The Accidental Systems Librarian

USING OUR LIBRARIAN COMPETENCIES IN MANAGING

Presented by Nicole C. Engard

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The book: http://tasl.web2learning.net

Outline

* What is a Systems Librarian?

* Who is the Systems Librarian?

* What does the Systems Librarian do?

* Competencies

* Networks and Learning

* Resources Systems Librarian Tools

* Systems Software

What is a Systems Librarian?

* The systems librarian is a unique breed. The position requires someone who no only understands libraries and computers but someone who can put both fields into context.

  * Ingersoll, Patricia, and John Culshaw. 2004. *Managing information technology: a handbook for systems librarians*. Westport, Conn: Libraries Unlimited.

* All you need is the ability to read books, the desire to learn, and the time to do it.

  * Morgan, Eric Lease. "Technical skills of librarianship." *LITA Blog*, August 7, 2005. http://litablog.org/2005/08/technical-skills-of-librarianship/.

Possible Job Titles

- Information systems librarian
- Library webmaster
- Digital services librarian
- Manager of library systems
- Lead library systems analyst
- E-services librarian
- Head of information technology
- Instruction and liaison librarian
- Library systems and digital collections administrator
- Systems manager/reference librarian

- Virtual branch and innovative tech manager
- Metadata librarian
- Assistant director of technical services for library systems
- Systems manager
- Informatics librarian
- Web services librarian
- Integrated digital systems librarian
- Head of application development and management
- Library systems liaison officer

Systems Librarian/ Tech Services Job Ads

* "The systems librarian is responsible for emerging technologies, website development, and systems maintenance."

    * http://www.lisjobs.com/jobseekers/details.asp?ID=46553

* "Responsible for the support and assessment of the library's expanding web-based services. As part of the Library Technology Services team, work with web development, desktop support and other staff to continually maintain and improve these services, now the primary points of patron contact with the library. Manage the core resource discovery and integrated library systems as well as innovative open source and locally developed services in order to maximize access to academic information for students, faculty and staff. Lead user testing and other assessment of technology services to ensure that they meet current patron needs and usability expectations. Recent graduates are encouraged to apply."

    * http://joblist.ala.org/modules/jobseeker/Systems-Librarian-/19903.cfm

Systems Librarian/ Tech Services Job Ads

* "[A]n Information Systems Librarian to perform in-house installation, maintenance, testing and troubleshooting of library's information technology infrastructure."

    * http://capecod.careercast.com/jobs/detail/48324467/33

* "The Technical Services and Systems Librarian manages all aspects of acquisitions, cataloging, and library systems. This includes but is not limited to acquiring needed resources in a timely and economic manner, performing cataloging for a variety of formats and serving as the database administrator for the library's Innovative Interfaces Inc. Millennium software."

    * http://www.communitycollegejobs.com/jobdetail-18704-Technical Services and Systems Librarian

Who is the Systems Librarian?

* The Accidental Systems Librarian is the one who applied to work in Technical Services/Cataloging (just as an example) and was good with computers (either designing websites or just troubleshooting issues) so they were asked to help with the new ILS and then the library website and then ....

* The Systems Librarian is someone who studied (or has specific experience with) libraries and systems. This person applied for the role and manages the library's systems as a chosen career.

What Does the Systems Librarian do?

* Regardless of how the systems librarian came to be he/she manages any one or more of the library's systems

    * Web site

    * ILS / OPAC

    * Public and Staff PCs

    * Library content applications

    * Library Hardware

COMPETENCIES

Using existing knowledge in managing systems & what you should learn

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New Competencies

✳ Things to learn to understand systems better:

  ✳ Database languages like MySQL or PostgreSQL go a long way

  ✳ Programming languages like PHP or Perl can help if you have an open source CMS or ILS

  ✳ Network basics can help with understanding how computers connect to each other

  ✳ Linux server management basics help with the understanding of servers and basic troubleshooting actions

Communication

* "[Y]ou most likely will be the only one doing anything related to technology, and your biggest asset will be an ability to translate techno-speak to library- speak."

  * Eileen Lutzow, Charleston Southern University

* "I use reference interview skills all the time to get more information out of the folks who are truly geeky, and to help people troubleshoot the problems they are reporting. I also use my web-searching skills often to find answers to thorny problems."

  * Margaret Hazel, Eugene Public Library

Systems/Databases

* A system is just a set of instructions

  * Advanced searching skills assist in understanding database structures

  * Traditional cataloging skills give us a unique insight in to deciphering confusing looking data

  * Knowledge of the various types of metadata schemas helps with the organization of data

Never Stop Learning

* WebJunction (www.webjunction.org/catalog) is an online community that focuses in part on training librarians. WebJunction offers both free and for pay courses, as well as many tutorials, articles, and resources to help you stay up to date.

* MIT OpenCourseWare (http://ocw.mit.edu) offers freely accessible course materials from MIT, covering topics from Management, to Computer Science, to Literature, to Technology.

* Lynda.com (http://www.lynda.com) offers online software training videos for members. TechSoup for Libraries (www.techsoupforlibraries.org) offers a growing collection of resources, articles, and webinars for librarians interested in new technologies.

* W3Schools Online (www.w3schools.com) is the place to go for free tutorials and quizzes on web development topics.

NETWORKING & LEARNING

★ ★ ★ ★ Keeping up is the key to staying sane as a systems librarian ★ ★ ★ ★

Networks and Networks

* Systems & Technical Services librarians often get caught up in managing data, library systems and networks that they forget to communicate with their outside networks.

* Use social and professional networks for assistance, tips or just to share stories

* Keep up to date with what other libraries are doing by watching what systems librarians are sharing online and in print.

* Join systems related mailing list & online groups.

Mailing Lists

* Code4Lib

  * https://listserv.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=CODE4LIB&A=1

* LITA-L

  * http://www.ala.org/lita/involve/email

* SYSLIB-L

  * https://iulist.indiana.edu/sympa/arc/syslib-l

* Web4Lib

  * http://web4lib.org

Information Sources

* TechRepublic (www.techrepublic.com) includes technology news, tutorials, articles and software suggestions that can be very handy.

* O'Reilly Media's (http://oreilly.com) solid print titles and thorough technical information mean that it has useful offerings for all library technical personnel.

* Popular technology blogs like Lifehacker (www.lifehacker.com) and Engadget (www.engadget.com) are good resources for finding tips and new software applications.

* Library Technology Guides (http://librarytechnology.org) and Lib-Web-Cats (www.librarytechnology.org/libwebcats/) are great sources for library systems information and news. The annual reports on automation systems are very helpful when considering migrating to a new system.

SYSTEMS LIBRARIAN TOOLS

Resources for an efficient Systems Librarian

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Operating System Troubleshooting

* Windows:

    * http://www.microsoft.com/security/default.aspx

    * http://www.annoyances.org

* Mac:

    * http://www.apple.com/support/

    * http://reviews.cnet.com/macfixit/

* Open Source:

    * http://planet.ubuntu.com

    * http://www.oss4lib.org/mailing-list

Finding Software

* TechSoup for Libraries (http://www.techsoupforlibraries.org) offers software, training, articles and more to help with technology in libraries

* Microsoft for Non Profits (http://www.microsoft.com/NGO) offers free and discounted software for non profits

* FOSS4Lib (http://foss4lib.org) bares repeating here as a place to find open source software specific to libraries and documentation on releases and who's using what

LIBRARY SOFTWARE

Software every systems librarian should know about

Help Desks

* Request Tracker (http://www.bestpractical.com/rt/) is an open source web-based help desk that will allow your staff and patrons to submit help tickets so you can easily track issues in the library and keep a knowledgebase for future reference.

* osTicket (http://osticket.com) is another open source ticketing system for your help desk.

* Mibew Web Messenger (http://mibew.org) is an open source live chat/support solution that you can add to your library website/intranet.

Screensharing / Remote Login

* Teamviewer (http://www.teamviewer.com) free application for remote log in to another PC and screen sharing.

* PcAnywhere (http://www.symantec.com/pcanywhere) remote desktop access for help desk/troubleshooting.

* LogMeIn (https://secure.logmein.com) suite of tools for logging in to remote devices.

* RealVNC (http://www.realvnc.com/products/free/4.1/) is remote control software which allows you to view and fully interact with one computer desktop using a simple program on another computer desktop anywhere on the Internet.

Security

* Clean Slate from Fortres (http://www.fortresgrand.com/products/cls/cls.htm) protects public computer disk drives by clearing them of unwanted files (as well as other security measures).

* Deep Freeze (http://www.faronics.com/enterprise/deep-freeze/) "freezes" your computer's configuration.

* Clonezilla (http://clonezilla.org) is an open source computer cloning application.

Firefox

* Firefox is arguably the most secure web browser, throw in some plugins and settings and you can make it even better on your public machines:

  * Private Browsing (http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/Private-Browsing)

  * AdBlock Plus (https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/adblock-plus/)

  * NoScript (https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/noscript/)

  * FlashBlock (https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/flashblock/)

  * More: https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/extensions/privacy-security/

Day-to-Day

✱ Scribus (http://www.scribus.net/canvas/Scribus) is an open source desktop publishing application for publication of signs and handouts.

✱ Jing (http://www.techsmith.com/jing.html) is a free tool for screenshots and screencasting.

✱ SpiceWorks (http://www.spiceworks.com/free-pc-network-inventory-software/) is a PC inventory tool to help you keep up with software that is installed in the library.

General Web Based

* LimeSurvey (http://www.limesurvey.org) host surveys on your own web server and query you staff and patrons about new technologies (or any library service).

* Moodle (http://moodle.org) is an open source course management system for hosting technical training materials for your staff and patrons.

* Google Analytics (http://analytics.google.com) keeps track of web access statistics so you can gauge the use of your online services.

Content Management

* WordPress (http://wordpress.org)

  * Scriblio (http://scriblio.net/download/)

* Drupal (http://drupal.org)

  * SOPAC (http://thesocialopac.net)

  * Drupal4Lib (http://listserv.uic.edu/archives/drupal4lib.html)

* Joomla (http://joomla.org)

FINAL TIPS

Tips and things to remember

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Never Forget

* It's okay to ask for help!

  * Use social networks

  * Use presentation and video sharing sites to find answers

* You're not alone

  * Delegate tasks amongst your staff

  * Train colleagues to handle the simple issues (changing printer toner)

Take Time to Learn

* Don't get stuck in a rut!

  * Take time each week to learn something new

  * Plan for free time to try playing with new technologies

* Just because it works doesn't mean it's the best solution

  * Don't stop looking to see what else is out there

  * New things are always released

To Read

∗ Engard, Nicole C., and Rachel Singer-Gordon. *The Accidental Systems Librarian*. 2nd ed. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 2012. http://tasl.web2learning.net.

∗ Ingersoll, Patricia. *Managing Information Technology : a Handbook for Systems Librarians*. Westport Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

∗ Mathews, Janie M., and Harold Pardue. "The Presence of IT Skill Sets in Librarian Position Announcements." College & Research Libraries 70, no. 3 (May 2009): 250–257.

∗ Patton, Stephen. "The Deliberate Systems Librarian." Info Career Trends, November 3, 2008. http://www.lisjobs.com/career_trends/?p=486.

∗ Resnick, Taryn, Ana Ugaz, and Nancy Burford. "E-resource Helpdesk into Virtual Reference: Identifying Core Competencies." Reference Services Review 38, no. 3 (2010): 347–359.

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