



Research Article

## Essential Skills for Public Library Professionals in the Digital Age

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Received: 21 Sep 2015

Revised: 22 Oct 2015

Accepted: 27 Nov 2015

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### ABSTRACT

We are living in a world that is changing rapidly due to the technological revolution and, as such, both libraries and librarians seem to be struggling to maintain their traditional roles. It is essential to respond to and integrate this new technology into library services, while maintaining the traditional role of librarians. This paper is discussed about the skills required for the library professionals in the Digital environment. The users are expected from sources and services with endless from libraries. Today the library sources as well as services are also extended based on the user's needs and demands. So, as a library professionals are needed many skills to manage, organize the library services in the digital age.

**Keywords:** LIS Professionals; required Skills; leadership quality

### INTRODUCTION

Our everyday life is changing rapidly due to the technological innovations in all fields. These new technological changes are affecting the field of library science and information systems just like any other field. It is shifting the role of a librarian from simply being a book keeper to a dynamic agent that brings together information from different sources and makes it available for the users. Librarians in the new era are required to play different roles that demand the presence of various skills ranging from the traditional roles of user education, facilitation and evaluation to being a professional who is able to manage the digital information system within a library. In the technology Era, the availability of information's in the digital media had created an opportunity for the global access of the information. Due to the development of ICT, they can access the information's without the barriers of time and place. The Development of Information and Communication Technologies need to adopt them among the human beings.



The services offered by the library can also meet out the user needs and there will be a necessity to provide the better services along with the new communication technologies. The expectations of the patrons will change for the time being. The new innovative and dynamic services to the patrons only help to turn the attention towards the library. Today's librarians are having professional degrees in library and information science is not sufficient unlike in the past. There is demand for librarians having multidimensional aptitude in the areas of technical work, administrative work and also in providing user oriented services along with soft skills. Like any other profession, the soft skills are required in day-to-day working for carrying out routine jobs more effectively. The librarians working in large organizations like corporate offices are already practicing these skills through by experience or training. One may learn these soft skills easily provided they are aware what these are!! Librarians function as our library 'hosts' in communal room(s) of books we all own as citizens. So good manners should include eye contact, saying hello and verbal greetings of library patrons. Since a host is in charge of showing guests around and making them comfortable, it is important for a librarian to be asking if a patron found everything s/he was looking for or whether further help from a research librarian should be sought,

## PARADIGM SHIFT

The rapid development in computer technology as well as economic changes has made it clear that the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Librarian as information intermediaries must undergo immense change. The changes are occurring at such a fast pace that each day new skills and approaches are required to handle information and unfurl the new ideas. The changing perception of users and the technological advancement have forced the library and information professionals to enhance their knowledge and acquire new competencies, skills and develop themselves in accordance to the new environment to avoid becoming obsolete and outdated. Thus, it has transition or paradigm shift in traditional to ICT skills and environment.

## Soft Skills Required To Lis Professionals

**Listening skills:** The library professionals must have good listening skills as he/she has to interact with different types of users all the time. By carefully listening to users' he/she can identify the exact requirement and then provide the service accordingly.

**Communications skills:** Command on language especially English and also regional one will improve the communication. Good communication skills also require understanding people, self-confidence.

**Interpersonal skills:** Librarians have to deal with all levels of people like Management, users, colleagues in library, vendors etc. To deal with each one on them in rightful manner requires interpersonal skills. When you work in large organization, it is most important to build rapport with all departments, which helps in managing the library and providing better services to everyone.

**Public relations:** One needs to use PR very effectively to attract users in libraries through various ways. It also helps to bond with users and vendors too. Also gives ability to work with other professionals.

**Customer service:** Customer is library user and to satisfy his information needs is customer service. The librarians are always giving attention to their users and providing services through CAS, SDI or other specialized services. The customer service emphasizes the customer satisfaction, which guarantees that user will always come back to library.

**Leadership skills & Teamwork:** Library management especially the big library is team exercise. Hence it is required to have leadership skills to manage and guiding the team time to time, as every subordinate is important for carrying out their work efficiently for smooth running of library.

**Negotiating skills:** These skills are required on special occasions such as handling bulk purchases, specialized databases subscription with vendors etc. Also some times in delicate situations like library committee meetings or avoiding undue requirements from arrogant users etc.

**Writing skills:** The librarians are sometimes asked to submit/help in writing research proposal/ business proposal/project report, which requires good writing skills. Today there are many library professionals who are contributing to various publications even in-house or even by blogging for sharing their experiences and helping



users.

**Project management skills:** In corporate sector many times, librarians are part of some project team and assigned specialized jobs such as knowledge management or digital institutional repository. These require dedication, understanding of the project, time management for completion of work, teamwork and reporting back the results etc.

**Presentation skills:** The presentation skills are required in report writing, library committee meetings and even in daily work which represents the library management overall for users. It not only emphasizes the individual skills but also from library presentation by means of its decoration, users guides, and library ambience.

**Teaching skills:** This is essential for new user orientations or in case new service is introduced such as online database searching. It also includes motivating reading habits in users.

**Strong work ethic** – we need people who are thinkers and visionaries but we also absolutely need people who are productive – what we call “do-ers.”

**Positive attitude** – one person we interviewed in my last search asked for feedback on why he didn't get the job. The main thing was his attitude toward some big projects we were accomplishing over the summer. He sounded like he was dreading the fallout. On the other hand, the person I hired described our approach as “fearless.”

**Time management abilities** – the ability to juggle multiple responsibilities is crucial. We are blended librarians who have a lot on our plates. We ask people in the phone/Skype interview to describe situations that illustrate these abilities.

**Problem-solving skills** – again, a crucial skill. We are often looking at creative solutions to difficult problems.

**Acting as a team player** – we are a team-based organization, so we often ask references about the person's ability to work with others collaboratively. If all of their accomplishments are solitary, it's hard to see them fitting in here.

**Self-confidence** – we have to put ourselves out there with our students and faculty and project confidence in our abilities and our knowledge in order to be taken seriously.

**Ability to accept and learn from criticism** – our librarians get a lot of feedback and mentoring as part of the rank and tenure process. If they cannot learn from that feedback and respond to it, they will not progress.

**Flexibility/Adaptability** – our jobs change and evolve. We have to be open to that. Working well under pressure – our Learning Commons desk is insane for the first couple of weeks of school. If we can survive that and our teaching load, we're fine.

**Traditional LIS skills** extended to the handling of digital and online resources, including acquisition, cataloguing and organization of resources, metadata schemes, reference/information services, information packaging, circulation, preservation, online reference service, information search skills, copyright and intellectual property laws, user behavior, user needs, information sources, packaging of information, management of digital and hybrid libraries, evaluation of information and information sources, knowledge of information flows in society

**Information management**, including information audit, knowledge management

**IT skills**, including Internet, Web and XML technologies, RFID, federated search engines, programming and scripting, Windows operating system, productivity tools.

**Transferable/generic skills** applied to the library environment, including communication, public speaking, writing, public relations, interpersonal/group skills, networking, research skills, interviewing and listening skills, conducting focus groups, analytical skills, teamwork, multi-tasking, time management

**Management and leadership**, including planning, financial management, budgeting, project management, negotiation and persuasion, supervisory skills, performance management/evaluation, administrative skills, human resource, outsourcing, quality management, ability to motivate subordinates, lead groups effectively, strategic planning

**Entrepreneurship**, including business analysis and market research, marketing, fee-based information service, networking skills across job functions and levels

**Attitudes and professional values**, including user-orientation, service-orientation, belief in the pursuit of knowledge, love of learning, ability to read and respond to novel situations, intellectual curiosity, interaction with members of the profession, ability to articulate the roles of libraries and librarians



**Other skills/knowledge:** operation of call centers, publishing, and Internet publishing Information professionals in public and private organizations will increasingly be called upon to participate in or lead knowledge management projects and initiatives in their organization.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude that, we the library professionals are follow the soft skills in our next generation library services definitely we will become good library professionals in future. Those skills are acquired through formal education, experience and above all personal inclination

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## PARADIGM SHIFT

Libraries	Networks
Custodian of Books	Service oriented Information Providers
Print	Digital
Ownership	Access
Order in Libraries	chaos on the web
One Medium	Multimedia
Media	Hypermedia
Copyright	copy left
Own Collection	Library without walls
Homogeneity	Diversity (heterogeneity)
In Good time	Just in Time
Top Down System	Bottom down system
Real	Virtual
Tangible	Intangible



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Monopoly	Equity
Library	Web Library
Intra-action	Inter-action
Teaching	Learning
Local reach	Global each
We go to the Library	Library comes to you
Book preservation	Bit preservation

Literacy in the digital age. members for support. According to Bourgeois and Hunt, learning requires time and is optimal in a social context. An evaluative form would provide colleges of education with specific information to better prepare literacy educators for public school service and ensure that university curricula address the required knowledge and skills prospective literacy educators require for effective digital age teaching. . Volume 24. The Language and Literacy Spectrum. Literacy in the digital age. 79. References. The Age of Digital brings endless possibilities for digital-savvy accountants ready to capture growth opportunities. The digitization of accounting services means that accountants have the ability to access professional and personal data at any time and from anywhere. To increase its value in the Digital Age, accountants must utilize technology to offer strategic and informed advice. If you don't want to be left behind in the age of tweed jackets and desk calculators, read on to find six essential skills for accountants in the Age of Digital. 1. Analytical Skills. The Digital Age has resulted in massive amounts of data readily available for company statistics. Digital skills are technical skills required to use digital technologies, whereas digital navigation skills are a wider set of skills needed to succeed in the digital world. These include finding information, prioritising information and assessing the quality and reliability of information. They include skills in: Communication (both written and spoken, e.g. public speaking). Literacy (e.g. media literacy, digital literacy, reading). Typing. In the digital age, the position of the educator is more fluid and less clear cut: who is educating whom? Participants discussed how being an educator is no longer limited to the traditional role of the teacher.