

## Internet Changes Field of Library Science\*

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(Jan 6,1997 10:36 a.m. EST) - - What is the gross national product of Belize? Who invented polyester? How smart is the average pig?

Five years ago, the best way to find answers to questions like these was to go a library and ask the librarian for help in finding the appropriate books and periodicals. Today, the same information is available on the internet, but finding it may still require the assistance of a librarian.

As technology has made more data available than can be bound in books or cataloged by the Dewey decimal system, the field of library science has changed drastically. While it is still a discipline dedicated to finding, filtering, organizing, evaluating and presenting information, it now requires a great deal more technical expertise with electronic information and computer networks. These new demand, in turn, have opened a raft of

\* เนื่องจาก อาจารย์ ชงชัย โรจน์กั้งสตาล อาจารย์จากจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ซึ่งกำลังศึกษาต่อในระดับปริญญาเอกที่สหรัฐอเมริกาได้ส่งบทความเรื่อง "Internet changes field of library science" มาทาง E-mail และกองบรรณาธิการเห็นว่า เป็นบทความที่ให้ข้อคิดที่เป็นประโยชน์ต่อวงการห้องสมุด จึงพยายามหาแหล่งที่มาของบทความเพื่ออ้างอิง และเผยแพร่ โดยติดต่อกับผู้เขียนตามชื่อ และ E-mail address ที่ท้ายบทความ และคุณสุภาภรณ์ ชัยธัมมาปกรณม์ ได้ช่วยสอบถามไปยัง อาจารย์ชงชัย ก็ไม่สามารถหาแหล่งอ้างอิงของบทความนี้ได้ กองบรรณาธิการเห็นว่าบทความนี้เป็นเรื่องทันสมัยและเป็นประโยชน์แก่บรรณารักษ์จึงขอนำบทความนี้มาเผยแพร่ทั้งฉบับ โดยมีได้ตัดทอนส่วนใดเลย เพื่อให้ข้อคิดที่เป็นประโยชน์ต่อวงการห้องสมุดต่อไป

new career opportunities, attracting considerably more people to the profession over the last decade.

In response, many universities have converted their schools of library science into schools of information and library science or, increasingly, just schools of information. "Information has always been the focus of library studies, but recent technological developments mean that there are now vast stores of information beyond what is contained within the walls of libraries," said M. Olivia Frost, associate dean of the University of Michigan's School of Information contained within the walls of libraries, "said C. Olivia Frost, associate dean of the University of Michigan's School of Information in Ann Arbor.

As a result, becoming a degreed librarian these days means taking courses like Implementation of Distributed Information Systems, Web Site Design and Network Management. "A third of the titles currently on our list are about the Internet; that's up from zero six years ago," said Patricia Glass Schuman, president of Neal-Schuman Publishers Inc. in New York, a supplier of textbooks to library and information science schools.

With their technological expertise, fewer recent graduates of library and information science programs are actually becoming librarians. Take John Powell. After graduating from the University of Michigan School of Information last year, he became data base manager and Webmaster for the State Appellate Defenders Office in Detroit. "The field is rapidly expanding to include a wide range of career opportunities," he said. "It's not just cataloguing books anymore."

Powell's duties include maintaining a World Wide Web site linked to a data base of legal

research as well as conducting Internet training seminars for defense lawyers throughout the state.

Although there are no comprehensive job placement statistics for graduates of library and information science schools, officials at the American Library Association have noticed a marked increase in the number of professionally trained librarians pursuing nontraditional, technologically oriented careers. "More and more, we're hearing titles like cybrarian, information specialist, Webmaster, knowledge navigator and database manager," said Elizabeth Martinez, the association's executive director.

Administrators from top library and information science schools report a similar trend. "A growing percentage of our students graduate to work outside traditional library settings," said Brooke E. Sheldon, dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Texas in Austin.

She estimated that nearly 25 percent of last year's graduating class went on to nontraditional library jobs like information brokers and network managers, while her counterparts at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana gave numbers of 30 percent and 40 percent. In the late 1980s, only 2 percent to 9 percent of library science graduates took such non-traditional jobs.

"There is high demand today for people who understand how to find, organize and distribute knowledge," said Lois Remeikas, who as director of knowledge and information management for Booz Allen & Hamilton, a consulting firm, has watched her department double in the last two years.



Companies like Monsanto, Ford Motor, Microsoft, Intel and CNA Insurance have begun to intensively recruit library and information science graduates to fill such positions as scientific searcher, configuration manager, records management analyst and graphic multimedia designer.

In a shift from the past, corporate representatives now show up regularly at library and information science schools to attract students and, in the case of CNA Insurance, have even set up special internship programs.

"Industry has come to realize the competitive advantage of hiring professionals who not only know how to find strategic information quickly, but how to evaluate its validity and present it coherently," said Lynn Eastabrook, dean of the University of Illinois, School of Information and Library Science.

The recent increase in job opportunities for library and information science specialists has inspired more people to enter the field. The American Library Association's figures indicate that this year's total enrollment at schools of library and information science in the United States and Canada is up 47 percent from 1986. And membership in the association itself has swelled to 58,112 in 1996 from 42,361 in 1986 - an increase of 37 percent.

The trend is even more striking at some individual institutions. For example, the University of Texas has twice as many library and information science students now as it did in 1990, and information science students now as it did in 1990. And applications for admission to the University of Michigan's School of Information are up 50 percent for the latest class over the previous year's class.

Also, more men are showing interest in what was once considered a woman's career. Most library and information science schools report a 10 percent increase in male students within the last five years.

powell, at the Appellate Defendes Office in Detroit, said the field's new emphasis on information technology, particularly related to computers, had changed the image of library science. No longer is it seen as the occupation of spectacled spinsters who delight in telling people to hush.

"Because of the important and crucial role they are able to play in this complex information age, there's new zip to the stereotypical profile of a librarian," Dean Sheldon at the University of Texas said.

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