Information Outlook, March 2010

Special Libraries Association

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“Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” A lot of investors no doubt wish they had heeded that age-old advice a couple of years ago and diversified their portfolios. But diversification does not apply only to money; it is an excellent career strategy as well.

An appealing aspect of librarianship in general and special librarianship in particular is the wide array of settings in which it can be practiced—the number of baskets available to you. There are, of course, brick-and-mortar libraries, and even these span the gamut. They range from highly specialized collections in cultural institutions and corporations to a broad array of academic, law and medical libraries to some of the world’s largest libraries, such as the Library of Congress and the British Library—and I have probably left out more than I have included.

Information and knowledge professionals have long worked in less traditional settings, too, and digital information is enabling this group to grow. Without the need to gain physical access to stacks, the laboratory, the home and even the executive suite can and do serve as the workspace of a growing number of SLA members who are defining themselves not by where they work but by what they deliver.

Regardless of where you now work, economic uncertainties have likely affected your sense of job security. That may make this a good time to identify some new career baskets into which you can place your proverbial eggs.

As the economy begins to recover, start preparing yourself now for the job you’ve always wanted.

BY JANICE R. LACHANCE, SLA CEO

Do you have a passion for a cause, a fascination with a certain organization, or a secret love for a certain subject? Now is a great time to explore ways to use your skills to get the job you always wanted, but never knew existed! First, find out which organizations are involved in the things that excite you, then use SLA’s Membership Directory to seek out other members who may already be working there. Follow and analyze job listings in the weeks and months ahead. Add any items to your portfolio of knowledge and skills that will make you more attractive to your dream employer.

Keep all of your skills current by staying engaged in SLA’s full program of professional development opportunities. Take a Click U Webinar to learn more about digitizing information, hear the latest from copyright experts, or participate in a discussion about the future of special libraries. Spend 15 minutes a week reading executive summaries of the hottest in business literature by signing up for execuBooks. Get up to speed on social networking and more by diving into “23 Things.” Check out SLA’s exclusive Career Center. Fill in the gaps in your software skills by taking one of the Atomic Learning software tutorials available in the Innovation Lab. Every one of these rich opportunities is absolutely free for SLA members.

There are many reasons why people decide to study library and information science. One is, purely and simply, a love of information and the world’s knowledge. Another is a commitment to lifelong learning.

Leverage these strengths. Invest in yourself by thinking outside your current basket and creating new places your career can take you.
Candidates Set to Run for 2011 SLA Board

The SLA Nominating Committee has identified 10 candidates to stand for election to the association’s 2011 Board of Directors. The candidates are as follows:

- President-elect
  - Brent Mai
  - David Stern
- Chapter Cabinet Chair-elect
  - James Manasco
  - Ulla de Stricker
- Division Cabinet Chair-elect
  - Scott Brown
  - Richard Huffine
- Director (two positions)
  - Nerida Hart
  - Jill Hurst-Wahl
  - P.K. Jain
  - Sara Tompsoon

The election will be held later this year, in mid-September. Information about the candidates, including their goals for the association and their answers to questions, will be posted on the SLA Web site.

Salaries of Special Librarians Rise Again in 2009

Average salaries of information professionals in the United States and Canada rose in 2009, the third consecutive year. The average salary for professionals in the United States was US$ 73,880, compared with US$ 71,812 reported in 2008. The average salary for Canadian respondents was CAN$ 72,705, up from CAN$ 69,971 in 2008. The 2009 salary data were collected in July and August 2009.

SLA used the salary survey data to create mini-reports for 17 different primary job functions, including legal research, knowledge management, reference, and competitive intelligence. Each mini-report can be purchased separately. The Comprehensive Salary Survey comprises all 17 U.S. and six Canadian mini-reports. The 2009 Salary Survey is only available in PDF format and will not be made available in hard copy.

SLA has also developed a salary calculator as an interactive online tool to analyze salaries based on multiple characteristics. Access to the online calculator is included as part of the Comprehensive Salary Survey, but it is also available for purchase on its own. The salary calculator drills down to a specific set of characteristics to compare the user’s salary with that of other professionals in similar roles at similar companies. Users can also investigate how salaries vary based on specific characteristics, such as the following:

- Primary responsibility
- Job title
- For profit/not-for-profit status
- Library/information center budget
- Library experience
- Number of employees supervised
- Location (U.S. Census District or Canadian Region)

The salary calculator computes the average salary for survey respondents in the database who meet all of the criteria selected.

The 2009 SLA Annual Salary Survey is available for purchase on the SLA Web site. The full PDF of the Comprehensive Salary Survey is US$ 65 for SLA members and US$ 125 for non-members. The mini-reports can be purchased for US$ 12.95 for SLA members and US$ 19.95 for non-members.

New York Chapter Helps Members Find New Jobs

With its network of divisions, chapters, caucuses and other interest groups, SLA offers librarians and information professionals a variety of opportunities to share their expertise, learn from others, and develop relationships. In New York, SLA members have the opportunity to do even more—find a new job.

In March 2009, the SLA New York Chapter established its Employment Task Force to assist members affected by the economic downturn. The task force consists of approximately 30 members and is chaired by Donna Severino, vice president of records management at the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

Since its founding, the task force has conducted a chapter survey on employment and created a blog to provide information about recruiters, networking tips and opportunities, job listings, continuing education and other career information. Members of the task force have formed a job hunters’ discussion group, which meets regularly to support colleagues who are seeking employment.

The task force has also sponsored several professional development programs. Laura Hill, founder of Careers in Motion, presented her job searching techniques program twice due to popular demand, and Nathan Rosen of Morrison & Foerster spoke about how to develop a powerful profile on LinkedIn. In addition, the task force has partnered with local LexisNexis and Westlaw representatives to provide free database training for members and aired the LIS Online Career Fair (http://liscareerfair.org/index.html) at Baruch College.

With assistance from the task force, several chapter members (including the chapter chair) have found full-time positions. The task force is continuing its efforts this year to address the needs of the many members in transition.

For more information about the task force, contact Janet Peros at jperos@wlrk.com.
Illinois Chapter to Help Members Attend SLA 2010

The board of directors of the SLA Illinois Chapter has agreed to provide up to 20 stipends to help chapter members attend the association’s 2010 Annual Conference and INFO-EXPO in New Orleans. To qualify for the stipends, chapter members must complete one of two applications, which are available online. Winning candidates will be chosen based on financial need, professional development need, and level of current and future commitment to the chapter and SLA. Completed applications will be forwarded anonymously to a committee for review. Winners will be notified in time to register before the early bird registration deadline of 2 April.

The conference stipends are in addition to two $1,000 stipends available to students enrolled in library programs.

For more information about the stipend program, contact Dianna Wiggins, president of the Illinois Chapter, at dwiggins444@gmail.com.

Five Information Professionals Named SLA Fellows

Two academic librarians, a consultant, a marketing professional, and a legal librarian have been named SLA Fellows for 2010 in recognition of their past, present and future service to the association and the information profession.

The honorees—Rebecca Jones, Dee Magnoni, James Manasco, Jill Strand and Libby Trudell—will be recognized at SLA 2010 during the Awards and Leadership Reception.

Jones joined SLA in 1981 as a student and is currently a managing partner with Dysart & Jones Associates, a Toronto consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, organizational development and change processes for libraries and information-intensive organizations. She has written and presented on the profession’s competencies and worked with the team that created SLA’s Competencies for Information Professionals of the 21st Century, for which she received SLA’s Leadership Award in 2004. She has served on the SLA Nominating Committee and as secretary for the Leadership and Management Division and is currently an alignment ambassador for the Toronto Chapter.

Magnoni has been an SLA member since 1992 and is chair-elect of the Leadership and Management Division and past chair of the Engineering Division. She is the library director at the Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering in Needham, Mass., and created from scratch many of the library’s services and resources since being hired as its first director eight years ago. She has served on the SLA Board of Directors, chaired SLA’s Professional Development Advisory Council, and served as president of two different chapters: the Boston Chapter and the Rhode Island Chapter. She also chaired the Information Technology Division and was the convener of the Information Futurists’ Caucus.

Mansaco, the head of collection development for the University of Louisville, joined SLA in 1994 and is a member of the Kentucky Chapter and the Science-Technology, Information Technology, and Academic Divisions. He has served as chair of the Sci-Tech and IT Divisions and as president of the Kentucky Chapter, which honored him with its Professional Award in 2004 and its Outstanding Member Award in 2007. He is a co-presenter of the popular Sci-Eng 101 series of programs offered at SLA’s Annual Conference each year and is the editor of Sci-Tech News, the multi-divisional bulletin that covers several of SLA’s science-related units.

Strand, who manages the information resources team at a law firm in Minneapolis, is a member of the Minnesota Chapter, the Legal, Competitive Intelligence, and Leadership and Management Divisions, and the Public Relations Advisory Coun- cil, which she recently chaired. At the chapter, she has served as alignment ambassador, vice president, president-elect, and president; at the division level, she serves as professional development chair for the Legal Division and worked on the 2009 Conference Planning Committee for the CI Division. As chair of the PRAC, she helped recruit, train and support more than 80 alignment ambassadors, an effort that garnered her a 2009 SLA Presidential Citation.

Trudell, vice president of marketing at Dialog in Sunnyvale, Calif., has served on the SLA Board of Directors and is currently chair of the 2011 Annual Conference Advisory Council and public relations chair for the Information Technology Division. She has served as director, president-elect, and president of the San Andreas Chapter and is currently its public relations director. The chapter honored her with its Mark Baer Professional Achievement Award in 2009. SLA
NOT SEEING THE WHOLE PICTURE

Stephen Abram is not seeing the whole picture when he questions why libraries participate in interlibrary loans (“Dilbert and Libraries,” December 2009). He states that the “vast majority” of materials involved in interlibrary loans “are available for less than five dollars each (used) on Amazon.” I would argue that these items do not constitute the majority of materials that are processed between special libraries through ILLs.

I work at a law library, and many of the books on our shelves cost hundreds of dollars. You will not find them for $5.00 on Amazon. The books loaned between special libraries are often specialized and cannot be purchased cheaply.

There may be instances where purchasing an item makes sense, such as if it cannot be obtained expeditiously through ILL or if it costs less to buy than borrow. However, wholesale elimination of ILL is not the answer. In many situations, it will not be cost-effective to purchase the item. Additionally, a library may not have space for the new item, or the item may not be consistent with the purposes of the library.

Katy DiVittorio
Lewis and Clark Law School
Paul L. Boley Law Library
Portland, Ore.

ESTABLISHING FALSE LIMITS

Thank you for publishing the interview with Larry Prusak in the December 2009 issue of Information Outlook. I have long admired his work and think the interview contains a number of important insights. I would, however, like to register contrasting views on two points.

First, I would not agree that we should leave the acquisition of information to the purchasing department, and I wouldn’t agree, as Prusak does, when the interviewer asks, “It sounds like you’re saying that information professionals need to move away from procuring and maintaining content.” Licensing information requires specialized expertise—it’s not like buying pencils. Information and knowledge are closely intertwined (perhaps inseparable), and I don’t agree that we have to choose between them. I think that’s a false choice.

Our organizations need both information and knowledge, and librarians need to manage both. Let’s not give up information services and management in pursuit of knowledge services and management. To do so would be to repeat an error our profession has made all too often in the past: to see our role and our value too narrowly.

Katy DiVittorio
Lewis and Clark Law School
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Portland, Ore.

My second concern is with Prusak’s exclusive focus on business. Librarians in all sectors—regardless of whether they use the word “librarian” in their job title—are taking responsibility for knowledge as well as information. To cite just one example, in the same issue of Information Outlook in which Prusak’s interview appears, Michele Tennant of the University of Florida described her role in recruiting faculty to affiliate with the university’s Genetics Institute—a knowledge management role if ever there was one.

So, to state that only corporations need knowledge is to place a false limit on the importance of knowledge in other segments of society and to overlook the value that librarians can add in many types of organizations. To advocate that librarians need to give up information as they engage with knowledge is to ignore the essential connections between the two, dismiss the ongoing importance of information, and again set up a false limit on the role of librarians.

We’ve limited ourselves too much in the past. These comments, if we accept them, will continue to limit us. Let’s not perpetuate that mistake in the second century of SLA.

David Shumaker
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DIFFICULT TO DEPERSONALIZE

In the October/November issue, I told SLA members about my cool job at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (“10 Questions: Jacalyn Spoon”). When asked to name the biggest challenge I face, I replied that it was “not taking budget cuts personally.”

Today, I find myself looking for employment. I must say this particular budget cut is very difficult to depersonalize. It’s been six years since I looked for a new job. Luckily, it’s been less than one year since I updated my resumé and wrote a practice cover letter.

As the Solo Division’s chair of professional development, I would like to remind everyone to take the time to update your resumé. When you see a great job posting, write yourself a cover letter (even if you’re not really looking). It builds confidence, and practice makes perfect.

Wish me luck!

Jacalyn C. Spoon, MLS
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To share your views about an article or column in Information Outlook, send a letter to editor@sla.org. Letters should run no longer than 500 words.
Most Faculty Add Information Literacy Component to Courses

Nearly three-fourths of faculty members at U.S. colleges and universities have incorporated some form of information literacy instruction into their teaching to help students familiarize themselves with library resources in their field, and slightly more than half of faculty members at Canadian institutions have done so as well, according to a recent study.

The Primary Research Group, which publishes research reports, surveys and benchmarking studies for businesses, colleges, libraries, law firms, and other institutions, polled roughly 550 full-time faculty at more than 300 colleges and universities about their use of library reference and subject specialist staff. Two-thirds of faculty surveyed admitted they need help from reference staff and subject specialists occasionally; about 14 percent said they need help frequently and that library staff usually meet their needs. Only 11 percent said they don’t really need assistance from librarians, while just 2 percent said they often need help but that librarians frequently lack the expertise to assist them.

Among faculty who have incorporated information literacy instruction into their courses, those who teach at small colleges are more likely (77 percent) to do so than those who teach at large colleges (62 percent). Faculty in psychology, counseling and education are most likely to engage in information literacy instruction into their teaching, while those at research universities are least likely.

American faculty members are much more likely than those in Canada to use their library’s virtual reference services; conversely, faculty in Canada are more likely than their American counterparts to believe that subject matter specialists in their library are competent. Use of subject specialists rises with rank: full professors used specialists a mean of 5.11 times per year, while associate professors used them 2.59 times.

For more information about the survey, visit www.primaryresearch.com.

Stakeholders Find Common Ground on Balancing Public Access, Scholarly Publishing

Specific embargo periods between the time of publication and that of public access should be established for peer-reviewed journal articles containing data and findings from federal research grants, according to a group of representatives from university administrations, libraries, information science departments, and the publishing industry.

The members of the group, called the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable, were brought together in June 2009 by the Committee on Science and Technology of the U.S. House of Representatives and asked to recommend policies that would “balance the need for increased access to scholarly articles with the need to preserve the essential functions of the scholarly publishing enterprise.” Their proposals, presented in a report, include the following:

- That an embargo period of between zero (for open access journals) and 12 months be established for most science disciplines, though some fields might require a longer period;
- That common standards be adopted to ensure searchability and collaboration across fields and databases;
- That international cooperation on standards be encouraged; and
- That federal agencies work together with the publishing community to ensure common core properties and a coherent framework for access and preservation across the government.

The group members made it clear that they oppose requiring manuscripts accepted for publication in scholarly journals to be deposited into federal repositories, saying such an action “violates fundamental principles of copyright on which today’s scholarly communication is based.” Should the U.S. government consider taking such a step, the report states, it should work with publishers to determine how to provide such access (central repository versus distributed access on publisher sites) and what fees might be necessary to compensate publishers for the use of their copyrighted works and the significant value publishers add to peer-reviewed articles.

For more information about the report, visit http://science.house.gov/press/ and look under “Letters to the Committee.”

Catholic University to Offer Certificate in Library Management

Librarians in the Washington, D.C., area looking to hone their management skills can take advantage of a new program designed to prepare them for the challenges of leadership.

The Advanced Certificate in Library Leadership and Management, a joint program of Catholic University’s School of Professional Studies and the School of Library and Information Science, consists of 18 credit hours and six courses, as follows:

- **Project Management**: Introduces students to the principles underlying effective project management; covers the project life cycle, stakeholder identification, resource allocation, cost management, scheduling techniques, and human resource aspects of project management.
- **Managerial Decision-Making Tools and Techniques**: Introduces decision-making tools used by managers, focusing heavily on financial management, terminology, budgeting techniques, financial reporting, and metrics.
- **Management**: Emphasizes the development of competencies in using human, financial and other resources to achieve effective and efficient organizational performance in all types of libraries, archives, media and information centers.
- **Use and Users of Libraries and Information**: Promotes an understanding of how different groups of people and communities seek, gather, retrieve and use information in a
variety of information environments.

• **Research Methods in Library and Information Science**: Covers the analysis and evaluation of research studies in library and information science and the application of analytical and evaluative technique; includes research design and proposal writing.

• **Practicum**: Supervised professional training in a library, archive, or other library/information service agency; typically taken as the final, capstone experience in the program.

The program was developed in response to data indicating that most librarians assume management responsibilities within a few years of completing their master’s degree, yet few of them receive any management education in school. As a result, librarians often find themselves in positions of leadership for which they feel unprepared.

For more information about the program, visit http://slis.cua.edu.

**Applications Due for Scholarship and Award**

Applications are due 30 April for the 2010 Roger K. Summit Scholarship, a US$ 5,000 prize given annually to a promising graduate student in library and information sciences, and the Australia and New Zealand Information Professional Award.

To qualify for the scholarship, candidates must be enrolled in an accredited library or information sciences program. A panel of information professionals will select the winner after reviewing academic achievement, interest in electronic information services, proficiency in academic achievement, interest in electronic information services, proficiency in research methods, and information and library/information service agency experience.

The scholarship is named in honor of Dialog founder and chairman emeritus Roger K. Summit, a pioneer in developing the technology behind online information retrieval. This year’s winner will be announced at SLA’s 2010 Annual Conference and INFO-EXPO, to be held 13-16 June in New Orleans. Applications and information are available online at dialog.com.

The award carries a cash prize of AUD 2,000 and is open to all information professionals in Australia and New Zealand. Nominees must describe the contribution they’ve made to the profession. The contribution may be associated with a new product or service, an innovative approach to management or service delivery, or a major paper that has led to a better appreciation of the role of information among users of their services or a wider audience.

A panel of SLA Australia and New Zealand Chapter board members and regional Dialog management will select the award winner, who will be announced at the 2010 SLA Annual Conference. Nomination forms are available at http://units.sla.org/chapter/canz/. Nominations should be e-mailed to Jeanette Regan, awards chair for the SLA Australia and New Zealand Chapter, at jregan@grapevine.net.au.

**Grant to Support Development of New Archival Management Tool**

Libraries at three U.S. schools—the University of California, San Diego, New York University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign—are joining forces to develop a next-generation archival management tool, thanks to a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The US$ 539,000 grant will support the planning and design of a new software tool for the description and management of archives. The new tool will be based on the combined capabilities of Archivists’ Toolkit (AT) and Archon, the two leading open-source archival tools, which are used by dozens of academic libraries, special collections, archives and museums around the globe.

Planning activities will include the development of a next-generation architectural framework as well as a complete review of the new archival tool’s required and desirable functional specifications. Members of the archival community will be consulted during the planning and product development stages.

For more information, visit http://libraries.ucsd.edu/about/press/.

**Info File**

**Writing for Information Outlook**

**Information Outlook** welcomes queries from authors about articles of interest to information professionals. For writer’s guidelines and a current editorial calendar, see www.sla.org/WriteForO or write to editor@sla.org. Please allow two to four weeks for acceptance.

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Comments on articles or opinions on any topic of interest to information professionals may be submitted as letters to the editor. They should be sent to editor@sla.org with a subject line of “Letter to Editor.” All letters should include the following: writer’s name, SLA volunteer title (if applicable), city and state/province, and phone number. (We won’t publish the phone number, but we may wish to call for verification.) Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity to conform to the publication’s style.

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**Membership**

Inquiries about SLA membership should be sent to membership@sla.org.

To update your address or other account information, to join SLA, or to renew your membership, go to www.sla.org/content/membership and select the appropriate item from the menu in the left column.
Find the answers in the 2009 SLA Annual Salary Survey.

The 2009 Salary Survey is available in a Primary Job Function mini-report format, with 17 mini-reports for the U.S. and six for Canada at a price of $12.95* each.

The Comprehensive Report is also available at a price of $65.00* and comprises all 17 U.S and six Canada mini-reports. The 2009 Salary Calculator is included with the Comprehensive Report.

Get your copy today and start negotiating a better compensation package!

www.sla.org/salarysurvey
A very wise library school professor told me that you never know where your career may take you, and developing the skills and strategies needed to move up (or out) can only expand your opportunities. This advice is especially true in today’s challenging economy. The more skills and abilities you master and successfully integrate into your work life, the better your chance of enhancing and advancing your own interests as well as those of your library or information center.

Even if you don’t think you want to join the upper ranks of management or become your own boss as a consultant, the skills and strategies needed to be successful in these endeavors are invaluable in making you a better and more effective information professional, both at your current job and in any future position you may want to pursue. I hope the articles that follow will instill in you the confidence to pursue these skills and strategies and help you improve the status and importance of knowledge services in your organization.

Two of the articles are first-person profiles by info pros who “left the library behind” and found personal and professional satisfaction in new careers. Jane John is a former corporate librarian who started her own company, On Point Research, after her family moved to Maine. In her article, Jane describes how her training and experience as a librarian prepared her (or didn’t, in some instances) for consulting work and how she repackaged and repositioned herself to become a consultant.

Anne Caputo, SLA’s current president, never worked in a physical library—her first job in the information field was at Lockheed Martin, as a customer service trainer for the Dialog database—but her degree in library science and her knowledge of how librarians think and work helped elevate her to the highest levels at Dialog and at Dow Jones, where she now serves as executive director of learning and information professional programs. In her profile, Anne explains how the skills and knowledge she learned while earning her library degree and working with librarians opened up opportunities for her in large corporations.

Complementing these profiles are two articles about how to improve your chances for success once you move up or out. Allan Cohen, a professor at Babson College and co-author of several books on management and leader-
ship, notes that as you rise higher within an organization, you gain authority over more people but rely more on those you don’t control—a conundrum that makes it imperative to learn to exercise influence. He discusses the nature of influence and how best to wield it, using examples from the library world to illustrate his thesis.

Sherri Thomas, a career coach and consultant, writes about how people who want to advance their careers often find they need a support system to help them succeed. She discusses how to develop such systems and explains who should comprise them and how to make good use of them.

No matter where you are on your career path, I hope you find these articles to be of value. Even if you are satisfied with your job and feel professionally fulfilled, learning about the factors that have contributed to others’ career success may help you perform better in your current position. And if you have additional thoughts on leaving the library behind, please share them in a letter to the editor at editor@sla.org.
After graduating from college and completing my student teaching requirements, I entered the world of my dream job—a high school social studies teacher. As with many dream jobs, the reality of teaching proved to be quite different from what I had envisioned. After two challenging years in the classroom, I discovered I loved teaching but not the school administrators, the administrative requirements (like hall and cafeteria duty), and nearly all of the parents of my students.

Casting around for my next ideal career, I thought about working in a museum, archive or specialized library. When I interviewed with Leslie Janke, the dean at San Jose State University’s School of Library and Information Science, I was surprised to hear his admonition that although I would be accepted into the program, I should not count on jobs being available when I completed my degree. Remembering my earlier career mistake, I began working in the Science Department of the campus library, trying reference and collection development and classification skills on for size.

A few years later, I emerged with a newly minted library degree, only to discover that Dean Janke had been right—there were no jobs available in libraries in California at that time. So I took the advice of my advisor, the legendary Marty West, and conducted a practice interview with the Dialog Project at Lockheed Missiles & Space Corporation, down the road in Palo Alto.

My interview was an intimidating combination of driving through Stanford University picketers carrying “Merchants of Death” placards and walking into the research lab to see rooms full of disk drives and monitors, all on elevated floors to allow air conditioning systems to cool the space. After an hour-long interview during which I barely understood the concept of building an information retrieval system or using Boolean Logic or field searching, I left thinking I had at least practiced my interview techniques. Much to my surprise, I received a call-back for a second interview, and in another week or so I was offered the job.

That first job stretched into a 22-year career at Dialog; I’m now in my 13th year at Dow Jones. During my long career I’ve made use of many of the skills I learned while getting my MLIS at San Jose State, and I’ve found that I’ve needed many more skills than I acquired in my graduate school education.
I would encourage even more development of management and communication coursework, which would produce a winning combination for those who aspire to managerial positions.

Developing Skills Over Time

My first job at Dialog involved answering the new 1-800 telephone number used for customer service inquiries. In truth, the reason I was selected for this initial position lies in what I learned in my MLIS program and also in capabilities I learned earlier, in my teacher preparation courses and even in my high school debate training.

In many ways, customer service makes use of the reference skills that are so ubiquitous in library education. You have all the cues available from your client except those presented by body language. You need to know your content set, which is the equivalent of your collection. You need to employ all the reference interview techniques you learned in the classroom to understand and define the true question being asked. You need the interactive questioning capabilities that are so prized in good reference staff, and you need to know when the question cannot be answered using the tools and content you have at hand. Of the many capabilities I acquired in my MLIS program, reference skills were the first I employed and by far the most useful.

In addition to working in the customer service area, I also contributed to writing systems documentation and the customer newsletter and to testing and writing other user materials. All the writing I did in library school helped me in these tasks, but my writing skills owe more to my liberal arts college education and even to my high school courses.

A third area of responsibility in that initial Dialog job was creating training programs and delivering them to customers. My training for classroom teaching proved invaluable in helping me write for adult learners and stand in front of groups to discuss complex search topics.

All of these skills were aided by my cataloging and classification courses. A clear sense of organization and a logical approach to the way knowledge should be arranged are assets to any kind of professional career. Understanding the role of metadata across common content is useful in organizing thoughts, fostering critical thinking skills, and formulating a clear style of writing (and, ultimately, all communication).

As my career has advanced into management roles in marketing and strategic planning, I have continued to use my reference and classification knowledge to great advantage. The skills I’ve needed that were most lacking in my MLIS training—marketing and communication—I’ve been able to develop over time, thanks to a strong foundation in earlier parts of my education.

Management and leadership require creativity, flexibility, the ability to build teams, and other “soft” skills that seldom are taught in formal coursework. Above all, they require good communication—an essential tool in expanding your ideas and creating compelling messages to attract followers. This is an area that begs for additional focus in our iSchools and more traditional MLIS programs.

Fine-Tuning Curricula

Over the years, I’ve frequently encountered information professionals who were my students in the 1980s and 1990s when I was teaching information retrieval and electronic resources courses at Catholic University and the University of Maryland. To initiate conversations, I often ask them what they wish they had learned while earning their professional degree that would help them in their current roles. Put another way, I ask them what they’re doing in their professional lives that they had not anticipated doing and were not prepared to do. The most frequent role they mention is teaching clients to discern and use information resources directly; a close runner-up is conducting presentations and speaking extemporaneously.

From my own career development, I would concur with these two answers. My professional library and information science degree gave me an excellent foundation in organizing information, thinking critically, and asking good questions to get to the essential heart of what is needed. These skills were complemented by my earlier training in teaching and curriculum design and my even earlier training in debating and public speaking.

As professional schools fine-tune their curricula, they are adding some of these elements to their courses. I would encourage even more development of management and communication coursework, which would produce a winning combination for those who aspire to managerial positions. SLA
With Independence Comes Challenges

A TRADITIONAL EDUCATION AND CAREER PROVIDE LIBRARIANS WITH USEFUL SKILLS, BUT ADDITIONAL CAPABILITIES ARE NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AS AN INDEPENDENT INFO PRO.

BY JANE JOHN, MIS

Do traditional library education and experience prepare you to be an independent information professional? What are the challenges of running a business, and do you need additional skills?

I earned a library degree in the 1970s from the University of Denver, then worked in association and corporate libraries in the 1980s and 1990s. When my family moved to a small town in Maine, I started On Point Research, an independent information firm.

Today, I conduct market and business research for start-up companies. I research potential markets for mid-stage companies commercializing their products and for larger firms exploring the potential market for new products and services. I use many of the skills I acquired in traditional library settings, though I had to learn a few new ones along the way.

Start with Library Training

All in all, my traditional library training prepared me well for independent consulting. Specifically, it provided me with skills in the following areas:

Sources and methods. In library school and as a special librarian, you learn to organize, access and make sense of information. You may also create taxonomies, conduct literature searches, and answer questions.

If you decide to start your own company, you’ll find there are people who will pay for these skills. Just change “library” to “information,” “reference” to “research,” and “answers” to “business insights,” and voilà—you have the mission of a new company: “Our firm will conduct research and provide you with the information and insights you need to reduce the risk of your next business decision.”

Working with others. In a special library, you often work with a group of people to serve other employees; in your own firm, you may start by working totally on your own. But you will soon realize that your clients want you to work with them, as a part of their team.

JANE JOHN is owner of On Point Research (www.onpointresearch.com), which provides market and business research services to companies in the high-tech sector. Before starting On Point Research in 2001, she worked at the Mitre Corporation in McLean, Virginia, in various research positions; prior to that she held information positions at the National Wildlife Federation and at Public Technology Inc. in Washington, D.C. She is a past president of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP) and a member of SLA.
Working as a special librarian alongside fellow employees to accomplish a strategic initiative is not unlike consulting, in that both arrangements help a company accomplish its business goals.

**Industry experience.** Most SLA members work within an industry, accomplishing reference and research tasks, providing technical services, or managing people or projects. Members of the Association of Independent Information Professionals (AIIP)—all independent business owners—also report working in a variety of vertical industries. Common client bases are in the health care, information technology, education or pharmaceutical sectors. Librarians with experience in these and other industries may find that their specialized knowledge of industry sources and content transfers readily to work outside the traditional library setting.

**Add Some New Skills**

In addition to what you learn from a traditional library education, you’ll need to acquire new skills if you decide to become an independent consultant.

**Marketing.** Call it marketing, advertising, or business development—once you’re in business for yourself, you’re responsible for your own “deal flow.” No one is bringing in work for you. But even if you don’t have a salesperson’s temperament, there are a number of ways you can market your business. Simply placing yourself in a room of people who do not have your background can instantly make you interesting and marketable—you become an expert even if you’re a generalist in a traditional library setting.

**Basic business skills.** A new business owner has to get up to speed quickly on budgeting, accounting and other basic business skills. These skills can be learned, and in most communities there are business development centers, retired business executive volunteers, and other resources to help you learn them. It may also be possible to find other entrepreneurs to help you with these tasks—for example, a bookkeeper to manage your expense reporting one day a week, a tech guru to design a Web site, or a financial analyst to help you decide how to grow your company.

**Specialization.** Most companies hire an independent consultant because they’re seeking unique expertise, skills or access. Whether you have vertical industry expertise from years spent in a medical or trade association library, access to unique data resources you have purchased for your business, or a knack for a particular type of service (such as telephone surveys or taxonomies), you’ll need to convey that you have some sort of special skill or knowledge to make yourself worth hiring. You’ll also need to keep your specialization sharp by engaging in additional self-directed learning and professional activities and attending industry events.

Developing a niche won’t necessarily preclude performing other types of work. Whatever your special skill set, it’s better for a potential client to notice that you are an expert in X and thereby assume you can also do Y than to wonder whether you are up to a certain task because you are a generalist.

**Presenting results.** When someone tells me, “I’ve always loved the thrill of finding information, so I want to start a business finding information for others,” I’m often skeptical. Sure, information consultants find information. But remember—most people today don’t think they’ve lost any information. In fact, they’re surrounded by more information than they can absorb, and the last thing they may want is more of it!

Customers may not be willing to hire someone to find more information, but they are willing to pay an expert to sift, sort and summarize it—and to offer clear, concise conclusions. The bottom line is usually an insight that reduces risk, saves money, or leads to more customers. Busy people crave insights; they want someone to tell them what information means. Offering insights and drawing conclusions are skills that most librarians possess—though I have found I use them even more frequently as a consultant.

**Simply placing yourself in a room of people who do not have your background can instantly make you interesting and marketable.**

**Address Challenges Directly**

Independence comes with challenges. Following are four challenges I have encountered beyond the library walls. With a little creativity, all of these challenges can be overcome—and finding creative answers can add to the satisfaction of running a business.

**Right-sizing the work flow.** Generating the right amount of work to support a small business is a challenge. It may take a few years to get an adequate amount of work coming through the doors, and you may need to essentially “write off” some of those early development months or years. Later, as you gain a reputation, you may reach another common watershed point—deciding whether to grow your firm or remain a solo consultant. The choice is yours, but you have to develop a flow of work that matches the size of your business.

**Doing it all.** Whether you operate your business from home or rent office space, you will have no one available to fix the computers, invoice customers and pay bills, or develop marketing materials. You’ll also run up against issues related to project scouting, finding new clients, and a host of other start-up questions. Professional organizations offer excellent opportunities to network with others within the information profession who are facing similar challenges. Be prepared, however, to...
Busy people crave insights; they want someone to tell them what information means.

wear many more hats than you wear in a traditional library setting.

Working alone. Working alone, especially from home, is not for everyone. Some people love it; others miss the collegiality of the workplace. Hiring help, collaborating with others, and consulting at client locations can mitigate some of the loneliness of working solo, but librarians considering working independently need to carefully evaluate this factor.

Ensuring your health and retirement. If you now have a job with health, vacation and retirement benefits—rejoice! As an independent consultant or owner of a small firm, you will likely need to pay for your own health insurance and start your own retirement savings program, and your vacations will be well-deserved but unpaid. Whether you rely on a partner or spouse for benefits, pay these expenses from your business income, or decide you can get along without some benefits, you need to factor these issues into your business planning.

Enjoy the Results
At some point, many of us in the library and information profession will decide to give “life beyond the library” a try. Perhaps you have a long-term plan for launching a business or working outside the traditional library; perhaps a family move, a layoff, or another of life’s inevitable changes will provide the spark. Whatever the reason, I believe that countless information businesses can thrive outside a traditional library setting.

Some paths may lead from consulting back into full-time employment in a client’s library, while other information businesses may morph into entirely new fields. Whether you stay with your employer or become independent, it’s always a good idea to develop new skills and address challenges head on.

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The Illusion of Authority, the Centrality of Influence

AS THEY LEAVE THE LIBRARY BEHIND AND MOVE INTO MANAGEMENT POSITIONS, INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS WILL ACQUIRE MORE AUTHORITY—AND LEARN THAT IT HAS ITS LIMITS.

BY ALLAN R. COHEN, MBA, DBA

Anyone who tries to get things done in an organization will, at times, long for more formal authority to force compliance from the people and departments necessary to accomplish important objectives. While this is a perfectly natural desire, it is somewhat misplaced.

Authority, the formal assignment of a role that allows command over specified resources, people, and information, enables some things to be done but doesn’t help much with others. A person with authority can make numerous decisions that have an impact, most often when addressing problems that have known solutions, identifiable role requirements, and behavior based on pre-existing knowledge, skills and preferences. If a person with formal authority can say, “Do this and not that, link this with that,” then mountains can be moved.

In more uncertain circumstances, however—where external conditions and technologies are changing, solutions cannot be predetermined, or judgment is required from many independent or quasi-independent parties with myriad allegiances—then authority is indeed a limited tool. In such contexts, influence is needed to get people to collaborate and invest themselves in accomplishing larger goals.

Under these circumstances, no one person can be effective using only the license to command that goes with formal authority. Even Jack Welch, named by Fortune magazine as the best CEO of the 20th century, could only do so much through making top-down decisions. After buying and selling multiple businesses, reducing GE’s workforce by 200,000 people and adding back 100,000, changing the structure of the company and removing many layers, he realized that the barrier to further growth was the “soft stuff,” which required capturing the hearts and minds of employees. Formal authority allowed him to alter many organizational levers and introduce numerous programs and procedures, but for continued success it
It turns out that the higher you rise within an organization, the more dependent you are on people you don’t control, and the more skillful you have to be at influencing them.

The Currencies of Influence

At the heart of influence are reciprocity and exchange (Cohen and Bradford 2005). People allow themselves to be influenced because they receive something valuable in return for what’s being asked of them. This kind of give and take is the social glue of all relationships and organizations.

This is not a cynical variation of total self-interest; sometimes, what people want is for others to benefit from their efforts. Indeed, part of what makes influence fascinating and sometimes difficult is that the return the other party desires can be hidden or be so different from what the influencer would want that it is overlooked (or it can be known but disparaged). Thus, it is useful to have a model of how to acquire influence to use in situations where it does not come naturally (see Figure 1).

All of us have considerable ability to influence, or we couldn’t function in the world. The problem comes when our usual methods of getting others to cooperate don’t work. It is in these situations that the ability to step back and identify what the other party wants becomes critical.

Because influence is about exchange, we use the concept of currencies as a metaphor for what a person or group values. Using currencies helps stimulate ideas about what matters to the other party and what you can find to exchange for it.

Assume all are potential allies. The first requirement for influence is to assume that any person you want to influence is potentially a strategic ally, no matter how intractable she or he may appear to be. Strategic allies are those with whom it is possible to find an area of overlapping interest in order to exchange something valuable. Therefore, you should treat any resistance to your attempts to influence as a statement that you don’t yet fully understand what is important enough to the other party to find common grounds for exchange.

Clarify your goals and priorities. If you want influence, be clear about what you really need, what you’ll settle for, and what is absolute. Don’t overwhelm the other party with multiple and undifferentiated demands or mix your own personal agenda into the organizational goals.

Diagnose the world of the other person. Ultimately, you want to identify the currencies in which the other party likes to trade. But sometimes you won’t know the other person or have easy access to him or her, or you’ll have only one opportunity to pitch your idea or request. It turns out that much of what any given person cares about in a work situation is knowable, even from a distance. Ask yourself these questions:

- What does the person’s boss expect?
- How is she or he measured?
- What’s the actual nature of the person’s work?
- Does the person have much autonomy?
- What peer pressures does the person experience?
- What is the culture of the person’s workplace?
- Is the person on the career fast track or in the same job she or he held 10 years ago?
- What is his or her educational background?

All of these forces are likely to shape what the person cares about, allowing you to make a reasonable diagnosis without having personal contact. If the person has made public statements, written memos or reports, or developed a reputation that you can examine, your job is even easier. You must, however, be alert to what the person says once you have a conversation, so you can adjust in real time to what the person is revealing.

Identify Relevant Currencies

Many attempts at influencing others break down because the person desiring influence is too caught up in his or her own views of what is important to notice what’s important to the other party. In the following quote (Caputo 2010), notice how some in the library profession do just that:

One of the most interesting and striking sections in the alignment research shows that what we value and promote as our key contributions to our institutions do not always align with what is needed and valued by users in these institutions. For example, we may think that managing a physical collection is key, but our constituents think selecting resources that deliver fast, accurate and factually correct information is even more essential. We may think conducting research on behalf of others is our primary contribution, but our organiza-
tions want analysis and value-added opinion. The alignment research is like a compass that points us along the pathway to strategic importance to our organizations.

Most people constantly declare their currencies—you’ll hear them if you remember to listen. One way to remember to listen for the possible range of currencies is to think about at least five categories: inspirational, task-related, position-related, relationship-related and miscellaneous personal currencies. These are common to most organizations, though not everyone values all of them. Your challenge is to figure out which ones matter to the person or group you want to influence and accept their right to care about things you don’t (see Figure 2 for a list of common organizational currencies).

Notice that almost all of these are currencies that you can obtain to offer. You don’t need permission to recognize another person, tell his or her boss what a wonderful job the person did, or help make the other person’s work more interesting. Granted, if the other party wants budget dollars and you don’t have budget dollars, you’re stuck—but most people trade in more than one currency, and you can often find a mutual one to exchange.

Dealing with relationships. People don’t like to exchange with those they don’t trust, so sometimes it’s necessary to spend time strengthening a relationship, especially if there’s a bad history between you and another person (and/or your areas). In this regard, the evidence suggests that those with more relationships in an organization tend to be more influential, as are those who do things that others value before knowing what they might get in return. Going out of your way for someone only when you want something in return tends to erode influence.

Influence through give and take. If you have something the other person cares about and can exchange it, make sure the process of giving is done in a way that builds ongoing trust. Otherwise, you can set yourself up to lose influence later. Those who play only for short-term advantage generally create opposition that brings them down or limits their influence over time. Keep looking for ways to help others get their work done in return for helping you accomplish your goals.

Two Influential Librarians

The careers of two librarians who acquired considerable influence with senior managers in two very different organizations provide interesting lessons. Nettie Seabrooks started as an assistant librarian at General Motors at a time when she was one of just two African-Americans among the 5,000 employees in GM’s headquarters building. Doing good work and focusing on how to help the organization and the executives who used the library’s services led her to be perceived as a go-to person. As a result, she was asked to help prepare Richard Gerstenberg (later the chairman of GM) to testify before Congress, which was investigating the safety of the Corvair. Though she was the lowest-ranking person in this group, she developed the toughest questions and gained the respect of the others.

Over time, Nettie was given more responsibility. She took advantage of numerous opportunities to expand services while staying within budget or even cutting costs. She also learned to stand up for her employees, demonstrating more toughness than her soft-spoken style would have indicated.

As she explained, “I didn’t set out to do it for personal glory—that would have been self-defeating because they would have smelled it. I wanted to make a contribution to GM, to be part of the fabric and not just an appendage. I never went to somebody and said, ‘This might help you’—this would be presumptuous (unless it was an extension of an existing project). But I tried to figure out what others needed and just gave it to them.”

Eventually, Nettie was offered the chance to work in public affairs and became director of government and civic affairs for Chevrolet, Pontiac and GM of Canada. After retiring from GM, she ended up becoming deputy mayor, chief of staff, and chief operating officer of Detroit; later, in her seventies, she became the chief operating officer of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Richard Voos, vice president of institutional planning at Babson College, started at Babson as a cataloging librarian. When Babson began to introduce...
Total Quality Management methods and procedures, Richard was trained as a facilitator and facilitated teams and meetings all across campus. When Babson took up re-engineering, he did the same.

Over time, Richard’s exposure to high-level managers, combined with his organizational ability, persistence and level-headed analytical ability, propelled him into three interim management roles, then into the position of chief of staff for a new president. That led to him being asked to run institutional advancement because it became clear that his organizational skills were very much needed there.

As with Nettie, Richard’s opportunities arose because he was in positions that offered him exposure to a large number of people, and he demonstrated that he could identify what was important to them and deliver it. He focuses on what the organization needs rather than on his own personal aspirations, and that skill is highly valued.

Although library work is not the only path to influence in organizations that need information, the examples of Nettie Seabrook and Richard Voos demonstrate that librarians possess many skills that are likely to be valuable to others. The trick is to pay attention to what is on the minds of other senior executives, who are probably worrying about increased competition, tight budgets, building organizational capacity and talent, determining future strategy in a rapidly changing world, and so on. Helping them cope with those concerns (and, not so incidentally, using the language of their areas) pays them in valuable currencies that will enhance your ability to get things done—and there’s a lot to do. Sla

REFERENCES


Figure 2: Currencies Frequently Valued in Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspiration-Related Currencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Being involved in a task that has larger significance for unit, organization, customers, or society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Having a chance to do important things really well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral/Ethical Correctness</td>
<td>Doing what is “right” by a higher standard than efficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Task-Related Currencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Resources</td>
<td>Obtaining money, budget increases, personnel, space, and so forth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge/learning</td>
<td>Getting to do tasks that increase skills and abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance</td>
<td>Receiving help with existing projects or unwanted tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Support</td>
<td>Receiving overt or subtle backing or direct assistance with implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid Response</td>
<td>Getting something more quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Obtaining access to organizational or technical knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Position-Related Currencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Acknowledgment of effort, accomplishment, or abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>The chance to be known by higher-ups or significant others in the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Being seen as competent, committed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insiderness/Importance</td>
<td>A sense of centrality, of “belonging.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contacts</td>
<td>Opportunities for linking with others.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Relationship-Related Currencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Having concerns and issues listened to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance/Inclusion</td>
<td>Feeling closeness and friendship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Support</td>
<td>Receiving personal and emotional backing.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Personal-Related Currencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Appreciation or expression of indebtedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership/Involvement</td>
<td>Ownership of and influence over important tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept</td>
<td>Affirmation of one’s values, self-esteem, and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Avoidance of hassles.</td>
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Networking Secrets for Managers

THINKING OF MOVING UP OR OUT? IDENTIFY THE ‘CAREER INFLUENCERS’ WHO CAN HELP YOU GET HIRED OR PROMOTED OR TAKE YOUR CAREER IN A WHOLE NEW DIRECTION.

BY SHERRI THOMAS

Whether you currently hold a management position or aspire to be a manager one day, the key to a long, successful career is having a powerful professional network.

People are the jet fuel behind your career. Networking strategically can not only help you transition from a library specialist into a management position—your network can also help you get promoted faster, stay employed longer, bounce back from setbacks more easily, and even help you discover hidden career opportunities that non-networking managers never even know about.

Why You Need a Network

Ten years ago, managers simply needed to have a good relationship with their boss to be successful. But in today’s volatile economic environment, a manager also needs to build positive relationships with an entire support system of colleagues, managers and senior leaders.

Think about your career this way: What would happen to you if your manager lost his or her job tomorrow? Would other managers and leaders rally around to support you? Do they know about the value you’re providing to the organization? Do they know about your recent achievements? Are they aware of the key contributions and results your team has made?

It’s critical to keep your manager updated on your progress and successes, but you also want other leaders to know about your strengths and talents and the value you’re adding to the organization. In the corporate world, a manager’s career depends largely on relationships with employees, peers, directors and senior leaders. You’ll have more career opportunities and job security by creating and nurturing a strong professional network of what I call “career influencers.” These are professionals who work inside the company and industry and who could potentially support you by helping you reach goals, implement new ideas, get project funding, and help your department grow.

Think about your circle of current and past managers, colleagues, clients, and associates. Look for those who can provide guidance, expertise, or information that could help you succeed in your current role or advance you up the career ladder.

SHERRI THOMAS is president of Career Coaching 360, which provides career planning, management coaching, and leadership development to professionals who want to advance their career. She is an international speaker and author of Career Smart: 5 Steps to a Powerful Personal Brand.
You want to send the message that you’re a manager who is successful, resourceful and well connected inside and outside the company.

**Types of Career Influencers**

As you create your networking list, try to identify career influencers in each of the following categories:

**Key influencers.** Every company has an inside network of influencers who are well positioned within the company. Their ideas are accepted, their projects are funded, and they are on the fast track in their careers. Identify who those influencers are. Keep your eyes and ears open. Listen in meetings. Who is talking about ideas? Who is talking about how to grow the business?

Key influencers are easy to spot—they are well respected and usually well liked within the organization. They are movers and shakers, constantly helping to move the organization forward. Others seek out their advice and ask for their suggestions. These are professionals you want to include in your network.

**Knowledge experts.** Knowledge experts can teach you something new, such as a part of a business or a new skill. They are experts in their fields and possess specialized knowledge or expertise to help you learn more about a company or industry.

**Coaches and mentors.** Every manager needs great coaches and mentors to help navigate through internal roadblocks and politics within an organization. Because they are, or have been, successful in a management position, they can provide invaluable advice on the skills and behaviors necessary to be successful in management. They can also provide guidance on your career path and share their own personal career roadmap. They may even give you insight into the professional challenges they have faced and the specific strategies they used to overcome those challenges.

**Brand builders.** You can add credibility to your personal brand just by working with some people or being associated with them in some way. Sitting on a committee with a well-respected director or working side by side on a program with a colleague who is well positioned within the company could give your image and personal brand a boost.

**Performance supporters.** These professionals are familiar with your work and can help strengthen your visibility and credibility with other career influencers within the organization. They voluntarily spread the good word about your work and accomplishments and the value that you provide. You’ll want to build and nurture a strong professional relationship with these individuals.

**External influencers.** Now that you’ve identified influencers within your organization, it’s time to think more broadly. Who are the influencers within your industry or profession? Start attending professional association meetings, industry conferences, and business networking events. Meet other members of your industry, speakers at conferences you attend, and members of the board of directors of your association. Join a committee or the board of directors of an association. These influencers can teach you about the history, trends and best practices in the industry as well as alternative career paths and job openings in various organizations.

**Building Your Support System**

The goal of networking is to create a connection or establish a relationship with someone. The goal is *not* to start asking for support for your projects or teams the instant you meet someone.

The two biggest mistakes in networking are the following: (1) asking for support too quickly, and (2) creating a one-sided relationship. You don’t want to send the message that you’re having a problem and need help. Instead, you want to send the message that you’re a manager who is successful, resourceful and well connected inside and outside the company. You want them to realize that you are someone who should be in their network.

The next time you find yourself standing next to a manager or leader in your organization, keep the conversation focused on that person (it’s not about you—at least not yet). Talk about their latest marketing campaign or product launch, or something new or interesting that’s going on inside their department.

The best way to build strong professional relationships is by being a resource for people in your network. Professionals are naturally drawn to those who are well informed and well connected. Volunteer to share any news about new technologies, industry events, conferences, training seminars, career opportunities, or company information that may interest them. Send out quick e-mails with links to books, white papers, press releases, news articles, or cool Web sites.

People are more likely to support you when they believe that you support them. You’ll want to invest your time in getting to know professionals in your network and understanding their career goals and challenges. Look for ways to strengthen your relationship by championing one or two of their initiatives.

Voice agreement with them during a staff meeting, or share how their new initiative could benefit the company. Search for ways to support them (but only on initiatives that you truly feel would benefit the department or company) in staff or management meetings, status reports, or project updates.

Finally, volunteer to connect them with other influencers in your network who could potentially help them solve a problem or advance their career. By taking the time and initiative to help
others, you’ll be creating a network of colleagues, managers and leaders who want to support you in your career.

Managing Upward
Want a stronger relationship with your manager and your manager’s manager? Here are a few tips:

Focus on results. In the management world, only one thing matters: getting results. When you meet with your manager, you should spend the majority of the time focusing on how your team is getting (or will get) results for the company. Discuss goals, challenges, and deliverables and the value that each of your projects and teams are bringing to the organization. For example, talk about how your group is helping the department save costs on training or knowledge management.

Get as much face time as possible. Flying underneath the radar is not a smart career strategy. Be visible with your manager—ask him or her if you can set up weekly one-on-one meetings. If that’s too often, schedule them bi-weekly. Prepare for every meeting by gathering supporting data, obtaining status updates from team members, and thinking about what matters most to your boss. Also, never miss a meeting in which your manager is the chair.

Manage your career up. If it’s appropriate within your organization, you may want to ask your manager if you can set up one-on-one meetings with your manager’s boss. This is common in many Fortune 500 companies—it allows managers the opportunity to meet with a senior leader. Be laser-focused on discussing your team’s recent accomplishments and the results you plan to achieve within the next 90 days. Also, share any ideas you have to help the department save costs, generate revenue or gain market share. Finally, be sure to ask, “Is there anything I can do to support you?”

Opening New Doors
I strongly believe that no matter where you are in your career, you’re always in a position to help others. Is there someone you can support by recommending her new initiative, introducing her to another manager, or inviting her to a networking event? Sometimes it’s easy to get caught up in our own careers, but when we help others along the way, the universe gives back to us more than we ever dreamed possible.

The bottom line is this: you need a powerful professional network if you want to have a successful career in management. Start today by making connections and nurturing your professional relationships. You’ll find that once you have a strong team of career influencers on your side, doors to new opportunities will open and your career will soar. SLA

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GROWING UP IN A COUNTRY WHERE THE GOVERNMENT TRIED TO CONTROL ACCESS TO INFORMATION TAUGHT THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2009 SLA INTERNATIONAL AWARD TO VALUE LIBRARIANS AND THE ROLE THEY PLAY.

BY FORREST GLENN SPENCER

At the 2009 SLA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., Gimena Campos Cervera was given the SLA International Award in recognition of her instrumental role in organizing an annual international conference on libraries in the 21st century, which has helped to create and strengthen an American-Italian library network in Italy. Originally from Paraguay, Gimena is employed at the U.S. embassy in Rome as the senior information researcher in the Information Resource Center. Her career spans a multitude of national and international organizations, including the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Health Organization. Information Outlook spoke to Gimena a few months after she returned to Italy from SLA 2009.

Q: What’s the role of information specialists in the U.S. State Department? How are they utilized?
The primary purpose of the Information Resource Centers (IRCs) at the U.S. embassies is to offer timely and authoritative information to foreign audiences in support of U.S. policy and public diplomacy goals. The IRCs provide access to information about U.S. politics, government, law, economics, society, culture and the arts that is needed either for professional or personal purposes.

Each IRC responds to local conditions and needs, but in overall terms, IRC information specialists are highly regarded by host country users. They are considered to be progressive and innovative professionals who offer reliable, accurate and balanced information. In addition, IRC professionals act as a bridge between the U.S. LIS community and local library professionals, bringing models of sound library practice into the country.

Q: What are your duties at the U.S. Embassy in Rome?
As the IRC senior information researcher, around 60 percent of my time is dedicated to reference research, both for inside and outside audiences. External requestors may be university professors and students, members of the Italian government, artists, journalists, publishers, or the general public.

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Internal requestors are U.S. diplomats working in the U.S. Mission to Italy, in the political, economic, press or public affairs sections, or in the ambassador’s office.

Another core duty is engaging the Italian library community in a dialogue on the future of the profession and facilitating the dissemination of U.S. best practices in the LIS field. Other aspects of my work are related to managing the IRC collections, assessing our Web resources, disseminating U.S. government information resources, and acting as director in the absence of the IRC director. The State Department is encouraging the use of new media in diplomacy, so we include this perspective in all aspects of our work.

Q: I understand you are associated with the 21st Century Librarians program. Please tell us about the program.

The 21st Century Information Professionals program represents an effort to create an ongoing dialogue between U.S. librarians and information professionals and their Italian counterparts. We focus on future trends in the profession and on the impact that information literacy can have on the corporate world, the government, and academia.

We have reached out to about 200 members of the Italian library community—not a big number, but a group of strategic contacts with whom we are planning future activities, especially in the field of professional development. With SLA Europe, we are trying to encourage Italian information professionals to become members because we think the professional development courses offered by SLA—like Click University—can be a great opportunity for them.

Q: Describe your professional development as a special librarian. How did you get from Paraguay to Italy?

I got my bachelor’s degree in foreign languages at the University of Asuncion, in my home city in Paraguay. While I was studying there I got one of my first “serious” jobs, at a Paraguayan think tank, where I worked as editor of a magazine on women’s issues. At that time the magazine, *Informativo*, was published only in print format, and we worked manually to design it—we literally cut and pasted articles and images and took the master copy to the print shop. The *Informativo* was a real adventure, an attempt to systematize information in a country that was just about to come out of a 35-year-long dictatorship and where denying access to balanced information was one of the main strategies used by the government.

Truly, that was my first course of study in the field of library and information sciences, and I think I owe all I do today to that first experience in Paraguay. Learning how to do my job on the job was a very hard school, but today I am grateful for it.

Some years later I moved to Italy, where I attended a European Community professional development course on library and information sciences. I was selected out of 100 candidates, and I graduated with honors. This year I finished my LIS master’s degree online at the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland, with a dissertation on multicultural information services.

Q: How and when did you become a member of SLA?

Everything started with an SLA “giveaway.” In 2006, I attended a U.S. government training workshop in Vienna, and the trainer—who happened to be an SLA member—gave me an SLA annual conference briefcase as a present. At that time I did not know what

**Gimena Campos Cervera accepts the SLA International Award at the SLA 2009 Annual Conference.**
SLA meant. I looked for it on the Internet and saw that it matched well with what I did at work and had an overseas membership, so I decided to join right away. Now that I’m done with my MLS, I will use SLA professional development programs in the future.

Q: As you know, networking is essential in our field. Tell us about your SLA networking experience.

Networking is one of the best experiences I’m having in SLA. I’m meeting European and North American information professionals who are giving me the chance to learn more about the profession today. This exchange among peers is extremely important for several reasons: it allows you to think about your work and how you could improve it, by listening to other people’s experiences; it makes you part of a large community where you know the profession is constantly valued and fostered; and it allows the development of ideas that can be pursued in collaboration with new people.

A classic example is that of the “potential speaker.” At the open houses at the SLA centennial conference in Washington, D.C., I met a few people that we would like to invite as speakers for future professional development programs we will organize in Italy. Another example is the Web 2.0 community: I’m connecting with new colleagues on blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which provides me with a rich and constant flow of information and ideas.

Q: To what other professional associations do you belong?

I’m a member of AIDA (Associazione Italiana Documentazione Avanzata), an Italian special libraries association. AIDA helps to foster the work of information professionals in Italy.

Q: What challenges are information professionals in Europe facing?

I think past fears that new technologies and the Internet were going to sweep away librarians have been overcome. Most of the information professionals I talk to in Europe know how—with more or less difficulty—to gain recognition within their organizations for the strategic role they play in delivering valuable information that contributes to timely decision-making processes. But certainly the job cuts that are a consequence of the current global recession constitute a major challenge for information professionals.

Speaking specifically about Italian information professionals and librarians, one of the major problems is access to education and work opportunities, not only in this country but throughout the European community. Italy offers only one or two LIS master’s courses, but even these courses seem not to prepare Italian students to face the European market and stay in the loop on new trends in the profession.

Italian librarians tell me they see a large gap between their work and the work of “21st century” librarians and information professionals. They feel they do not know how to attract users, and they see their services as old-fashioned. They realize they need more effective marketing techniques and technology skills to keep pace with the new generation of information users.

Q: As we emerge from the global recession, what impact do you think it had on special librarians in Italy?

How did it affect your work?

Up to now, my work has not been affected, but I could experience cuts in subscriptions in the future. Cutting access to some information resources would certainly have a negative impact on the services I offer at work.

On the other hand, I know of colleagues working at U.S. universities in Italy who have seen a reduction in working hours (from full time to part time, for instance) as well as cuts in subscriptions to electronic databases. However, many of them are gathering together to propose consortia subscriptions to database vendors, which I think is a creative way of facing hard economic times.

Q: What comes next for you in your professional development?

The development of library and information services in relation to new social networks, new media and the e-publishing industry is extremely interesting today. Digital technologies are having a great impact on how we search, use, store and share information. I think of it as a revolutionary time, comparable to the passage from manuscripts to print. However, the enormous possibilities that the Internet, digitization and open access offer may clash with the lack of access to information and technologies in poorer countries.

I like to think of libraries as places where citizenship and democracy are built—something along the lines of what the Idea Stores in the United Kingdom are doing. Also, I like to think of my future as one of being an information professional in the fields of development and diplomacy, collaborating with developing countries to build information-literate societies.
Reducing Document Delivery Costs and Improving Services

COMPETITION AMONG DOCUMENT DELIVERY SERVICE PROVIDERS HAS BEEN DRIVING DOWN COSTS AND SPURRING INNOVATION, OFFERING LIBRARIANS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CUT COSTS AND INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.

BY ROBIN M. HOLMES

Regardless of whether your information center budget is increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable, the need for you to provide more value-added services and transparent information content resources is more critical than ever. The economic recession is putting pressure on even the most ideal information content financial strategies and challenging information professionals like never before. Taking the time to review deliverables with stakeholders before the budget planning cycle is essential if you are to continue supporting critical knowledge worker functions within your corporation.

Given the increasing cost of information required to remain competitive, librarians are often asked to prove the return on investment (ROI) for procured content and at the same time directed to make blanket cuts in their budgets to mitigate corporate financial challenges. What is troubling about this scenario is the fact that most librarians don’t control the entire corporate information content budget. According to the Primary Research Group (2008), approximately 30 percent of information professionals control less than half the information content budget, while another third control 50-80 percent of this budget.

These statistics show that many information professionals are being asked to take more responsibility but are being given less financial control. And while the backbone of information content management—the content contract—may be within your area of responsibility, these contracts are reviewed with surprising infrequency. Typically, information professionals spend less than one week per year reviewing contracts for their company (Primary Research Group 2008).

Even if reviewing contracts is a top priority for you, managing information resources is becoming an increasing challenge given the significant number of library positions that have been eliminated over the past two years and the increase in customer research requests.

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Many libraries have responded by transferring responsibility for content contracts to internal customers, which leads to a reduction in operational efficiencies and increases the risk for copyright infringement. Content rights management—an information management key competency—is thereby sacrificed in order to maintain mission-critical activities.

If there is a bright spot in the current economic environment, it is that the recession is affecting information vendors as well as users, prompting them to be more flexible on pricing and service. As noted in a recent Outsell report, “Especially as we head into renewal season, buyers may find this is a good time for creative deal-making with respect to vendors’ licensing terms and conditions, pricing models, and pricing. A shrinking market with lots of players and competition means that customer centricity becomes an essential differentiator, making this an opportune time for vendor portfolio managers to engage with their suppliers for action on product development, packaging, features, and functionality” (Lustig 2009).

Clearly it is time for libraries to evaluate new and improved information content and services (information solutions), compare their potential to improve workflow, and negotiate for the best prices. These solutions should enhance productivity, cater to the customer’s needs rather than vice versa, reduce “cycle times,” and simplify pricing and/or reduce costs—all while never compromising quality. They should also be transparent, easy to manage, and require minimal involvement by your Information Technology Department.

So, what can you do now to make the most of this opportunity? You can begin by working throughout the year—and well in advance of the budget cycle—with stakeholders such as research and development and IT, your internal customers, and your vendors to ensure the right mix and amount of information content and services are purchased. In addition, you should review big-ticket information content line items, such as electronic journal subscriptions, aggregated databases, and reference materials, though this process should be initiated by understanding the past and potential impact of your document delivery configurations.

**What’s New in Document Delivery?**

Information professionals consider document delivery a top deliverable and “an integral part of content delivery that is crucial to satisfying client need” (Lustig 2008), so it makes sense to target this service when your goal is to improve processes and reduce costs without compromising quality. Given that most information centers/functions provide document delivery services to their organizations, this is a competitive business and becoming increasingly more so. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect regular improvements and innovations from the vendors in this sector, as well as increased collaboration between vendors and customers.

For example, rights management solutions are available that can increase compliance and also save time for users and administrators by simplifying the flow of work. These solutions are most successful when accompanied by ongoing education to raise copyright compliance awareness inside an organization. Article repositories and article repository check capabilities, meanwhile, are designed to eliminate duplicate purchases of copyright-protected content for which legal re-use rights exist.

Link resolvers are yet another example of vendor improvements. Link resolvers help increase the utilization of subscription content, but article-level targeting efficacy varies dramatically within organizations due to a number of variables, and traditional online link resolvers have not been able to accommodate other methods of ordering content (such as e-mail). New services have emerged to

**PROVIDERS OF DOCUMENT DELIVERY SERVICES**

- **British Library Document Supply Service**
  *London, England*

- **National Research Council Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CiSTI) Document Delivery**
  *Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

- **Linda Hall Library Document Delivery Service**
  *Kansas City, Mo., U.S.A.*

- **Reprints Desk**
  *Santa Monica, Calif., U.S.A.*

- **TDI Library Services**
  *Los Angeles, Calif., U.S.A.*

- **Information Express**
  *Menlo Park, Calif., U.S.A.*

- **Infotrieve**
  *Wilton, Conn., U.S.A.*

- **Ingenta**
  *Oxford, England*

- **The Research Investment, Inc.**
  *Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.*
It is reasonable to expect regular improvements and innovations from the vendors in this sector, as well as increased collaboration between vendors and customers.

help close these gaps, improve content spending by integrating open access content, and deliver other important benefits.

An important consideration with these and other solutions is return on investment—how much time and money you would save to offset your investment. Other considerations are the process by which rights are verified and the source of any interpreted set of rights.

By implementing a document delivery solution that works synergistically with your customers’ work processes, your information center can generate immediate cost savings. In addition, partnering with the right vendor allows you to improve your visibility and provide an extra service “touch” to customers.

While some industry observers suggest that heavily mediated document delivery solutions interrupt the flow of “self service” search and retrieval functions performed by the end user, the other extreme—a completely hands-off approach—leads to corporate library customers feeling abandoned at a time when they continue to require help with many information retrieval tasks. With more and more businesses adopting Web 2.0 and 3.0 technologies, search and retrieval are becoming more complex, making sophisticated linking/retrieval capabilities and “behind the scenes” mediation increasingly important. The mediation—either by internal information professionals or the document delivery vendor—must be a part of the process. The absence of mediation leads to unfulfilled orders, causing researchers and administrators to underutilize existing collections, repurchase articles, ignore copyright compliance, and waste time.

Information professionals should welcome customer requests for assistance because they increase the visibility of key library individuals and functions. Partnering with a document delivery vendor to provide a more user-friendly customer assistance service can both add value and reduce costs.

An ideal method for measuring user friendliness and initiating a review of available services in the market is to conduct a trial. Qualitative and quantitative results should be measured—turnaround time, document quality, service fees, and user feedback about ease of use are a few variables with which to start. A few tests comparing the same documents with different suppliers are also useful.

The right document delivery solution will integrate your existing information content—electronic journal subscriptions, pay-per-view resources, non-subscribed open access articles, copyright compliant article archives, and print collections—and enable your customers to seamlessly utilize already purchased content, immediately reducing expenses associated with duplicate purchases and copyright. The right document delivery solution will also provide or improve link-resolver technology, saving time and costs, ensuring mediation for “broken” links, and improving the customer’s desktop searching experience by providing an uninterrupted flow of self-serve search and retrieval. (Speed is critical, but it should be secondary to users’ needs to place orders with minimal amounts of information and in any manner that is best for them.)

If you struggle with complicated fee structures, it may be worth your while to find a solution that offers simplified workflow and management rather than making it more complicated for end users and administrators. Such a service should offer a flat fee, no platform fees, simplified cost accounting, reduced or no fees for “extra” services (e.g., rush, panic, color, etc.), and metric analyses and charge-backs (not just for document delivery, but also for databases, subscriptions, and rights management and advisory tools).

When considering a document delivery provider, what variables should you investigate? According to Outsell (Lustig 2008), satisfaction with document delivery vendors is based primarily on the following factors:

• Depth/breadth of coverage;
• Fair pricing; and
• Ease of doing business.

As you investigate document delivery providers, it is important that you understand the history and focus of each vendor. In addition to considering product trials and testimonials, find out which companies excel in the post-sale experience (based on renewal rates and customer recommendations). Evaluate each vendor’s finances—are they government-backed, venture funded, private or public? What is each vendor’s employee retention rate? Such key information will help you identify a potential long-term partner to help implement your strategies and product integration plans. SLA

REFERENCES


INFO SITES

Learn What the Thinkers are Thinking About

Think Tank City keeps an eye on more than 30 policy research organizations and lets you know what’s on their minds.

BY CAROLYN J. SOSNOWSKI, MLIS

Think Tank City
thinktankcity.com/
This “online marketplace of ideas” brings together the work of 30-plus policy research organizations, including the Pew Research Center, the Urban Institute and the Wilson Center. The site collects the content so you can search it or just see which topics the organizations are discussing. The archives seem to be quite deep in some cases. Subscribe to RSS feeds for search results. As of this writing, the site is open and free (sign up for beta membership), but it may be going to a fee-based model. Membership includes updates for the categories you designate to be of interest.

Craiglook
craiglook.com/
Craig may know a thing or two about community and the marketplace, but librarians know more about search tools. That’s why, if you’re trying to find something on Craigslist, you need to check out Craiglook. Developed as a better way to tap into Craigslist content, Craiglook is a mashup of Yahoo! Pipes and Google Maps. You can easily adjust your geographic search radius, view thumbnail photos, and forward listings. Bookmark your searches using various social tools and sort your search results by price. Listings are organized into major subjects, including jobs, housing, and services.

SuperCook
supercook.com/
Information professionals may be great planners and strategists at work, but sometimes we’re not so organized when it comes to putting meals on the table. If you regularly find yourself standing in front of the open refrigerator deciding what to serve for dinner, sit down at your computer and consult SuperCook, a recipe search engine. Plug in the food items you have at home and you’ll get a list of recipes that fit the ingredients you have on hand. A master list of source sites would be more helpful than the FAQ that says SuperCook “crawls the Web,” but results do come from sites such as epicurious.com and MarthaStewart.com. SuperCook will also make suggestions about what flavors to add to your mix and create a shopping list of staples to pair with your food items. With site registration, you can save recipes.

10 Librarian Blogs to Read in 2010
lisnews.org/10_librarian_blogs_read_2010/
You may already be reading some of these blogs, but I’ll bet there are one or two you’ve never visited or even know about. One blog, The M Word, focuses on marketing (we all need some help with that); another, The Best of PubLib, is a quick way to keep up with that discussion list without having to subscribe (it’s not all public library-related). I hadn’t heard of Agnostic, Maybe, and now that one has been added to my reader because of its big-picture posts about the library world. There’s some fun reading here, and some serious reading, too. Be sure to check out the lists from 2006 to 2009. SLA

CAROLYN SOSNOWSKI is manager of SLA’s Information Center and also the association’s e-learning manager. She has more than 13 years’ experience in libraries, including six-plus years at SLA. She blogs at Information Center Connections (http://slaconnections.typepad.com/info_center_blog/) and can be reached at csosnowski@sla.org.
A New Decade of Change: Are We Ready Yet?

A few years ago, I wrote in this column about an idea I had whereby we could learn new things and technologies in small increments. I suggested tracking our learning topics and progress using the 43Things.com Web site. The inestimable Helene Blowers ran with the idea and invented the 23 Things movement (sometimes called Learning 2.0), and the rest is library history.

SLA and hundreds of other organizations (and thousands of library folks) have learned the Web 2.0 tools that are now considered quite normal—tools like wikis, blogs, instant messaging, social networks, and tagging. It has been very exciting to see whole organizations adapt these tools and use them in the service of libraries and their user communities, institutions and companies. Indeed, library and information professionals frequently have become the internal experts and gurus for their communities and organizations. Cool!

Now, by some measures, we are entering a new decade, and it’s time to update our skills again. The challenge and irony of lifelong learning is that you’re never really done. Continuing education is just that—continuous!

In an information age, we’re well prepared already to succeed. But change marches inexorably on. We’re prepared for the present as a result of personally investing time in learning and using the new tools of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0. So, what’s next? What will Act II be in our personal learning initiatives?

Adopting New Technologies

I have a few suggestions (you knew that would happen, right?) Here are some ideas that I think are worth investing time in to prepare yourself to continue to be the guru in your domain.

Jeremiah Owyang has a great post on adoption strategies over at his blog, Web Strategy. I talk a lot about adoption curves since it is a clear challenge for libraries to address the needs of such diverse markets as communities and institutions, given that we tend to serve a wide range of users with a wide range of talents.

Jeremiah references the Rogers adoption curve, which has been shown through research to reflect adoption styles in larger populations. Each style has its own benefits and risks, and each will be represented among your users. You can check out more in Jeremiah’s article, but I want to specifically reinforce his three key recommendations for strategically thinking about your own personal and work planning strategies:

1. Examine your organization’s adoption patterns. First, define how quickly your organization responds and adapts to technologies, and factor this into your considerations.

2. Be a category ahead of your company. If you’re responsible for new technologies at your company, your personal adoption style should be a level or two ahead of the organization’s adoption, as you cannot effectively deploy for your company if you don’t personally understand the impacts of the new technologies.

3. Track the category ahead of you. Find an individual who’s above your adoption category (the early adopter watches the innovator) and be sure to watch his/her behaviors and learn from them. Adopters are often blazing their own trail and may not ever follow anyone.

I totally agree with Jeremiah that we should try to be one step ahead of our customers in our thinking and experience. I suppose that in libraries, the real debate and the real challenge are to figure out where that is in your environment!

New Trends to Watch

Either way, I’m sharing my current list of new technology trends and services to watch and play with. I’m certainly not “there” yet on these, but I believe I’ll need to be in the near future. So I’m going to play—play being the operative word here. It’s supposed to be fun to encourage good learning, and I’ll invest the time if it’s fun. So here goes my incomplete list:

1. Cloud computing (going beyond Google Docs)
2. Mobile computing (getting more out of my phone)
3. Augmented reality (AR)
4. QR codes (I’m seeing these in popular magazines already)
5. The real time Web (this is moving fast, and a company’s or celebrity’s reputation can be trashed in an instant)
6. Collaboration software
7. Experience portals
8. e-Learning (like Click U and beyond)
9. Mobile phone commerce
10. Apps (iTunes, Facebook, Apple iStore, Android, etc.)
11. Faceted search
12. Visual display (going beyond world clouds)
13. Using images as search statements, as with goggles (that’s google, not Google)
14. Tracking and searching reputations in places like Twitter and FriendFeed
15. Automated translations (not ready for prime time yet, but you need to review now)
16. e-Books (understand the emerging formats and devices)
17. New devices: Netbooks, Kindles, iPhones, Android, etc.
18. GPS, geo-tagging and more location-specific applications

So, there you go. Have fun. I’ll try to write more about these (and others) here and on my blog this year.

Are there any things you’d like to learn in 2010? If so, please share them with me at stephen.abram@gmail.com.

SLA
Life Beyond the Library

While we cannot always anticipate career opportunities that arise, we can put ourselves in position to take advantage of them.

BY DEBBIE SCHACHTER, MLS, MBA

Information professionals have access to a robust range of career opportunities that are not necessarily available to other professions. Sometimes, options for new career paths arise unexpectedly, such as emerging job opportunities caused by new technologies or new trends in management. We cannot always anticipate these opportunities, but we can certainly prepare ourselves to take advantage of them by developing both our hard and soft skills.

The opportunity to progress steadily through a career within a large organization is diminishing, as the volatility of business environments makes it extremely difficult to predict long-term employment patterns or develop effective long-term career plans. Just as businesses undertake strategic planning rather than long-term planning nowadays, professionals need to use a strategic planning approach to career development. "Strategic" implies that you will identify the strategies by which you will attain a certain role, position, or other future state, keeping in mind that the future role or position may also be a moving target.

Preparing yourself to take advantage of opportunities, whether unexpected or foreseen, requires being open to the randomness of the business and special library environments and allowing for the unexpected. Planning and positioning yourself to be ready are factors that you can control, regardless of what happens around you.

My own employment experience—moving out of the special library environment into non-traditional and non-information roles, and eventually into senior management within a traditional library setting—confirms this. Some of these changes occurred as a result of specific planning, such as earning an MBA with the thought of developing my management skills for new opportunities. Others, such as moving into the nonprofit and non-library worlds, were not planned but occurred at a time when I was ready to go in a new direction.

Preparing for Transition

Everyone’s story is different, but there are a number of ways you can prepare yourself to make transitions:

Understand your motivations.

Sometimes, individuals look for new career opportunities because they feel constrained by their current position or situation. They may want to have a bigger voice in making decisions or more involvement in setting goals; they may want to be able to have a broader impact on the organization. Others are simply unhappy with their current role and are uncertain why that’s true.

One of the most important things to do when planning for your future is to try to understand yourself better. Start by examining your motivations, your interests, and your abilities. What are you good at? What are you not good at? What skills should you work on developing? If you don’t like doing something, should you try to get better at it or drop it in favor of another skill that you will enjoy developing?

It can be difficult to conduct an honest and clear assessment of yourself, but there are many self-tests that can help you identify areas for development. You can also ask others for input—for example, your supervisor or manager should be willing to share honest feedback about areas in which you excel and skills you would benefit from developing. It is important to view this type of feedback as constructive input rather than criticism. A mentor, whether it be another librarian or someone in a different profession, can also be very helpful in identifying areas that will be useful for your personal or professional development.

Prepare for randomness.

This is a bit of a worn refrain, but our ability to change continues to be where we most need to focus our attention. We actually need to develop three abilities—to identify changes we need to make, to adapt to and adopt changes that are imposed on us, and to craft and manage change.

As with randomness, change is not easily predicted. Sometimes we are involved in the change, and sometimes
we are even driving it (these being the best-case scenarios). Sometimes change is completely outside of our control and is not necessarily to our benefit.

Rather than just getting on board with change (which, by itself, is often easier said than done), take control of it by educating yourself and inserting yourself into change processes at your organization. I don’t advocate that you blindly accept change; rather, understand the reasons why changes come about. Take a professional response to change by contributing to the change initiative—by providing information that is required to develop decisions and by challenging yourself to look at both the pros and cons of any particular change.

Develop your skills. Keeping an open mind is an important way to help develop your career, especially in terms of honestly assessing your abilities and identifying where you need to grow. You should assess your current abilities and skills with a view toward emphasizing your areas of expertise and being honest with yourself about where you most need to develop your skills. Continuing education opportunities are available from many sources and should be continually pursued so you are ready to take new career paths when they open up.

Opportunities for leadership development also exist. Leadership comes naturally to some, but for many of us it is developed through persistence, practice, and support from others. Leadership skills are universally applicable and are essential if you are interested in pursuing a career in team-based organizations or in management or executive positions.

Promote yourself. Many information professionals are reluctant to brag about their successes and innovations. The question is, why? Appropriate self-promotion, with the acknowledgement and recognition of others’ contributions, is beneficial to individuals as well as to our profession.

We should feel confident in speaking about how we saved our organizations money, or writing about how we identified a significant problem in a proposal, or making a presentation about how we are essential members of teams.

All in all, there are many effective approaches to expanding future career opportunities. What these approaches require is some significant effort on your part to continue your personal and professional development and enhance your self-awareness. Be prepared to take opportunities that arise by developing your ability to lead and manage change. If you are open to the possibilities, you will find unexpected and interesting opportunities available to you. SLA

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Who Made Me the Copyright Librarian?

Many times I hear librarians say they have become the “go to” person for copyright issues. If you feel that you have fallen into this position (or if you have chosen it), follow this five-point plan to get up and running.

Get authority. If your title is acquisitions librarian or reference librarian or any other title that does not have the word “copyright” in it, get that changed. You want fellow employees to be able to find you in the company directory; you need people to follow your advice when you tell them they cannot copy a newsletter or other item; and you need confirmation in your own mind that you are, in fact, the “go to” copyright person.

If you’re going to be guiding people on copyright compliance, senior management should be aware of your role and why certain things are or aren’t permitted, and your fellow employees need to recognize your role in this complex and often frustrating area. You need authority to provide advice and guidance and ensure copyright compliance where necessary.

Get information. Take time to find out what’s happening on the copyright and licensing front in your library and organization. What sorts of copyright materials are being used? Are print books an issue, or just electronic books? Are there questions regarding public performance in movies, or concerns relating to copying sound recordings? Do you have licensing agreements that no one can understand? How are copyright and licensing issues resolved? Do you answer questions about copyright and licensing issues, or are they dealt with in different ways by different people? Perhaps your new title as copyright librarian can help you organize and streamline copyright issues in your organization.

Get a budget. As copyright librarian, you will find there are many things on which to spend money. Books and newsletters about copyright should be read and placed on a reference shelf or Intranet page for you and your colleagues to consult. You will want some training in copyright law, and you may also want to train others with whom you work (so they know the basics).

You may need money to hire a copyright consultant to develop a copyright policy for you. You may also need a budget to consult with a copyright lawyer on questions that you cannot answer.

Get an education. Did you take an information law policy course in library school? If so, dig out your notes and look at the bigger picture. Locate books that are written for librarians on copyright and licensing (there are several available). Read Web sites and blogs.

Self-study can take you far on copyright issues. But you should also consider taking online and in-person courses to learn basic principles, upgrade your knowledge, and stay on top of changes in the law. (Check out SLA’s Click University, which offers a certificate in copyright management.)

Get help. Do you have a network of people you can contact for assistance, such as colleagues in similar positions? Does your organization have an attorney, either on staff or on retainer, who can advise you on copyright matters that are outside your comfort zone?

It is important that you establish contacts in the library and legal communities to assist you in such situations. Build a support system by attending conferences and meeting others who work in copyright, networking with fellow students in copyright courses, and joining online copyright communities.

Now, Get Going!

Although you may never have intended to be the copyright librarian in your organization, you may find that the job offers much satisfaction. You will be a key player in helping people gain access to information, moving work forward, and eliminating the frustration and uncertainty that others confront when using content. While you may often say no to requests, your colleagues will soon appreciate your value in guiding them through the copyright maze. SLA

LESLEY ELLEN HARRIS is a copyright lawyer who consults on legal, business and strategic issues. She is editor of a print newsletter, The Copyright and New Media Law Newsletter (for a sample copy, send an e-mail to contact@copyrightlaws.com), and teaches the Click University seven-course certificate program in copyright management. She maintains a blog on copyright questions and answers at www.copyrightanswers.blogspot.com. The second edition of her book, Licensing Digital Content: A Practical Guide for Librarians, was just published.
**OTHER EVENTS**

**APRIL**

7-11  
Information Architecture Summit  
American Society for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T)  
Phoenix, Ariz., USA  
http://iasummit2010.crowdvine.com/

12-14  
Computers in Libraries  
Information Today  
Arlington, Va., USA  
www.infotoday.com/cil2010/default.asp

13-17  
Museums and the Web 2010  
Archives and Museum Informatics  
Denver, Colo., USA  
www.archimeuse.com/mx2010/

18-20  
Buying & Selling eContent  
Information Today  
Scottsdale, Ariz., USA  

26-28  
Emerging Technologies in Academic Libraries  
Trondheim, Norway  
www.ntnu.no/ub/etac/

**MAY**

21-26  
MLA 2010 Annual Meeting  
Medical Library Association  
Washington, D.C., USA  
www.mlanet.org/am/am2010/index.html

28-29  
International Conference on Digital Scholarship and Emerging Technologies  
Gaborone, Botswana

25-28  
2nd Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference (QQML2010)  
Chania, Crete, Greece  
www.isast.org/

**JUNE**

16-18  
14th International Conference on Electronic Publishing (ELPUB 2010)  
Helsinki, Finland  
http://conferences.aepic.it/elpub2010/

21-24  
7th International Conference on Conceptions of Library and Information Science (CoLIS 7)  
London, England  
http://colis.soi.city.ac.uk/

24-29  
2010 ALA Annual Conference  
American Library Association  
Washington, D.C., USA  
www.ala.org/ala/conferencesevents/upcoming/index.cfm

28  
UK Library and Information Science Research Coalition Conference  
London, England  
http://lisresearch.org/

**JULY**

14-16  
2010 National Diversity in Libraries Conference  
Princeton, N.J., USA  
https://qed.princeton.edu/main/NDLC2010

18-23  
ACM SIGIR 2010  
Geneva, Switzerland  
www.sigir2010.org/doku.php

**SEPTEMBER**

12-14  
ASIDC Fall Meeting  
Association of Information and Dissemination Centers  
Baltimore, Md., USA

26-29  
International ACM Conference on Management of Emergent Digital EcoSystems  
Bangkok, Thailand  
http://sigappfr.acm.org/MEDES/10/

**OCTOBER**

25-27  
International Conference on Digital Scholarship and Emerging Technologies  
Gaborone, Botswana

25-28  
2nd Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference (QQML2010)  
Chania, Crete, Greece  
www.isast.org/

**November**

15-16  
Taxonomy Boot Camp  
Information Today  
Washington, D.C., USA

16-18  
Enterprise Search Summit  
Information Today  
Washington, D.C., USA

21-28  
SLA 2010  
New Zealand Library Association  
Dunedin, New Zealand

For more information on these SLA online seminars, and to register, go to www.sla.org/clicku.

**LIVE WEBINARS:**

7 April  
Is There a Future for Special Libraries (Part 1)?

14 April  
Is There a Future for Special Libraries (Part 2)?

5 May  
How Digitizing Materials Can Increase Information Flow and Access

13 May  
Ask the Copyright Experts

19 May  
Searching Public Records Online: Tips and Tricks

**REPLAY WEBINARS:**

Ask the Copyright Experts: Top 5 Things Librarians Need to Know about Fair Use

Electronic Records Retention: 10 Essential Elements

Finding and Keeping Library Jobs

How Social is Your Website?

It’s 2010: 20 Technologies to Watch, and How to Cope

Open Source Software for Libraries

Twitter for Librarians: More than What You’re Doing Today

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- Interfacing with SLA units and committees to consolidate efforts and develop opportunities for members to participate and build virtual world skills.

www.sla.org/VWAC
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