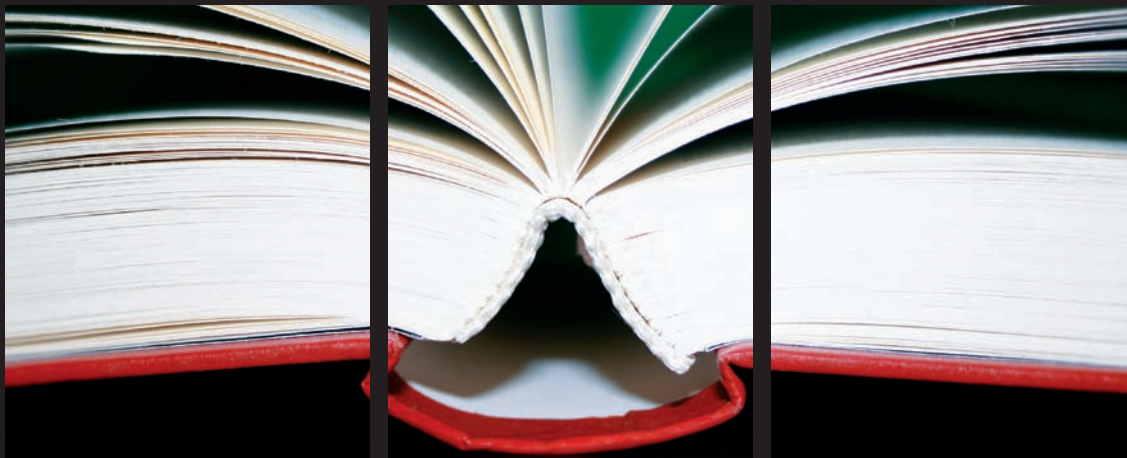


Next-Generation Corporate Libraries and Information Services

CONSTANCE ARD



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Executive summary

EMBEDDED LIBRARIANS, knowledge management, enterprise search, taxonomy, metadata, social media managers, archival content...

The terms used to describe today's information professionals and their areas of responsibility and positions are as varied as the organisations for which they work. The transformation in information services over the past several years has been fast and the future is not gearing down. The one constant in these expanding roles and duties is that the supporting organisation's own mission and business goals govern every corporate information centre.

Chapter 1 examines the changing role of the librarian or information services manager. Library managers are no longer just managing physical and staff resources. The leaders of our information centres are changing their own areas of responsibility to ensure the future of information centres. Information managers must be marketers and educators as well as collaborators and politicians. They must be hard-line negotiators and business analysts who can define the value of information services in the language of their organisation's business. Most importantly, the next-generation information professional must serve as an agent of change.

The future of the library requires a continual evolution by information professionals. This evolution influences the necessary skills for librarians, services offered and the method by which those services

are delivered. Chapter 2 discusses these skills. The increase in electronically-created content means that information users rely on the skills of information professionals to manage the influx of data from all inbound streams: e-mail, social media and traditional sources in new media. Content management requires expertise in not only physical items but also the multiple electronic media that abound, both internal and external to an organisation. As content creation continues in the electronic medium the physical space will be less important than virtual access to information. The roles of information professionals will continue to transform due to the electronic shift and other influencing factors such as delivery methods and services provided.

A report on New Zealand special libraries published in April 2009¹ states that a review of 30 years worth of job advertisements shows that the skills required for information professionals are less traditional today. Desired qualifications have more to do with communication and behavioural skills than organising and retrieving information. Those core skills are still necessary but organisations are seeking the able individual who can communicate with and relate to his or her clients. In-depth information technology ability is another area of great importance for the next-generation librarian.

Expanded roles result in new or extended services such as embedded librarians, who are physically co-located with their

internal clients. Chapter 3 examines the growing trend for embedded librarians. These librarians are responsible for training, competitive intelligence and in-depth subject support through research. Recently a lot of attention has been given in library literature to embedded librarians and the value of the library, including a study concluded in June 2009 by David Shumaker and Mary Talley which examined embedded librarianship.² Their survey concluded that 45 per cent of respondents provide specialised services to one or more groups. This model is shifting the budgets and payment of librarians within organisations as well as traditional reporting structured.

Provision of competitive intelligence is one area in which information professionals can show their strengths and prove their value to the organisation. Chapter 4 reviews how librarians can provide expanded competitive intelligence services to encompass new environments, new services and new expectations, even if some of the work performed includes the semi-traditional provision of reference and research.

Chapter 5 examines the role of technology in the evolution of the corporate library, while Chapter 6 goes on to explore possible uses (and challenges) of social media applications in the corporate library environment. The overall influencing factor in every information professional's life is the continuing technology evolution. Tradition has no place in the next generation of information delivery. Information professionals will continue to develop their technical skills and rely upon their knowledge and understanding of information structure to help organisations choose the right online tools to meet the information needs of their customers. This may be through traditional print and electronic resources delivered in 21st century

methods. It most certainly will include cloud applications and ever expanding Web 2.0 and 3.0 technologies. Traditional information vendors will use new technology to continually improve the offerings for information consumers and the librarian will be the one taking charge of knowing what's available and how to use it.

Case studies and practical examples are referenced throughout the report to illustrate how forward-thinking libraries have exploited new opportunities and prepared for emerging challenges. Contributing organisations include Field Fisher Waterhouse LLP, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Beachcroft LLP, Minter Ellison, Yarra Plenty Regional Library, YMCA of the USA and Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation.

To regain and retain library staff, information professionals must speak in organisational language. The future of information services depends upon the ability to quantify the existence, evolve staff roles and project the continued and growing need for professionals who collect, organise, analyse and disseminate information. Now is not the time for reliance upon good will. Understanding the organisation's mission and business goals and aligning information services to meet those goals is the future. Next-generation information professionals must lead their services aggressively into the future.

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About the author

CONSTANCE ARD offers information and content management solutions through her consulting practice Answer Maven. Before launching the consulting practice, Ms. Ard was a practising law librarian for 12 years. She received her MLS from the University of Kentucky in 1995.

Throughout her career, Ms. Ard has worked to develop a strong background in management and research as well as project management. Ms. Ard specialises in working with organisations to assess information problems, user needs and expectations and offering solutions to improve and leverage company expertise to solve those problems. This specialty includes working closely with management, end-users and information technology. Technology and information are irrevocably intertwined and in order to meet user requirements information and content managers must work collaboratively with IT to ensure organisations meet their business goals. Ms. Ard is expert at facilitating those relationships.

Currently Ms. Ard serves as the Chair-Elect of Special Libraries Association Legal Division and will become Chair in January 2010. She received the Outstanding Chapter Member Award from the Kentucky Chapter of Special Libraries Association in 2006 and the Professional Member Award in 2008. She also received the Kentucky Libraries Association Special Librarian of the Year Award in 2007.

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Constance Ard
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