

Reflection Paper

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“Libraries and information organizations continue to evolve so they can best meet the needs of their user communities in response to the changing information landscape” (Hirsh 2022). This is one of the first things that I read during this past semester and for some reason, it stayed with me. As the semester has gone by we have learned different ways that library professionals persevere and excel in their profession. This specific quote stuck with me because it was the first time that I started to think about how libraries along with professionals are constantly having to change as our society also continues to change.

What does it mean to be an information professional today? I would say that being an information professional today means being able to adapt while also finding ways to continue to equitably distribute resources to patrons. Being an information professional to me is also being able to connect with the community to make an impact. To me, equity is one of the most important aspects of being an information professional. Our communities are very diverse and being able to connect with every person and not just connect but also cater to them is incredibly important in library professions. “Information organizations are responding by adopting a vision for themselves as the technological, social, and information resources hub of their communities— meaning they provide internet access; connect community members to information and resources; integrate technologies; design creative spaces and instructional tools for both virtual and location-based environments; and provide opportunities for community members to connect, learn, and socialize with each other” (Hirsh 2022). This quote, to me, summarized exactly how it is that I feel about libraries because I most definitely see them as a hub of their communities.

Now, when it comes to the challenges that library professionals face today—I would say that it would be keeping up with the ever-changing technology. Technology has been changing at a

rapid speed and it can be difficult to keep up with these changes because once you learn something, there's a new technology piece that was released. This can most definitely lead to an information overload. Another issue that library professionals continue to challenge their work is budgets. Due to tight budgets, there is only so much that library professionals can do. This can lead to stress due to having to find new and cost-effective ways to provide resources. "In Fresno County, California, for example, LSCA money bought a bookmobile to serve mostly Mexican American farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley, but with the passage of a tax-cutting proposition in 1978, "La Biblioteca Ambulante" suffered successive budget cuts" (Hirsh 2022). In this specific example of a budget cut. It was affecting migrant workers because it was difficult to acquire information to learn English. This can become a challenging part of the job because as an information professional you want to ensure that everyone has access to information, so it leaves library professionals to figure out how to distribute information with little resources. The quote above speaks about a budget cut that occurred with a bookmobile in the 70's, but this is something that still applies to this day. We continue to see how different libraries receive budget cuts that leave them with to sort of "figure things out".

So, if this was occurring in the 70's have libraries changed much during the past 100 years? I would say that they have changed, but there are a few things that remain. Libraries have changed in the way that they cater to diverse populations today in comparison to the past. One could also argue that there's a lot of work that needs to be done when catering to diverse populations because we need to ensure that the resources, education, and information that are being distributed are being done equitably. Technology is another aspect that has changed incredibly over the years, and these changes have allowed libraries to help information users/patrons and the community have access to more information than they perhaps have had in the past. One

change that I hadn't thought about before reading "Information Services Today" is how human behavior has also changed. Specifically when we look at COVID-19, as well as other events that have occurred, it has changed how patrons interact with libraries, which leaves information professionals having to adapt to these changes. This all leaves me thinking about how the role of a librarian will look 100 years from now. I would say that when I start thinking about the future of librarianship, I see a lot of technology involved. I mostly imagine as a lot of my classmates mentioned in one of our discussion posts, a lot of the library's collections becoming digitized. Now, I'm not exactly sure if I consider this a good thing. Will the digitization of a collection be accessible to everyone? Part of me wants to wish that it would be widely accessible to everyone, but I feel that that unfortunately wouldn't be the case. The way that library professionals do outreach and deliver services might look a lot different from how it does today. I think that outreach is where digitization would benefit because it can be widely distributed quickly. At the end of the day, I see collections being digitized, outreach benefitting from digitization, and services and resources looking a lot different than what they look today because the needs of the community change as time passes.

Overall, I learned a lot this semester and it made me think about a lot of concepts that I wouldn't have thought about before this course. It made me reflect a lot on what librarianship is going to look like in the future and how we'll be able to continue with our efforts to create welcoming spaces that equitably provide information and resources. I also was unaware of the history of libraries and it made me realize how far we've come but also how much work still needs to be done in today's libraries. I would say that this course did provide me with some tools that I can take with me once I develop myself as an information professional.

References

Hirsh, S. (Ed.). (2022). *Information services today: An introduction*.

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