Traditional and Alternative Careers for Librarians and Information Professionals

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THE RESEARCH

Purpose: to compare the applicability of Library and Information Science skills in traditional library organizations and non-traditional positions and roles

Research Hypotheses:
• There are numerous persons with Library and Information Science degrees working for the Federal government outside traditional library organizations and roles
• The Library and Information Science education of these persons is highly relevant to their job duties in many cases

Methodology: a 20-question survey was developed, pre-tested, and administered. Publicity was sent to a variety of email lists and organizations with Federal librarian participants. Due to the difficulties of identifying Federal employees with Library Science backgrounds, especially in non-traditional roles, convenience sampling was used. Responses were collected during October 2012.

Respondents:
• 401 usable responses
• Over 80% classed in traditional librarian job series (1410, 1411, 1412)
• Close to 90% working in libraries

NOTE: Those working outside traditional libraries are also much more likely to be classed in non-librarian job series.

THE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Top 10 Tasks performed by those working in libraries:

- Ready Reference
- Formal Info User Training
- Collection Development
- Project Mgt
- In-depth Research
- Marketing / Outreach
- Web Content Mgt
- Producing Manuals, Guides, etc.
- News Alerting
- Interlibrary Loan / Document delivery

Top 10 Tasks performed by those NOT working in libraries:

- Project Mgt
- Producing Manuals, Guides, etc.
- Marketing / Outreach
- Web Content Mgt
- Consulting
- Strategic Planning
- Formal Info User Training
- Supervision
- Data Analysis
- News Alerting

Both Groups Agree that Library Science is Relevant to Their Work

- Working In Library (% -- N=363)
- Not Working In Library (% -- N=49)

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

- We found relatively few respondents with Library Science background working outside a traditional library setting
- Most respondents valued their LIS background
- There’s some overlap, but major differences between tasks most performed by those in traditional and non-traditional roles