consortia, and others. What I write will concentrate on academic librarians of course, but I am charged to gather input from others, too.

What is your job title?

What, exactly, do you do?

Where does the library fit in the university hierarchy? In other words, how many administrative layers are there?

What are you doing today at work that you weren't doing (or that didn't exist) two years ago?

Five years ago?

In what ways have you learned to think differently about your work?

If you have been a librarian for more than 10 years, how have you had to change your perceptions and expectations about your job?

If you have been a librarian for five years or less, how do you perceive your job, and is it different from the perception of your older colleagues?

Is there overlapping or sharing of roles/missions between and among the university and local public libraries?

Between school libraries and the university?

Among local consortia?

How has that played out? Do you like it or not? Why?

Did you work in other kinds of libraries before coming to work in a university or research library?

How has that affected or influenced your work at your current job?

What specific skills are most needed and useful in your work?

How did you obtain those skills? In other words, how did you learn what you know?

Your education, both undergraduate and M.L.S.?

Your expertise and on-the-job learning?

Library leadership in your institution?

Mentors who guided you personally?

What prepared you emotionally/psychologically for the rapid and radical changes in librarianship?

This document is called "New Jobs for Old." What does that mean to you?

What would you like to say in response to it?

If you are more comfortable answering these queries verbally, send me a note with your telephone number and a good date and time to call, and I will call you back.

Please add your complete name, title, mailing address, phone number, fax number, and email address.

If you are willing to include your age and gender, that will help me a lot (if it makes you feel better, I am 52, and the mother of a son in an age group I hope to reach--the 25-35 year olds). If you do not wish to have your name and/or your institution identified, please make that clear, and I will use the data but not the identifiers, instead calling you "a new librarian under 30 at a small Midwestern college" or some locution like that.

I am sending this both as email and as a Word document attachment: use what works best for you. You can even send it back on paper if you wish.

I need your responses back quickly, by February 4th.

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