

NASIG Newsletter

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27th Conference (2012) Wrap Up

Brainstorming Session Notes

Sheraton Music City, Nashville, TN

June 8, 2012

Brainstorming Topic: Report from the Taskforce on Core Competencies for Electronic Resources Librarians (Presented by Sarah Sutton)

Sanjeet Mann Introduced the Core Competencies Task Force: Eugenia Beh, Steve Black, Susan Davis, Cynthia Porter, Taryn Resnick, and Sarah Sutton

The Task Force thanks the Board Liaisons, Katy Ginanni and Clint Chamberlain, for their support.

The Task Force followed the method that Sutton had recently used in her dissertation research to determine the core competencies for e-resource librarians. Mann reviewed the section headings of the core competencies:

- Life cycle of electronic resources
- Technology/providing access to electronic resources
- Research skills
- Effective communication
- Supervising and management
- Trends and professional development
- Personal qualities

Comments from the audience followed:

- One member commented that they'd never be able to be an expert in all of these areas. This is a ceiling, not a floor—this document outlines something to aspire to. The Board is hoping to use

ideas from this document for continuing education opportunities.

- Some jobs have only half of these responsibilities—technical versus public services; print versus online journals.
- ALA's statement of core competencies is very basic/general, not aspirational. They expect library schools to start from those core competencies, but expect that librarians will go well beyond that.
- Rename the competencies "Core Competencies for Electronic Resource Management" rather than for Electronic Resource Librarians. Some of the competency statements on the ALA website are geared towards working with specific populations or in specific activities rather than specific librarians.
- One attendee suggested prioritizing these competencies from basic to advanced level.
- There was a concern about all of these skills being lumped into one position, when this is more than one person should be doing. Some positions focus heavier on certain areas, such as the person who does data analysis. This should be all skills across an organization, not those of a single person or position.
- One library hired two e-resources librarians at the same time, and there was plenty for both of them to do. In fact, they could use more such people. E-Resources is starting to be a more generic term covering a variety of responsibilities, including acquisitions, metadata, SFX, licensing, and troubleshooting.
- Areas such as communication and management are much more general than just e-resources. Even competencies that look like e-resources are things that can be generalized to other areas.

- Another library has 10 people working with e-resources and no “e-resources librarian” since all of them must have aspects of these skills.
- We might want to clarify in an introductory statement to the competencies that these might be skills across a team, not just for a single person.
- Another attendee suggested categorizing competencies in levels 1, 2, and 3, with 3 being advanced specialization. Work is mainstreamed or split among a number of people in management of e-resources. We are talking about competencies in working with a type of resource, not competencies for a specific position.
- UNC Chapel Hill had an Information Professional 2050 conference where they tried to predict what our jobs would be like in 2050.
<http://sils.unc.edu/news/2012/ip-2050>
- We need to know bits of all of these aspects so that we know what we aren't doing or don't know how to do. At some point we need to know what we're giving up, what's in the big bucket of e-resource responsibilities that needs to be passed over or passed on to another person.
- There are distinctions between attitudes and knowledge. What do e-resources librarians need to know about, versus what do they need to do, versus

what do they need to believe about the value underlying the work?

- Most of these skills are oriented to a technical whiz. Who is responsible for marketing the resources and making sure people are using them? This document is focused on acquisition and access.
- Marketing comes from a variety of sources in various libraries—public services, directors, e-resources people, marketing personnel.
- Whether e-resources librarians are marketing and promoting or not, we need to understand that is part of the process for e-resources.
- What about soft skills pertaining to negotiation?
- Perhaps the conversation about marketing should be in the context of library skills and needs, not in terms of e-resource librarian skills. We have enough to do.
- A lot of people do aspects of this job and don't see themselves as belonging here at NASIG. But they do belong here.

Notes by

Carol Ann Borchert, Secretary, NASIG Executive Board
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