

2



“SLA Report: The Future Workplace” By Robin Neidorf and Pam Foster

Jinfo Newsletter

Every month, the Jinfo Newsletter presents an advice article or a CV makeover, where you can see transformed versions. All identifying characteristics are changed.

To submit an article idea or your CV for possible inclusion, send it to <monique.cuvelier@freepint.com>.

Please forward this newsletter to anyone who may find it useful. To subscribe to the Jinfo Newsletter or to modify your subscription, login to your account at <http://www.jinfo.com/subs/> or send an email to support@jinfo.com.

FreePint Limited (c) 2007

“SLA Report: The Future Workplace” By Robin Neidorf and Pam Foster

While librarians have a place in the future workforce, their role is likely to change significantly. Two sessions at the Special Libraries Association 2007 conference in Denver, Colorado, USA, showed how information workers' jobs are likely to evolve in coming years.

Future of Librarians in the Workforce

José-Marie Griffiths' Future of Librarians in the Workforce was an update on the progress of the on-going IMLS- (Institute of Museum and Library Services) sponsored study that aims to: identify future and potential labour shortfalls in the library and information sector due to retirement, the skills needed to fill these vacancies, the current and potential capacity of LIS schools to meet these demands and effective approaches to recruitment and retaining staff.

Initial findings of the latest round of research reveal some interesting trends. We're now seeing more remote users of library services, which means that total usage is increasing, even if visits to the library are diminishing. The number of non-professional library staff is also increasing, especially in public libraries where there has been a large increase in non-professional jobs (IT, etc). Estimates show that by 2016 there will be a need for 14,120 special librarians and 26,000 public librarians. More than 4,000 graduates are becoming available each year, suggesting that a crisis will hit at some point - a bottleneck is caused by individuals not retiring as early as originally thought. The number of graduates has been consistent since at least the last workforce study in 1982.

Clearly, the information profession has some work to do in terms of attracting and retaining talented students. Another phase of the study will be approaching high school (pre-university) guidance counsellors to ensure they are appropriately counselling students into considering the information field. At the same time, a parallel crisis is emerging in attracting and retaining faculty to teach in accredited information at the university level. A dearth of PhD candidates today means no incoming tenure-track faculty. As programmes are (hopefully) recruiting more students, they will also have to be creative about supporting them with dedicated, knowledgeable and enthusiastic faculty.

When asked about job satisfaction, nearly 38% of those surveyed said that they would choose the same career again. Professional development is an issue. When asked about the adequacy or not of their library/information education, there was general agreement, by respondents, that they felt well prepared for the first couple of years, but felt the need for more management education over the next five years.

-- Continues --

“SLA Report: The Future Workplace”

About the Authors

Pam Foster is the editor of VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>, and Robin Neidorf is the General Manager of Free Pint Limited. They attended this session at the SLA annual conference in Denver, Colorado.

Another interesting aspect to the study is its identification of the increasing 'bleed' between librarianship as a profession and other jobs and roles. Based on the preliminary data, the number of workers who are engaged in information functions is 10 times the number of workers who have a library-specific degree from an accredited programme.

The study is also examining usage of different types of libraries. Data gathered to date indicates that libraries - public and specialised - remain vital. Whilst in-person visits for some categories of library are flat or (in some cases) decreasing, remote visits (for the subset of the sample that could report this information) are increasing. At the same time, it is troubling how many respondents had to state 'Don't Know' in response to the question regarding remote access. If we cannot track usage of information resources, it is difficult to make a compelling case for their continuation, let alone expansion.

In the question period, we made the observation that the study, funded in part by the US federal government, is focussed specifically on the US workforce. Yet the information profession is international - workers train in one country but work in another and vice versa; multinational corporations must staff multinational information 'centres' that may not have a central location. The investigators are considering some of these issues for future iterations of the study by asking questions about multinational workforces, as well as cross-border educational experiences.

An IMLS website provides further information <<http://www.libraryworkforce.org/>>.

Dream Jobs of the Future

Many said the discussion didn't focus enough on what these dream jobs would be in this session presented by recruiters Diane Goldstein, Deb Schwartz and Joel Burger, and academic Hazel Hall, but everyone was relieved to learn that librarians were included in the future. However, their titles might be different. Hazel Hall, panel member and senior lecturer at Napier University, says to look beyond job titles to identify e-information role opportunities. Be on the lookout for these titles: business analyst, coach, community and network facilitator, competitive intelligence officer, data steward, digital project manager and e-learning facilitator, among others.

-- Continues --

“SLA Report: The Future Workplace”

Hall, flanked by information recruiters, also said recruiting agencies would play an increasingly important role in helping jobseekers find work. As job titles become more enigmatic, recruiters will serve as stewards and translators for the new work environment. Schwartz, Burger and Goldstein all said more companies are outsourcing information workers, for which they turn to professional recruiters.

Want to beef up your CV with an advanced degree? Try an MBA, ontology, taxonomy or linguistics degree. Overall, become better managers, a weak point according to all panel members.

Read more coverage of the SLA conference in the most recent issue of FreePint <<http://www.freepint.com/>>.

-- Ends

FUMSI Reports from Free Pint Limited

Helping you Find, Use, Manage and Share Information

Project Handbook Report and Tool Kit

How to write project handbooks that are clear, useful and get used

More info:

<http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/project-handbook/>



Product Evaluation Report and Tool Kit

Make the most of product trials. Provides an adaptable methodology for evaluating business information products. Includes 5 worksheets, sample needs assessment tools and a sample evaluation report.

More info:

<http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/product-evaluation/>



Risk Management Report and Tool Kit

Turn KM techniques into RM initiatives. Step-by-step guidance on building or improving a risk management programme. Includes 8 hands-on worksheets.

More info:

<http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/riskmanagement/>



Company Portfolio Series

High-value information on content vendors, assembled in a convenient package. Includes overview, news analysis and product reviews from VIP magazine, and excerpts from discussion at the FreePint Bar. Now available at web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/:

- Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing
- Factiva
- OneSource
- LexisNexis



All reports can be purchased online with a credit card for immediate access, or complete the offline order form:

web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/

Single site, multisite and enterprise licenses available