

# Impact

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Best Paper**

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## **Editorial**

This edition of Impact is another conference issue, this time featuring a number of the papers presented at this year's CDG National Conference. The theme covered a huge range of ways to adapt to changing situations, either personally or as an organisation.

Katie Burn and Kirsty Whitehead impressed the whole room with their fearless approach to career development, and were deservedly awarded the prize for the best paper.

Other topics included the skills needed for a career in knowledge management, making the most of sector changes, improving your visibility, making your service useful to users, thinking big about opportunities and developing when times are tough.

Presentations from the day are available on the CDG Slideshare pages:  
<http://www.slideshare.net/CareerDevelopmentGroup>

Photos from the day are available on Flickr:  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/sarahjison/sets/72157628330096175/>

This issue also features a paper by Bev Woolfson, who describes the challenges of educating new library users. She writes from a legal library perspective, but the challenges are familiar to anyone who has been faced with educating and, hopefully, inspiring new members to make the best of the resources we provide.

Finally, this is my last issue as editor, and I am pleased to be handing over to Sharon Lawler, who has a wealth of experience in editing journals, and I am looking forward to reading Impact over the coming year.

Lizz Jennings  
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# **CDG**

**Career Development Group**  
Helping you achieve your full potential

# **Compromise versus integrity: practical tips on how to be a career chameleon**

**Katie Burn and Kirsty Whitehead**

## **Introduction**

Competition amongst peers for vacancies within all sectors of the Library profession has always been strong, and that has become even more evident over the past few years with increasing political and economic pressures. Even within individual organisations competition for posts is immense and the desire for job security sometimes means making compromises and being flexible in approaching career opportunities.

Within the context of academic libraries this paper aims to share the experiences of two professional librarians both of whom have consistently, over several years, taken on a wide variety of new challenges and roles with the aim of developing and maintaining a high profile within their institutions. This paper will describe how building effective relationships, meeting challenges and coping with and preparing for change can have a positive impact on career development.

Both Katie and Kirsty work at the University of York and are seconded to their current posts as Executive Officer (Refurbishment Project) and Academic Liaison Assistant from Library Assistant posts working in Serials and Cataloguing respectively. Whilst Katie always knew her career would be in the Library sector, for Kirsty this decision came later.

Between them they have 14 years' library experience as a Graduate Trainee, various library assistant roles, professional secondments; plus five degrees between them, including library qualifications. However, there are plenty of well-qualified and well-experienced new librarians out there and they have found that the main challenge is upholding a balance between enhancing career prospects and job security whilst ensuring their professional focus is maintained.

From these experiences they share their strategy and present suggestions on how to develop and sustain skills, knowledge and experience to suit the fast changing landscape of professional Librarianship within the context of academic libraries.

## **Qualifications vs. Experience**

Having read through recent papers, such as those from the most recent New Professionals Conference, it appears that one of the current topics is defining professionalism:

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"The generic skills which are taught at library school are fine in theory but how do you prove that you can put them into practice? In order to do any type of job, you have to have the self-belief that you are capable of carrying out the duties" (1)

What we have taken from this is it doesn't matter how you came into the Library sector, it's what you do when you get here that counts!

On top of doing our day to day jobs, at the start of our career we were also willing to get our hands dirty (quite literally sometimes), do the boring jobs, the jobs no one else wants to do. This enthusiasm, as well as demonstrating a commitment to our own development by seeking out courses, speaking at or attending conferences and Chartering, have all been small steps in gaining and maintaining a high profile.

The practical tips below are based on our own experiences and what we personally have thought were the most instrumental factors in increasing our career potential. We hope that they will be interesting and useful to others.

## **1. Have clearly defined goals and know your limits**

### **Be open minded and flexible**

Early in our careers, when we weren't aware of what area of the large umbrella that is 'The Library Sector' we wanted to work in, we found being as open minded and flexible as possible and applying for a variety of vacancies was advantageous. Not only did it help keep the CV polished and up to date, but also made the chances of actually securing a job more likely.

### **Experience can help define goals**

As we became more experienced in where our strengths lay, what we enjoyed doing and what we'd rather avoid, our goals became more defined. Flexibility is still important, particularly in challenging times, but being aware of the parameters of your flexibility is equally as important. For example, the following factors may affect a decision about whether or not to apply for promotion/other positions: the sector you would prefer to work in, the type of role, whether it is full or part time, temporary or permanent. You are likely to be more specific about such criteria the more experience you acquire.

Kirsty admits that she has made compromises in order to try and reach her goals. Leaving permanent jobs for temporary jobs, full time posts for part time and taking secondment opportunities knowing that these are time sensitive, for instance. These risks are ones that she calculated were worth taking in order to work in her chosen area: Subject Librarianship. She has, however, avoided compromising in other situations: where a job was in a different library sector, but was better paid and permanent, she made the decision not to attend the interview as it would take her away from working in University libraries.

Be flexible enough to work in many and varied teams in various institutions and in varying circumstances, but don't be afraid to stick to your guns once you know what you enjoy doing and where you want to be.

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## **2. Use challenging situations to your advantage**

The role of Executive Officer for a Library refurbishment has been a permanently challenging situation. Working together with the contractors whilst maintaining a fully functional Library service when the Library is effectively a building site is a day to day challenge that Katie has to meet.

### **Don't view challenges as negative but as opportunities**

Challenges are opportunities to display your skills and demonstrate your ability to learn and develop. Skills such as decision making, delegation, and good communication are often the ones that Katie believes can be developed from any challenge.

Challenges such as covering vacant positions can be turned into positive experiences. As part of her role with the Hull York Medical School, Kirsty has been able to gain more experience by covering a vacancy at the University of Hull, teaching information skills sessions there and making new contacts.

Successfully coming through these situations can also increase confidence in facing future challenges.

### **Saying no can be positive**

It is also important to know how much pressure you can take and learn when to say no. Maintain your integrity. You will gain more respect from admitting to a heavy workload or to feeling under pressure, and politely saying no to any extra work that people may want to pass on. Don't merely agree to everything. In these situations, it is better to do a great job of the work that you already have rather than a mediocre job of everything.

## **3. Be able to manage and cope with change**

A large part of any role today is being able to confidently deal with change. This is not just work-based change, but also being able to recognise and manage change in your own development.

Work-based change is always going to occur, especially in a technology-heavy sector such as ours. Being able to have the confidence to keep up with these changes, and work towards change, no matter how large or small, proactively instead of reactively, is an important skill to develop.

### **Effective communication is key**

Implementing change and communicating it effectively and successfully to others is an important factor in how other people manage and cope with change. Having a full understanding of the changes and what effect or perceived effect they may have on others is crucial.

In addition, it is important to be able to communicate the change in a way that people will be able to comprehend it. The way that change is communicated can differ depending on the means of communication, for

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example via twitter, blogs, in meetings or in more formal documentation. It will also differ on your intended audience.

Managing change is a large subject area. Lyndon Pugh's "Change Management in Information Services" (2) is one of the many books out there that can help give direction. There are also numerous courses which can give practical as well as theoretical guidance.

#### **4. Keep developing**

As much as this article may play down the importance of qualifications versus soft skills, having a Library qualification can give you an edge over other candidates, and in some sectors this is also an essential requirement.

Chartering, as well as being a professional qualification, is also a useful means of reflective practice. In addition it is an important way to show that you are committed to your development.

##### **Take the plunge!**

Attend a conference such as the ones held by the CDG or other specialist areas, or write a paper or present at one. This has many advantages: it allows you to demonstrate an interest in wider fields and your professional development, and provides networking opportunities, for example. Deciding to write or present a paper is a challenging situation that you can learn from.

##### **Work experience**

Kirsty benefitted from taking part in an internal work shadowing scheme - work experience isn't just for 16 year olds! This allowed her to gain direct experience of working in a subject librarian post at a time when her experience was limited. Being involved in schemes like this, or volunteering for projects outside your usual remit, has advantages for everyone: you are doing extra work for free, gaining extra experience, and again demonstrating your skills to those who matter.

##### **Developing personally as well as professionally**

Acknowledge any weaknesses and embrace them as opportunities for development. Make use of courses and events held nationally and locally, and courses run by your workplace. York, for example has a Professional and Organisational Development (POD) department within the university that offers free courses from all subjects ranging from IT, leadership and management to personal and career planning.

Looking at recent vacancies, even if not actively looking for a new position, is a great way to see what skills and experience are needed to work in a particular area and this can help identify any skills you may need to develop or experience that you may need to gain.

If financial constraints prevent you from attending courses and events, investigate what responsibility your workplace has for staff development and make the most of performance reviews, organise meetings with line managers/team leaders.

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## **5. Build effective relationships**

Effective relationships at work don't just make the day to day work life easier. Establishing a peer-to-peer network can be vital in helping career development. Use these to identify job vacancies for each other, give advice on applications, practice interview techniques, share information about useful courses, or even just as informal way to let off a bit of steam.

### **Get involved**

If you don't have this join a CILIP network or get involved in a group in your wider library community. Social networks and online communities, such as the Library Routes Project (3) and LIS New Professionals Network (4) enable you to exchange experiences of developing a career in libraries.

### **Build networks wherever possible**

Take the opportunity to build networks wherever possible and as soon as possible; you never know where they will lead. Someone you meet at a conference or happen to talk to at work may just remember you when opportunities arise.

Don't be afraid to network internally with those outside your direct team, or with senior members of your workplace. A good start is to simply say hello in the corridor; which might develop into longer conversations in the tea room or staff room at lunch. This can become a semi-informal way of making your intentions known and can develop a way to discuss your goals with the people who may be able to help or point you in the right direction.

## **6. Be proactive and dynamic**

This is essentially taking one or more of the above tips and putting them into practice.

Being proactive is an essential attitude both in your day-to-day job and also with regards to your career. Think about the future: Where are you going? How are you preparing? Does the future look bright or are there potential issues ahead?

### **Have a plan**

It doesn't need to be a full '5 or 10 year plan', but have some sort of direction, or idea about where you want your career to take you and how you think you are going to get there. This may be more difficult at the beginning of a career, but recognising strengths, thinking about what sort of role will suit your skills and personality plus a willingness to experience work outside of your comfort zone will be beneficial.

### **Be positive**

Have a positive outlook and enthusiastic approach to career development, and remember it is a marathon as opposed to a sprint.

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## Are you are career chameleon?

Career chameleons adapt to change and have the ability to transform themselves depending on what the role requires from them. However, don't forget to keep an eye on who you really are and where you want to go, otherwise you may end up losing yourself in the process.

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# Conference Report 1

## Laura Ashford

On a rainy Monday morning in November Library and Information Professionals flocked to Bristol to attend the CDG 2011 National Conference "The Practical Professional". Over the six hours that followed delegates listened to a number of presentations from different sectors sharing their experiences in the profession, it has been a taxing year for all. It provided a welcome chance to network and meet those that we had already made contact with on social media sites.

The first half of the day was dedicated to becoming a "career chameleon". Presentations given by Amanda Poulton, Emily Hopkins and the double act of Katie Burn and Kirsty Whitehead focussed on expanding and selling our skill sets by taking opportunities when they are offered either in the work environment or through CILIP visits, training or conferences. There was emphasis given to the importance of being able to audit your skills and update your CV when you are in a positive mood, also the need to be flexible and able to adapt to the situation at hand. In a time where budgets are being cut and services restructured, flexibility and transferable skills are vital whereas specific sector and subject knowledge can be learnt over time. We were also given top tips for continuing professional development. These included having clearly defined goals, being proactive and dynamic and being able to build effective relationships with colleagues and possible partners.

These three presentations alone gave us a lot of food for thought and set the tone for the rest of the day which was continued with David Clover sharing his experiences of the Future Leaders Programme. He had two main questions to leave with the delegates - Where do I want to be and how do I get there? In order to do this we must find out what's available to us and be able to apply, review and reflect both on the profession as a whole and our individual experiences. Phil Bradley spoke about the importance of staying in touch with social media and the need for us as information professionals to be able to navigate these tools in order to help others. He left us with the view that our profession needs to be credible and empower people as social media is the way forward. Knowledge Manager Katharine Schopflin explained the unique way in which she works as a liaison between information teams and the organisation she works for, showing how strong relationships can really build effective information flow in an organisation.

After an impressive lunch spread we took part in a speed networking event where we were split into groups of three and were given a minute a piece to share our name, organisation and our unique selling point. This was a fun and educational exercise to make everyone think about the skills they have acquired through their profession and how to best advocate ourselves. It was also a good way of networking with all the participants at the conference and expand on lunch conversation.

The second half of the conference was about making a splash. In the four presentations that followed Miggie Pickton, Gill Young, Emily Hopkins, Tracey Pratchett, Jo Myhill and Lizz Jennings shared their individual development experiences and showed how they advocate their services to target audiences. The key themes taken from these presentations included the need to be proactive as a profession and within our own work environments. The need to be virtually and physically present, dynamic and adaptable to change and as a profession the need to embrace new technologies, best practice from different sectors, and get out and promote ourselves as individuals within the profession and advocate the profession as whole to the wider world.

The very nature of our profession is to learn to adapt to an ever changing society in which we are looked at to provide information and authority so we owe it to ourselves and the profession to continue our own development. I came away from the conference with a renewed sense of motivation and want to thank the CDG events team and all speakers for their time and effort in organising a conference full of thought provoking material and practical tips that can be used straight away.

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# Conference Report 2

## Julie Hoskins

This is the first year that I have attended this conference, so I was not sure what to expect. I am a sole librarian at a small independent girls school in Somerset and the chance to meet people from all over the country, working in a variety of Libraries, was one I wasn't about to turn down.

The day was well planned, with a reasonable start, allowing everyone to get there and with regular tea/coffee breaks.

There were ten presentations in total during the day, starting off with Becoming a career Chameleon was Amanda Poulton from De Montfort University, Leicester who talked about "Changing sectors - developing skills and experience" She has worked in NHS, Academic and Public libraries. Lots of helpful hints were given to anyone thinking of changing sectors and how you could go about it. Amanda encouraged us to look at our skills and see how they could be transferred to other sectors.

Emily Hopkins, Library Manager at Manchester Health Trust talked about "We're not in Kansas anymore" which looked at the way their Library was moved and re-structured. She explained how they had packed up the Library and had to run an enquiry service, directing people to other libraries for the resources as theirs were all in storage. Emily also told us about the integration of two libraries and their staff and gave us tips on how to approach and solve problems.

Katie Burn and Kirsty Whitehead spoke on "Compromise versus integrity: practical tips on how to be a career chameleon" Both Katie and Kirsty have ended up changing jobs and not necessarily ending up where they had planned to be, but both spoke positively of the ways in which we can analyse our skills and keep improving on our knowledge through training and networking. Katie has been in charge of a re-development of a library and spends most of her time wearing a hard hat and steel toe-cap boots and liaising with builders and contractors, so a far cry from a traditional librarian role. Kirsty had changed jobs and even taken a part-time job to stay in the field she was interested in.

David Clover who is a Head of Subject Librarian at the University of London spoke on "Think Big: investing in your professional and career development." David encouraged us to get out of our comfort zone and be ambitious. He also suggested we get to know ourselves and see what motivates us and which skills we use best. Talking to people about their roles is often a good way to find out about them and asking advice from friends and colleagues if you are thinking of taking on a new job or challenge, as they know you best. He also talked of his trip to visit the USA through a CILIP grant.

Phil Bradley, Freelance Librarian & Internet Consultant spoke about "Librarians and social media - it's not about 'friends' anymore (and never was)." Phil started off by giving us statistics on the increase in internet usage and the amount of people using social media like; Facebook, Twitter, Google + and Linked-in. He went on to explain that now brands are encouraging people to link to their Facebook pages and most of them are finding they get more hits via this route than the traditional internet searching. Phil encouraged us to make sure we have access to social media in our place of work as information managers it is essential. He ended with "social media is the way forward".

Katharine Schopflin from the University of London spoke on "Knowledge management for librarians: how to become one and why you probably already are." Firstly Katharine explained the term knowledge management as being the information that we have in our heads, which is not written down. We all have vast amounts of information relating to our jobs that we don't document. Katherine's job is to find out the information and share it with colleagues.

After a quick lunch, with time to network we were all called together to be sorted into two groups for our speed networking session. In our groups of 3 people we had 3 minutes to tell the others who we were, where we worked, our role and what made us unique. Most of us found the last thing challenging, but I decided that being a sole librarian that made me unique and the extras that I do that are not really related to my role, like training our Spelling Bee Team and taking a coach trip to The Clothes Show Live every December. This session was a brilliant use of time and some of the more organised members had business cards to swap. I know we all met a couple of people who we will be e-mailing in the not too distant future.

The final part of the day was Making a Splash - how you developed your service. This was started off by Miggie Pickton from University of Northampton talking about "Being useful: services for researchers at the University of Northampton" Miggie talked about how they had conducted surveys and focus groups to provide evidence of what services were needed by the researchers. She also talked about training people and the need to know the level of training they needed as some people much more aware of the information available to them than others.

Gill Young, Emily Hopkins and Tracey Pratchett spoke on "Negotiating the scramble net: the library professional in their 20's, 30's and 40's." They all spoke about their careers and how they had to deal with changing sectors, taking on further qualifications, whilst working full time and facing redundancy. Again, the value of knowing your skills and how they are transferable was mentioned and looking at change as a positive, not a negative.

Jo Myhill from the University of Bedfordshire spoke on "I didn't know you did that" She manages 12 academic librarian. The library staff make a big effort to be seen by the students both physically, through being around in areas of the Library at the beginning of term and asking if students need help. They also have a web page with lots of guides on searching the library catalogue, writing assignments, web 2.0 and QR codes. There is a profile page for each of the subject librarian, so that all students should know who their subject librarian are and more importantly, what they look like. At different times of the year they run branding on the main university web page, which helps increase the number of hits by students to the library page.

Finally, after a long wait and no doubt getting more nervous by the hour, Lizz Jennings from University of Bath spoke on "Every flavour career beans: sector changes and career development in libraries" Lizz has had a varied career working in the Library Association, an accountancy firm, a public library, a prison library and now an academic library. She encouraged us to all find out our strengths and weaknesses, to identify our skills and see how they can be transferred to another sector. If you are unsure of which sector to look to, Lizz suggested that we book visits to various different libraries. She also encouraged us to tailor our CV's to the job we are applying for and not feel that we had to include all of our previous employment, especially if it ran to quite a few pages and was not relevant for the position you were applying for.

At the end of the presentations everyone cast their vote on their favourite presentation and the runner up was Amanda Poulton "Changing sectors - developing skills and experience" with Katie Burn and Kirsty Whitehead "Compromise versus integrity: practical tips on how to be a career chameleon" winning the £100 prize, given in memory of Viki Lagus, Honorary President in 2011, who passed away in March 2011. Viki was an active member of CDG committees at a local and national level for nearly ten years, making a significant contribution to the national events programme, including Umbrella. As well as her community-focused career in school and public libraries, she was a CILIP Mentor. Viki's commitment to CDG continued literally until her last few days and she will be remembered as a great ambassador for the Career Development Group, CILIP, libraries and the profession.

Many thanks must go to all the organising committee for their efforts in making the day a highly organised and enjoyable one. I will certainly be looking out for next years' conference, who knows I might even submit a paper!

Mrs Julie Hoskins, ACLIP  
Librarian, Bruton School for Girls

# Knowledge management for librarians: how to become one and why you probably already are

Katharine Schopflin

### Introduction

I joined the information profession in 1996 as a Document Management Assistant, classifying, indexing and filing documents. I switched to librarianship after I found out what it was and became passionate about the profession while doing my Masters between 1998 and 1999. In the ensuing years I did film cataloguing, information and archives research, business research and finally knowledge management. And lots and lots of networking, professional development and committee work.

I went into knowledge management by accident. After I had opted for redundancy from the BBC, my recruitment consultancy sent me a description for a 'business information facilitator' position. The idea of this job was to be the liaison between the information team and the rest of the organisation, ensuring colleagues knew what we had to offer and we were aligned to their needs. There was nothing in the job I had not done before in some context or other: arranging workshops and training events, organising online resources, developing a taxonomy, creating current awareness resources and even reactive enquiry work. But the approach was a change from thinking about 'what services do we provide?' to 'how does information and knowledge work in this organisation and how can we make it better?'. When I started, I pounced on an unsorted collection of reports needing weeding, sorting and indexing. My manager was grateful but reminded me 'you're not here to create a library; you're here to make us a knowledge-sharing organisation'. This is the key to thinking about knowledge management jobs.

### What is knowledge management?

I was sceptical when I first heard about knowledge management. After all, managing knowledge is what librarians have been doing for years. And my faith wasn't reinforced by the fact that the BBC at the time had a Head of Knowledge Management, who was nothing to do with information and archives, and whose job largely concerned internal communications. I have since discovered that different employers use 'knowledge management' to cover all kinds of things: IT, internal communications, training, cataloguing, content management and even traditional library management.

My interpretation is based around the classic distinction that while librarians and information managers connect their users with explicit information that has been previously written down, such as books, reports and facts, knowledge management also aims to connect the tacit knowledge which resides in people's heads. If information management ensures useful

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information can be found again by putting it in a logical place, knowledge management aims to do that with unexpressed knowledge held in the heads, capabilities and skills of the workforce.

This means knowledge management is concerned with processes: how employees store their information and make it available to each other, how they communicate, whether they understand the value of their own knowledge and feel motivated to make it available to others who might find it useful. All of which takes place while they are carrying out their day jobs.

### **Your daily worklife**

How that translates into what you do all day at work depends on your organisation. Anyone hiring a knowledge manager should have identified - or be in the process of identifying - how employees work while practising good knowledge management. The processes you implement will stem from this. Typical tasks include many of the following:

- 1) Auditing / gathering information on current work practices, for example:
  - (a) Records Management audits: what information people create and how they manage it
  - (b) Information audits: what information people use in their job (including externally-sourced)
  - (c) Information asset audits: who is the principle owner of key pieces of information (for example, customer lists, contracts or usage metrics) and how they are kept
  - (d) Skills audits
- 2) Developing new working processes: the results of such audits should lead to identifying more efficient ways of working and encouraging colleagues to adopt them
- 3) Developing resource-sharing tools which colleagues can use to help them share knowledge in the course of their work, for example, enquiry management tools which enable useful information about how enquiries were carried out to be re-used
- 4) Sharing resources in a more traditional library sense: for example populating existing databases, preparing current awareness information or web content management
- 5) Organising training events and workshops, either enabling different departments to share specific areas of knowledge or expertise, or on information management skills such as email management or web searching
- 6) Developing internal communications tools such as 'white pages' which record skills and knowledge held by employees (not necessarily related to their current position)
- 7) Project tracking: a particular type of audit, important because of the cost and impact of most projects, it involves supplying information about previous projects, and identifying lessons learned before they close down
- 8) Using or implementing SharePoint: this is worth mentioning as a separate item because it is currently a key collaborative tool in many workplaces

## Getting a job in knowledge management

If you are moving from a traditional library role, you should emphasise the following skills areas:

- Organising information
- Networking and communication
- Training and development
- Research
- Familiarity with IT systems and the ability to communicate with IT professionals (they may be able to come up with cheap and easy solutions to knowledge-sharing problems)

Employers will also be interested in the following:

- Knowledge of the organisation: you'll need to demonstrate how good practice can help them specifically
- Strategic thinking: evidence that you can analyse how employees might improve their working practices
- Subject specialist knowledge: employers welcome those who have already worked in their sector, even if not in knowledge management role
- Pro-active communication skills: showing that you can talk to people from all sectors of the organisation on your own initiative
- Change management experience: evidence that you have worked through, and learned from, a significant change at work

## What's good and what's bad about it

Knowledge managers are at the heart of their organisation, often working directly from corporate strategy, rather than supplying a service to a particular work area. Partly because the discipline emerged from management and information technology (rather than library science), knowledge managers receive a high level of respect. The work is varied and rarely routine. And, in purely practical terms, it is well-paid and there are currently good opportunities available.

However, organisations do not always know what they mean by knowledge management. Sometimes it can be a strategic add-on to an existing library service. At the other end, it could be an upmarket way of describing a basic data entry job. If you lack sufficient support at the right level, knowledge management is very difficult: you have to have a mandate to be able to encourage people to work in new ways. Currently organisations are embracing knowledge management and not generally demanding strict metrics as a means of demonstrating value, but to do so is not easy. Can you really prove that another department became more productive because of best practice advice you offered? And, sadly, the nature of the work means people very rarely thank you for it.

If you like the trappings of traditional librarianship: face-to-face service delivery, handling objects, the satisfaction of completing an enquiry or a cataloguing record, knowledge management is probably not for you. You have to get used to blank faces when you say 'I'm in the knowledge management team' rather than the warm (if misconceived) recognition you see when you say 'I'm in the library'. But, when it works, knowledge management is infinitely more satisfying than transactional library work and gives you real sense of importance and satisfaction of a job well done.

## Key phrases you see in job advertisements

"facilitating the collection, exchange and access to intellectual capital"

"project tracking, intellectual capital capture and dissemination, knowledge systems maintenance and technical development/troubleshooting, promoting and training consultants in proper use of knowledge tools and appropriate knowledge sharing, expert/expertise tracking "

"to shape, develop and facilitate knowledge sharing across the business and to develop and promote tools and processes which increase information flow and best practice sharing within the domain and across the firm."

"driving the adoption of knowledge and information management solutions across the company; providing subject matter expertise for document and records management, content management, search and collaboration; and ongoing management of the KM system"

"establishing strong relationships within this global organisation all relating to collaboration and knowledge sharing. "

"identify knowledge needs and continually improve KM programs and solutions - assist in developing a global knowledge sharing and collaboration - measure success of knowledge programs - manage content architecture for assigned area - work with knowledge team to manage rollout and deployment of initiatives - supervise knowledge coordinators "

Katharine Schopflin

# It's that time of year again: training the new trainee lawyers in a commercial law firm

## Bev Woolfson

Every September, the City law firms take a collective deep breath as they prepare themselves for the arrival of the next set of trainee lawyers. The preparation and planning that goes into their induction programme is phenomenal; I know I don't speak only for the library when I talk about how much effort is made to ensure that the trainees get the best introduction possible to the firm and its culture.

A bit of very general background in case you're not familiar with the mechanics of a commercial law firm: every year a number of trainee lawyers are recruited to commence a two year 'training contract' with us. During this time, they will usually experience four different 'seats', meaning that every six months they move to another department and gain as much experience as possible in that particular area of law. On successful completion of the training contract requirements, the trainee will become a fully qualified lawyer. It's at this point that you ought to clear your mind of any images of Tom Cruise selling his soul in the enthralling and aptly named 1993 film "The Firm" - it's true that our trainees have to work hard but there are no sinister undercurrents beyond that at our firm, honestly!

### **So where do the librarians come in?**

The majority of law firms in the City have a library or information service of some kind, albeit under a number of guises. Although often referred to as 'the library', our official title is the Business Intelligence Services department. We provide a legal research and business information service to our London AND transatlantic fee-earners. Much of the work we do is often hugely varied because we never know what we may be asked to find out from one day to the next - enquiries really can range from the sublime to the ridiculous! On top of the enquiry service we offer, we also maintain the library collections both in hard copy and online; manage and provide training in firm-wide online research databases; and provide a pro-active current awareness service - thereby ensuring that our fee-earners are kept abreast of the latest developments in their particular practice area.

### **Trainee lawyers: how we help**

Every law firm library that I have worked in has different ways of co-ordinating trainee training sessions, but the programme that my manager and I currently carry out consists of one two-hour session once a week, over a period of four consecutive weeks, followed by two further two-hour sessions in October/November. One of the primary aims of the training we offer is to introduce the trainees to our department, and explain to them in detail about

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the services we offer and how we might be able to assist them in their various seats. We spend the first session helping them to gain an understanding of how commercial research differs greatly to academic research. Although many of our trainees will have completed summer placements or work experience periods in law firms, it is important to make sure that they realise that in the commercial environment, time really is money, and so they need to approach research in an efficient yet also cost-effective manner. We also discuss things like the firm's copyright policies, using the library catalogue and how to borrow books.

Thereafter we use each session to focus on a particular area of legal research, which means having a projector set up so that we can run through a number of example questions and illustrate how they could be answered, using the key online resources to which we have access. We also bring in hard copy resources where appropriate to show that a solution to a particular question is not necessarily always found online.

We finish most of the sessions with a practical element. This involves taking the trainees into the IT training room, where they can work individually or in groups at a PC, and answer three or four questions that we have set for them. We deliberately try to make at least one question per session based on a hard copy resource only - again to try and stress the importance of considering all options available to them when conducting research. Now it may sound rather cruel to set the trainees questions after the training session, but it's an excellent way of giving them just a very brief taste of the kind of things they might be most commonly asked to find out - although as mentioned earlier, there will always be some research tasks that are completely unprecedented and that no amount of training could prepare them for any better! But this is a method that has been used in every law firm trainee training programme that I have been involved with - and if nothing else, ensures that they might be a little more inclined to pay attention to what we're saying in the main session because they know they are going to be tested on it afterwards!

### **My reflections**

As I write this we are just over halfway through this year's training programme, and there are definitely a few observations I thought might be of interest. The first thing that struck me not only this year, but during the last couple of years of trainee training, is that at the beginning of the programme, it is quite clear that a number of trainees do not see a 'library' training session as something that merits much attention; in fact, the number of trainees who seem to have a last minute excuse to either leave early, or not attend at all, is definitely on the rise. I find this attitude rather frustrating, but alas I think they are simply a product of their generation: why should they bother with the library's services when 'everything is online'? Now of course we all know that nothing could be further from the truth - particularly when it comes to the legal world! But this particular observation leads me very neatly into my next one; that being the initial reluctance of any of our trainees to utilise hard copy resources, even when they can't answer a particular question using online databases/the general internet. At the end of our last session, we were running through the answers to the questions we set, and came to one which necessitated a hard copy resource in order to answer it fully. I had even made a point of referring to this particular set of books during my part of the training session with regard to answering questions like this one. But not one person had

referred to these books when they were left to answer the questions - they just said they didn't know how to find out the information. It is undoubtedly becoming more and more noticeable that many trainees are not accustomed to having to use hard copy textbooks, and although I try hard to impress upon them that sometimes, the answer they're looking for could be found within five minutes of looking up a textbook, it is only once they have been in their seats for a few weeks that they begin to realise this. I think much of the problem can also be attributed to the fact that often, trainees mention that at law school or university, they had access to all the core texts in the form of e-books. Unfortunately, however, this isn't something that's financially viable at present - not least because there is a whole other generation of lawyers who refuse to look at a book in any format other than hard copy! But that's another story in itself...

Thankfully, however, most attitudes do change for the better once they're actually undertaking research assignments from their supervisors. They begin to understand the importance of the services we offer, and that maintaining the hard copy collections is only a small part (albeit important nonetheless) of the work we do for fee-earners. Whilst we encourage our trainees to learn to be as self-sufficient as possible when it comes to research, there will always be tasks and assignments that they either need guidance on, or need us to carry out for them. Even something as simple as obtaining company filings has to be done through us, so it's highly likely that sooner rather than later, our services will prove to be vital to their work!

As a firm on the whole, we are very fortunate with our trainees - they settle in quickly and work hard from the outset, and it's very rewarding for us to get to know them over the two years of their training contract, and watch them develop both professionally and personally. Whilst the trainee training programme that we offer does involve a lot of behind the scenes work on our part, it is undoubtedly the best way to introduce the trainees to legal research in the commercial law firm; and moreover, to enable them to develop good habits early on when it comes to being as comprehensive as possible in finding an answer.

Bev Woolfson  
Senior Business Intelligence Analyst  
Edwards Wildman Palmer UK LLP

# Negotiating the scramble net: The library professional in their 20's, 30's and 40's

Emily Hopkins, Tracey Pratchett and  
Gil Young

*"None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm." ~ Henry David Thoreau*

## Introduction

The library profession is undergoing a period of rapid change. The uncertain economic environment has led to the perception of fewer posts across all sectors. Anecdotally this is partly due to an overall fall in the number of professional posts across the country and to the lack of movement within the profession as a whole.

Research by the CIPD and Penna (2008, p9) claims that workers in their late twenties, thirties and early forties picture their career as a "scramble net" as opposed to the steady progression up the career ladder of former generations. Such workers are used to uncertainty and change. In order to survive and prosper they recognise, amongst other things, the importance of building wide networks, utilising new technology and making themselves visible both within and outside of their profession. The emphasis is on developing generic and specialist skills which can be transferred between teams, organisations and sectors. Career development and progression is determined by skills and knowledge as opposed to age. As training budgets are cut and the opportunities to move around are curtailed by economic factors it can be hard for such individuals to remain motivated.

Motivation is, at the most basic level, "a reason for doing something" (Armstrong, 2006, p.252). Focusing on the career experiences of three library professionals currently working in the NHS in the North West of England, the following case studies examine how they have been able to respond to changes in their career circumstances including moves between sectors, redundancy and organisational restructure. Issues covered include maintaining personal motivation levels when change is forced upon you, the importance of demonstrating impact and the ongoing need for personal and professional development regardless of age or experience.

## Case Studies

### **Clinging on as the net moves beneath you Emily Hopkins (Case study 20s)**

Graduating from Library school in 2006, we knew that we weren't going to walk into 'jobs for life' and make a steady ascent up the career ladder. I couldn't quote exactly the advice we were given, but we knew we needed to gather as much experience as possible, develop our transferable skills, and

be prepared for change! My first professional post was in a public library, before moving to the Department of Work and Pensions. By the time 2008 rolled around, I took up post as SHA (Strategic Health Authority) Librarian at NHS North West, an entirely new role to make my own. Looking back, these jobs all gave me skills that I have used elsewhere, and I suppose my key learning points from these jobs were: to expect the unexpected, to work across a large organisation and ignore (where necessary) team boundaries, and to learn about your users by embedding yourself in the organisation and getting to know them.

In mid-2010, I was appointed library manager at NHS Manchester PCT (Primary Care Trust). I wanted a new challenge, although I knew that this was not going to be easy - the service was still experiencing the fallout from a merger 6 months earlier. Plus, on the brink of an election, the NHS was facing a major restructure and one of the first acts of the newly elected Coalition was to issue a white paper Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS. (Department of Health, 2010), which proposed fundamental changes to the way the NHS operates in England. In the end, the majority of PCT functions and staff were transferred into either hospital trusts or mental health trusts. In our case, it was the latter, and we soon found ourselves moving into Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust.

Landing in a new organisation as an existing library service, but with a user base that had disappeared (most of our users had transferred to different organisations) has all the disadvantages of starting a service from scratch - trying to win over lots of users, and establish and promote yourself, but with additional "baggage" - expectations from management, having to work with what you've got in terms of procedures, stock, staff skills and so on.

Two large pieces of luck have inevitably helped us. One was that, there had always been a lot of investment into mental health stock, as this was an area of interest in the PCT. Consequently, our stock is still relevant and we haven't had to start from scratch. The other was that a few months before we moved into the Trust, an Outreach Librarian was appointed, to deliver "virtual" library services. Very early on we decided to take a pragmatic approach and work together, as we found that the two elements complemented each other very well. This has helped strengthen the service and reach more people - in fact; the Trust has now gained a comprehensive library service.

However, I think what has helped me was to remember that the important thing are our skills, and that these will continue to be relevant no matter what the organisation - the specialist subject knowledge can be built up over time, but our core skills are what really matter and can be taken with us, and will probably be useful in whatever situation we find ourselves in!

Emily Hopkins  
Health Information & Resources Library Manager  
Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust

### **Scrambling sideways**

#### **Tracey Pratchett (Case study 30s)**

Moving between sectors: I became a qualified librarian at the age of 30 and during the past 10 years I have worked in 3 very different roles in two public sector organisations (FE and NHS). In FE, my job was constantly changing

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and I was expected to take on additional roles and responsibilities as they arose. When I left FE, my official role was Coordinator of the Adult & HE Learning Centre, which was a move towards teaching and provided the opportunity to obtain a PGCE. Shortly after I commenced in this new role, the Library Manager retired and as one of the few remaining qualified librarians, I was asked to manage a restructure of existing library provision and take on additional responsibilities (staff training, budgeting and project management) - all in addition to my day job. At this point I felt that my role was being diluted and that I was moving further away from my chosen career. It was under these circumstances that I applied for a Clinical Librarian position, and it was the diverse range of skills and experience in project management, teaching and management skills, rather than my (lack of) Clinical Librarianship knowledge that won me the post.

Responding to change: Although I moved from one public sector organisation to another, the transition from FE to NHS was a culture shock. Before joining the NHS, I saw it as a single entity; however, it soon became apparent that organisational boundaries are somewhat blurred and constantly changing. I found that whilst I could not offer library services to NHS staff over the road (due to Service Level Agreements), I did deliver a service to staff based in Cumbria almost 50 miles away from my base. This was very confusing at times and very different to FE, where the user base was relatively local and easy to identify. As a Clinical Librarian I had to work out not only who my users were, but how to support them at the point of need with clinical decision-making, commissioning, research and lifelong learning (Hill, 2007). Part of the challenge for me was delivering an equitable service across a large geographical area, understanding user requirements and adopting the right methods of doing this.

Demonstrating impact: In the Northwest we have a strong regional library network (LIHNN), which has been an invaluable support for developing my local Clinical Library service and has also provided a range of opportunities for me to collaborate with colleagues from other organisations on large scale projects including Horizon Scanning, Peer Support in Literature Searching, research into the impact of the CL and Making Alignment a Priority for Health Libraries. Many of these projects have exploited Web 2.0 technologies to address the challenges of managing projects regionally and reaching users in a virtual landscape. These projects have opened up a world of ideas and new skills for me to add to my portfolio and widened my network of collaborators for support and advice. In this period of such dramatic change for the NHS, one driven by efficiency, productivity, cuts and mergers, it is essential that we keep in touch with the key driving forces which are impacting upon our users and it was out of this idea (and the Londonlinks Alignment toolkit) that the MAP project was born. I believe that by being knowledgeable about the issues which are affecting my organisation means that not only can I talk their language but I can reinforce the impact of my service on their key aims and objectives. As librarians, we will be increasingly challenged to demonstrate our value to the organisations we serve and we should continually harvest and share this knowledge as an ongoing process.

Tracey Pratchett  
Clinical Librarian

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust

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## **Falling off (and getting back on) the scramble net**

### **Gil Young (Case study 40s)**

During my 18 years in libraries I have worked in a variety of sectors including health, academic and public. I am used to change and have made concerted efforts to keep my skills relevant over the years. The one thing I was most concerned about was keeping working. I was convinced that losing my job would be a disaster which I would not be able to deal with until last year when it happened. Reflecting on this time there are a number of things which I would argue enabled me to cope with the situation I found myself in and motivated me towards finding another job. These things are personal to me and I am well aware that many people who find themselves in this situation will have very different experiences.

The first factor, which I admit sounds a little bizarre, was that I loved the job I was doing and felt I had done it well. On a personal level I wasn't plagued with regrets about things I could have done differently and I recognised that the organisation I was working for needed to change if it was to survive. This meant that I was clear in my own mind that I wanted to carry on doing the same sort of work and enabled me to tailor my search for a new job accordingly. I decided on a strategy where by I would only apply, in the first instance, for jobs I would have applied for if I wasn't about to lose my current role. The plan was to widen the search out as my last day got closer but in the end this was not necessary.

The years in my role and the wide variety of experience I had amassed meant that I had a very strong network of colleagues across different sectors. A friend who works as a trainer spent a morning brainstorming my options with me. This didn't particularly identify anything new but it did help me clarify what I wanted to happen and how I was going to go about it. I also let as many people as possible know that I was looking for a job. The advert for my current role was sent to me by 5 different people!

I have had some sort of job since I was 16. When I turned 40 I realised that even though I had been employed in some capacity or other for 24 years that, with the raising of the retirement age, I still potentially had another 27 years of working ahead of me. With this in mind I decided to enrol at Salford University to study for an MSc in Human Resource Management. I wanted to enhance my skills and learn something new. Most of my fellow students were in their early 20's and used to studying whereas it all felt very new to me. Many things had changed since I had last taken a course in the early nineties and doing exams was a real shock to the system. I was in the second year of this course when I found out that my job was under threat. Having to concentrate on writing a management report and sitting exams meant that my focus wasn't wholly on what was happening at work. Additionally developing the skills I needed to complete the course helped build my emotional resilience.

As part of the course I mentioned above I was required to maintain a current CV and a reflective diary. These documents came in really helpful when I began to apply for jobs as they focused on outputs and achievements. This meant I had plenty of recent examples of things I had done which had made an impact and which I could use to demonstrate my skills.

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Losing my job was not the disaster I had feared. In effect this was due to the fact that, over the years, I had built myself a safety net. I had enhanced my qualifications, built up my resilience and had contacts I could make use of. Doing these things will not make anyone immune to redundancy or joblessness. I am not one of those people who would say that losing my job was the best thing that ever happened to me. It wasn't. It was stressful and I felt very emotional at times. However it wasn't as bad as I always feared it would be and just over a year later I am happy in a new role that makes use of my existing skills and which is helping me develop new ones.

Gil Young  
CPD & Partnerships Manager  
North West Health Care Libraries Unit

## Conclusion

Negotiating the scramble net requires individuals to be flexible in managing their careers. The case studies demonstrate how learning and development needs to be ongoing regardless of your age and experience. Over the coming years many of us will find ourselves in situations we have not planned for and in places we do not want to be. Maintaining motivation in the current climate is difficult but continuing to do things will ensure that when change happens each individual is as equipped as they possibly can be to cope with it.

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# Think Big: Investing in your professional and career development

David Clover

In the current financial and political environment opportunities to further library and information careers by changing jobs are limited, and workplace training and development budgets may be restricted. In such an environment it may be tempting to think small in terms of personal and professional development, especially for mid-career professionals, who may feel already equipped for the day-to-day needs of their current roles. Despite these temptations this article will encourage thinking big in terms of professional development. The article outlines an approach to thinking big about professional and career goals, and to identifying powerful goals and working towards them, reflecting on the experiences of taking part in the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education's Future Leaders Programme for Library and IT professionals from 2009-2010, and the receipt of the CILIP/ESU Travelling Librarian Award and following 2010 study tour to the United States.

### **A planned approach**

There is a risk that professional development is a reactive process, one that relies on courses or conferences being offered, and one that is piecemeal in nature, rather than working towards clear personal or professional goals. An alternative approach is to reflect on where you are now, and where you want to be in the future, and to set yourself powerful goals that will help you achieve this vision. It is true that there is always a large element of opportunism in career development - the right person at the right time finding the right job. But, although unpredictable elements exist, planning and personal initiatives can play a major part in creating opportunities for development and advancement. You should try to shape your career rather than simply react to events.

### **Know yourself**

It is useful to first know yourself. Take time to reflect on and understand what interests and motivates you, what skills and knowledge do you want to develop, and what is important to you, as well as what work-related values matter most to you. Think about what you like about your current role, but also ask yourself how much you want to be doing those things in five, ten or twenty years time.

Thinking about skills, knowledge and experience gained through your current job, and also in other academic study, professional roles, voluntary work and your personal life. Remember that skills can be transferred from one context to another. It's not enough just to say you have skills, as you seek career change you will need to ask whether you can provide evidence of your skills.

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## Scan the environment

Medium and long term career planning requires you to not only consider what you want from your future career and what kinds of work interest you, but also to think more generally about the environment in which you work. It is worth taking an overview of what is happening in your workplace, the sector, and in society generally, and how these trends and developments may impact on your goals. Useful tools include PESTLE analysis, which considers:

- Political changes
- Economic changes
- Social and demographic changes
- Technological changes
- Legal or regulatory changes and
- Environmental change

And can be done in a few hours and help identify changes that may be threats or opportunities for your future career plans. Think about how much change has happened already in your career, and the impact of this on people's roles and jobs. Reference librarians no longer (in most sectors) carry out mediated searches for users on expensive pay per minute and item databases. With trends such as shelf-ready books, and the growth of e-books, areas such as cataloguing will certainly continue to change, likely to lead to more specialised and fewer jobs.

## Setting powerful goals

Powerful goals go beyond a list of new skills and knowledge you want to develop. Powerful goals need to be about where you want to be in the future, be ambitious, and inspire you to go beyond the ordinary. Powerful goals should be both a little scary, and definitely exciting. Be clear about what areas you want to develop, and what you want to be doing in your job, whether for example moving on into management, developing further specialist knowledge, increasing teaching or training roles, or moving onto other specialisms.

### Goal 1: Exploring and building on my leadership potential

Managing a small library moving towards converging with a larger organisation I knew that my role would change. This provided a useful opportunity to think about what I enjoyed about the job I was doing and where I wanted to be heading next.

I'd worked as a service manager in libraries in higher education for a number of years, and over that time watching, thinking about, and trying to engage with changes in our external environment, was keen to start to take a broader role in meeting these changes in a strategic and institutional context. Recent responsibilities had made me think more about where I want my career to be heading, my potential for leadership, and the contribution I could make. I decided I enjoyed the management aspects of my role, and that my personal goal was to expand on this and move into more of a strategic role.

In order to help achieve this goal I applied for the Future Leaders Programme.

The Future Leaders Programme is a leadership training programme developed by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, in collaboration with SCONUL, UCISA, The British Library and JISC. The programme takes place over a year, with three residential modules and action learning sets in between, and has been developed specifically to help experienced professional services staff - typically covering library, ICT, student services, and related services - to develop a more strategic approach in preparation for a greater leadership contribution. Key parts of the programme include an emphasis on self-awareness and reflection as well as on tools and knowledge, and working with a highly supportive network of colleagues.

I had initial support from my Senior Management Team for my application and for the project I outlined that I planned to work on as part of the programme. Funding came from both library and the university staff development budgets. I also invested some of my own money towards costs and certainly invested a great deal of my own time. When I embarked on this programme I described my goals as: "to help me to develop a better understanding of my leadership potential, my strengths and weaknesses and the knowledge of how to further develop my skills. I hope it helps me gain longer term and more strategic perspectives on information services and the higher education sector. I am looking for stimulation, insight, support, expansion and shared experience, and prepared for periods of discomfort, to be challenged and of the need for reflection. I expect the programme to assist in clarifying my own goals and in attaining better self-awareness if myself as a manager and potential leader. I am keen to work with a group of colleagues from a variety of organisations and roles, to learn collectively. The programme will be the start of an ongoing process of development, which I hope leads on to taking on and succeeding in further challenges and new roles in my work in the sector, managing the strategic development and delivery of effective information services and transforming these services to meet the new and ongoing needs of our users."

On reflection all those expectations were met, and perhaps if I am honest exceeded some of my initial expectations. The programme was not a magic wand for getting into senior management, but certainly provided an opportunity to reflect on how important or relevant that goal was, as well as opportunities to gain skills, experience and insight to prepare for such a role. It was not without challenges, and due to organisational changes in my workplace it was difficult to progress my project in the way in which I wanted. It was also a difficult year in my personal life, and this impacted on the degree I felt contributed and felt a part of the project at times. For example, I was not able to be present at the first Action Set, despite organising and hosting it. I was pleased things came back on track and by the end of the programme I was able to say that I had learnt a lot about myself, through tools, but also individual and group feedback and through taking part in activities. One of my key learning points was the realisation that I took on leadership and responsibility within the group on a number of occasions, and it was interesting and useful to be called a 'natural' even though at times I was filled with self-doubt. I also discovered a hidden talent for story-telling.

From this programme our action learning set continues to meet once a year and the leadership challenge or goal I set myself is an ongoing one, and an important one to revisit from time to time as new challenges arise.

## Action planning

Once you know where you want to be, work out how you can get there. Think about the different options and opportunities that could lead you towards your goals. From these options draw up an action plan, you won't need to follow it letter for letter, but there is much value in having a written record to review and reflect on. Make decisions about the steps you will take, and think about contingencies, if your preferred options can't be acted on. Check your plan for realism.

Think about what has put you off acting on your goals before? What ideas or plans have you put down, abandoned or neglected and why? What barriers have you or are you putting up to acting on your goals?

## Take action

One important step that is helpful in being successful in your plans is to share your goals with people who matter. Think about who supports you, who influences you, and who you are accountable to. The people who matter may include partners, family and friends, trusted colleagues, a mentor, your boss.

Be prepared to take risks. Thinking big means being prepared to not always get the opportunities you seek and being prepared to fail and learn and try again.

## Goal 2: Gaining international perspectives on my work

As I came towards the end of the Future Leaders Programme, another goal emerged. As a subject librarian in a research library I had managed to develop a certain level of expertise, knowledge and reputation, amongst librarians and academics in my field. I wanted to further develop this and was conscious that my experience was largely limited to the UK.

Each year, the English-Speaking Union (ESU) and CILIP invite applications for the Travelling Librarian Award, from UK library and information professionals. The Travelling Librarian Award is intended to encourage US/UK contacts in the library world and the establishment of permanent links through a professional development study tour. The Award provides funds that substantially cover travel and accommodation costs for this trip. I had been aware of the English Speaking Union/CILIP Travelling Librarian Award for a number of years. I had always thought it would be great to be able to do such a thing, but had done nothing more than think about it. Early in 2010, thinking more about my desire to gain increased international perspectives on my work, I spoke with a previous Award holder and submitted an application. I was fortunate enough to be interviewed and disappointed to receive a call saying that while I had made a good impression on the panel I had not been successful. A few days later I received another call, asking if I'd be interested in a smaller award (£2000 rather than the standard £3000) for my proposed trip. Naturally I agreed! My purposes in applying for the Award were that I wanted to get some new perspectives, to think out of the geographic box, especially in terms of issues around subject librarians, support for research and collection management, including collaborative collection management. In my application I said that the ESU/CILIP Travelling Librarian Award will provide an excellent opportunity to:

- Expand my knowledge of major collections relating to Caribbean Studies in the United States,
- Make personal contact with United States librarians and archivists with Caribbean Studies responsibilities, and
- Develop strategies for collaborative projects with United States libraries, including scoping digital projects, building on previous contacts with some institutions

As I planned my trip I added a further objective, being to learn about current projects relating to Caribbean collections, in particular relating to collaboration and digitisation. During the trip I took the opportunity was taken to discuss other areas of interest, including models of reference service, staff roles for subject specialists, web based subject guides, and fundraising initiatives.

I contacted libraries, checked flights, and confirmed arrangements (all very time consuming activities) and then in October 2010 undertook a seventeen day series of visits to university and research libraries in the United States with significant collections and services relevant to Caribbean Studies. Visits took place at Florida International University; the University of Miami; the University of Florida; the University of North Carolina; Duke University; University of Illinois-Chicago; University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign; New York University; Columbia University; and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

It was a busy itinerary, and by the end of it I was very pleased to return home. And it was an extremely valuable experience. One of the most valuable aspects of this scheme was that it is not tied to specific projects or outcomes and travelling with this open mind to new insights and experiences was highly appreciated. The Award was a valuable opportunity to learn more about US academic and research libraries generally as well as provision for Caribbean Studies, and provided a wealth of information, ideas and inspiration, as well as helping to establish a useful network for ongoing contact and potential collaboration. The visits provided opportunity for important learning about digitisation, collaboration (collections and services), web support, role of subject librarian, reference services - and fed into the development of services in my workplace as well as my own knowledge base and confidence.

Applications for the ESU/CILIP Travelling Librarian Award are certainly competitive, and feedback from the panel is that every year there are applications of a very high standard. This is certainly not a reason to put off applying though, and I was pleased this year when one applicant I had given advice and feedback was also initially unsuccessful but then had a shortened version of his proposed trip paid for by his employer.

## **Review and reflect**

Professional development is an ongoing and evolving process. Regular review and reflection are key to getting the most from the opportunities you experience as well as essential for thinking about what next. Every few months take some time out to reflect on what you have achieved towards your goals. Decide on an annual review period that suits you and the place you work to consider what steps are needed next - this may coincide with formal appraisal timetables, or yearly workflows, for example over summer may be a good time for those working in academic libraries. Preparation for

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revalidation provided the impetus to submit this paper (as did goal 3 - to increase my professional profile within the library and information world), and also distracted me from the revalidation process, but only temporarily. Writing this paper has been a useful opportunity to reflect on these recent activities, and start thinking about the next goals, as well as ways of helping achieve them.

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## Forthcoming Events

### Librarians' Christian Fellowship Annual Conference Librarians and disciples in a time of trouble

**Date:** 28th April 2012  
**Time:** 10:30am - 4:45pm  
**Venue:** Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London WC1  
**Cost:** £25 (£20 unwaged)

Librarians and Disciples in a Time of Trouble is the title of the annual conference of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship which is to be held on Saturday 28 April 2012 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1, from 10.30. a.m - 4.45.p.m.

The Conference fee is £25.00, including lunch and refreshments, with a reduced rate of £20.00 for unwaged delegates. Non-members are welcome. Further details are available from The Secretary, Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlstone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Tel: 020 8599 1310. E mail: [secretary@librarianscf.org.uk](mailto:secretary@librarianscf.org.uk)

For more details, visit the web site:  
<http://www.librarianscf.org.uk/events/conferences/forthcoming.html>

# Being useful: services for researchers at the University of Northampton

Miggie Pickton

In June 2007 the Library and IT departments at the University of Northampton converged into a single Department of Information Services (INS). During the restructuring a new role was created, that of Research Support Specialist (RSS). The University was then fairly new (having won research degree awarding powers in 2005) and keen to become "a leading regional, national and international centre for research and knowledge transfer" (from the University's Strategic Vision, 2005). The creation of the new RSS role therefore provided an opportunity to develop services for researchers that both supported this vision and met individuals' needs.

This paper describes how these services were developed and, in particular, how it was ensured that they were useful to and valued by the research community.

### **Research support partners**

The RSS role provided a departmental focal point for research support. This benefited both the research community and those that served them. Colleagues within and beyond the department had a named individual to contact and both groups could be quickly signposted to the most appropriate point of help. Sometimes this point of help fell within the converged department, for example subject specific resource questions were best answered by the Academic Librarians whilst login queries were the province of INS Customer Services. At other times, researchers were best served by staff in other university departments, for example the Graduate School or the Research and Strategic Bidding Office.

The development of good, collaborative working relationships with members of other departments has been essential to the success of research support services from INS.

### **The Northampton research community**

Identifying members of a research community is not as straightforward as one might expect. Research students are relatively easy to count (but not necessarily to locate, hidden as they are in offices all over campus), but identifying individual research active members of staff can be challenging. Research administrators, managers and trainers are also important members of the research community, while those who employ and manage researchers, such as Deans, Senior Managers and the University Directorate, have a vested interest in research activity too.

Add to this the variation in needs brought about by individuals' priorities, accountabilities, career stages and project demands, and it is clear that one type of service will not fit all.

### **So what does the research community want?**

In any given week the RSS will field queries from the research community on subjects as diverse as data encryption, choosing where to publish, accessing resources, data management planning, journal creation, web tools for research and so forth. Many of these arrive by email and are dealt with on an individual basis. However, there are a number of other routes to finding out what researchers need. Informally, face to face meetings with individual researchers or research groups often throw up interesting service requests; whereas formal committee meetings at both School and University level can be more effective in offering a broader overview.

By being a full member of the University's Research Committee and Research Degrees Committee the RSS has direct access to research leaders and managers, as well as a degree of credibility with other members of the research community.

Providing services in collaboration with others tasked with supporting researchers can also be a very effective way of establishing genuine needs. For example, working with the Graduate School on research student inductions has led to the development of targeted training courses and significantly raised the profile of the RSS among research students.

The development of networks such as these does not happen overnight, and moreover does not guarantee that the views of all researchers are taken into account. Because of this, it was decided that researcher views should be canvassed by means of an online survey.

### **The Researcher Needs Survey**

This survey, undertaken in June 2008, examined researchers' use of and attitudes toward existing services, solicited opinions of potential new services, and gave respondents an opportunity to provide general feedback. The results are not pertinent here - by now they are dated and in any event would not apply to other institutions - but the real value of the survey lay in the evidence base it provided for subsequent decision making and service changes.

As a result of the survey recommendations were made for immediate action, further investigation and action subject to additional funding. The full survey report is available here:

<http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20394/postgraduate-research-students/552/researchers-in-the-library/14>.

### **Research support strategy**

Having gained an understanding of researcher needs through the various means of communication described above, it was also appropriate to set the new services within the context of departmental and university strategy.

By aligning services with strategy they are more likely to find favour with those in authority, a necessity if any are to require extra resources or impose further costs.

At Northampton the five point INS Research Support Strategy and Plan drew on both the INS Departmental Plan and the University's Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy. All three were guided by the University Strategic Plan. The five points covered the provision of resources, training, support for research processes, physical and virtual research spaces and practitioner research and innovative practice.

## **Supporting the research community - some examples**

### **a) Information support and training**

Core support from the library had always included information skills training, access to research collections (internally and externally), library web pages for researchers and one to one help. However, with research now falling into a single portfolio, it became possible to focus these onto known researcher needs. So in addition to basic training on Metalib (necessary for those new to the University), research students and their supervisors were taught how to find highly cited papers; use alerting services; make the most of the web for research purposes; prepare theses for electronic submission; and manage their research data. The RSS also took the service out to the researchers by offering a weekly 'Help Desk' service in the research centres on both campuses.

### **b) The institutional repository**

The request for an institutional repository initially came from the Director of Research and Knowledge Transfer, inspired by the need for publications data for the University's RAE2008 submission. Driven by this and subsequent reporting requirements, the Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and Research (NECTAR) has developed into a comprehensive record of University research outputs. The University's Annual Research Report is produced from NECTAR and publications lists generated from NECTAR appear on individual staff profiles and School research pages. There has even been a suggestion that the repository may be used as part of a set of staff performance measures. Thus NECTAR is offering value to researchers, research managers and employers.

### **c) Electronic theses**

In December 2008 the Research Degrees Committee agreed that research degree theses should be submitted electronically with a view to them being made openly available in NECTAR and subsequently in the British Library's EThOS service. This provided several opportunities for INS staff to engage with the research community: for example, by providing advice and training on intellectual property rights for research students and their supervisors and in offering joint support with the Graduate School for thesis submission.

### **d) University publishing**

INS staff have been responsible for the development and maintenance of two publishing facilities: the Northampton Open Journals collection

(<http://journals.northampton.ac.uk/>) and the administration of University ISBNs. Whilst both of these have had a fairly slow start, the journals collection has been noticed by our new Vice Chancellor who is now encouraging academic staff to engage more actively in open access journal publication. In a recent interview he stated:

"I'd like to see more staff coming forward with ideas for online journals. We have the library resources, we have the skills base amongst our library staff and we have the software that allows us to take that step. A heartfelt plea to colleagues to come forward with great ideas for journals and we'll help you to get them online" (Vice Chancellor, Professor Nick Petford  
<http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20137/research/806/open-research-at-the-university-of-northampton>).

#### **e) Research data management**

Researchers spend a large amount of time generating, collecting, processing, analysing and otherwise managing their datasets. Data are extremely important to them. Clearly, engaging with researchers' needs in this area is a potentially fruitful use of time.

In the summer of 2010 a Research Data Project was undertaken, utilising the Data Asset Framework methodology (reported here: <http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/2736/>). An online survey was followed by in depth interviews with individual researchers and the results informed a new research data policy for the University (available here: <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20283/academic-research/1606/research-data-policy>). With research funders increasingly encouraging the sharing and re-use of data, the adoption of this policy ensures the University is holding its place in the sector (appealing to research leaders and managers) and enabling researchers to tick all the right boxes in their funding applications.

#### **f) Support for the Research Excellence Framework (REF)**

Like every other university, Northampton is keen to make a strong submission to the forthcoming REF. In addition to maintaining NECTAR as a tool for gathering publications data, INS staff have been supporting the REF by offering advice and guidance on bibliometrics and citation analysis, and by monitoring REF related activity elsewhere in the sector. The RSS is a member of the University's REF Working Group and is working closely with the REF Manager to ensure that NECTAR software is fit for purpose with respect to the REF.

#### **Research informed practice**

It is a key element of the INS Research Support Strategy that library staff should engage with practitioner research and use the results of their own and others' research to inform their practice. The RSS has responsibility for encouraging practitioner research and to this end facilitates a departmental Research and Innovation Group and convenes research training events such as this summer's Research Summer School. Support is also given to colleagues wishing to apply for research funding and the library has recently had a number of successes in this area.

Not only does this activity contribute to University research targets, but it also leads to a greater understanding of the research process and increased empathy with researchers.

In some cases it has led to successful collaborations between library and academic staff on research projects. Ultimately, the successful completion of a research project and subsequent publication of papers lends credibility to library staff in the eyes of the research community.

### **So what next?**

The key to being useful to the research community lies not only in responding to their stated needs but also in anticipating needs that they might not yet realise they have.

In the pipeline at Northampton are plans to upgrade NECTAR software to meet REF requirements; to implement the University's Research Data Policy through a programme of advocacy and training; to overhaul the library's research support web pages; to develop two further open journals; and to explore the potential of a current research information system (CRIS) for the University.

The University is currently undergoing another restructuring of its professional services. As of this month (November 2011) the library and IT services are no longer converged. Staff numbers are being cut. It is indicative however, of the perceived value of the services provided to the research community that the library's research support team is to double in size. In the present economic climate being useful means keeping our jobs.

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Research Support Specialist  
University of Northampton

# Every-flavour career beans: sector changes and career development in libraries

Lizz Jennings

## Introduction

Changing library sector can be a daunting process, but in a tougher economic climate, flexibility is essential for career development. In her 1978 paper, Slater describes a situation many of us will recognise in today's climate:

"...what the profession seems to be suffering from at the moment is immobility... because of the current economic and employment situation"

(Slater 1978)

During tougher times, stepping into an unfamiliar work environment can feel risky, but traditional career paths may not be available due to financial pressures on employers. This paper aims to illustrate the benefits and drawbacks of sector changes, with ideas for getting the most out of a varied set of experiences.

My own career began at (what was then) the Library Association, in a temporary post in the information services department. This proved to be an excellent place to start, as I quickly learned about the profession in its widest sense, through scanning the press for relevant stories and responding to all manner of library-related enquiries. This was followed by two years working in the specialist tax library at an accountancy firm. Following redundancy, I gained a post as an assistant library manager in a public library, and held two more equivalent posts in that library authority before relocating to another county and taking up a role divided between public and prison librarianship. This did not play to my strengths, and I refocused my career aims, gaining a post in a university library working with electronic resources, a role I still hold.

I chartered in 2008, following my achievement of my CILIP Certification (ACLIP) in 2005, and since 2009 have been studying for an MSc in Information Management by distance learning.

## Standard Flavours

Library roles in all sectors will include core information skills, as represented in CILIP's Body of Professional Knowledge. When looking at a career which includes a range of roles, it is important to be able to identify which skills are aspects of the same core activities. Linking work activities with this framework can also make it easier to identify where skills applied in one type of environment might be transferable to another. This requires a good understanding not only of library work, but of your own strengths and interests. The reflection and self-awareness required to re-purpose skills becomes a

habit out of necessity, but it is a productive habit that brings benefits when undertaking professional qualifications, or when convincing potential employers of the relevance of your experience.

Experience gained in an environment with which a prospective employer or assessor is unfamiliar may not seem relevant to them, so it is important to consider how this is demonstrated, by giving examples, and explaining the impact it has on the end user. This is especially important if the skills you are demonstrating lie outside the traditional library skillset, but can be transferred or applied in different ways: just because you understand why they are important does not mean that everyone does.

### **Carrot? Actually...**

One thing I always liked about Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans was that sometimes the least promising flavours were the best: carrot turned out to be my favourite by far. Sometimes when you look at a job description, there are some aspects which do not sound as appealing as others, but when you actually do the work, you find that it is the most rewarding part of the job - I had not expected to become quite so enthusiastic about usage statistics when I began in academic libraries! This is one area in which I feel sector changes can be particularly beneficial, as you very often pull experience from a number of different areas together to meet the requirements of a person specification for a job application, and learning how to adapt skills from one area to another can be a huge advantage in making the most of a new role.

### **Join the dots**

While some skills may only be needed in a particular role, many others form a continuous thread through a sector-changing career.

For example, some level of serials management has been part of most of the roles I have held. However, this has taken a range of different forms, and when applying for my current role, the experience I had gained in special libraries related more closely to what was required, as did the computer aspects. However, in other areas, such as customer service and understanding of library management systems, public and prison library work had provided me with more relevant experience. This synthesis can open up opportunities that might not otherwise be available, as you do not necessarily need to gain all the required experience in one place.

The combination of skills gained in other sectors can prepare you not only to gain posts, but to develop them while you hold them, as your experience will often provide you with different insights, or alternative ways of working. It is crucial, though, to remember to learn from those with more sector-specific experience and ensure you are in dialogue, not monologue, with your colleagues.

**"Alas! Earwax!"  
(Rowling 1997, p. 218)**

Changing sector can bring risks as well as benefits. While networking with colleagues through professional activism and visiting libraries in other sectors can give you a good feel for whether you might enjoy working there, they do not give the whole picture. The challenges of a particular sector are not always apparent, and the differences can be hard to identify.

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It is demoralising to find that a particular role does not suit you as you felt it should, but it is usually possible to extract positive benefits from negative experiences. It is easy to focus on the problems in a role, but through honest reflection, it is possible to identify your strengths and weaknesses more clearly. Knowing what does not work for you can be a huge advantage when considering future positions, e.g. if you know that timekeeping is not a strength, look for posts offering a flexitime scheme. Understanding your weaknesses can also help you play to your strengths. For example, one reason librarianship appealed to me as a career was because it had a strong element of computing. As this is a cross-sectoral aspect of librarianship, it was never a significant factor when considering my next career move, until I worked in a prison library, where the ability to use IT was very limited. This highlighted to me that the absence of computing as a key part of the job was a problem, and gave me the impetus to focus my future career on that part of the work.

### **Too many flavours?**

Of course, the biggest advantage of sector changes is that you gain experience in a wider range of skills than others, but this can also be a disadvantage, as your curriculum vitae fills with a range of abilities, which may or may not be relevant to a given situation. It is not unusual to find myself rewriting my CV at length for particular job applications, and then rewriting it again for professional development activities. While this is often desirable, the increased choice can make this a very daunting task indeed. Additionally, it can sometimes be hard to demonstrate skills which are sector-specific, such as academic liaison, or community outreach work.

Grouping skills into broader categories can significantly improve this, especially as greater responsibility often supersedes earlier achievements. Publications such as CILIP Update can be very helpful in understanding whether your experience is equivalent to that being asked for in a potential role. Additionally, using a functional or achievement based format, as opposed to a chronological one, helps to unify your experience and reduce repetition.

### **Pick and mix**

When considering what to include in a particular representation of your career, it is important to remember that ability to select just those parts which highlight the relevant details is a valuable attribute in itself. This can be achieved by paying careful and systematic attention to the requirements. It is also vital to get the balance right between showcasing your adaptability, and demonstrating a deeper understanding of librarianship.

Hall (1996) describes the career of the 21st century as "protean", with success being measured psychologically, in terms of job satisfaction. To pursue a protean career, one must learn about oneself, and the learning curve becomes a series of shorter, progressive curves, dipping where significant career changes occur, but rising higher as each career stage reaches its peak. In my career, this pattern was evident when I looked at the earning patterns in my career. It is common with sector changes to find roles advertised at lower salaries than your current post, as there is a learning curve, but the potential to earn higher salaries over time is also present, especially if progression beyond a certain point is limited, as is common in public sector environments.

## A framework for reflection

CILIP's Framework of Qualifications offers library and information professionals an excellent opportunity to consolidate their experience, in whatever form, and to plan for the future in a structured way. The reflective and evaluative statements in the Chartership, Certification and Revalidation qualifications are an ideal chance to bring disparate career elements together, and observe more objectively how learning from each role has contributed to the current post. You, the information professional, become the centre of the process, and this enables you to consider the path you have taken, however scenic, to your current state. When applying for jobs, you apply this reflection speculatively, while the qualifications framework enables you to do this analytically. The need to be selective still applies though, and in this case, it is useful to consider the question, "How did that contribute to where I am now?" when deciding whether a particular item should be included or not.

## A framework for development

As well as reflection, the Framework provides a flexible way of assessing your future needs using the personal professional development plan (PPDP). This document is absolutely vital if you follow a protean career path, as you need to be in charge of your learning and development needs. If your current role is not fulfilling these, and you feel that a change is in the foreseeable future, the PPDP gives you a practical framework to plan for the future. Because it can include self-study, it is flexible enough to include areas in which you are unlikely to get training from your current employer.

It also enables you to plan on different timescales, which helps in decision making when new opportunities arise for learning or employment. For this reason, it is worth treating it as a working document after qualification, even if you are not participating in the Revalidation scheme.

## Conclusion

Sector changes, while a step into the unknown, can add colour to your CV and enable you to use your existing skills in new ways. They can make some aspects of career development harder, but can also open up avenues which may not be available to those following more traditional career paths. At the core of a protean, cross-sectoral career is a continual process of reflection and self-directed learning, and although this involves a good deal of motivation and work, the benefits in terms of job satisfaction are immense. These lifelong learning habits feed into the CILIP Framework of Qualifications, and the qualifications themselves provide a clear structure in which to make sense of a varied and non-traditional career and to plan for the future, whatever it may hold.

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# "We're not in Kansas anymore..."

A case study of Manchester Health Information and Resources Library's move into a new organisation under the NHS restructure, and how the library is evolving in a changing and challenging landscape

## Emily Hopkins

The NHS is no stranger to change, although the current reorganisations have made headlines for the combination of major restructures with financially challenging times. This case study shows how one NHS Library has faced the challenge and adapted to life in the strange new land, and how, by maintaining motivation and flexibility, it is possible to remain relevant in times of change, even when the organisational winds of change cause you to land in a whole new organisation.

### Background and origins

The Health Information and Resources Library's origins are as complex as the NHS itself. Manchester Primary Care Trust (PCT) Library began as part of the Manchester purchasing consortium in 1991, and survived numerous organisational changes, over the years becoming part of the Health Authority and then NHS Agency for the city, as NHS structures in primary care and healthcare commissioning changed over the years. The library served staff of these various organisations, providing professional information services to support commissioners and primary healthcare practitioners such as GPs. The Public Health Development Resource and Information Centres, also part of Manchester PCT, had also lived through numerous reorganisations and changes of organisational name since their beginnings in the 1980s as part of health education in the city. Established to provide health promotion resources (think the likes of Jars of Tar, models of livers and other visual resources often used in health education) they served a client based including NHS staff and also staff of partner organisations such as schools and youth groups. As part of the same organisation but in separate directorates, the two services had separate but complementary roles, and had been working in partnership and cross-referring staff where appropriate. In late 2009, after ongoing discussions that had been hastened by economic cuts and restructures within the PCT, the two services merged to form the Health Information and Resources Library, offering a combined service. This new service was based in the Public Health Development Service, in the provider arm of the PCT.

I came into post in mid-2010, to a service that was striving to work together but still had a long way to go in terms of combining policies and procedures. My post had been vacant for 6 months due to a recruitment freeze and staff had not had the capacity to learn about the other half of the service, or had a person to co-ordinate the service. My first few weeks were therefore spent frantically trying to learn and understand 2 sets of procedures, and begin to plan to harmonise them where necessary, and to encourage staff to start to learn about each others' roles in order to begin to fully integrate the service.

## **Moving premises**

A month or so after I came into post, we were faced with a major accommodation issue. The PCT needed to vacate the building we were in due to lease issues, without yet having a confirmed location for us to move to. We faced the task of packing up the entire library for storage with no idea where we would be moving to as the PCT searched for suitable accommodation for us. Meanwhile, we were preparing for major structural changes in the organisation, and the real possibility of our posts being moved out of the PCT, due to the impending NHS reorganisation.

## **The NHS Restructure**

It is perhaps worth expanding a little about the NHS reorganisations in order to explain how an NHS library service came to be moved from one organisation to another. Since 2009, PCTs had separate provider and commissioner services, resulting in two halves to the organisation; one responsible for providing services (such as community nursing, health visiting) and the other responsible for planning and funding these services appropriately to meet the needs of the population. In early 2010 the Labour government had announced plans to split the two halves completely, with separate organisations for provider and commissioning. After the election that year, the Coalition government further developed these plans, and it became apparent that for provider arms in our area, this meant either merging into other NHS organisations, either acute (hospital) trusts or mental health trusts, resulting in a new type of NHS organisation that was responsible for provision of services, meanwhile setting up clinical commissioning groups with GP representatives to take over the work of the PCT.

For Manchester PCT, the decision was made to split the majority of provider services between the 3 acute Trusts in the city, based on the locality (north, central or south) the service operated in. Certain services, including Public Health, our directorate, were to be moved to Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, a "citywide" Trust that also had links to the city council. In late 2010 it was confirmed that we were to be transferred to Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust on 1st April 2011, and MMHSCT would become a new type of mental health and wellbeing trust.

## **The storage challenge - providing services virtually**

By October 2010, all of our book stock, most of our health promotion stock, not to mention our desks, PCs, and all but essential files were in storage and we were hotdesking with the public health team. Initially we were told this would be for a couple of weeks at most, although of course things never go according to plan and in the end we did not unpack and reopen in our new premises until March 2011. The period in storage was understandably frustrating and anxious for all staff. However, we were determined to continue some form of service for our users - not least so they didn't forget us. Not having the physical stock did not prevent us from carrying our literature searches, providing document supply requests for articles and offering training - although the hotdesking situation was not ideal, and it meant a lot of the training had to be offered wherever we could lay our hands on a PC. Fortunately, the excellent interlending network in the North West meant we were still able to offer users books as and when they asked for them, obviously not quite as quick or convenient as being able to offer them from our own stock, but we ensured our registered users received regular emails updating them on the situation and reminding them of services available. Even without our physical stock, we were able to put our skills to good use.

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In March 2011 we finally unpacked in our new space, shortly before transferring to Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust. Unpacking was an adventure in itself as due to the speed of our removal and the fact things had gone into storage and then out again, our 350 crates had been shuffled like a deck of cards with no consecutive numbers next to each other - thankfully none of the labels had fallen off, although the next crate needed was inevitably at the bottom of a stack of 5 crates. Fortunately we had a lot of help from our patient (and very strong) removal men to shift the crates around, and miraculously all of the books went back onto the shelf in pretty much the right order. The health promotion models also, incredibly, made it through with no catastrophes.

### **Moving to a new organisation**

Although the turmoil of physically moving the service had just about died down at the end of March, the less visible but equally disruptive change was about to happen. On 1st April, we transferred under TUPE regulations to Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, along with the rest of the Public Health Development Service and various other services from the PCT, moving into the Trust's Health and Wellbeing directorate. The rest of the PCT staff who transferred were moving into one of the three hospital trusts in Manchester. All three had well established library services, who suddenly found themselves with several hundred new potential users. Meanwhile, we found ourselves now in a different organisation to many of our long-term users, although with a potential new user base of staff members in MMHSCT; we had lost many users but were about to gain new ones. We did, however, retain the remit to provide services to health promoters regardless of organisation, which did give us some continuity of users for that element of the service. This was understandably an anxious time for staff, but reminding them of the opportunities in the new Trust, such as potential to link in with other teams, and promote our services to a wider group of users.

MMHSCT had no physical library service of its own. However, 6 months earlier it had appointed an outreach librarian to begin to develop library services for the Trust. The outreach librarian was based in the Research and Development directorate, and we were to all intents and purposes, two completely separate services. However, we began collaborating early and agreed to work together to establish a cohesive library service for Trust staff, as the initial comments from staff had highlighted the need for a "full" library service with access to books and electronic resources, as well as an outreach service to the 30-plus sites across the city. Working across directorates, we began to develop our services jointly, and found that there was a natural fit between the two services - so there was no fighting over who would take responsibility for areas of work, just an easy collaboration.

### **Promoting the service**

We began to promote ourselves to our new audience in the Trust, meeting with staff, producing a new flyer with the corporate logo, and developing pages on the Trust website, plus taking whatever opportunities came our way, such as articles in the monthly staff newsletter and attending the staff induction "marketplace". We also held an open day to encourage people to drop in and meet us. Slowly, we are gaining a presence and staff are beginning to understand what library services can do for them.

Fortunately, there had always been a good investment in mental health stock as the PCT has always placed an emphasis on good quality mental health services, and our collection was therefore still relevant even in a mental health trust, and our mental health, psychology, leadership, management, and mentorship books have all proved relatively popular with staff. We had to be very clear that we would listen to our new users and develop the collections as appropriate, for instance liaising with Learning and Development to obtain reading lists for courses that groups of staff are undertaking, and where appropriate purchasing stock in that area. It was also necessary to revise the collection development policy to ensure it was relevant. We have also decided that it is important to give the service time to bed in, and although we won't necessarily dispose of stock that at the moment doesn't appear to be being used, in 12 months or so we should have a better idea if there are areas of stock that need to be targeted for weeding and disposal. In terms of journal collections, again there were existing subscriptions for mental health-related journal titles, although we have begun to develop this further. We have found there is not the dichotomy between a primary care library (albeit one that had invested well in mental health stock) and a mental health trust that may have been assumed. Although collection development is of course ongoing, in many ways the move was made easier by this good luck. We are also planning to begin a period of user consultation to gain feedback from users.

We have also begun to redevelop the library strategy to fit in with the Trust strategy. It was important not to assume that we would automatically fit in perfectly, and may need to be pragmatic about our approach to services. However, the Trust strategy places an emphasis upon research and developing staff professionally, and improving services, all of which the library is clearly able to support, although we had to ensure it was phrased appropriately in order to make this clear.

## **Barriers**

A barrier we have faced is coming into a Trust with no history of its own library service, and the work done by the outreach librarian had highlighted that although there was a role for a library, it would take work to encourage staff to use it and to ensure that what the service had to offer was fully understood. Many staff were uncertain about whether their role would "entitle" them to use a library service, as there was perhaps a perception that it was an elite service only for researchers, and that "ordinary" staff did not use library services. As well as promoting to all staff, and highlighting the fact we are open to everyone, we are working to link in with other directorates such as Learning and Development, Research and Development as well as all patient service departments. Obviously in an ideal world, if a service was to be developed from scratch with the funding and support to create an absolutely bespoke service, links would be made with these departments and services developed accordingly. Although we need to be careful to adapt our service where necessary and not to assume that what worked for the PCT will work for MMHSCT, realistically we do not have resources to do this and it is a case of tweaking as we go along and not being reluctant to respond to changes, or to be pro-active in reaching out to users to offer them our services. It is a time of great change in the Trust, with staff being required to become more efficient and effective, and work towards modernising services. A good library service should be able to support these developments, by providing high quality information and developing users' information skills. Although it is an anxious time for everyone in the NHS at the moment, we do have an opportunity to demonstrate our value and contribute to the organisation.

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## Conclusions and lessons learned

Admittedly our situation is an unusual one - although not unique in the current NHS climate. But, while we may identify ourselves as librarians or information professionals in a specialist area, and completely attuned to the needs of our organisation, our skills are transferrable and we are, or should be, constantly re-evaluating services and re-aligning our services as organisational needs and priorities change. This happened for us on a bigger scale, but highlighted the fact that, even landing in Oz, we still had our skills of connecting people with information, whether that be providing access to the evidence base, training users to improve their information skills, and these skills remain relevant. Our willingness to be flexible, to pick up new subject knowledge, to adjust our collections and the way we do things to serve the needs of new users (or existing users whose needs are changing), is what helps us put those skills to good use and remain relevant and valuable to our users. Although our 6 months without a library was difficult, it was in a way an opportunity to work on developing and reassessing our skills,

Unlike Dorothy, we cannot click our heels together and go home; that farm in Kansas isn't there any more. But we can enjoy the wonders, and oddities, of Oz and stay relevant in that strange new world.

Emily Hopkins  
Library Manager  
Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust

# "I didn't know you did that" Facing the challenge by being visible

Jo Myhill

The impending £9000 annual student fees is causing universities to think more about how they justify expenditure on services and resources and demonstrate value for money and this includes expenditure on libraries. Libraries have to show that what they do is essential to developing a positive student and learning experience.

For libraries this raises a number of questions in relation to: student expectations and perceptions of services, senior manager's expectations and perceptions of how a library services contributes to the university mission and justification for expenditure on developing and supporting high impact value added services and resources.

Student perceptions of what they expect a library service should deliver to them personally do sometimes feel unrealistic and trying to explain that no the library cannot open 24/7, nor can we provide you with your own personal copy of the textbook often makes us feel we have to go into defensive mode and that we are being personally attacked for perceived failings in service. As a service we need to shift from this defensive mode and move towards changing their perceptions on what we do and can do rather than focussing on what we can't do.

A very visible statement both to the university and nationally on student expectations and perceptions is the National Student Survey results. Annually we look at the Learning Resources questions in terms of score and comments and we see the same kind of issues in relation to opening hours and books. For students the simplest answer to solving these issues is to spend more money; however it isn't that simple and we have to look at alternative ways of trying to improve ratings by changing perceptions.

These perceptions: lack of books and inadequate opening hours suggest that we aren't being effective in demonstrating and telling people how as a service we contribute to the development of a positive student learning experience. We need to be more proactive both to students and senior managers in selling ourselves and our services and not just expect that people "know" what we do.

Since taking over as Head of Academic Liaison and managing the team of Academic Liaison Librarians (ALLs) these issues have become more apparent. We needed to think about how we as a team could change perceptions and improve customer satisfaction by raising awareness of who we are and what we do.

We realised we needed to become more visible especially as we were no longer physically visible on Customer Service desks answering information related queries. We needed to create a voice to tell people what we did, we

needed to engage again with our student (and staff) population and we needed to demonstrate to a wider audience what we did.

Visibility was the key, we felt we had become hidden and that people weren't aware of what we could do or did do because they hadn't had the opportunity to engage with us or find out about us as a service.

To help us give focus we created a vision statement:

"Visibility both physically and virtually to deliver high quality services to the learning needs of our students, staff and researchers."

By having this vision it allowed us to understand what we were trying to achieve and why. When identifying priorities, objectives and tasks for the team and individually we were able to ask "will it help us achieve our vision?" The vision recognises that the library is no longer and hasn't been for a long time just a physical space but also virtual and that many of our resources and services are available in this 24/7 library. It also recognises the environment we operate in has changed, that we can't be complacent and continue doing what we've always done in terms of tasks, assume that people know what the library does in terms of supporting their learning and expect people to come to us rather than us going to them. For many of our students this is the first time they have used an academic library and for many of our staff they aren't used to librarians providing learning opportunities in relation to information literacy and academic study skills.

For the team this has meant a shift away from what we might consider traditional librarian tasks such as collection management and cataloguing and concentrating on or placing a higher priority on more on marketing, promotional activity and evidence based service development. This is a change in focus can be defined as:

- Undertaking data collection on perceptions' of service, analysing it and drawing conclusions on how we can improve our services and demonstrate how we are responding to need.
- Be more proactive in terms of pre-empting problems in relation to resource access, academic skills for assignments and resource availability and offering solutions.
- Recognising that we have to get out there and talk to our academic community and tell them in as many ways as possible what we are skills and expertise are and how we can make their learning and teaching easier to do (and tell them again and again)
- Make sure everything we do has a purpose and is linked to learning resources and university strategic developments

This change in emphasis and focus has been challenging for some of the team as it requires a personal change in perspective and viewpoint in terms of role and function. Change takes time and with suitable staff development, and by developing a more open, trusting, sharing and supportive team culture we are continuing to cope with change.

### **Virtual visibility**

For a number of years we have been placing a high priority on developing our virtual presence on our webpages. We do this in a number of ways:

## Library guides

Our library subject guides are more than just lists of relevant resources. The guides provide guidance on why (underpinning knowledge) certain resources are relevant to a course, a topic, an assignment or give a certain type of data. Each link to a resource whether that be a database, ejournal, ebook or print based book has its own unique persistent URL which links back into the library catalogue to provide a reliable access route or in the case of print based resources live data on availability.

The guides also offer help and guidance on undertaking research, keeping up to date with latest research, referencing guidance and academic skills development.

In addition to the subject guides we also produce a range (and are continuing to produce) of other online guides relating to specific resource types (newspapers, ebooks), referencing, Web 2.0 tools and current awareness. We feel these guides supplement the subject guides and give more added value to the wider information literacy programme by providing guidance of getting the best out of resources such as EBSCO or CSA platforms and managing the research process.

These guides are heavily promoted on other library webpages, the Virtual Library Environment (VLE) and printed publications such as ALLs profile guide and course documentation. Between 01.09.11 to 18.11.11 there have been 4,141 hits on our subject guides and of the top ten visited Irweb pages in the same time period, seven were subject guides or help related ones produced by the ALLs.

## Digital Library

Our digital library page on the library catalogue and the associated guidance on the library webpages provide we hope an easily navigable access route into the vast array of digital resources. One of the key tools on this page is the Databases for My Subject menu. This A-Z list of subjects taught at the university links in to the database page on the associated subject guide.

These pages have been very successful in directing students to the core resources for their subject. By providing the persistent URL to the catalogue record we have seen a definite shift in access to resources from these persistent URLs between 30 - 40% rather than direct searches on the library catalogue title searches 14% and keyword searches 43%.

We are also encouraging academic staff to use persistent URLs to create "digital reading lists" on the VLE to again guide students to core reading and resources.

## Academic Liaison Librarian team - self promotion

Each of the team has their own profile page which describes their role, their skills and expertise and how they support learning and teaching. The aim is to appear professional but approachable. In addition each profile also has key information on their base location, contact details, hours worked and the all important photo. Again the address for these profile pages is heavily promoted on other library web pages and print based publications. Between 01.09.11 - 18.11.11 the profile pages had 1,555 visits. Students (and staff) can identify who their Academic Liaison Librarian is by using either the subject, department or research institute lists on the associated section pages.

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## **Resource promotion**

### **Blogs**

A number of the ALLs use blogs to promote resources; these can be new, core, or related to particular assignments. Persistent URLs are used to provide the direct route to the resource. One of our Applied Social Sciences librarians uses his blog in quite a different way from just resource marketing. His blog contains more personal discussion and thought provoking narrative with a subtle link to a resource that can be used to find out more about the report, theory or issue discussed. He encourages students to sign up to the blog at lectures and workshops and recently hit the 500 subscribers mark.

### **Banners**

We have a very definite Learning Resources policy to promote services, resources and academic skills development by using a rolling programme of banners that scroll along the top of the front page. Each banner has a link to an associated web page that gives more information. Analysis of hits on the associated webpage whilst a banner is running has seen a substantial increase in hits (on average an increase of 50 - 100 per day) which suggests this is an effective and cheap method of marketing

### **Physical visibility**

As part of strategy we recognised that we needed to be more visible and proactive in our physical space so we identified a number of activities that we hoped would achieve this visibility.

### **Welcome Desk**

For the university induction period we created a Welcome Desk in the library. At our biggest campus it was located in a busy walkway that links the library to the main campus centre which gets a lot of traffic.

The desk was populated with a range of publications and staffed by the Academic Liaison Librarians. The aim was to raise awareness of services by actually speak to students rather than just sit there and wait for them to ask questions. Opening questions included, what year are you? Have you used the library yet? Do you know who your Academic Librarian is? Are you lost, can I help? As the weeks progressed many of the students we spoke to had already met their Academic Liaison Librarian and were able to name them or recognise their photos. We also got to see senior staff including the VC and were able to explain what we were doing.

### **Welcome Back Newsletter**

Part of our response to improving our scorings on the NSS was to target 2nd and 3rd years students and remind them of the good things we do, what had changed and how we can help them this year. We produced a Welcome Back Newsletter which we gave out on the Welcome Desk and those ALLs who were seeing 2nd and 3rd years took them along to lectures. One of key promotions was our webprint service which allowed students to print from their laptops using the wifi.

## **Wish you were here**

To try and find out what our students thought of our services we devised a Wish You Were Here postcard. Aimed at 2nd and 3rd year students, it gave them the opportunity to quickly write down what they liked and didn't like about using the library. On the whole the comments were nothing we didn't already know or had heard, but it gave the students the opportunity to comment and provided us with more evidence to evaluate services. We'll use some of the positives in future marketing campaigns.

## **Roving**

Once we finished staffing the Welcome Desk the ALLs started to act as roving support on our main customer service / self service floors at our two main campuses. We located ourselves around the catalogues and basically pounced on anyone who was using the catalogue to see if they were ok. It really worked as we were able to pick up information literacy related queries, explain how the catalogue works, how classmarks relate to physical location of items and promote the skills and expertise of the ALLs in relation to getting better grades.

## **Demonstrating skills and expertise in teaching**

The ALLs have been long established in the curriculum delivering information literacy teaching. The majority of the team have undertaken the Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) to provide them with valuable skills, knowledge and credibility as teachers. The team utilises a range of interactive learning techniques (problem based learning, group work, peer assessment, workbooks) as well as more traditional lectures to create a relevant and hopefully enjoyable learning experience. So far this year from 01.09.11 - 18.11.11 the team has delivered 313 hours of teaching to 9842 students (student population of 15,000). Last academic year we delivered 1270 hours of teaching to 17982 students.

As well as curriculum based teaching the team provides 1 to 1 tutorial type support on an appointment basis to students who require additional support. For the same time period we have seen 125 students for a total of 90 hours, the average appointment takes 43 minutes. Last academic year we saw 549 students for a total of 412 hours with an average appointment taking 45 minutes.

## **Networking with the university**

### **Desktop visits for staff and researchers**

We encourage all new academic staff joining the university to book a desktop visit (we try to see a percentage of current staff yearly for a refresher as well) with their ALL. It is an opportunity for the individual ALL to tell the academics about the services and resources that we provide that can support learning and more importantly for the ALL to find out about curriculum and course developments and personal research activity.

The New Staff Conference and University Research Conference are also great opportunities to meet new and existing staff and promote how as a team we can support research and teaching. Many of the ALLs deliver workshops and papers at the research conference based around the action research projects they have been doing which further demonstrates their skills, expertise and credibility as researchers and teachers.

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## What's been the impact of this activity?

Some of the initiatives that I've described are long standing and successfully embedded into university culture, a lot of the more physical visibility activities we have been undertaking and will continue to do so over the academic year are new and being tested at the moment.

In terms of assessing whether all this activity is changing student and staff perceptions of the value and role of a library will take time and evaluation will consist of a number of factors including: NSS results and other national student feedback mechanisms and localised activity in conjunction with the Students Union and academic teams.

What we have seen certainly at our biggest campus is a very positive vibe emerging in the physical library space in terms of student learning activity and confidence in using our services. Students seem genuinely happy and thankful when you've explained how it all works and early feedback is showing that students recognise the value of library staff.

In terms of ALL team visibility I think this is improving, anecdotal evidence from the team suggests that students do know who we are, we get smiled at and greeted all over the university and often asked for advice in the most unlikely of places.

The ALLs are enjoying being more visible even if it is tiring. On the whole they have relished the opportunity to develop new skills, knowledge, expertise and confidence to participate in self promotion and marketing and using new technology to develop new innovative teaching material and learning opportunities. Getting direct feedback and thanks such as this anonymous comment from our online suggestions email for the work you've put in to create advice guides and learning materials is the strongest reward and motivator.

"best n greatest.....of all da other universities....  
specially fr dose who dont possess a laptop or computer"

### References

University of Bedfordshire webpages (see examples of banners):  
<http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/>

Library guides: <http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/guides>

Subject guides: <http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/guides/subjectguides>

Digital Library: <http://library.beds.ac.uk/search/D>

Academic Liaison Librarians profile pages: <http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/help/ALLs>

Blogs: <http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/libraryservices/whoweare/blog>

Bedtimes and Deadlines blog by Alan Wheeler:  
<http://bedtimesanddeadlines.blogspot.com/>

Welcome Back newsletter  
<http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/libraryservices/whats happening/welcome-back>

Desktop Visits: <http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/libraryservices/staff/desktop-visits>

# 2012 Pilot Merger Schemes

As you may have seen, CILIP has been consulting with branches and special interest groups about the feasibility of merging in order to bring the number of groups down, and also to give groups an opportunity to refine their remit to meet the changing needs of the profession.

Career Development Group was no exception to this process, and discussed possibilities with a range of groups. However, due to our size and the geographically-based divisional structure, the closest match seemed to be with CILIP's branch structure. As CILIP's Framework of Qualifications has adapted and developed, the functions of Career Development Group have become less clear cut, and a number of areas of overlap were identified.

A number of divisions already worked closely with their local branches, and two regions, the South West and the East of England, decided to pilot the idea of working more closely together, towards a merger.

## East of England

The East of England region is continuing to operate as two separate organisations in 2012, with a subset of each committee forming a merged committee to plan events together. The boundaries of the division and branch do not exactly match, which is an initial challenge. There are also a number of functions of the group which are not mirrored by the branch, such as candidate support and new professionals officers. The aim of the pilot year is to see whether a full merger is feasible, and what effect closer working has on members in the region. The pilot scheme will be evaluated with the intention of identifying what works well locally, and what could also be applied nationally.

## South West

CILIP South West and the two CDG divisions in that branch (Devon and Cornwall and the West Country) have a good history of working together, and have held a number of combined events in recent years. All three groups were interested in the idea of merging, and have decided to pilot a full merger in 2012. The aim of the new group is to provide a more cohesive group to support the CILIP members of the South West. The group will continue to offer portfolio and qualifications support, and build on a strong programme of visits, but also hopes to develop a wider range of events on this basis.

The group is also planning to develop a more participative approach to organising events, encouraging members to become involved even if only for one event or project, recognising that the commitment to serve for a longer period of time is a barrier to participation for some members.

In both regions, communication, participation and feedback are strongly encouraged, to ensure that any changes work in the best interests of library and information professionals, whatever sector or stage of their career they are in.

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