Role of the information specialist at University of Pretoria in 5 Years Time

Presented by Johann van Wyk at a UPLS Leaders Meeting on 14 May 2012
Overview

- Introduction
- The role of the Information Specialist at UP currently
- Trends/drivers that will impact the information specialist
- New Role: Characteristics
- Skills and Competencies that will be required
- Roadmap and Navigational Markers
- Conceptual Model
- How do we get the Information specialist to the desired future
- Conclusion
Introduction

UP 2025 Strategic Plan

UP Library Strategy 2011-2015

Trends from Literature

Information Specialist
Introduction
Introduction

UPLS Approach

[Graph showing the relationship between High Tech and High Touch over 5 years]
Current role of the UP information specialist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Performance Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Information Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information Resources Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information Literacy Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create and Organise UP Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work Groups/Projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

- Web 2.0 (Social Media), Web 3.0
- Much more involvement by clients
- Mobile Devices,
- Emphasis on Enquiry-based Learning
- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Greater emphasis on Embedded Librarianship
Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

- Increase in the use of online reference, or ask-an-expert services (e.g. WikiAnswers)
- UP2025 Institutional Research Themes (IRT’s)
- Data Curation and Management
- Need for products & services that will enhance the dual strategy (professional training & research) of the University
- Virtual Research Environments
- Advice needed on publishing in High Impact Journals, information on impact factors, h-index, Researcher IDs
Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

- Changing E-Learning Environment
- Massification of Education (Increase in student numbers)
- Gaming
- Diverse client corps (Age, race, gender, culture, language, disabled, disadvantaged, educational background, etc)
- Virtual Worlds
Trends/Drivers that will impact the information specialist

- Open Scholarship (Open Access)
- Repositories
- Metadata and new cataloguing standards such as RDA
- Digitisation
- Increasing and changing client expectations
New Role: Characteristics

Embedded Librarian

• Much more embedded in clients’ work processes and academic departments.;
• Greater emphasis on collaboration;
• Librarians will work with researchers more “upstream” in research process;
• Embedded librarianship in research setting may be project-based or programmatic in nature (Carlson and Kneale, 2011:168)
• Some Librarians will be part of VREs

Technology Savvy Information Specialist

• Experts in emerging new information technologies e.g. mobile devices, social tools, Virtual Worlds, etc.
• Information specialists will integrate these technologies into their work processes and services
• Train and advise clients on these technologies and how to use them to access the information they need
New Role: Characteristics

Ubiquitous Information Specialist

• Go where their clients are (Seal, 2011: 256)
• Deliver services and products where, when, and in the format the clients need it. (In the library, class, on campus, in the cafeteria, online, mobile etc)

Digital Collection Building

• Greater emphasis on buying e-books and building out e-book collections for different formats (e.g. smartphones and tablets)
• Creating products and services using social tools, or designing apps for mobile technologies
• This will be done in collaboration with clients (students and academics)
• Much lesser emphasis on building out print collections
• Some information specialists will be involved in digitisation
New Role: Characteristics

Information Literacy/Fluency Trainer

- IL Training **integrated within course curricula** of each faculty (curriculum-integrated instruction, enquiry-based learning) (Mavodza, 2011: 449)
- **Mode of delivery**: games-based and social learning approach, using face-to-face, gaming, social tools e.g. Skype and Virtual Worlds (Second Life). Other methods include Fun days, Treasure Hunts, Reading Clubs (which can be mobile) (Tiffen & England, 2011).
- **Content:**
  - information searching,
  - information sources in various formats: Web 2.0/social media tools, as well as emerging technologies e.g. mobile technologies
  - Issues of reliability, authenticity, privacy, and how new formats and tools impact our access to and notions of information
  - digital information literacy: include the ability to access, use, organize, create, disseminate, synthesize and evaluate information in digital formats (Walstrum, Garcia and Morrison, 2011).
New Role: Characteristics

Data Curation and Management

• Will work closely in collaboration with the data curation manager of the UPLS and with academic staff within the faculty, to curate (preserve), organise, and make their research data available and accessible for future researchers.

• As part of information consultation the information specialist will have to do data interviews with researchers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills &amp; Competencies that will be required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformative/Entrepreneurial/Innovative/Revolutionary thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change management: change is the new normal/constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening skills – we need to become learners and listeners not linear lecturers (Grant, 2011: 164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must be a team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must be a risk taker (Carlson &amp; Neale, 2011: 169)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Skills & Competencies that will be required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable about the creation of metadata and metadata standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People skills - relationship Builder: – must be able to build trusted relationships (Carlson &amp; Neale, 2011: 169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowdsourcing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Skills & Competencies that will be required**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation Skills in a project team (e.g. VRE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional knowledge and skills (Library and Information Science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable about the research cycle and how to support each step in the cycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Skills & Competencies that will be required

Design thinking

- Put yourself in clients’ shoes and create tools, services and products that the client wants rather than providing what the you (designer) thinks they should have.
- This is done through visualisation, observation, games, task analysis or immersion research (Tiffen & England, 2011; Brown, 2008).

Organisational skills

- This is an old librarian skill that will become even more important in the explosion of information in various formats

Knowledge Management

- This will become essential in interaction with researchers, project groups and VREs to help them facilitate their knowledge
Roadmap and Navigational Markers
**DESIRED FUTURE**
*(IN 5 YEARS TIME)*

**TODAY**

- Faculty Library 1
  - Information Specialists with current skills set

- Faculty Library 2
  - Information Specialists with current skills set

- Faculty Library 3
  - Information Specialists with current skills set

- Learning Centre
  - Information Specialists with current skills set

**DRIVERS**

**Communication Plan**

**Create new thinking**
How do we get the Information Specialists to the desired future

- **Performance contracting** with clear performance objectives aligned to the Faculty Library Operational Plan which should be aligned to the UPLS Strategic Plan

- **Flexible role description** which should be updated regularly to be aligned to Faculty Library Operational Plan

- **Communicating the Organisational Culture and Values** to all staff members, through dialogue, example etc. The organisational culture and values will create a safe environment within which new change can be embraced

- **Establishing a Communication plan**: – a clear plan that stipulates how these new changes will communicated to staff and implemented, while taking into account, technology angst, fear of change, diversity of staff, background etc.
How do we get the Information Specialists to the desired future

- **Create new thinking** (from the book “Quiet Leadership: help people think better – don’t tell them what to do”, by David Rock)

  1. Step 1 – Think about thinking
  2. Step 2 – Listen for potential
  3. Step 3 – Speak with intent
  4. Step 4 – Dance towards insight
  5. Step 5 – Create new thinking
  6. Step 6 – Follow Up
Conclusion

We are at the threshold of the Great Age of the Librarians!

An exiting time indeed!

Looking at the UP Librarians in 5 years time, I see individuals who are highly skilled technologically, can think out of the box, who are innovative, who embody the values of the organisation, and who are people focused. The people in these roles will make the difference. We as managers will have to help them think better and different. “A thinking librarian will be the best resource in the library”.
Bibliography


Bibliography

Bibliography

- **UP 2025 Strategic Plan.** Pretoria: University of Pretoria