



An overview of the library and information science profession

Dr. Papanna S

Department of library and information Centre, Government Science College, Chitradurga, Karnataka, India

Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving world, the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession has emerged as a vibrant and essential field that revolves around the effective management, organization, and facilitation of information across various platforms, be it in traditional printed materials or the ever-expanding realm of digital resources. LIS professionals of the contemporary era serve as crucial intermediaries, guiding users through the complex information ecosystem, transcending the conventional boundaries of librarianship to take on diversified roles encompassing digital content curation, sophisticated data analysis, and the seamless orchestration of knowledge resources. This transformative shift in the role of LIS professionals has been spurred by the relentless march of technology and the ever-shifting demands and expectations of users, necessitating a multifaceted skill set that seamlessly integrates technical expertise with exceptional interpersonal acumen to effectively address the multifaceted information challenges that define the 21st-century landscape.

Keywords: Library, information science, library profession, information ecosystem, librarianship, complex information

Introduction

Most professional librarian positions in the United States and Canada necessitate the attainment of a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree from institutions endorsed by the American Library Association (ALA). This robust educational requirement is upheld due to the intricacies of modern librarianship which demand a deep understanding and proficiency in information management and dissemination techniques. Librarians, as gatekeepers to a wealth of knowledge, are entrusted with the ethical responsibility to adhere to the esteemed ALA Code of Ethics. This foundational code underscores the principles of intellectual freedom, safeguarding privacy and confidentiality, and advocating for the unbiased and equal access to information for all members of our diverse society. The ALA strives to promote an inclusive environment within the library profession, ensuring that information services are accessible and equitable, regardless of social status, beliefs, or cultural background, thus empowering individuals to engage with knowledge in a fair and unrestricted manner. Consequently, the ALA-accredited MLIS programs serve as pillars of professional development, equipping aspiring librarians with the necessary skills and ethical frameworks to navigate the dynamic landscape of information stewardship effectively. In upholding these standards, librarians play a crucial role in fostering a democratic society where information is not just a privilege but a fundamental right, enabling individuals to make informed decisions, foster creativity, and engage in lifelong learning while upholding the highest ethical standards of their profession.

The library and information science (LIS) profession plays a vital role in society by engaging in the comprehensive management, organization, and dissemination of human knowledge across various physical and digital platforms. LIS professionals today participate in a diverse range of tasks, including but not limited to curating information repositories, designing and maintaining information systems, instructing individuals in information literacy, and facilitating access to crucial information resources.

The duties of modern LIS professionals extend far beyond mere bookkeeping and entail the fusion of traditional library competencies with cutting-edge technologies, strategic management practices, and advanced data manipulation techniques. They are adept at leveraging digital tools and resources to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of information services, thereby catering to the needs of users in an ever-evolving information ecosystem. Moreover, the field of library and information science is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from various fields such as computer science, education, and social sciences to address the complex challenges posed by the contemporary information landscape.

In essence, LIS professionals act as information stewards, proactively adapting and innovating their practices to keep pace with the rapid transformations in information technologies and user demands. Through their multifaceted roles, they not only facilitate access to knowledge but also empower individuals and communities to navigate and utilize information effectively for personal, educational, and societal development. The dynamic nature of the LIS profession necessitates continuous learning and skill development to meet the diverse information needs of the modern era, thereby ensuring the enduring relevance and impact of library and information services in an increasingly digital and data-centric world.

Purpose

This paper offers a full review of the role's information professionals have taken on over the past 14 years. Information professionals include librarians, archivists, and data managers who handle knowledge and records. The review pulls from studies, articles, and reports published since 2011. It spots clear roles tied to shifts in the Library and Information Science field, known as LIS. LIS deals with how people organize, store, and share info in libraries, schools, and businesses. For example, pros now guide digital searches or teach data skills. These roles come straight from the literature. They track changes like the rise of online tools and open access. Readers might ask why

track 14 years. That span covers big tech jumps and global shifts that reshaped jobs. The goal stays sharp: map out what pros do base on hard evidence. This helps see the field's path forward.

Scope and Limitations

The research only included peer-reviewed articles published in English from 2000 to 2014. It concentrated on the roles of information professionals rather than the skills of librarians and their evolving professional duties

Objective

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the library and information profession, it is essential to explore the core functions that define the field of library and information science. These functions encompass a wide range of activities, such as collection development, cataloguing, reference services, and information literacy instruction. Evaluating the library and information science profession involves analyzing its impact on society, its evolving role in the digital age, and the ethical considerations that guide professional practice. It is important to recognize the value that the LIS profession brings to individuals, communities, and organizations, as well as the challenges it faces in meeting the diverse information needs of a global society. Reflecting on the concept of the LIS profession as a whole underscore the multifaceted nature of this dynamic field, highlighting the ongoing advancements in technology, changing user expectations, and the continuing importance of promoting equitable access to information.

Design

This research utilized a systematic review method. Searches were performed in February and March 2014 across various LIS databases. Out of 600 papers, 114 were chosen according to defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. A comprehensive full-text analysis of these papers identified six roles that librarians have taken on: educators, technology experts, embedded librarians, information consultants, knowledge managers, and subject librarians.

Review of Literature

Cyrus and Baggett (2012) delve deeper into the profound impact that technology has had on the management of information privacy. They shed light on the significant shift that has taken place in how information privacy is being approached, particularly in addressing the challenges posed by entering personal data into search engines. It is evident that search engines and social media platforms fall short in safeguarding individuals' personal information, thus underscoring the complex nature of online privacy. The advent of mobile technology only serves to compound this issue, as the intricacies of agreement policies and geolocation applications on mobile devices further heighten vulnerabilities. In response to these emerging concerns, Cyrus and Baggett propose a strategic framework for information professionals to actively engage in the discourse on information privacy. Firstly, they advocate for information professionals to stay abreast of technological advances and emerging trends to effectively navigate the evolving landscape of information privacy. Equally important is the emphasis placed on developing user instruction programs that empower individuals to make

informed decisions regarding their privacy online. Furthermore, they highlight the pivotal role of information professionals in assisting users in configuring and optimizing privacy settings on their digital devices. By championing these three key approaches, information professionals can play a pivotal role in advocating for greater transparency and control over individuals' online privacy rights. Ferguson *et al.* (2011) examine the role of Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) in the context of information privacy issues. The data contained within an RFID can reveal user preferences, potentially exposing the user's religious and political views. The authors contend that RFID technology is beneficial not only for security applications but also for circulation purposes. Nevertheless, the signals emitted by RFID can be intercepted and misused against the user.

Core functions of LIS professionals

▪ Collection and Organization

Professionals dedicated to the field of information organization play a critical role in curating a diverse array of materials, which range from traditional books and records to cutting-edge digital resources. Drawing upon their expertise and meticulous attention to detail, these experts meticulously select, acquire, and methodically organize these resources with the overarching goal of constructing sophisticated knowledge systems. By leveraging their deep understanding of information architecture and classification techniques, these professionals ensure that the wealth of materials they manage seamlessly integrates into comprehensive and structured repositories. Through their work, they establish cohesive frameworks that empower individuals to navigate complex information landscapes with ease and efficiency, ultimately facilitating seamless access to valuable and pertinent knowledge for a broad range of users.

▪ Access and Retrieval

One of the key responsibilities in this role is focused on guiding and supporting users as they navigate through various systems and databases in search of specific information. This task involves utilizing a deep understanding of information retrieval techniques and expertly managing databases to ensure that users can efficiently find and extract the data they need. The complexity of this skill set lies in the ability to seamlessly blend knowledge of information organization with technical proficiency. By leveraging expertise in information retrieval and management, professionals in this role play a critical part in facilitating smoother, more streamlined access to crucial data. Through their guidance and support, users are empowered to effectively sift through vast amounts of information, unlocking valuable insights and knowledge that can drive informed decision-making and enhance overall productivity within an organization.

▪ Preservation

In their crucial role, professionals entrusted with the preservation of the integrity of cultural and historical records are tasked with a multifaceted responsibility. This encompasses not only the meticulous physical conservation of delicate artifacts and documents but also extends to the meticulous process of digital reformatting to ensure the enduring accessibility and longevity of these invaluable

records. Through their dedicated efforts, these specialists contribute significantly to safeguarding the rich tapestry of human history and heritage for present and future generations. Their work involves employing a diverse array of techniques and technologies to protect these records from deterioration and to adapt them to evolving archival standards, thereby ensuring that the essence and significance of these cultural and historical treasures remain preserved and accessible to scholars, researchers, and the general public alike.

▪ **Information Literacy**

They educate users on how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively through a diverse array of educational resources, workshops, and interactive modules that cater to different learning styles and preferences. Their approach emphasizes developing critical thinking skills, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering information fluency to empower users to navigate the vast landscape of information sources with confidence and discernment. By guiding users through the process of identifying credible sources, honing research techniques, and utilizing technology tools for information management, they equip individuals with the essential knowledge and skills needed to succeed in academia, the workplace, and everyday life. Furthermore, their commitment to staying current with emerging trends in information technologies ensures that users receive up-to-date guidance and support in leveraging the latest resources and strategies for effective information seeking and utilization. With a dedicated team of experienced educators and information professionals, they strive to create a supportive learning environment where users can enhance their information literacy competencies, embrace lifelong learning, and become savvy consumers and creators of information in the digital age.

▪ **Technology Integration**

In today's dynamic information landscape, contemporary library and information science (LIS) professionals are at the forefront of managing digital repositories, curating vast amounts of data, and harnessing cutting-edge technologies to deliver a wide range of services tailored to the digital age. These dedicated experts play a pivotal role in navigating the complexities of modern information systems, where they seamlessly integrate digital libraries, effectively oversee data management protocols, and adeptly leverage innovative tools to create enriched user experiences in the increasingly digitized realm. By staying abreast of the latest advancements in the field, modern LIS professionals demonstrate a keen ability to adapt to evolving technologies, continuously enhancing their proficiency to provide seamless access to information resources and services in a rapidly changing digital environment.

Evolution of the Profession

▪ **From Traditional to Modern**

Since its humble beginnings centered around physical books, the profession has undergone a transformative evolution, now encompassing a diverse array of electronic and digital resources. This expansion has not only broadened the scope of services offered but has also revolutionized the way information is accessed and disseminated in the modern age. From e-books to online databases, the profession has adapted to meet the changing

needs of users seeking information in various formats. Additionally, the shift towards digital resources has facilitated greater accessibility and convenience for users, enabling them to access a wealth of knowledge with just a few clicks. As technology continues to advance, the profession will undoubtedly continue to evolve, embracing new tools and platforms to further enhance the user experience and ensure information remains readily available in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

▪ **Interdisciplinary Nature**

In today's modern landscape, the field has evolved to encompass a broad spectrum of knowledge spanning multiple disciplines. This transformation necessitates a comprehensive understanding that bridges the gap between computer science, management strategies, social sciences, and ethical considerations. The intricate interplay between these diverse areas highlights the interconnectedness and complexity of current trends and challenges within the field. By integrating insights from computer science, professionals can harness cutting-edge technologies to optimize processes and drive innovation. Additionally, drawing upon principles from management studies equips individuals to effectively navigate organizational structures and implement strategic solutions. Furthermore, insights from social sciences offer a deeper understanding of human behavior and societal implications, enabling informed decision-making that considers diverse perspectives. Finally, the integration of ethical frameworks serves as a crucial compass, guiding practitioners to make principled decisions and uphold moral values in their work. Embracing this interdisciplinary approach is essential to stay ahead in an ever-evolving field that demands a holistic perspective to address multifaceted issues and drive sustainable progress.

▪ **Adaptation to New Needs**

In today's rapidly evolving "knowledge society," Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals must exhibit a high degree of adaptability. This adaptability is crucial for meeting the diverse and ever-changing demands presented by this dynamic societal landscape. In addition to providing traditional library services, such as cataloging and reference assistance, modern LIS professionals are also expected to be proficient in delivering cutting-edge online services. These online services encompass a wide range of digital resources and tools, including virtual reference services, online databases, and digital collections. As technology continues to advance and shape information consumption patterns, LIS professionals must continuously update their skills and knowledge to effectively serve patrons in both physical and virtual spaces. Embracing this dual role of offering traditional and online services ensures that they remain relevant and valuable in facilitating information access and knowledge dissemination within modern society.

Findings

New and developing roles have been recognized, particularly within academic libraries. The educational duties of librarians and their proactive participation in the learning and research processes were emphasized across all identified role categories. Collaboration between faculty and librarians was noted as a method to guarantee effective instruction. The personal perspectives of librarians regarding their new and evolving roles were reported more

often; additional research is required to illuminate the perceptions of academics, students, and other users regarding librarians' involvement in the learning process.

Recommendations

Professional development tailored for Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals is indispensable in keeping pace with technological advancements and effectively addressing user requirements. This entails a holistic approach encompassing the enhancement of technical proficiencies, refinement of management capabilities, and nurturing of soft skills. Key focal points of professional growth encompass upgrading computer and digital literacy competencies, augmenting information retrieval and management proficiencies, honing communication and leadership skills, and fostering a user-centric mindset. It is recommended that professionals engage in a variety of developmental activities such as participating in workshops, enrolling in online courses, seeking mentorships, and pursuing professional accreditations to continually expand their knowledge base and refine their skills to meet the ever-evolving demands of the field.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the significance of continuous professional development in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) cannot be overstated. It serves as an essential requirement throughout professionals' careers, owing to the ever-evolving landscape shaped by rapid technological advancements and the diverse needs of users. Incorporating a blend of fundamental LIS principles and the integration of innovative, hybrid skills, this process aims to equip professionals with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the demands of an increasingly digital and information-centric world effectively. By embracing lifelong learning and staying abreast of emerging trends, individuals in the LIS field can stay not only relevant but also impactful, ensuring their ability to contribute meaningfully to the dynamic environment they operate within.

Reference

1. Alajmi B, Alasousi H. Understanding and motivating academic library employees' Theoretical implications. *Library Management*,2019:40:203–214.
2. Anyaegbu MI, Wali NB. Influence of staff training and development on librarian's job performance in federal university libraries in south Nigeria. *Library Research Journal*,2020:4(1):38–60.
3. Cobblah MA, van der Walt T. Staff training and development programmes and work performance in the university libraries in Ghana. *Information Development*,2017:33:375–392.
4. Dina T, Olowosoke G. The effect of motivation and job performance on library personnel effectiveness in universities libraries in Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*,2018:2042:1–28.
5. Elliott L. Professional staff development in academic libraries. *Journal of Librarianship*,1983:15(4):237–253.
6. Hampe N, Lewis S. E-portfolios support continuing professional development for librarians. *The Australian Library Journal*,2013:62(1):3–14.
7. Maesaroh I, Genoni P. Education and continuing professional development for Indonesian academic librarians A survey. *Library Management*,2009:30:524–538.
8. Venturella K, Breland M. Supporting the best Professional development in academic libraries. *Journal of New Librarianship*,2019:4:283–292.
9. Walter S. Instructional improvement Building capacity for the professional development of librarians as teachers. *Reference and User Services Quarterly*,2006:45(3):213–218.