

NEW SKILLS FOR LIBRARIANS: OLD SKILLS UPDATED – WITH AN ATTITUDE

By

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Abstract

The world and workplace of the librarian have been changing significantly over the past several years. This change appears to be continuing. What once was unique is now an every day occurrence. What we may be doing tomorrow on a routine basis, we can't imagine.

Is this good or bad? The answer depends upon you, your attitude, your ability to be flexible, your ability to learn and your ability to sell your organisation on the fact that you are a more valuable asset than you were just a few short years ago. This will be one person's attempt to look at some of the skills we must hone and some that we must acquire in order to provide traditionally high levels of service. We must become chameleon-like in some areas in order to meet the needs of our clientele.

Mission Statement

"The mission of the university library is to provide information services in support of the teaching, research and public service mission of the university."

Activities

"All activities of the library are performed for the purpose of serving the clientele, but the circulation and reference departments serve the public most directly."¹

What Were The Critical Skills

- Acquisition of Materials
- Organisation of Materials
- Dissemination of Materials and Information: Services to Users
- Managing
 - Staff
 - Space
 - Budget

Assumptions

- Basically Still True
- Substantial Change in Form
- Priorities Recorded

New Priorities

- Managing
- SDI
- Teaching
- Organizing
- Staff

Managing Time

- What is TIME?
- "Time which antiquates antiquities and hath an art to make dust of all things"
- "The time which we have in our disposal everyday is elastic; the passions that we feel expand it, those that we endure contract it, and habits fill up what remains."

Where Does Our Time Go?

- Vacation
- Conferences
- Selectors Meeting
- Dept. Heads' Meeting
- Systems Meeting
- University Senate
- Database Review
- Web Page Review
- OPAC Meeting
- New System Meeting
- Vendor Meetings
- Local Conferences
- Regional Meetings
- Communications Meetings
- Miscellaneous Campus Meetings
- Faculty Meetings

The Big User

- E-Mail
- Selective dissemination of information (SDI)

Teaching

- Ourselves
 - New Tools
 - New Techniques
 - New Methods

Teaching

- Our Constituencies
 - New Resources
 - New Access Methods
- The Future
 - New Students
 - Future
 - Librarians
 - Technology

- **FUTURE SHOCK**

Future Shock ... "The shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time" Alvin Toffler

Organizing

- All the Time
 - (Never Enough)

Staff

- Staff Development
 - Generally Honored in Lip Service?

What is Left?

- Never Enough

Do We Have Enough Left?

- And indeed there will be time to wonder, "Do I dare?" and

"Do I Dare"

References

1. Christianson, Elin B., David E. King, Janet L. Ahrensfield. 1991. *Special Libraries: A guide to Management*, 3rd ed. Special Libraries Association.