
An analysis of skills and qualities required by LIS employers 2004-2005

Paula Younger

The Author

A chartered librarian and qualified teacher, Paula Younger has worked since 1990 in a wide range of information and education environments. For the last 4 years, Paula has worked for the Ministry of Defence in medical and science libraries in the south of England, gaining familiarity with a wide range of e-resources, licensing arrangements and firewall settings. She will shortly be joining the NHS as the Electronic Resources Librarian at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Abstract

Between April 2004 and March 2005 data was collated from 1,000 LIS vacancies advertised in CILIP Gazette. The wording in the advertisements was analysed and a record made of skills requested. Skills were then grouped into the following areas: specialist library skills; transferable skills relating to management; general transferable skills - customer facing; general transferable skills - non-customer facing; working patterns and availability; and personal characteristics. Skills are analysed across the whole sample and grouped by larger sector, e.g. schools, FE/HE. The skills requested are also analysed by approximate level of post, ranging from library assistant to director and above. A brief attempt is also made to put the current skills situation into context in the light of the imminent retirement of many 'baby boomer' librarians. Some trends are observed, and some of the implications for both applicants and employers are also outlined.

Background

The library sector, like dozens of others, is facing a time of unprecedented change in the demographics of its workforce in the next decade. According to Lynch in her brief overview of 2001 US newspaper articles highlighting current trends (2002) and her work for the American Library Association in the same year, almost three quarters (68%) of today's librarians will have retired by 2017.

There is some evidence, both anecdotal and backed up by more systematic research, that for some time now recruiters have been experiencing difficulties in attracting appropriately-qualified staff to interview. In her research for the North West Regional Archive Council and Libraries North West, where questionnaires were distributed to libraries to gather key data including skills gaps and shortages in the region, Hamblin (2002) suggested that it is particularly difficult to attract candidates for fixed-term or project-style posts. The sectors targeted in this study included NHS, FE and HE libraries and information units, law libraries, public libraries and archives, private archives, business and government libraries.

Usherwood and Proctor's research on the public library workforce (2001), carried out for the Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society at the University of Sheffield, suggests that the situation will have worsened within the next decade. The study incorporated an extensive literature search, surveys of public library authorities in the UK, focus groups, and consultation with stakeholders. Published by re:Source (2001), it suggested that within 10 years, demand for candidates in the public library sector may begin to outstrip the supply of good quality applicants. A report by the public sector trade union UNISON on behalf of the culture media and sport committee inquiry into government policy on public libraries (c. 2001) also highlighted problems in recruiting.

Whether there actually is a skills shortage in the library field is a moot point however. Some individuals looking for work view the current 'librarian shortage' in a completely different

way, as can be seen from weblogs and anecdotal evidence. As one American librarian outlines, "Location does have a lot to do with whether there's a shortage of applications. Overall, however, for the amount of ENTRY-LEVEL jobs open, I believe there are far more MLSs". The writer goes on to say that what actually appears to be happening is that entry level positions are not opening up whereas management posts are experiencing difficulties in recruiting. Despite the ALA's official view that there is a lack of qualified librarians, other statistics on their site also indicate that the surfeit of posts is not at the entry level.

Jacobson (2002) also found in her brief analysis of employers' experiences in academic circles in the US that employers had a wide choice of candidates at the entry level. One university had 120 applicants for one entry-level post. Conversely, however, when a more specialised serials librarian vacancy arose, despite advertising across the United States on three separate occasions only two or three people applied.

The problems are not limited only to the UK or the US, as Teece (2003) indicated in his study on behalf of the Australian Library and Information Association in which he collated statistics based on information given to the association. He pointed out that "56% of librarians and 52% of library technicians are over 45 years of age", 20% of librarians were already past the minimum retirement age, and less than a quarter of qualified librarians were under the age of 35.

Succession planning, leadership and the wider demographic picture

Bentley (2004) is amongst many who are aware that the baby boomer generation is about to hit retirement age, as he makes clear in a newspaper article for the Guardian. 'Baby boomer' refers to the 17 million people born in Britain between 1945 and 1965.

The majority of the world's Boomers were born in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States between 1946 and 1964. In

Canada over 25% of the population is in this group (Whitmell, 2002). This generation is disproportionately represented in libraries in the US and Canada, and although it is difficult to find comparable information for the UK, what can be found suggests a similar profile in the UK. A Semlac report (2004) took an overview of the current library situation in the south east of England, for example, found in an analysis of CILIP members in the south east region that 29% of the regional membership was aged 50 or over. This rose to 33.3% if members aged over 65 and "not known" are removed. The likelihood is that the true figure is much higher, since many library staff are not members of CILIP.

As Whitmell (2002) has discussed, many baby boomers have stayed with the same library for the past 25 to 30 years. In the 1990s, as Generation X could vouch, new hires in libraries reduced drastically. Whitmell points out that "The issue of succession planning, or replacing the large number of those anticipated to be retiring and leaving professional and non-professional positions in the next few years, is slowly coming to the forefront of the library community. In fact, however, succession planning only usually becomes an issue when a member of staff leaves".

The next generation, meanwhile, Generation X, is much smaller in size. As Baby Boomers live longer and the cost of living spirals ever upwards in the civilised Western world, the dream of early retirement recedes for the Boomers. Some Generation X-ers are finding themselves under-employed. They may also find they are having to wait longer and longer for middle management and senior management posts. Although these posts are likely to become vacant in the next ten to fifteen years, in the meantime, Generation X are not always able to develop the leadership skills required for those future posts. The Baby Boomers often regard Generation X as a cynical, self-serving generation lacking in discipline and loyalty. The truth is rather more complex. Lankard (1995) gives a brief literature review of Generation X and how it differs from the Baby Boomers, incorporating differing viewpoints from a range

of authors. Generation X is characterised by a higher level of technological literacy and a coming of age when a linear career path no longer exists. Whitmell also suggests that Generation X look for a flatter structure within the workforce than the hierarchical approach taken by the Boomers: "Overall this group is characterized as being unimpressed with authority and will treat the chief librarian as they would the receptionist."

Rodgers (2004) has observed that, "with the baby boomers firmly entrenched in their roles and seemingly unwilling to budge, aspiring CIOs from Generation X - the eldest of whom turn 43 this year - are feeling left out in the cold." It is even predicted by some experts that there will be a leadership vacuum, particularly in the US. There are 76 million boomers in the USA, with only 50 million Generation X-ers to replace them. This relates to a newspaper article where he interviewed existing members of Generation X.

In the meantime, Generation Y is hot on the heels of Generation X. When the Baby Boomers do retire, it will be interesting to see whether the middle and senior management roles currently occupied by the Baby Boomers will still exist. How many of them rely heavily on traditional library skills and are likely to be swept away by new technology? It is possible that in a drive to save money on the wage bill (usually the largest single outlay of any organisation), employers may look to replace these postholders with qualified librarians, or with competent graduates (or non-graduates) who are able to use the Internet. It will therefore be equally interesting to see if management and leadership skip a generation and employers go straight to Generation Y. Finally, if it is not possible for employers to find the skills they require, will employers take a more flexible approach to retaining baby boomers, perhaps in a part-time or consultant role?

For libraries, this has implications for their ability to attract - and retain - suitably skilled staff. Whitmell, again, suggested that anecdotal evidence indicates that many managers are concerned about their ability to retain good

staff, particularly when so many are hired on temporary contracts. There are also some indications that some professional library jobs are being filled by non-librarians.

Indeed, the whole skills landscape of library work is beginning to change, as Wilder (2000) has observed in his report for the Association of Research Libraries, where he published information on unpublished, demographic data sets compiled from 1990s and 1994 salary surveys of the ARL. The 1998 updating of the information on these skills in 110 university member libraries meant that the information could be updated, to take a clearer snapshot of the situation.

Between 1990 and 1998 the number of functional specialists hired in US libraries increased by 72%. Interestingly, although perhaps not surprisingly given that 61% of hires in this period were for a systems-related job, almost half of the new hires (44%) in this sector were male, compared to just over a quarter in other categories (28%). The number of years of experience in this sector was also lower than in other areas, at an average of 4.6 years - although again, given the relatively new focus of this subject area, this is not particularly surprising.

This paper examines a selection of advertisements in the UK with a view to establishing which skills are most frequently requested, and whether there are any significant differences between sectors.

Methodology

One thousand advertisements for LIS posts published between April 2004 and March 2005 were examined and analysed. The advertisements were published in the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals Gazette. The Gazette is one of the main sources of job advertisements for the Library Profession within the UK. The Gazette is published fortnightly and is a member benefit for all members of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (the merged member organisation of the former Library Association and the Institute of

Information Scientists). The print publication has a national distribution within the United Kingdom. In addition the website is accessible world-wide.

Advertisements were chosen from at least two and up to three editions of the publication for each month between April 2004 and March 2005. All advertisements in these selected editions were included in the sample. Where an agency had advertised more than one post in an advertisement, each individual job title was included in the sample. Where an employer had publicised more than one post in the same advertisement, again, each job title was entered separately into the database for analysis. Where there was more than one post with exactly the same job title listed with the same employer in the same advertisement only one instance was included in the database, unless there was additional information included. 'Librarian – Children's and Young People' and 'Librarian – Lifelong Learning' in the same advertisement, for example, would count as two entries. 'Librarian – Children's and Young People (2 posts)', however, was only included in the database once.

Advertisements in the Gazette usually include details of job title, salary band, location and employer, and the skills required. There are some exceptions to this: many agencies, for example, also choose to advertise in the Gazette and of necessity their advertisements are shorter than most of those posted by employers directly. For each of these issues each individual advertisement was summarised in an Access database. The posts included job-share, part-time, temporary, permanent, and full-time, and were spread throughout the United Kingdom.

Initially the advertisements were examined for skills which regularly recurred (more than ten times in each issue). As details of more advertisements were added to the database, this was refined, with skills grouped together where possible. The wording in advertisements was analysed and a record made of skills requested, for example communication skills or teaching/user education skills.

ICT skills requested by employers ranged from fluency in MS Office applications to a general level of IT literacy. ICT skills in this study refer to transferable ICT skills, such as the ability to use Microsoft Office, which would be equally valid whether within or outside a library or information setting. For the purposes of the research, this heading did not include more specialised database or IT skills such as programming, or library catalogue systems administrator ability or experience: these were detailed separately.

Where requested, particular levels of education or qualifications were also recorded. These included, for example, a degree, a postgraduate diploma, the European Computer Driving Licence.

The geographical location and skill sector of advertisements were also recorded. The number of years of experience requested was also recorded where this was specifically stated. For the purposes of this study, the posts have been grouped into approximate levels, which are:

- Library Assistant
- Senior paraprofessional (e.g. Senior Library Assistant)
- Professional (Assistant Librarian)
- Professional (Librarian)
- Manager
- Senior Manager/Senior Librarian
- Researcher/specialist, and posts that do not easily fall into one of the other 7 categories
- Director and above

A skill was only recorded as being requested if it was explicitly stated in the advertisement. Information from each advertisement was input into an Access database and the data compared across sectors and levels of post. Some of the person specifications requested in the advertisements were not so much skills as personal circumstances and abilities, e.g. can be mobile, has own transport, is able to work weekends/evenings. Many of the skills and qualities requested cannot be easily measured. How, for example, does one measure flexibility? Some advertisements specified a degree but not necessarily an Information Science degree.

To allow for clearer comparison across sectors, the skills were grouped into the following areas:

- Specialist library skills, which it is unlikely that posts in other sectors would specify, such as cataloguing, stock selection, or knowledge of a particular library housekeeping system.
- Transferable skills relating to management. Presentation skills have been included in this section as a skill which managers are often required to demonstrate but which, in most cases, library assistants would not be expected to show.
- General transferable skills. This section includes skills such as customer service, interpersonal and communication skills,

which are equally relevant wherever an employee might work.

- Working patterns and availability (including car ownership and/or a driving licence)
- Personal characteristics, such as flexibility and enthusiasm.

Advertisements by sector

The data on the advertisements collected was broken down by sector, as shown below. Where 'Education' is used as a heading, this referred to advertisements with council education headquarters, national partnerships, or learning and skills councils rather than to HE, FE, or Schools.

Sector	No of vacancies in this sample	%age
HE	239	24
Public	225	22
NHS/Health	78	8
School	68	7
FE	66	7
Not stated	66	7
Government	51	5
Private/commercial	54	5
Law	45	4
Charity	20	2
Professional Body	18	2
National libraries	14	1.4
Finance	13	1.2
Museums	11	1
Prisons and police	10	1
Education	9	1
Media	8	1
FE/HE	4	0.4

Table 1 Percentage of advertisements by sector

There are 18 sectors in total represented in this sample. Only eight of those sectors accounted for five per cent or more of advertised posts, with three sectors (HE; Public; NHS/Health) accounting for over half of all vacancies in this research (54%). As can be seen, almost a quarter of all advertised posts (24%) in this sample are in the HE sector. Public libraries run

a close second, with 22%. NHS and Health libraries are next, with only eight per cent of the total.

There were particular difficulties with the 'not stated/miscellaneous' sector. In some cases, there was a clue in the job title as to the particular sector. The likelihood is, for example,

that 'Asian Collections Librarian' referred to a post in either the public sector or the academic world, but it was by no means certain. In other cases, the job titles offered no clue to the sector at all, when, for example, employers needed 'Project Cataloguers (Online Project)' or 'Team Librarian'. In some cases the employer was stated, but it was difficult to establish the sector affiliation of the organisation concerned. Posts were advertised, for example, with SWMLAC and EEMLAC, with a Chamber of Commerce, and with a Cathedral. The 'other' category applied where only one instance was found in the sample. Examples include research councils, "FE/HE", and VSO.

The skills requested were grouped by sector to make the results more meaningful. From here, it is possible to see within particular sectors where skills appear to be proportionately more important.

The extremely small percentage of the posts advertised in some categories, however, makes it very difficult to draw any firm conclusions. For those sectors where the numbers of vacancies advertised are small, further research over a longer period of time, or including a wider range of advertisement sources may increase the number of vacancies in those categories. This in turn might yield more conclusive findings.

Overall analysis of skills requested: specialised library skills

The chart below shows what percentage of vacancies in the entire sample requested particular library skills.

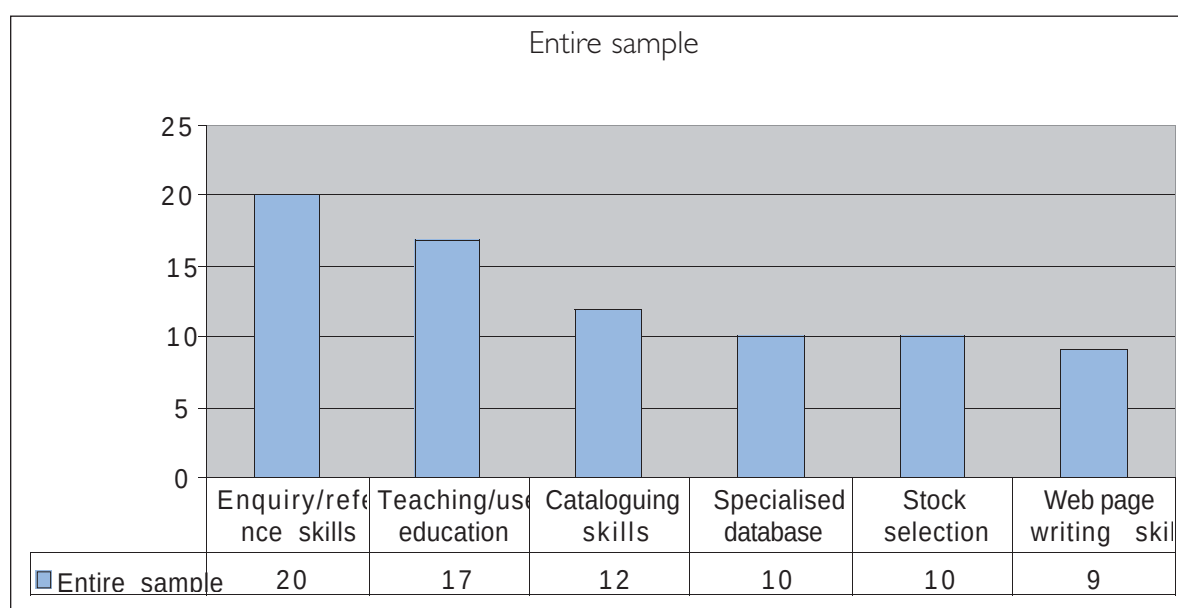


Fig. 1 Percentage of Library Specific Skills requested - complete sample

Overall, as can be seen, the most popular skill in this category was enquiry and reference skills, requested in one fifth of all advertisements. This was closely followed by

teaching/user education, with web page writing skills the least likely to be requested in this category (although still requested in 9% of advertisements).

The table below shows, for each sector, what percentage of advertisements in particular sectors specified a particular library skill. HE, public libraries, and health account for over half of all the vacancies advertised in this sample. The entire sample numbers are also given for comparison. In other sectors, which are far less

well represented in this sample, it is difficult to be certain that the results give a truly clear picture of the skills required in those sectors. Further research would be required, over a longer period, of vacancies in those less well-represented sectors, to gain a more accurate picture of the skills in demand.

	Teaching/ user education	Enquiry/ reference skills	Cataloguing skills	Specialised database knowledge	Web page writing skills	Stock selection
Education						
HE	23	21	18	12	10	9
FE	22	24	15	10	6	12
Schools	21	0	1	4	3	3
Education	11	33	11	11	22	11
Public Sector						
Prisons and police	30	20	10	10	10	10
Museums	9	27	36	9	18	9
Public	8	8	4	2	3	13
Government	8	29	17	8	27	4
National libraries	7	43	29	7	14	7
Health						
NHS/Health	38	20	7	30	12	16
Other						
Not stated	41	38	39	35	36	38
Other	25	25	25	25	25	25
Charity	10	40	20	15	20	5
Professional Bodies	11	56	28	6	17	33
Commercial Sector						
Private	26	41	39	31	24	24
Law	18	27	11	4	13	13
Media	13	50	38	13	13	13
Finance	8	85	8	8	8	8
Entire sample	17	20	12	10	9	10

Table 2 Percentage of Library Specific Skills in sample divided by sector

In the education sector, teaching and user education is specified in almost a quarter of vacancies in HE (statistically the most significant sector in the overall sample in terms of number of posts), and just over a tenth of posts in education. This skill is also important in FE and schools, at just over a fifth of all posts. Enquiry and reference skills are also important in all subsets of this sector except for schools. Cataloguing skills are requested in just under a fifth of posts in HE, in over a tenth of

posts in FE and education, and appear to be negligible in the schools sector.

Overall analysis of skills requested: general management skills

The chart below gives percentages for the entire sample of vacancies which specified management skills. General management skills were specified in over a quarter of all vacancies (26%).

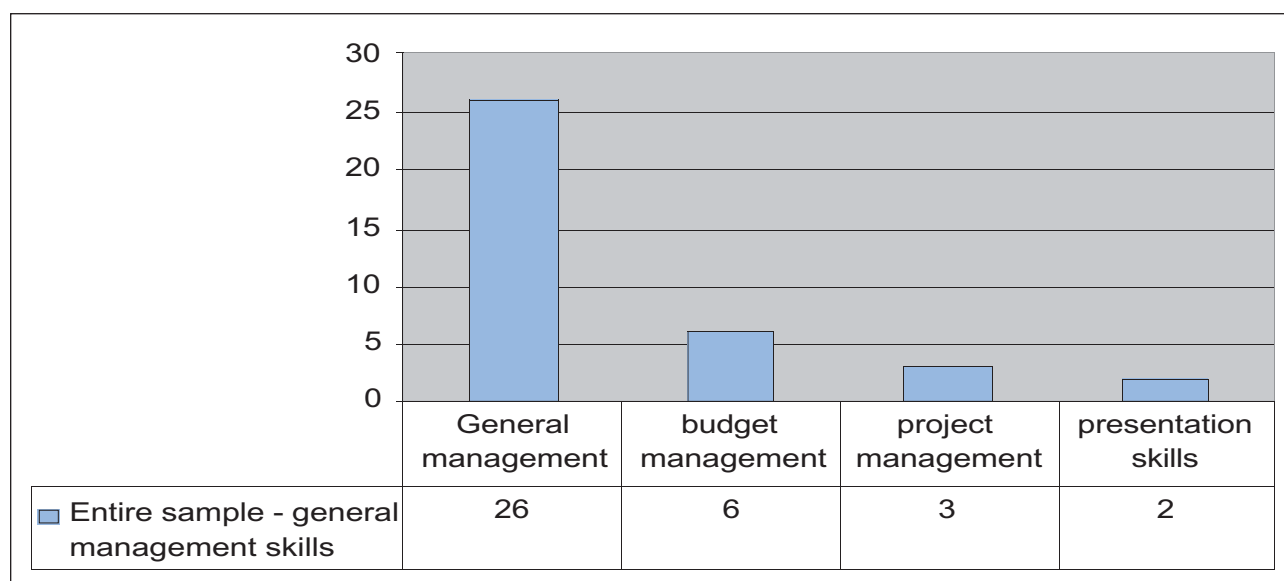


Fig. 2 Percentage of General Management Skills requested - complete sample

The table below shows, for each sector, what percentage of advertisements in particular sectors specified a particular management skill.

	General management	Budget management	project management	presentation skills
Education				
Education	33	11	11	11
FE	33	6	2	3
HE	27	4	4	2
Schools	21	4	1	0
Public Sector				
Prisons and police	33	11	11	11
Public	32	11	4	1
Government	27	2	2	2
Museums	27	9	9	9
National libraries	7	7	7	7

	General management	Budget management	project management	presentation skills
Health				
NHS/Health	27	9	4	5
Other				
Other	40	10	10	10
Charity	31	20	19	20
Not stated	25	25	25	25
Professional Bodies	25	10	5	5
Commercial Sector				
Private	44	33	33	33
Finance	15	15	8	8
Media	13	13	13	13
Law	4	2	1	0
Entire sample	26	6	3	2

Table 3 Percentage of General Management Skills in sample divided by sector

All management skills are proportionately more important in the private sector than in any other sector. General management and budget management are least likely to be requested in law; project management and presentation skills are least likely to be requested in law and schools.

Overall analysis of skills requested: transferable skills, customer facing

The chart below gives percentages for the entire sample of vacancies which specified transferable skills in customer-facing areas. Communications skills were specified in over a third of all vacancies (35%).

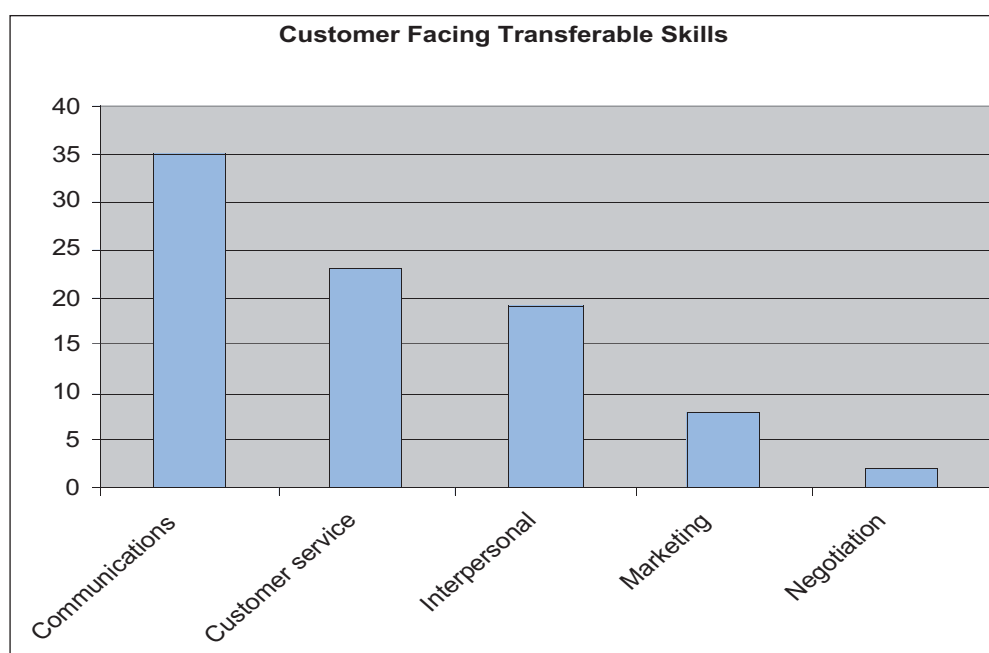


Fig. 3 Percentage of customer facing transferable skills requested - complete sample

The table below shows, for each sector, what percentage of advertisements in particular sectors specified a particular transferable skill in customer-facing areas.

In the education sector, communications skills appear to be most in demand in the FE area, followed by HE, and least in demand in schools - although it should be remembered that the advertisements for school librarians are in general the least detailed. In the public sector, communications skills appear to be particularly important for the police, followed by museums, and less important in government posts. Over half of NHS/Health posts in this sample specified communications skills. Although the 'other' category appears to be a particularly important sector, it should be remembered that there are very few posts in this category. Similarly, although over half of posts in the 'not

stated' category specify communications, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this owing to the very diverse range of employers in this sector.

Interpersonal skills are important in at least 15% (schools) and at most 27% (HE) of the posts in education. In the public sector, these skills are important in just over a tenth of national government posts (12%) and in just under a third of posts in prisons and the police (30%). Just under a fifth of health library posts advertised in this sample specify interpersonal skills. As with communications skills, although on the surface the 'other' category appears to find interpersonal skills particularly important, numerically the posts in this area are so few that it is difficult to draw any sensible conclusions from this survey.

	Communications	Interpersonal	Customer services	Marketing	Negotiation
Education					
FE	45	24	22	2	1
HE	39	27	26	4	2
Education	33	22	33	11	11
Schools	19	15	1	6	0
Public Sector					
Prisons and police	60	30	20	10	20
Museums	45	27	36	9	9
National libraries	36	29	57	7	7
Public	31	14	29	15	4
Government	19	12	31	6	2
NHS/Health					
NHS/Health	51	19	26	14	4
Other					
Other	75	50	25	25	25
Professional Bodies	67	22	22	6	6
Not stated	62	44	52	36	30
Charity	30	10	25	10	10
Commercial Sector					
Private	43	30	33	20	20
Finance	31	8	8	15	8
Law	16	11	43	7	2
Media	13	13	13	13	13
Entire sample	35	19	23	8	2

Table 4 Percentage of customer-facing transferable skills by sector

Overall analysis of skills requested: transferable skills, non-customer facing

The chart below gives percentages for the entire sample of vacancies which specified transferable skills in non-customer-facing areas.

ICT skills (not including specialised database knowledge) were specified in 40% of all vacancies, by far the most frequently requested skill.

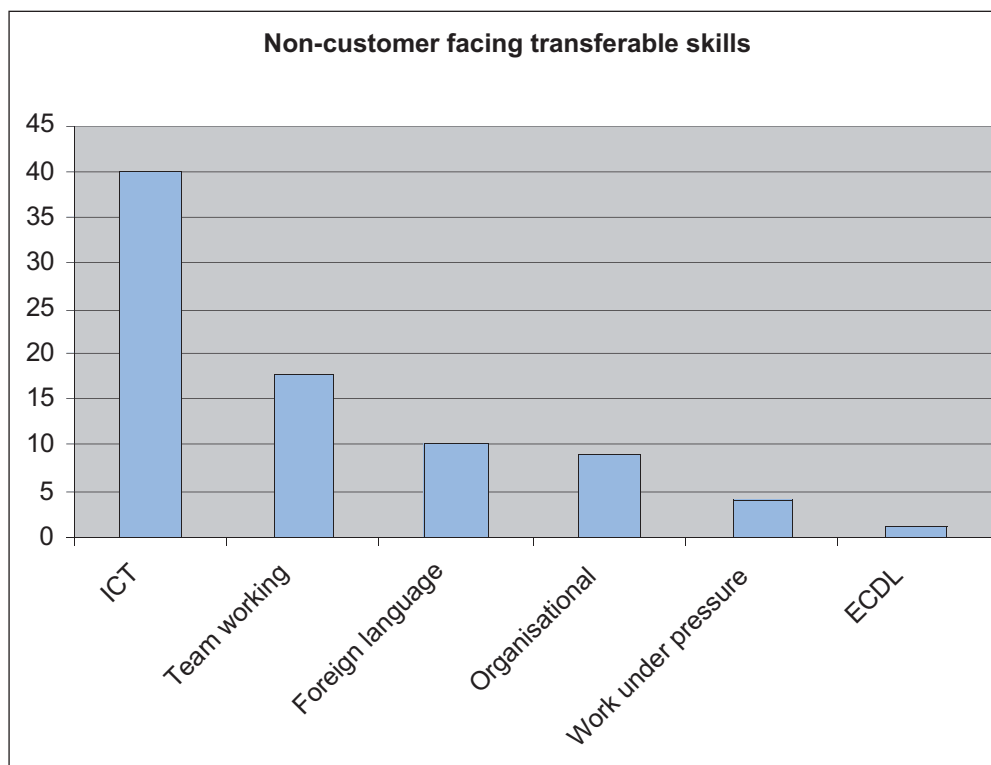


Fig. 4 Percentage of non-customer facing transferable skills requested - complete sample

The table below shows, for each sector, what percentage of specified a particular transferable skill in non-customer-facing areas. ICT skills

were proportionately most important in law. Organisational skills were most important to the prisons and police sector.

	ICT	Team working	Organisational	Work under pressure	Foreign language	ECDL
Education						
FE	58	23	9	5	2	1
Education	56	22	22	11	22	11
HE	46	20	7	5	4	0
Schools	46	7	1	0	0	0
Public Sector						
Museums	55	18	15	9	18	9
Prisons and police	40	10	50	10	20	10
Public	34	17	10	5	0	3
Government	33	15	2	4	4	2
National libraries	7	24	7	7	21	7

	ICT	Team working	Organisational	Work under pressure	Foreign language	ECDL
Health						
NHS/Health	47	9	12	1	0	3
Other						
Not stated	64	44	39	32	67	30
Other	50	75	25	25	50	25
Professional Bodies	44	17	11	6	11	6
Charity	25	20	5	5	10	5
Commercial						
Law	86	16	13	7	67	0
Private	50	39	28	20	43	17
Finance	15	31	8	8	15	8
Media	13	13	13	25	25	13
Entire sample	40	18	9	4	10	1

Table 5 Percentage of non customer-facing transferable skills by sector

Skills by job title

The job titles of posts were recorded in the database exactly as they appeared in the header of the advertisements. There were 665 unique job titles in this sample, although there were several job titles which had a common component, e.g. Clinical Librarian and Clinical Librarian (Mental Health), or Information Skills Trainer and Information Skills Training Officer.

The vacancies were divided into the following categories, based on job title.

- Library Assistant (including Graduate trainees where the post is offered prior to library school applications)
- Senior Paraprofessional e.g. Senior Library Assistant
- Professional - Assistant Librarian (incorporating trainee posts where the applicant is required to have completed a postgraduate or first degree level library or information science course)
- Professional - Librarian, including subject and departmental librarians. Although in Academia subject librarians may often be known as Assistant Librarians, in this sample

only 2 of the posts advertised carried this title. Three further posts, which carried the title Trainee Assistant Subject Librarian, were included in the Assistant Librarian category. Of the 198 posts in this sample which specified 2-5 years experience, only 7 had Assistant Librarian in their title. For comparison, 78 of the posts requesting this amount of experience were for Librarians. For this reason, Assistant Librarian and Librarian posts have been analysed separately.

- Manager - where manager was part of the job title
- Senior Librarian - including e.g. Head of Library Services
- Researcher/specialist - this category includes those posts which do not easily fit into any of the other categories, e.g. Project Co-ordinator, Portal Content Manager, and Researchers.
- Director and above

The chart below shows the percentage of vacancies in each of these categories in this sample:

Level of Post	%age of vacancies in this sample
Librarian	36
Manager	20
Researcher and specialist	15
Assistant Librarian	12
Library Assistant	7
Senior Librarian	6
Senior paraprofessional	3
Director and above	1

Table 6 Percentage of posts by sector

In this sample, over a third of the posts advertised were at Librarian Level, with the next nearest category, manager, accounting for one-fifth of posts. Researchers and specialist posts accounted for 15% of vacancies. Assistant Librarian vacancies accounted for only 12% of the posts advertised in this sample: or, to put it another way, there are three times as many vacancies at the Librarian level as there are at the Assistant Librarian level in this sample. Senior Librarian vacancies accounted for only 6% of the posts advertised in this sample: or, to rephrase again, there were six times as many

vacancies at Librarian level as at Senior Librarian level.

Skills by level: general management

The table below gives percentages of management skills requested across the levels. As might be expected, the higher the level, the more important are general management skills, although even at library assistant level some posts expect a level of general management ability.

	Budget management	General management	Project management	Presentation
Library Assistant	0	4	0	0
Senior paraprofessional	3	10	0	7
Assistant Librarian	3	14	2	2
Librarian	6	21	2	2
Senior Librarian	11	48	0	3
Manager	12	54	5	1
Researcher/specialist	3	10	7	3
Director and above	22	67	0	0

Table 7 Percentage of posts requiring management skills by level of post

Skills by level: specialised library skills

The table below gives percentages across the various levels of posts for library skills.

	ICT	Cataloguing	Web page	Enquiry	Stock selection	Specialised database	Teaching/user ed
Library Assistant	45	13	4	31	3	6	3
Senior paraprofessional	62	24	7	28	7	10	17
Assistant Librarian	46	18	12	26	26	15	20
Librarian	39	16	10	20	12	11	20
Senior Librarian	31	0	3	3	8	2	8
Manager	38	8	6	13	11	7	16
Researcher/specialist	43	7	12	23	4	12	20
Director and above	11	0	11	0	0	0	0

Table 8 Percentage of posts requiring management skills by level of post

ICT skills and enquiry skills appear to be proportionately more important at the level of library assistant and senior paraprofessional. ICT skills and enquiry skills are least important at director and above level. Cataloguing is proportionately more important for senior paraprofessionals and least important for senior librarians. The ability to write web pages and select stock, together with specialised database knowledge, becomes more important for assistant librarians, librarians, researchers/specialists, and directors, and least important at the senior librarian level. Specialised database skills are most important for assistant librarians, and least important at director level. Teaching/user education becomes more important for assistant librarians, librarians, and researchers/specialists and is least important for directors.

Transferable skills - customer-facing

As can be seen from the table below, communication skills are proportionately most important for senior paraprofessionals, and least

important for assistant librarians - although even for assistant librarian posts communication skills are specified in almost a third of vacancies in this sample.

Customer services skills are most likely to be requested in library assistant vacancies, and least likely to be requested at the level of director and above. Marketing skills are most likely to be found in librarian vacancies and least likely to be requested at paraprofessional and director level.

Negotiation skills, on the other hand, are most likely to be requested at director level, and not found at all in library assistant, senior paraprofessional or senior librarian posts in this sample. Interpersonal skills are most likely to be requested in senior paraprofessional vacancies, and least likely to be requested in researcher/specialist roles - although even here they are still specified in 16% of vacancies.

	Communication	Customer Services	Marketing	Negotiation	Interpersonal Skills
Library Assistant	31	44	3	0	18
Senior Paraprofessional	55	34	0	0	24
Assistant Librarian	30	29	6	1	23
Librarian	36	22	10	1	18
Senior Librarian	33	13	9	0	17
Manager	32	19	8	6	19
Researcher/specialist	38	19	10	2	16
Director and above	33	11	0	11	22

Table 9 Percentage of posts requiring customer-facing transferable skills by level of post

Transferable skills - other

In this skills area, both the graph and the table illustrate that enthusiasm is most likely to be specified in posts for senior librarians, and least likely to be requested at director level and above. The ability to work under pressure is most likely to be found at the senior paraprofessional level, and least likely to be found explicitly requested at director level. Teamwork,

To judge by the data in this sample, enthusiasm is most important for senior librarians, and least important for those at director level. The ability to work under pressure is most important for

senior paraprofessionals, and least important for directors. Conversely, the ability to work in teams is most important for directors, and least important for library assistants. Organisational skills, on the other hand, are most important for library assistants and least important for directors. It is most important that senior librarians are flexible, and least important for directors. The European Computer Driving Licence is requested in at most 2% and at the least 0% of vacancies. Posts requiring foreign languages are most likely to be at the senior paraprofessional level, and least likely to be at senior librarian or director level.

	Enthusiasm	Work under pressure	Team work	organisational	flexibility languages	ECDL	Foreign
Library Assistant	13	6	8	13	4	0	7
Senior paraprofessional	17	10	24	3	0	0	14
Assistant Librarian	18	5	18	11	3	1	2
Librarian	31	4	19	10	6	2	3
Senior Librarian	42	5	19	8	9	2	0
Manager	27	3	18	7	5	0	1
Researcher/specialist	22	4	19	7	7	1	3
Director and above	0	0	33	0	0	0	0

Table 10 Percentage of posts requiring non-customer facing transferable skills by level of post

Chartered or qualified?

For a qualified librarian, the next stage in career development is often to charter.

In this sample, chartership was mentioned in less than 10% of vacancies as an entry

requirement or a factor that would result in a higher salary. The sector most likely to request a chartered librarian was the public sector, with 52 of the 98 adverts (53%) that mentioned chartership being from the public libraries sector.

Chartership by level

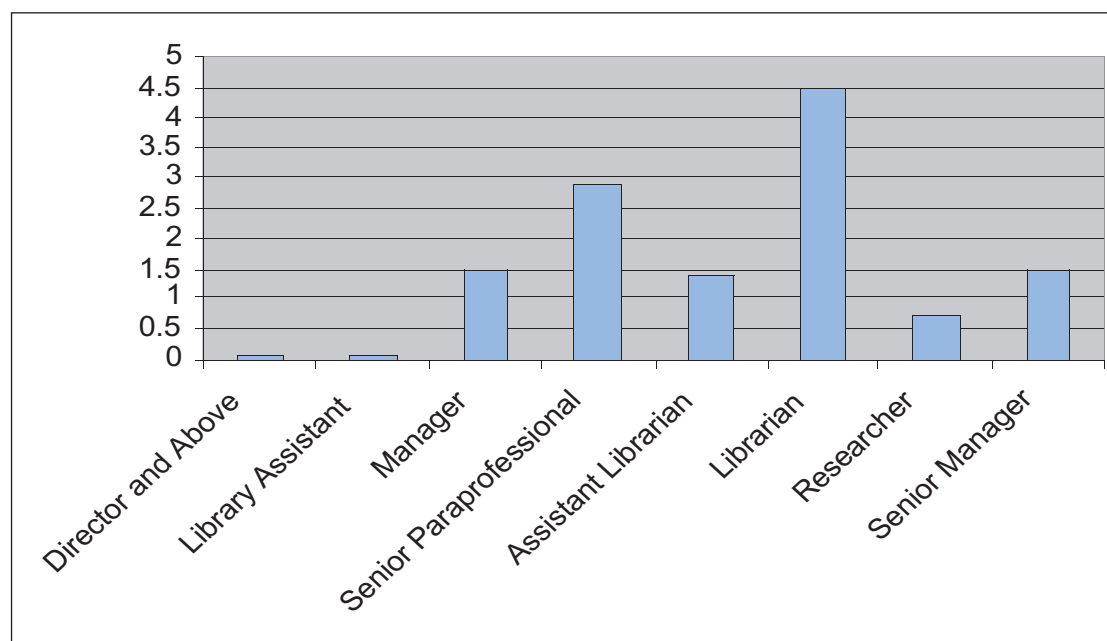


Fig. 5 Percentage of advertisements by level requiring chartership - complete sample

In this sample, chartership is specified in more than one per cent of only four of the seven categories. The most likely level of post to request chartership is that of Librarian, though even there it is only requested in 4.5% of posts.

At Library Assistant level, only one post requests chartership, though this is not so surprising as the fact that at Director level and above the percentage is identical.

	Number	Percentage
Director and Above	1	0.1
Library Assistant	1	0.1
Senior Paraprofessional	29	2.9
Manager	15	1.5
Assistant Librarian	14	1.4
Librarian	45	4.5
Researcher	7	0.7
Senior Manager	15	1.5

Table 11 Percentage of posts requiring non-customer facing transferable skills by level of post

Chartered by sector

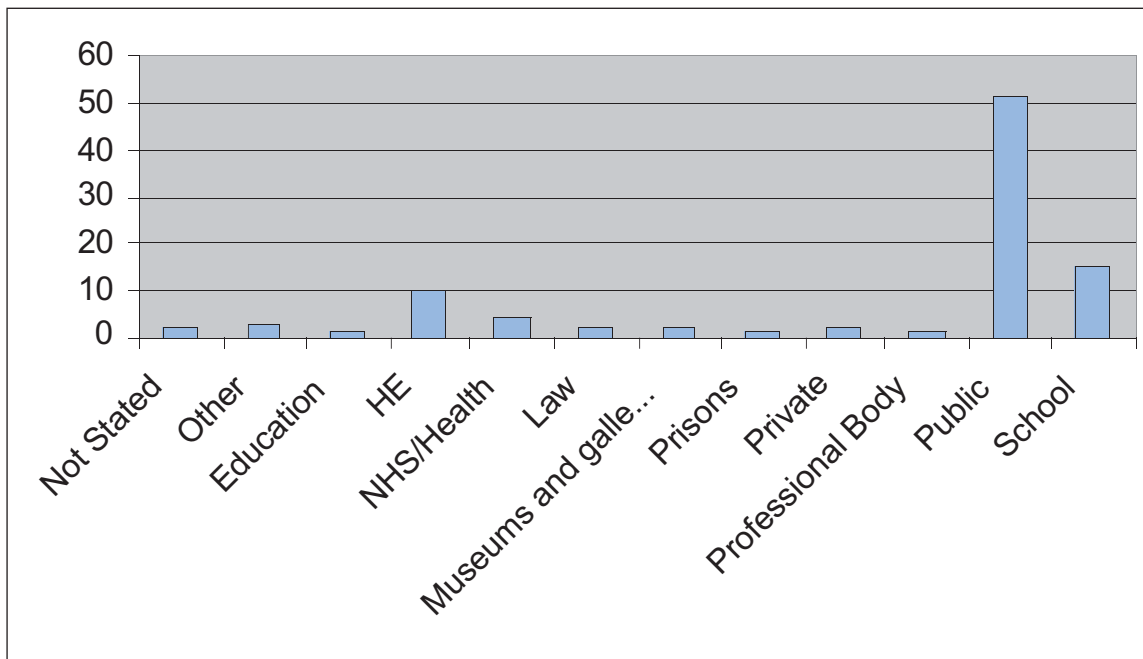


Fig. 6 Percentage of advertisements by sector requiring chartership - complete sample

	Number	%age of sample
Education		
School	15	1.5
HE	10	1
Education	1	0.1
Public Sector		
Museums	2	0.2
Prisons and police	1	0.1
Public	52	5.2
Health		
NHS/Health	4	0.4
Other		
Not Stated	2	0.2
Other	3	0.3
Private		
Law	2	0.2
Private	2	0.2
Professional Body	1	0.1

Table 12 Percentage of posts requiring non-customer facing transferable skills by level of post

Some observed trends

ICT skills are the most frequently requested overall by employers, particularly if specialised library catalogue or systems administrator experience is included. Many job adverts, however, leave the reader to extrapolate which skills are actually required. Schools are particularly weak at specifying which skills they need. This may be due to the fact that advertisements are sold by number of column inches. At 2005 costs, the cheapest advertisement in Gazette, for example, for mono 1/16th of a page, is £365, with half-page advertisements running at almost £3,000, and full-page colour advertisements costing the advertiser £5855. In addition, School Library advertisements may be compiled by an administrative officer, teaching professional, or local government employee who is not a specialist in this area.

Where chartership is concerned, the public library sector is most likely to ask for a chartered librarian, which makes a difference to the salary. From the data in this sample however the public library sector also appears to be the lowest paid. Over 51% of public library posts in this sample pay less than £20K per annum, compared to 43% of HE posts and 48% of government vacancies.

Implications for individuals

As mentioned above, ICT skills still seem to be in high demand. Proof of ICT ability, therefore, would seem to be a valuable asset. The ECDL, although an internationally recognised qualification throughout Europe, and endorsed by the British Computer Society, is only specified in 11 posts in the entire sample (1%), although ICT ability is requested in 404 (40%). The European Computer Driving Licence is equivalent to an NVQ Level 2, or GCSE qualification. This may mean that for some library posts it is a little too basic. There does not, however, appear to be a more formal ICT qualification at a higher level than this unless you look at more formal qualifications such as a bachelor's degree or above. Communication is the most valued 'soft skill'.

The majority of vacancies (over a third) are in London. If the South-East is included, this increases to almost half of all LIS vacancies. This seems to be particularly true of entry-level posts. Over 61% of vacancies in the south-east and London (344/560) were suitable for those with less than 2 years experience.

Higher Education remains the sector with most vacancies overall, followed by the public sector. For those wishing to specialise, there are comparatively fewer posts and many require sector-specific experience, suggesting that once you have specialised in a sector, it is extremely difficult to change. This theory would, however, benefit from more structured research.

Implications for employers

If the advertisements in this sample can be taken to be representative of the needs of LIS employers, there are three times as many professional vacancies at librarian level (36% of sample) as there are at assistant librarian level (12% of sample). A further fifth of vacancies require managers of some description. Employers may therefore need to look at recruiting from within to fill these vacancies effectively. To draw out this talent they may need to consider offering incentives in the way of training, mentoring schemes, or talent-spotting schemes such as those found in some parts of the public sector.

In areas of relatively high job choice (such as the south-east), employers may need to be aware that good candidates can afford to be very selective. Where salaries are relatively low compared to similar posts, it may be necessary to sell the vacancy using other advantages of working for the employer.

It may be necessary for employers to start thinking about internal schemes to mentor and identify future leaders as suggested by Singer et al in their Library Journal analysis of the situation (2004).

Suggestions for future research

The research raises several areas for possible future research. What proportion of librarians, for example, fall into the Baby Boomers/Generation X/Generation Y categories and what implications does this have for the next 10-15 years in the library profession? What proportion of these jobs are likely to be replaced by new technology?

It would be interesting to conduct a study into what proportion of qualified librarians are under-employed, or finding themselves sidelined or stymied. In the UK Civil Service, for example, the entry level grade is Band D/Executive Officer. How many years on average do entrants spend there before either being promoted internally or moving to another part of the civil service, and what proportion are able to be promoted internally without changing disciplines or locations? What proportion of library assistants have LIS degrees or postgraduate diplomas?

It would also be interesting to assess what proportion of non-library graduates are filling what have traditionally been graduate librarian posts. Finally, is the geographical clustering of LIS posts in the south-east a true picture or a reflection of the fact that many provincial employers see CILIP as a south-focused organisation and advertise their posts elsewhere?

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