



Survey of the labour market for information specialists in Lithuania

[Elena Macevičiūtė](#), Ph.D.
Faculty of Communication
Vilnius University, Lithuania

Abstract

This paper reports on the results of surveys carried out in Lithuania and Estonia in 1995 and 1996, the main aim of which was to provide a basis for planning the development of information management courses in the Baltic States. In the course of the project it was necessary to resolve certain methodological difficulties in the identification of the concept "information specialist" and in the process of data collection. The results show the recruitment rates needed over the next three years and the qualities and skills needed by information specialists.

Introduction

The article is based on the results of a project carried out in Lithuania and Estonia in 1995-1996. The project was undertaken by the Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University and the Department of Information Studies at the Tallinn Pedagogical University according to the recommendations of the UNESCO/IFLA/EUCLID Workshop on Education and Training of Information Specialists in Eastern Europe and CEI. The Workshop was supported by ASSISTANCE ([Large, 1994](#)). The need of labour market in information specialists had never previously been researched in the Baltic States.

The main goal of the project was to create a foundation for the long term planning of higher education in library and information science in the Baltic states, as well as to discover and define new areas and possibilities for information specialists in the emerging information sector. The article introduces the methodology of research (definition of the information specialist, set of methods designed to complete the labour market for information specialists analyses, questionnaire design and data collection); and the results of the data analyses in two sectors of the labour market - information services and information specialists in industry. Different methods were used for research in Estonia and Lithuania for the survey of these sectors, therefore an additional data processing is required. The library sector in the Baltic states operates under the state control and the developments in it are so different that it constitutes an object for another article.

Methodology: design and execution

The very start of the work on the project was marked by considerable conceptual problems. The obvious, and recently clearly defined, profession of a librarian and information specialist has become an opaque concept without clear job description or professional obligation. The second difficulty was the establishment of the sectors of employment for the information specialists to be covered by the project. The preliminary exploration of the job and profession classifications used by the Labour Exchange and other employment institutions in Lithuania and Estonia and study area classifications of the institutions of higher education or research presented a very ambiguous picture. Even the librarian's profession may be found under different chapters in the same classification, not to speak of the different kinds and aspects of the information professionals. Only the Classification of Economic Activities

(NACE) constantly places the information and library field in the "Other communal, social and personal services" area. To define the attitudes of the participants of the project towards these main problems was essential for the further design of the methods and data collection.

Definition of an information specialist or professional

The current need to identify an information specialist or a new information professional is justified by emergence of information-intensive economies throughout the world. The concept of the profession changes according to the development of the information sector and under the influence of the changing needs of society as well as requirements of the new information technology. According to some concepts the information sector is treated as the largest sector in economics and most of the workers as doing one or another kind of information job. However, this is not entirely correct and cannot be used as a basis for our research. Therefore, we have tried to define the following concepts of 'information professional':

1. Historically we may treat as information specialists only those who are working in a specialized information field that considers information processing, storage and usage as its main objectives. It includes library work, bibliography, archival work, publishing and press, documentation, information services and systems, and information management.
2. Information management may be extended to non-information activity; that is, using information resources, processing and information and communication technologies in other fields of activity when it converges with classical management concepts.
3. Information technology requires special industry, implementation and service sectors. The specialists of this sector may also be treated as information specialists.
4. One of the modern tendencies is integration of the specialized information field with the communication field. This brings closer the traditional information specialists and mass media, advertising, marketing, public relations specialists.
5. Intelligence underlies one of the newest type of activities - consultancy and expertise which has received a high status in service sector. A significant communication and information aspect of this activity allows it to be included in the information sector. ([Augustinaitis & Maceviciute, 1996](#)).

The broad concept of information specialist requires a major survey of demand and professional requirements in a huge sector of economics and is unrealistic with regard to available resources. The objective of the present research is to establish the main tendencies in the labour market for the information specialists that will enable planning the curriculum and number of students for the institutions of higher education. According to this objective three main sectors of employment were selected:

- emerging sector of information service (governmental and private);
- established sector of libraries;
- information management in different sectors of economics.

Each sector presents special problems and difficulties for researchers and requires a slightly different approach though the main methodology should remain the same. The data was collected from all three sectors, but the article deals only with the first and the last one.

Methods used for labour market research

The **first objective** of this stage was to work out the complex of methods of research that is suitable for the establishment of the main trends in the labour market for information professionals in the Baltic states. It could be repeated and applied in other Central and European states and give results comparable with the results in other parts of the world.

The greatest challenge is the changing environment and society of the newly emerged democratic states and the rapid growth of information sector. The change from the centralized economics to decentralized systems and the liberalisation as well as the growth of the private sector change information activities and services very quickly. It is impossible to predict the development of the needs and requirements for modern jobs in the information field for certain as the country's (and foreign) investments in information technology is constantly increasing.

The main activities carried out with regard of the methodology development was the analysis of the similar research carried out in other countries ([Paez-Urdanet,1992](#); [Pors,1992](#)); review of the available information resources; and the preliminary examination of the situation in the information sector.

The main conclusion reached by the working group was that the diversity and rapid changes in the information sector require constant monitoring and data collection about the demand and requirements for information specialists using a variety of research methods. Only in this way can reliable and usable data for forecasting of the demand, planning of professional education and curriculum development be produced.

For the current research the following methods were used:

1. Analysis of the statistical sources and documents used in labour exchange systems. The main result of this activity was to define the status of the information specialists among other workers and the reflection of the job demand for these specialists in the labour exchange systems of the CEE countries.
2. Analysis of the advertisements in the periodical press. The result showed awareness and general job definitions of the information-related jobs as reflected through mass media (indirectly showing the status of the information specialists in society).
3. Analysis of the growth in information services, businesses and systems.
4. The survey of the employers (questionnaire) was the main method for collecting data about the possible changes in the market and the present requirements for information professionals. In this way data about the people occupying the jobs of information professionals at present was also collected. (The groups under survey are defined in 1.1).

The described methods were intended to complement each other and were used selectively for different parts of information sector research.

The questionnaire suitable for the collection of the data in Estonia and Lithuania and applicable to the different parts of the surveyed manpower parts in the information sector was prepared on the basis of UNESCO guidelines ([UNESCO,1986](#)). The questionnaire was prepared in two parts:

- PART I consisted of the questions the answers to which supply data for the qualitative evaluation of the labour market for information specialists;
- PART II was designed to supply qualitative data on the skills and knowledge demanded by the market from information specialists.

The **second objective** was to collect reliable data that could be used to characterise the labour market for information professionals in Lithuania.

The questionnaires were disseminated among information services providers in April, 1996. One third of them was returned and processed. Data from the library sector were collected in October, 1996 and data-collection from the third sector (information management in other economic sectors) was finished in May, 1997.

The work reported here was partly undertaken by students as part of their project work, and directed by Maceviciute: the student project were by [Ulianskaite](#) (1996)and [Maslauskas](#) (1997)

Labour market sector for information specialists

The labour market in Lithuania is a comparatively newly officially recognized phenomenon. The organization of information flows in the labour market helps employers to fill vacancies in time and the employees to find jobs. An effective system of employment should be based on the active processes of job seeking and information support for these processes. However, the information factor is not considered to be important in the regional employment programmes in Lithuania. The labour exchanges in Lithuania are the main mediators between employers and employees from 1991. These institutions were established according to the experience of countries with developed market relations (Sweden, Denmark, Germany). It is the main institution gathering information about labour demand and supply. The data about employment are received in surveys, questioning the citizens. The surveys are carried out in according to the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (April 1994; February

and May 1995; June 1996). The main trends in the Lithuanian labour market are: the growth in unemployment, decrease in vacant jobs, increase in regional differences in unemployment, the growth in the number of unqualified young people, and increase in the numbers of registered unemployed persons. The main growth of jobs takes place in the private sector, where specialists knowing foreign languages and working with computers are in great demand.

At present there are several data-bases giving information about labour demand and supply in Lithuania that are created in the institutions examining and regulating labour market: a data-base of the newly created jobs; and a data-base of Public Works. Some data-bases are produced by the private employment agencies (HRStrategies). According to the households survey in 1995 the main channels of getting information about jobs are:

- friends and acquaintances (60%);
- labour exchange (50%);
- advertisements in newspapers (40%);
- direct contact with employers (20%);
- organization of individual business (2.3%) ([Stonkiene, 1996](#)).

Employers looking for employees use:

- labour exchange data (50%);
- recommendations of the enterprise employees (36.4%);
- lists of previous employees (27.6%);
- advertisements in newspapers (13%) ([Stonkiene, 1996](#)).

Given the results of the surveys, we used the labour exchange data and the advertisements in newspapers to define the information specialists demand and supply situation.

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange and Labour Exchanges in the largest Lithuanian towns do not separate information specialists as such. Information work does not figure in the Classification of Economic Activities either, most probably because of its novelty. The data-bases on employment mark out Information activity as a part of the sections "Computers and related activity", library work is a part of the section "Recreation, entertainment, cultural and sports activities" and there are also other sections in which information specialists are disguised. In fact the Labour Exchange information system does not allow one to evaluate the demand and supply situation for information specialists even according to institutional criteria.

The institutional criteria (the advertisements of libraries or librarians, information service firms and centres, enterprises looking for specialists for information departments) were used to evaluate general labour demand and supply situation as reflected in the Lithuanian periodical press. Three main dailies, two regional newspapers and three advertising newspapers were selected.

Lithuanian dailies	
<i>Lietuvos rytas</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
<i>Respublika</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
<i>Lietuvos aidas</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
Regional newspapers	
<i>Panevezio balsas (Panevezys town)</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
<i>Sekunde (Panevezys region)</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
Advertising papers	
<i>Alio, reklama</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
<i>Noriu</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02
<i>Reklama</i>	1995/01 - 1996/02

Table 1: List of newspapers used for labour supply-demand analysis

The main criterion for the selection of the papers was the existence of a special column for job advertisements (job seeking as well as advertisements about vacancies). The advertisements published from 1995/01 to 1996/02 were retrieved. Repeated advertisements were treated as separate as they reflected an unsatisfied demand. It is clear that information specialists do not generally advertise their availability for work in the newspapers: only one such advertisement from a librarian was found in a regional newspaper (*Sekunde*).

The demand for specialists in information sector was far greater. All in all, 98 advertisements were found in surveyed newspapers:

- The largest number of advertisements offering jobs for information specialists was found in January, 1996 (25). A general trend of slight growth towards the end of the year 1995 and at the beginning of 1996 emerged in all three types of papers (one to two advertisements a month). However, in some papers the number of advertisements for information specialists is very low, or they do not appear at all.
- The general overview of information specialists' labour market shows that the awareness of existence of this special type of professionals and the need for them is growing in Lithuania. However, there is an evident lack of general information sources about this specific section of labour market, which means that this research carried out by Vilnius University is highly relevant and timely.

Information service sector

The direct indicator of growth in the information service sector and the indirect indicator for the situation of information specialists in the labour market is the number of information service companies and centres.

One of the features that characterises the growing Lithuanian market for information services after 1990 is the differentiation of services according to changing demands of the users. Before 1990 most information centres offered their users scientific and technical information and served the needs of research and innovation activities. At present the market demands mostly services for growing Lithuanian business. Bigger enterprises and companies can afford to establish an information department usually combined with public relations activities, or at least to hire an information specialist; however, a growing number of small and medium businesses turn to specialized agencies. The need was quickly perceived and the number of institutions and companies offering information services started to grow rapidly. Some of the earlier centres have converted their services and turned to serve the most likely users - businessmen (Lithuanian Institute of Information, Lithuanian Technical Library). The situation in the information services sector is rather complex and difficult to sum up, because of the vague usage of the term "information services" and the wide range of the companies offering them. Most of these companies are selling information technology and providing services associated with the exploitation of IT. However, some of them are broadening the scope of their activities in connection with Internet. We have tried to establish the rate of growth of the business information companies from 1992 to 1996 checking the data provided in companies' registers and catalogues. Those that provide the customers with collection, processing and dissemination of economic, industrial, commercial data, market research, etc. are considered as providers of information services. The data show that the number of these companies has more than doubled in Vilnius from 1993 to the start of 1996 (from 24 to 58) and the growth rate is rather steady every year (from 8 to 15 per year). During 1996 the number increased to 92 (in January, 1997).

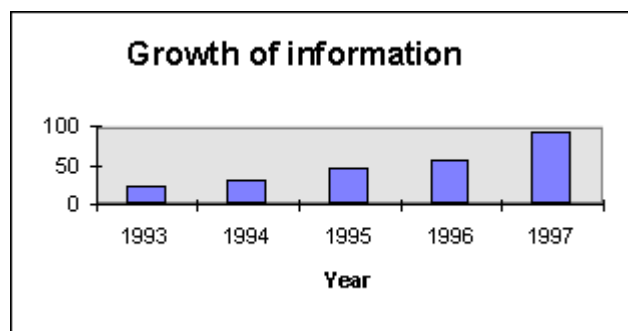


Figure 1. Growth of information

The survey of employers was conducted at the beginning of 1996 and reflects the labour market situation in 1995.

The questionnaires were sent to 58 companies and institutions identified in the catalogues of enterprises and through Lithuanian Association of Information Business. 30 of them returned the questionnaires after several reminders (52%). However only 28 were considered fit for the analysis (48%). According to the returned questionnaires 36% of information service companies are creating data-bases and disseminating or publishing information from them; 21% - creating data-bases and providing information from them as requested; 21% - establish reliability of business partners; 21% - indicated such services as marketing, information retrieval, publishing newsletters or information leaflets, etc.

The labour market for information specialists quantitative position in this sector is represented in Table 2.

	Types of services				
	DB publish.	DB retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
1. Staff employed (Q3*)	240	72	40	278	630
2. Vacant posts (Q7)	10	4	28	8	50
3. Total posts (Q3+Q7)	250	76	68	286	680
4. Vacancy rate	4%	5.3%	41.2%	2.8%	7.4%

Table 2: Number of employees, number of vacancies

** Data taken from answers to Question no.3 (Q3).*

The results indicate that there is a balance between demand for and supply of specialists. The percentage of vacancies in this sector is 7.4%. The least satisfied are the companies performing deep information analysis services in the business sphere, i.e. demanding specialists of the highest qualification.

	Types of services				
	DB publish.	DB, retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
1. Departures (Q5)	60	14	14	32	120
2. Turnover rate (T2S1* versQ5)	25%	19.4%	35%	11.5%	19%

Table 3: Numbers leaving jobs

** Data taken from Table 2 Section 1 (T2S1)*

The turnover rate is the number of staff who leave during the year expressed as a percentage of the number employed: $60/240 \times 100 = 25\%$. If the turnover is 10% or less it usually shows healthy movement, high rates (25% and over) may be disruptive to organizations. Total turnover in the information service sector is approximately 19% and in some sections reaching up to 35%. This turnover is rather high.

	Types of services				
	DB publish.	DB retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
New staff entering jobs (Q6)	35	11	10	1	57

Table 4: Number of arrivals in 1995

	Types of services				

	DB publish.	DB retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
1. In year 1995 (Q6-Q5)	10	8	6	-30	-6
2. In years 1996, 1997 (Q8-Q9)	18	6	28	10	62
3. In five years (Q10-Q3)	62	54	70	40	226

Table 5: Net growth in posts

To calculate the changes during last year the data on departures of staff members is subtracted from the data about newly employed staff. If more persons have left the jobs than entered the growth is negative. Though jobs were lost during 1995, the forecasts of employers for future years are optimistic. The actual supply is calculated adding the figures of the employed staff (T2S1) and the number of staff who have left during the year (T3S1). From this number we subtract the number of arrivals (T4). The result is the actual supply of the workforce last year:

	Types of services				
	DB publish.	DB retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
1. Staff employed (T2S1)	240	72	40	278	630
2. Plus lost staff (T3S1)	60	14	14	32	120
3. Minus arrivals (T4)	70	22	20	2	114
4. Equals supply in 1995	230	64	34	308	636
5. Departure rate	26.1%	21.9%	41.2%	10.4%	18.9%
6. Arrivals rate	30.4%	34.4%	58.8%	0.6%	17.9%

Table 6: Supply in 1995, departure and arrivals rates

The data allow us to state that the large arrivals rate is equalled by the high departures rate in the information services sector, especially in business information services. One can suggest that, most probably, these services lack good professionals who are qualified for the job. The financial considerations of employees in these services could not serve as a reasonable explanation for quitting the job. The new arrivals are most often attracted by high salaries and expectations.

	Types of services				
	DB publish.	DB retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
1. Present supply (T2S1)	240	72	40	278	630
2. Minus departures (T3S1)	-60	-14	-14	-32	-120
3. Plus arrivals (T4)	+70	+22	+20	+2	+114
4. Supply in 1996	250	80	46	248	624
5. Present posts (T2S3)	250	76	68	286	680
6. Plus net growth in 1996-1997 (T5S2)	+18	+6	+28	+10	+62
7. Demand in 1997	268	82	96	296	742
8. Demand in 1997	268	82	96	296	742
9. Minus supply next year	-250	-80	-46	-248	-624

10. Recruitment need in 1997	18	2	50	48	118
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Table 7: Supply and demand in 1997

The recruitment need in 1997 is quite obvious and indicates that the job market in this sector is unsaturated.

	Types of services				
	DB publish.	DB retriev.	Business reliability	Others	Total
1. Present supply (T2S1)	240	72	40	278	630
2. Minus departures (T3S1x5)	300	70	70	160	600
3. Plus arrivals (T4x5)	350	110	100	10	570
4. Supply in 5 years	290	112	70	128	600
5. Present posts (T2S2)	250	76	68	286	680
6. Plus net growth in 5 years (T5S3)	62	54	70	40	226
7. Demand in 5 years	312	130	138	326	906
8. Demand in 5 years	312	130	138	326	906
9. Minus supply in 5 years	290	112	70	128	600
10. Recruitment need in 5 years	22	18	68	198	306

Table 8: Supply and demand in 5 years

The answers to the questionnaire show that, at present, most often the information services employ specialists who have no professional education in information science: economists, journalists, engineers, teachers, designers, physicists, mathematicians, etc. For the lack of information specialists this niche is filled by the job-seekers from different fields. However, the most important competencies (as measured on a three-point scale) are those from the information specialist's repertoire:

Rank	Competencies	Rating
1	computerized information storage and retrieval	2.9
2	systematic search of information	2.7
=3	information resources management	2.6
=3	selective dissemination of information	2.6
5	promotion of organization's inforsources	2.5
=6	use of external databases	2.3
=6	production of commercial data-bases	2.3
=8	use and design of information systems	2.1
=8	design and marketing of infoproducts	2.1
=10	forecasting and current planning	2.0
=10	in-house data-base design and development	2.0
=10	training in info, resources and technologies	2.0
13	reviewing of specialized literature	1.9
14	optimization of information flows and functions	1.8
=15	production of abstracts and reviews	1.7

=15	preparation of reports and newsletters	1.7
17	info. support to decision making	1.5
18	other (indicate)	-

Table 9: What competencies are most important for your institution?

Computerized information storage and retrieval as well as traditional information search abilities top the list of information specialist's competencies. Ability to use the computer is highly valued as an attribute of an employee, although it does not outrank such qualities as oral and written communication skills, need for self-improvement, friendliness and knowledge of English language.

Rank	Attribute	Rating
1	verbal and written communication skills	2.7
2	need for self-improvement	2.6
=3	English language	2.5
=3	friendliness	2.5
5	ability to use the computer	2.4
6	foreign language	2.3
=7	management skills	2.1
=7	inclination to science and technology	2.1
=9	higher education	2.0
=9	knowledge of economics	2.0
11	education in a second area	1.9
12	knowledge of managerial concepts	1.8

Table 10. **What attributes do you prefer in information professionals?**

Surprisingly low is the evaluation of managerial knowledge and skills as well as of formal education in any area. The reasons for these opinions should be investigated further.

Information specialists in industry

Despite the difficulties of the transitional period Lithuania remains an industrial state. Though the share of industry in the General Average Product has become smaller, it is 29% and is now growing constantly. The process of privatization according to the law has reached all industries and regions. The main factors that influence the labour market in industry are the economic situation, structural and functional changes in the economy and in management, and the formation of market economy relations. The revival of the economy is manifesting itself in the revival of services that were closed down or squeezed during the first hard years of restructuring. Information services are among them. At present the need and significance of information in industry is rising. However, no-one has tried to survey the possibilities of this sector from the point of view of the labour market for information specialists. A first modest attempt was made in order to complete the picture of the whole situation at the end of this survey. From the surveys of the industrial and services sector in Estonia conducted in 1995 it was clear that the greatest part of small and average-sized businesses do not employ information specialists permanently: mainly, they use the possibilities offered by information services and centres. However, the larger and stronger industrial enterprises establish either posts or departments to fulfil the information needs of the organization. That was the main criterion for selection of the respondents for the survey. In Lithuania the biggest and best enterprises are announced in the main business weekly "Verslo zinios". The list of 200 best and largest enterprises in 1996 was published in February, 1997. 90 (45%) enterprises were randomly selected from the list and the main data on them was gathered from the registers and catalogues. 40 (44%) of the surveyed enterprises from different towns have returned the questionnaires by the end of April, 1997.

A letter was attached to the questionnaire with the explanation what the information work is and what kind of

employees could be considered information specialists. The time period for forecasting was changed to three years because industry at present is a very vulnerable sector and the employers are not inclined to make longer prognoses.

The analyses of the data has showed that practically there are no vacancies for information specialists - the posts of that kind are already filled.

1. Staff employed [Q3*]	288
2. Vacant posts [Q7]	4
3. Total posts [Q3+Q7]	292
4. Vacancy rate	1.4%

Table 11: Number of employees, number of vacancies

The number of people leaving jobs or the turnover among the information specialists in industry is average - 15.2%. There were 76 newly employed information specialists throughout the surveyed enterprises.

1. Departures (Q5)	44
2. Turnover rate (T11S1* <i>vers</i> Q5)	15.2%

Table 12: Numbers leaving jobs<

1. In 1996 (Q6-Q5)	44
2. In 1997 (Q8-Q9)	40
3. In 2000 (Q10-Q3)	-232

Table 13: Net growth in posts

The negative net growth of posts (diminishing) in three years may be explained by the fact that the climate in industry is unstable and too many factors effect the enterprises. The employers do not intend to create new posts in administration or services. They are too concerned with general survival. However, one has to have in mind that this assumption may be wrong. It is possible that the present level of information services in the surveyed enterprises is satisfactory, or that the employers do not see the necessity of creating this kind of new posts. The conducted survey does not permit a final conclusion on the basis of available data.

1. Staff employed (T11S1)	288
2. Plus lost staff (T12S1)	44
3. Minus arrivals (T13)	76
4. Equals supply in 1995	256
5. Departure rate	17.1%
6. Arrivals rate	29.6%

Table 14: Supply in 1996, departure and arrivals rates

The arrivals rate among information specialists exceeds the departure rate. Some of the enterprises have created totally new posts for this kind of employees.

1. Present supply (T11S1)	288
2. Minus departures (T12S1x5)	44

3. Plus arrivals (T13x5)	76
4. Supply in 1997	320
5. Present posts (T11S2)	292
6. Plus net growth in 1997 (T14S3)	40
7. Demand in 1997	332
8. Demand in 1997	332
9. Minus supply in 1997	320
10. Recruitment need in 3 years	12

Table 15. **Supply and demand in 1997**

1. Present supply (T11S1)	288
2. Minus departures (T12S1x5)	132
3. Plus arrivals (T13x5)	228
4. Supply in 3 years	384
5. Present posts (T11S2)	292
6. Plus net growth in 3 years (T14S3)	120
7. Demand in 3 years	412
8. Demand in 3 years	412
9. Minus supply in 3 years	384
10. Recruitment need in 3 years	28

Table 16. **Supply and demand in three years**

The overall results show that the industry as a labour market for information specialists is not growing at present and the recruitment need is rather low. It may be satisfied without additional educational effort. However, the survey of this sector has revealed its difference from the other two sectors. The employers in it have not met with the concept of the information specialists and are not used to it. Besides, they are not primarily interested in the problems of recruitment of these specialists and are not ready to spend time thinking about it. This was not taken into account before the start of the survey. For further research in this sector it would be worth looking for a different method of data gathering or it would be necessary at least to adapt the questionnaire to its peculiarities. However, the evaluations of the main competencies of information specialists in this sector are very useful for further recommendations:

Rank	Competencies	Rating
=1	systematic search for information	2.8
=1	computerized information storage and retrieval	2.8
=1	design and marketing of info. products	2.8
=4	in-house data-base design and development	2.5
=4	forecasting and current planning	2.5
=4	use of external databases	2.5
=7	information resources management	2.3
=7	information support for decision making	2.3

=7	optimization of information flows and functions	2.3
=10	selective dissemination of information	2.1
=10	production of commercial data-bases	2.1
=10	training in info. resources and technologies	2.1
=10	preparation of reports and newsletters	2.1
=14	production of abstracts and reviews	2.0
=14	use and design of information systems	2.0
=16	reviewing of specialized literature	1.8
=16	promotion of organization's inforsources	1.8
18	creating bibliographies, indexes and catalogues	1.2

Table 17. **What competencies are most important for your institution?**

The required competencies are very similar to the ones highly rated among the information service providers. This proves the initial assumption that small and medium businesses are turning to information service companies for the same reasons major enterprises that employ information specialists.

Professional requirements for information specialists and recommendations for educators

The labour market for information specialists is evolving from all institutions and processes which are related to buying and selling labour, evaluation and social structures which determine the placement and distribution of labour, its mobility as well as distribution of job related functions. Conducting studies in the labour market one cannot but take into account wider social, economic and political trends.

The information and library profession, perhaps more than others, finds itself severely challenged by a technological and social environment that is rapidly changing. The technological age has brought about two major societal changes:

- technology professionalizes the workplace;
- the confrontation between the unsure person and seemingly knowing system requires professional intervention.

There is need for challenging new roles that go beyond providing information and that facilitate understanding, problem solving and decision making.

In addition to the influence of information technology the rapid commercialization during the transition period in Lithuania should be taken into account, as well as changes in the education system, and the financing and structure of labour. It means that the need and demand for labour today already differs in nature from qualitative and quantitative indices of labour with regards to education level, demographic structure, and geographic location.

Education and occupation related values and expectations of young people have changed with regard to future developments in the education system. The labour market and the education market are related through a system of education which offers certain opportunities for qualifications and the right to choose. From the standpoint of an individual it is a question of settling in to the social hierarchy of professions and occupations, taken more widely it is a problem of correlation between the educated and available jobs on the labour market.

Higher schools are influenced by several factors, e. g., changing labour market, changes in the policy and activity of the entire system of education. Tendencies towards wider interpretation of information science, making the structure of academic degrees more multidisciplinary, losing traditional boundaries between different disciplines became manifest nearly a decade ago. Still, up to now there is no united, socially accepted structure of an academic discipline and specialty ([Vakkari, 1995](#)).

There is no doubt that the development of information technology and the inherent changes in the labour market

conditions will lead to more frequent changes in the contents of the information specialists' education. The information science schools will have the possibility of adapting in a more flexible way than before and participating actively in these transitions. The fact that students tend to react rather quickly to changing occupational possibilities should be taken into account as well.

According to the results of the research Vilnius University has created a new Bachelor's degree programme in Business Information Management as the need for a specialized expertise in this field was indicated by the high turnover rates revealed by the research in the information services sector. The ranking of the main competencies and skills in different sectors of the labour market were taken into account in changing curricula (e.g., introducing a Communication Skills module) for the information specialists and librarians not only at the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University and Tallinn Pedagogical University but at the other higher educational institutions as well (e.g., in planning meetings and curriculum development activities for the International Centre of Information Management Services and Systems at Torun University).

It should be noted that the institutions of higher education in information studies should take the responsibility for influencing and shaping the labour market for information professionals. The dissemination of awareness among the major employers about the essence of work of information professionals and close professional links with them provide possibilities for changes in the perception of the role of modern information professionals.

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