



# Eligibility of a Librarian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in accordance with the Demands of the Day: a Study

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## Abstract:

*The aim of the research is to investigate the qualifications and the skills of the librarian's profession as they are impressed through the job ads. A total of 300 job advertisements were studied from the india in 2018 and 2019. The data were derived from known web sites. Overall, 24 skills and qualifications were identified through the job ads. Their percentage of appearance was recorded and this constitutes the basic element for the final findings of this research. The research restricted in ads emanated from well known company's web sites.*

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**Keywords:** Librarians, Skills, Qualifications, Library Science

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## 1. Introduction

The appearance of the Internet and the World Wide Web, as a final stage of an evolution started many decades ago with the introduction of computers and network technologies, has created a new information and social environment, radically different from the functional environment of the traditional library. The modern librarian should be a professional that possesses standards and values that function effectively and smoothly in a technological environment. He fully understands and knows sufficiently the conventional library practices. He constantly wishes to change, to develop and to learn. He adapts easily in a permanently altered environment of information, he has experience in education and possess a considerable amount of communication skills (Salter, 2003). His survival will be ensured by the fundamentals of his science and the skills and roles that emerge from them. The role of intermediate and instructor will still be essentials and librarian will focus into helping the user identify the information he needs and providing tools for evaluation and use (Sharp, 2000).

Audunson [et. al., 2003] believes that the modern academic courses in LIS should aim to create the "complete librarian", while Fourie (2004) points out that the education should not only focus on the technical matters of Library Science, such as the creation of a digital library, but should also be orientated towards the development of survival and affective skills. Concerning the education side of the problem Missingham (2006) suggests that in the modern environment procedures and practices in education should convergence with those found in an actual working environment. Abram (1999) states that librarians must emphasize in the learning environment they create themselves and not solely to technology. He also demonstrates ten tendencies of the contemporary environment of information that influence librarian's function and role such as: virtual is a place not a format, communities of interest are no longer bounded by geography and every profession's relevance is in question. According to him, one of the most important future roles is that of information counselor. Identification of the most important issues that affect – within the modern environment – the behavior and attitudes of every librarian is also accomplished by Melchionda (2007). Techno stress and technophobia, lack of standardization and quality, competition with search engines and commercial tools are few of the factors that influence the role of librarian in the modern environment.

Librarians should also focus on evolving their Internet skills and four basic points regarding that evolution should be mediation and assistance, teaching and training, partnerships, design and production (Croud [et. al], 2000). Also, according to Pace (2002) every online library experience should be consisted of quality, expertise, integrity and longevity. Ashcroft (2004) identifies six basic skill categories and those are professional, marketing and promotion, evaluation, communication – negotiation – collaboration, censorship and personal transferable skills. In addition, Marion (2001) conducted a research on job advertisements and she concluded that a new category of “digital librarian” is not yet necessary and library is still a part of an evolving automated environment, rather than of a digital one. She also found communication skills to be the most wanted qualification. Kwasik’s (2002) analysis on job ads regarding skills for serials librarians found communication skills to be the second most desired qualification (second only to LIS degree). In general, she found traditional skills to be more desired than then ones originating from the digital world (such as metadata standards and markup languages). The importance of ICT skills is underlined by Biddiscombe (2001) as he believes are necessary for any learning, educational or research procedure in a (virtual) learning environment, but at the same time, information specialists should maintain some of their traditional skills and qualifications. Steele and Guha (1998) also believe that ICT skills, along with communication and administration ones will be essential for every modern librarian. They also state that the use of many terms in order to describe the new librarian is the result of the uncertainty of what the role of a librarian should be. Concerning the roles served by a modern librarian, Fourie’s (2004) literature survey identified several roles such as publishing, negotiating, teaching, advising, retrieving – researching and archival management. In addition, she suggested three more: environmental scanning, active identification of new niche markets and action research. Moreover, England (1994) states that the librarian will function as researcher, organizer and publisher, member of the digital library design team, teacher and consultant, while Garrod (2001) analyzes seven roles for a modern librarian, such as metadata specialist, marketing – public relations and learning facilitator. Finally, Nageswara and Babu’s (2001) research reflects some of the most current trends in LIS as impressed through the roles they identify; search intermediary, facilitator, trainer – educator, web site builder – publisher, researcher, interface designer, knowledge manager, shifter of information resources.

## 2. Objective

The aim of the research is to investigate the qualifications and the skills of the librarian’s profession as they are impressed through the job ads.

## 3. Methodology

300 job advertisements were studied from India in 2018 and 2019. The data was derived from known websites.

## 4. Findings

24 skills and qualifications were identified through the job ads. Their percentage of appearance was recorded and this constitutes the basic element for the final findings of this research.

**Table 1 Skill of Librarian**

| Sr. No | Skill                                 | Percentage |
|--------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 01     | Degree Of LIS                         | 94%        |
| 02     | Work Experience                       | 61%        |
| 03     | Communication                         | 36%        |
| 04     | Knowledge of ICT                      | 29%        |
| 05     | Use of Library Software               | 24%        |
| 06     | Personal Traits                       | 22%        |
| 07     | Experience of Library Automation Work | 21%        |

|    |                                      |     |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 08 | Knowledge of Library Subject content | 20% |
| 09 | Digitization                         | 17% |
| 10 | Research Knowledge                   | 14% |
| 11 | Easy to Use of PC                    | 12% |
| 12 | Cataloguing Skill                    | 11% |
| 13 | Administration                       | 11% |
| 14 | Communication of Multi Language      | 10% |
| 15 | Working as a Team                    | 09% |
| 16 | Creation / Management of Web Page    | 08% |
| 17 | Networking                           | 07% |
| 18 | Consortia                            | 06% |
| 19 | Discipline                           | 05% |
| 20 | Marketing                            | 04% |
| 21 | Critical Thinking                    | 03% |
| 22 | Typing                               | 03% |
| 23 | Programming Language                 | 03% |
| 24 | Metadata Expert                      | 02% |

The findings of this research are as following.

1. 24 skills and qualifications were identified through the job ads. Their percentage of appearance was recorded and it's the basic element for the final findings of this research.
2. Degree in LIS and working experience skills were expected to be the ones with the highest percentage, and should be considered "de facto" for all librarians, without any further value into this research's findings.
3. Communication skill appears in 36% of the ads and should be considered a desirable skill for every modern librarian. We can assume that this need for communication skills, no matter if the librarian works in technical or public services, comes from the rapid development of the Web and the increase of possible ways and means of communication among LIS professionals and the librarian and the user.
4. Development of digital collections skill appears in the 10<sup>th</sup> place. The "equivalent" originating from the traditional environment appears in twice as many advertisements. This finding is an important one regarding the need for development of a completely new set of skills that will originate from the digital world. Instead, it is concluded that the skills that the librarian has developed for decades and regard the knowledge and use of traditional library systems are still important.
5. Research knowledge is required only 14%
6. The need for administrative – organizational skills underlines that a modern librarian should have the ability to manage and organize whether it is about the library and its Departments or research groups and projects.
7. ICT skills often have a higher percentage than the "digital skills". Although ICT skills have a relatively low percentage (29%), we can expect that this will change in the future. General use of software and the knowledge of creating and maintaining web pages are two of the most desirable skills in this category.
8. Marketing Skills, Programming Language and Networking have a small demand and that was an interesting finding. Especially when compared with the "traditional" skills we can conclude that, at the time being, professional practice dismisses the need for a new category, the "digital librarian".
9. The qualifications and the personal skills a librarian must possess does not change according to the developments in technology, but goes along with the change in organizational and administrative structure of information services. Qualifications for a modern librarian are a mix of

old and new ones and that synthesis derives from the need in organizing documents and information in a hybrid environment. Social skills are important not only for professionals working in public services, but should be considered a distinct category of skills, along with professional skills, important for every modern LIS professional.

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