FreePint®

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ABOUT FREE PINT

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs & events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out. To receive a fully formatted version as an attachment or a brief

What skills are employers looking for in today's workplace? That's the question asked by Sylvia P Webb in today's article, Skills for Career Success. Today we publish her FreePint report 'Sharpening Skills, Acquiring Knowledge' available to purchase online at <http://www.freepint.com/shop/report>.

Keeping up to date with the latest developments, continuous learning, and cultivating skills beyond subject knowledge all emerge strongly in Webb's report as important skills and aptitudes currently sought by employers. The report features interviews and insight from leading information professionals including Lynne Brindley, Chief Executive of the British Library. It nearly always pays to seek out development opportunities actively and to use your initiative to attend networking and continuous learning events, sometimes in your own time. People who do this early in their career usually find that it pays off in the long term.

Innovation often comes from getting out of the workplace and brainstorming with peers. This was evident at a recent Factiva forum where I led an interactive workshop. One key theme to emerge was the importance of information professionals' early involvement in IT projects. Delegates agreed that information professionals have naturally strong collaborative skills. However, collaboration alone is not enough. What is needed is the ability to strongly influence key stakeholders. It's the IT departments who often hold the purse strings. Delegates agreed that with some tough negotiation and quick wins, the tables can be turned, and more information professionals can start to hold the budgets to develop user-centred technology projects, whilst working alongside IT departments.

We recently ran a piece on US librarians' reaction to the US Patriot Act and the implications of access to personal data <http://www.freepint.com/issues/040304.htm>. This week Ian Watson looks at perceptions of privacy in view of the increasing growth in electronic surveillance techniques. With a number of topical case studies, he illustrates aptly the boundary between invading privacy and acting in the public interest. We are all acutely aware of the importance of counter terrorism measures, but what about consumer surveillance by manufacturers and retailers in the form of supermarket loyalty cards and Radio Frequency Identification?

Today we also publish our first ever Virtual Exchange, on copyright. A virtual exchange is a training package you can run online that enables you to keep up to date with issues at your own PC. You can purchase it at the FreePint shop <http://www.freepint.com/shop/>. A number of you contributed to this virtual exchange by emailing in your own questions on copyright. You can find out more at <http://www.freepint.com/exchange/cp110304.htm>.

Best Wishes

Annabel Colley
Editor, FreePint <annabel.colley@freepint.com>

FREEPINT JOBS
<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>

The FreePint Jobs Update is being circulated widely every two weeks. This free newsletter now has 1,100 direct subscribers and is posted at the Bar and in the Bar Digest (circulation 11,000).

To see the Jobs Update No.70 visit <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28226> and to subscribe, modify your account at <http://web.freepint.com>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Information Officer, Web Services
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2933>
Produce an e-newsletter, develop a chat room forum and edit web pages for this busy customer-focused business information service.
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Executive Search Researchers (3)
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3100>
Senior Researchers (3) with confidence plus excellent telephone and desk research skills for prestigious Executive Search client.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Editor - The Marketing Managers Yearbook
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3109>
This award-winning title is in its 14th edition and we are looking for someone with B2B directory-publishing experience.
Recruiter: AP Information Services Ltd.

Information Specialist (Maternity Cover)
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3110>
An exciting opportunity exists to provide investment analysts with the highest standard of information support.

Intranet Editor
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3111>
Day-to-day running of our Intranet and its team of around 15 editors continually developing it for our ever-evolving needs.
Recruiter: World Wildlife Fund

NB: There are 28 other jobs in the current edition of the Jobs Update <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28226>.

MY FAVOURITE TIPPLES
by Paul Verlander

Paul Verlander is an information specialist at the UK Health and Safety Executive, the UK regulator for health and safety at work and is part of a team producing the HSELINE database.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

- The Centre for Corporate Accountability <http://www.corporateaccountability.org> - A critical look at health and safety matters in Great Britain including details of deaths at work statistics and inquests, responses to government initiatives and critiques of the current health and safety system from this campaigning organisation.

- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (USA) <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html> - The research arm of the health and safety system in the US, contains access to free information and advice, databases including the bibliographic database NIOSHTIC and a range of quality freely available research.

- The UK Health and Safety Executive <http://www.hse.gov.uk> - A wealth of freely available information from basic advice leaflets to full-text access to the full range of research sponsored by HSE. Also provides access to HSE's register of prosecutions and other enforcement action.

- OSHROM <http://www.ovid.com> - The principal bibliographic database in occupational safety and health - unfortunately a subscription-only service. Contains high quality bibliographic references from the databases of the Health and Safety Executive, NIOSH, the International Labour Office and extracts from MEDLINE. Can be purchased from OVID.

- The European Agency for Safety and health at Work <http://europe.osha.eu.int> - The pan-European network for the promotion of health and safety in the workplace. This website contains a range of information from a wider cross-European perspective including statistics and full text access to research.

EVENTS

United Kingdom:

- "Guidelines for Developing a Corporate Infrastructure for the Management of e-Records" 30th March - 29th June <http://www.freepint.com/go/e300>
- "Knowledge Activist Masterclass" 20th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e313>
- "Title Benchmarking your Intranet" 20th - 21st April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e303>
- "PDA Wireless Conference" 23rd April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e290>
- "Gartner Outsourcing & IT Services Summit 2004" 26th - 27th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e272>
- "Targeting, harnessing and extracting the value of Unstructured Information" 26th - 27th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e301>
- "Developing and extracting the value of Unstructured Information" 26th - 27th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e295>

Australia:

- "Email Management II: Planning and Controlling your Email Strategy" 28th - 29th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e296>

United States:

- "OSS 04 Global Information Forum" 13th - 16th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e265>

This is just a selection from the 27 listings in FreePint Events. For a free listing, complete the form at <http://www.freepint.com/events>.

FREE PINT BAR
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company

We're often stumped when asked to describe FreePint in one sentence. Keywords like 'research' and 'community' usually make it into the description. Of course, it's the information professionals and researchers who make up the bulk of our community and so they're the most active at the Bar.

As well as the usual requests for company and market information worldwide, the Bar sees many questions about software. Someone is selecting a new library management system and lots of opinion has been forthcoming <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28107>. A PhD student has been pleased with suggestions for software to manage his references and ad-hoc information <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28151>. Experiences are being sought by someone integrating an information centre enquiry desk with their IT helpdesk <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28141>. Do you know how to incorporate library collection information into a content management system (Ektron CMS 300)? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28069>.

A favourite correspondent across the pond, ResourceShelf's Gary Price in Washington DC, has posted an item about a new search tool from HotBot that also indexes your hard drive <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28102> and a selection of new resources from the latest ResourceShelf <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28162>. Always good stuff. Why not post your thoughts on Google's new personalised search results <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28190> or if shortened links (like those from DigBig.com) put you off clicking on them <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28059>.

Peter Kaiser, valued contributor to FreePint on computer problems, has generously offered to help FreePinters with PC software and hardware gripes <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28086>. Perhaps one solution might be to stop using computers altogether, the topic of research into 'email-free days' <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28068>.

Finally, the fourth issue of VIP is now available, with an in-depth look at Dialog's new unified platform and guest comment from the CEO of OneSource <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28214>. We've also started posting a Digest of the latest postings from the VIP Wire, a database of information-related press releases <http://www.freepint.com/go/b28144>.

William Hann <william.hann@freepint.com> Managing Editor, FreePint

TIPS ARTICLE

"Intrusion on privacy by electronic surveillance and personal data gathering "
By Ian Watson

Ian Watson is Rights and Information Manager for Newsquest's Glasgow-based newspapers, The Herald, Evening Times and Sunday Herald, He first encountered the Internet, then a bizarre creation virtually unknown outside academe, in 1989 while working at the Turing Institute, a research centre on artificial intelligence. As the World Wide Web brought the Internet to a wider public in the early 90s he became a regular columnist on the subject in Managing Information. He is currently studying for an LLM in IT Law by distance learning from Strathclyde University.

The right to privacy - at its simplest the right to be left alone, or the right not to be subject to surveillance - is enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm> which is now incorporated into English and Scots Law. Article 8 states that 'everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence'. The exercise of that right should not be interfered with by public authorities, except 'such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.'

The right to privacy therefore is not absolute. It is further tempered by Article 10 which provides for the right to freedom of expression, including the right to seek and impart information. If we accept that a degree of surveillance is a necessary requirement of contemporary ways of life, the problem becomes one of defining the circumstances in which, and degree to which, the invasion of individual liberty or privacy might be acceptable. 'Surveillance and the Information Age', the 1999 White Paper Modernising government (Cm 4310, HMSO, 1999 <http://www.official-documents.co.uk> talks of Information Age Government: 'New technology offers opportunities and choice. It can give us access to services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It will make our lives easier. Government intends to be at the head of these developments ...'.

Few would argue against harnessing the power of information technology to deliver better services through better and more rapid access to information and though interactive services. Are these gains outweighed by the attendant loss of privacy? Simon Davies, founder of Privacy International <http://www.privacyinternational.org> believes that the ease of surveillance introduced by the internet is a force that is more than likely to be used by government and corporate interests to the detriment of those of the individual.

National Security

As western governments seek greater access to personal data as part of their counter-terrorism efforts, web sites such as <http://www.epic.com> and <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk> express concern about over zealous surveillance on the grounds of national security. The Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System (CAPPS II), a programme intended to prevent the hijacking of aircraft, uses information from government and commercial databases to assign each passenger a security ranking. It has attracted considerable criticism, especially in Europe where there is great concern that exporting passenger data to the USA would be in breach of European data protection rules. In January 2004 The Register <http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/34915.html> and

<http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/34563.html> reported that the EU had agreed to the use of European passenger data for testing purposes only. Andreas Dietl of European Digital Rights <http://www.edri.org> is sceptical:

'The Commission has agreed to the abuse of EU citizen's personal data to test a surveillance system that in its very nature is against the principles of EU data protection legislation. The claim by the U.S. that the data used for testing purposes will be deleted thereafter is merely a joke: The data will still be available in the Computerized Reservation System (CRS), where it can be accessed by government agencies at any time.'

In February 2004 Privacy International was equally scathing, accusing the EU of failing to respect the privacy of air travellers: see <http://digbig.com/4bagq>. The Electronic Frontier Foundation <http://www.eff.org> is concerned about data quality, data integrity, the right of public access and 'mission creep', a common problem with government agencies, described in <http://www.eff.org/privacy/cappsii>:

'The National Directory of New Hires ... was to ensure that the new hire was not a "deadbeat parent" evading responsibility for child support. Not long after the directory was established, however, it became a tool for locating students with overdue loans and anyone else owing federal monies.'

Law Enforcement

The Crimes and Disorder Act 1998 allows for partnership schemes amongst local agencies to tackle a range of social ills including drug misuse, domestic violence and football hooliganism. The Act makes very wide provision for the disclosure of information. A joint statement by the Data Commissioner and the Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/jsdprho.html> recognises the dichotomy between information sharing and data protection:

'The public rightly expects that personal information known to public bodies will be properly protected. However, the public also expects the proper sharing of information, as this can be an important weapon against crime. Agencies should, therefore, seek to share information where this would be in the public interest.'

This dichotomy was dramatically illustrated when the 2003 Soham murder trial revealed a critical lack of information-sharing by various police forces. In the wake of the trial, Information Commissioner Richard Thomas introduced a new

package of measures to improve guidance on interpreting the Data Protection Act, declaring:

'It is ridiculous that organisations should hide behind data protection as a smokescreen for practices which no reasonable person would ever find acceptable ... Data protection law stands in the way of a surveillance society where government and commercial bodies know everything about everybody... '. Organisations must use their own judgement to balance what they want or need to do against the need to safeguard the privacy of individuals and to ensure their personal information is handled properly. In another case <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/3342059.stm> British Gas was criticised for failing to pass on to social services the information that it had disconnected the gas supply to an elderly couple who subsequently died.

Both these cases illustrate that the boundary between invading privacy and acting in the public interest may be very hard to define and, given the reliance on 'common sense', may in fact be more of a blurred 'no man's land'.

Consumer Privacy

According to CASPIAN (Campaign Against Supermarket Privacy Invasion and Numbering) <http://www.nocards.org/welcome/index.shtml> the data collected by loyalty cards can be used in ways detrimental to the individual. David Hinchcliffe MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Select Committee on Health, is reported to have suggested that data loyalty cards could be used to monitor eating habits and steer consumers towards healthier eating (see <http://www.nocards.org/news/index.shtml#obesity>). 'You have enormous power with these,' he said, holding up a loyalty card. 'Perhaps there is a use for these to steer people, in some respects, towards more healthy products.' This might be a laudable objective but a dubious use of personal data, from which the supermarkets have been quick to distance themselves. If loyalty cards have attracted hostility - "the opening volley of the marketers' war against consumers" according to Katherine Albrecht <http://www.nocards.org/AutoID/overview.shtml> - Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) has the potential for even more intrusion and, it should be conceded, benefits.

RFID employs a technology called EPC (electronic product code), a system which can allocate a unique number to any physical object in the world and track its whereabouts. According to Albrecht, 'Though many RFID proponents appear focused on inventory and supply chain efficiency, others are developing financial and consumer applications that, if adopted, will have chilling effects on consumers' ability to escape the oppressive surveillance of manufacturers, retailers, and marketers. Of course, government and law enforcement will be quick to use the technology to keep tabs on citizens as well.'

Conclusions

Michael Cross <http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1122844,00.html> argues against blaming the information infrastructure per se for the loss of privacy. In World War II, the Nazi-occupied

Netherlands, with a population register based on then state-of-the-art IT (punched cards), was more efficient than France (which relied on pieces of paper) in its ability to round up Jews. This line of reasoning would lead to the conclusion that state inefficiency is the last bastion of freedom. The efficient provision of goods and services online does require the collection of personal data which can make the whole process more convenient.

The EC Privacy and Data Protection Directives <http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/privacy/law_en.htm> and <http://digbig.com/4bagp> go some way to protecting privacy. Lawrence Lessig <http://www.lessig.org> is an advocate of technological solutions, arguing that code can restore the original balance between freedom and constraint. Information architecture could enable machine- to-machine negotiations about privacy, allowing individuals to instruct their machines about the privacy they wish to protect. Given the current state of PC operating systems, this option is probably beyond the capabilities of most casual users.

The question of whether the benefits of electronic commerce and personal security outweigh the loss of privacy depends to some extent on the individual's own perception of privacy. If privacy itself is difficult to define then it may be difficult to recognise when it has been violated. Data protection laws are part of a mechanism for patrolling the rather ill-defined and shifting borderline between excessive surveillance and privacy. What constitutes an acceptable balance will to a large extent be determined by the interplay of political, social and economic forces in society as whole, and the extent to which individuals and campaign groups are willing to defend their privacy.

Alison Salmon has been an information professional for approximately 14 years. She is currently the Information Manager for the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT Ltd). Much of her work involves searching for and disseminating automotive and transport information to the Technical Department in which she is based, and to the SMMT as a whole. Alison is a solo information professional, and a committee member of ICLG (Industrial and Commercial Libraries Group), a CILIP group. This group supports and promotes the professional interests of library and information workers in a wide range of commercial and industrial workplaces, and those acting as independent consultants.

Related links:

- Find out more about this book online at the FreePint Bookshelf <http://www.freepint .com/bookshelf/effect s.htm>

- Read customer comments and buy this book at Amazon.co.uk <http://www.amazon .co.uk/exec/obidos/A SIN/1573871710/free pint0c> or Amazon.com <http://www.amazon .com/exec/obidos/AS IN/1573871710/freep int00>

- "Net Effects" ISBN 1573871710, published by Information Today Inc.

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FREE PINT BOOKSHELF

<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

" Net Effects: How librarians can manage the unintended consequences of the Internet "
Written by Marylaine Block
Reviewed by Alison Salmon

This is a useful book, full of diverse ideas, fresh thinking and solutions to stimulate the mind.

Marylaine Block describes herself as a writer, Internet trainer and 'librarian without walls'. This book, a collection of essays compiled by the author, was written as a follow-up to her essay, 'Planning for side effects: The case for semi-Luddite management'. Block believes that information professionals feel they are losing control of their library services, because of complications experienced due to the uptake of the Internet.

The Internet, she suggests, has to a certain extent made our lives 'easier', but it has brought with it many technological side-effects. For example, it has changed the way people search and use information, users' expectations relating to the speed of information received has increased, and information professionals can feel pushed into diverting funding away from purchasing hard copy resources to purchasing electronic resources and their technical support.

Block acknowledges that these could potentially be big problems but she suggests that they are 'opportunities in disguise' for service development and that her book, an 'anthology' of solutions, can help to iron out the problems.

There are 10 chapters:

1. Regaining the Right to Select; 2. Rescuing the Book; 3. Training Our Users; 4. Adapting To Our Users' Changing Expectations; 5. Access Issues; 6. The Techno-Economic Imperative; 7. Continuous Retraining; 8. Up to our Ears in Lawyers; 9. Disappearing Data; 10. How To Not Be Blind-sided Again

Each chapter first discusses the problem, and a number of solutions in forms of essays are provided. Throughout each chapter are interspersed comments from Block, which are handy as they give bite-size overviews of the chapters' contents, highlighting points of interest.

VIP Eye No.5 Available Free

A recent edition of VIP Eye has been made available free online. There is also a new free twice-monthly Digest of information-related press releases from the 'VIP Wire' posted at the VIP Lounge:

<http://www.vivavip.com/>

One chapter I found to be particularly interesting was 'The Techno-Economic Imperative'. It addresses problems such as how we as information professionals are becoming more systems-savvy, how we deal with vendors, choose new software, deal with online subscriptions, and how we work with our IT departments.

This book will appeal particularly to those information professionals who have users in attendance, e.g. public or academic libraries. It is an American publication, but don't be put off by the American bias; solutions can be tailored to your situation and to any type of library!

As an added bonus, Block has created a website 'tie-in' <http://marylaine.com/book/index.html>. New articles and online resources relating to the problems covered by this book can be found there. Also the book contains a listing of all the URLs and the works cited.

I don't know if I've ever considered myself to be a Luddite, but I think the semi-Luddite attitude this book suggests is not such a bad thing. For example, being prepared; being professionally aware; and IT-literate, so that you do not miss advancements or advantageous situations and can help you keep your cool. Such an attitude will help prevent you from being overwhelmed by the Internet and its consequences.

FreePint Forthcoming Articles

* Marketing for the Info-entrepreneur * Cardiology Information * Artificial Intelligence * Time Management * Developments of Search Engines * Semantics * Usability * Geospatial Searching on the Web *

If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact <penny@freepint.com> or sign up for the Author Update at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

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FEATURE ARTICLE
"Skills for Career Success"
By Sylvia P Webb

Sylvia P Webb BA(Hons) FCLIP is a well-known consultant, author and lecturer in the LIS field. She has lectured internationally including two highly successful lecture tours of Australia. Her best-known book 'Creating an information service' has sold worldwide. She was College Librarian and lectured in behavioural sciences at Ashridge College. Her most recent research considered the introduction of knowledge management in legal firms. Other research covered business information, quality issues in corporate libraries, and professional education in the finance sector. Sylvia was the founding editor of Aslib's KnowHow series, now part of Europa Publications' list. She has served on various government advisory bodies; been regularly involved in professional education and training, and active within the library and information professional associations, especially as Chair of CILIP's Accreditation Board.

Whatever career path we start out on, or choose to move into, we all need various skills and varying degrees of knowledge about certain subjects to carry out our work effectively . A new FreePint report* looks at the sorts of skills and knowledge that you might need, and the situations in which you could apply them at various stages of your career. Whilst the particular focus is on those qualities and skills necessary in the field of information, library, and research work, many of them will be equally relevant, even essential, to other professions, especially those skills relating to the management of various cross-functional activities. For example, project management, financial planning, and staff development apply to most professions and businesses. You are likely to have to take on responsibilities in one or more of those areas at some stage in your career.

What are the options?

The key determinants in choosing a career will be: your preferences; your knowledge of a sector or a profession; parental or peer encouragement; your aptitude and your motivation and commitment. In other words, you need to be able to make an informed choice according to what appeals to you, how much you know about it, and what you are, or might be, good at. You have to be realistic. Some of us are naturally good at doing certain things, they seem to come easily. Other activities require a lot more work and can still be difficult to grasp. That does not mean they are beyond our reach, or that we should not pursue them, but it could make a difference to our initial choice and subsequent direction. Don't be put off; we can't all achieve excellence in everything, but we do need to be competent.

Initially you may think you would like to become an accountant, a librarian or an engineer, or you may have no idea of a possible career, but decide to study in a field that interests you and make your career choice later. Whichever profession you decide to pursue, there are many variations and possible directions within each. That is where your preferences, skills and knowledge need to be considered together, along with the entry requirements of the relevant professional body which will ultimately award or accredit your qualification. Have a look at the websites of some of the professional bodies. They are not only concerned with qualifications, but also with setting standards and providing advice. They will give you an idea of the different types of work involved. Key library, information and research activities are discussed in more detail, along with related skills, in the FreePint report*.

In the library and information field start by looking at the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in the UK, <http://www.cilip.org.uk>; the Australian Information and Library Association (ALIA), <http://www.alia.org.au>; the American Library Association (ALA), <http://www.ala.org> and the Special Libraries Association (SLA) in the USA, <http://www.sla.org>; also the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA),

<http://www.eblida.org>. For international links try the website of the British Council which has offices throughout the world, <http://www.britishcouncil.org>, or a general search engine such as Google, <http://www.google.com>.

Even at the beginning of your career, you will be able to bring certain skills to your first job. For example, as part of your formal education you might have carried out research. Any work experience that you have had will have allowed you to test and develop your skills in dealing with people, as well as learn more about organisational behaviour. Such prior experience could be useful in your new job, but don't forget that your new employer may have different ways of working, so you will need to be adaptable, possibly adjusting or abandoning some of those earlier ways of working. Don't be weighed down by baggage which may no longer be needed.

What do employers want?

What will your potential employer look for, or expect of you as a new employee once you are in post? The Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) representing many of the UK's top employers, has conducted surveys of members, asking them for key qualities they seek as employers. As well as a consistent search for business awareness, teamwork and communication skills, there has been an increasing call for candidates to display a willingness to learn, seen as the key to career success, and 'employability' based on 'skills beyond subject knowledge'. Look at the AGR web site, <http://www.agr.org.uk>. where some

GOLD

- FreePint No.134 3rd April 2003. "Genetically Modified Foods: Official Information Sources" and "Information Systems - Never Just Technology" http://www.freepint.com/issues/030403.htm

- FreePint No.109 4th April 2002. "The War Against SPAM" and "Finding Chemical Information on the Web - the User's Viewpoint" http://www.freepint.com/issues/040402.htm

- FreePint No.84, 29th March 2001. "In the Footsteps of Miss Marple - Female Detective Fiction Online" and "Quest for Liberty: History of the United States of America" http://www.freepint.com/issues/290301.htm

- FreePint No.59, 30th March 2000. "Virtual Visits: Links to museums and the like on the WWW" and "Internet Development in the Middle East" http://www.freepint.com/issues/300300.htm

- FreePint No.35, 1st April 1999. "UK Immigration Sources on the Web" and "The Internet for Competitive Intelligence" http://www.freepint.com/issues/010499.htm

- FreePint No.11, 2nd April 1998. "The International Marketing Power of Domain Names" and "Job Hunting on the Net" http://www.freepint.com/issues/020498.htm

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publications can be downloaded free of charge. Among others worth viewing: Graduate Prospects which produces careers guidance for graduates, <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>, and LTSN Generic Centre which promotes effective practices in learning and teaching across all disciplines in Higher Education, <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/genericcentre>.

In order to 'grow' staff who will be able to fully contribute to the organisation in achieving its objectives, employers need to put in place appropriate and realistic training and development programmes. Examples of what employers require and offer are described in the report, and include BRIS, a business information service; KPMG, a multinational firm, and the British Library.

Impact of the corporate culture

As well as the employer's need to assess you as a potential employee, you will want to build up a picture of the employer. Of course you will carry out the necessary research in preparation for any interview, probably by looking at annual reports, corporate websites and various independent sources. However, you will not get a real feel for the organisation until you actually work there. The corporate culture will vary considerably from one organisation to the next and will have a considerable impact on policies and working practices, as research from Mercer Consulting shows <http://www.mercerHR.com>. It will certainly influence the role and status of the information service. As new policies are put in place, for example on whether to set up a knowledge management centre, there will be opportunities for library/information managers to make a valuable contribution, provided they a) have the appropriate skills and understanding of the concept and b) ensure that top management is aware of this. The management of change covers a range of work policies and requires both employer and employee to re-think their working patterns and attitudes. As well as the requirements of employment law which influence the ways that companies operate, there are other things which have made sweeping changes to the way we work. The development and spread of technology has been rapid, and has had a particular impact on information work, allowing those working in the field to acquire a whole range of new skills and create a niche for themselves. Anna Atkinson, now a web manager, did just this in deciding to explore the potential of IT in her various posts, as described in the report.

Successful management

Jobs at all levels and in all fields will require you to manage your work effectively from day one.

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As you progress, you will need to develop and put into practice a range of management skills. Staff management and training, systems decisions, negotiation, all form part of the manager's brief. Library and information skills can provide the foundation on which to build a successful career in that field, or be equally valuable as transferable skills if you choose to make a complete career change. This is demonstrated in the report by the example of someone who moved out of business information, first into stockbroking, then on to work for a statutory enforcement agency. In her current role she finds that her earlier information-seeking activities have been invaluable in pursuing a whole new area of knowledge, as well as in her day-to-day work. Management skills have been added along the way and now involve her in such activities as managing strategic projects, as well as staff-related management.

That same approach, building on skills, and adding others, are equally important if you decide to work as an independent consultant. Here you will need not only to be highly motivated, but also very well organised, and able to think "outside the box". You will also need those practical skills that enable you to actually run the business, as well as keeping up-to-date in your chosen areas of operation.

Leadership skills, vision and management competence have contributed to Lynne Brindley's success, leading to her current post as Chief Executive of the British Library. Since her appointment in 2000, the British Library has undergone comprehensive management restructuring and completely transformed human resources management. In-house programmes have been developed in, for example, performance management and leadership. Lynne provides an excellent example of the way in which skills, knowledge, experience and hard work can take you to the top of your profession.

The process of developing skills and acquiring knowledge is not quick or easy. They are gained through longer term experience, and require considerable thought and effort, but are well worth pursuing, resulting not only in personal growth and development, but also promotion and a great deal of job satisfaction.