Expanding the repertoire: The changing nature of work and roles of the academic library liaison

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Expanding the Repertoire:
The Changing Nature of the Work and Roles of the Academic Library Liaison

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Why This Topic?

- Team Leader of the Library Liaison Team

- Observed evolution:
  - Expectations of the classroom faculty
  - Discussions re: responsibilities with the librarian liaisons

“Stop asking if the library has a role, or what it is, and start getting involved in digital projects that are already happening. Advocate for new expanded roles and responsibilities to be able to do this.”

-Micah Vendegrift, 2012
Traditional Library Liaison Roles & Activities 1974-~1995

- Role – Functional manager of the selection and management print books and journals

- Bibliographer- “knowledge worker...an expert in the bibliographical organization of a field of knowledge, and he utilizes this expertise to provide complex and needed services to a clientele collection development
  - Skilled assistance in maximizing the use of the collection
  - Bibliographical control of the collection
  - Selector somewhat disconnected from input from the academic departments

- Focused on building of a “core collection”, but with an evolution towards the recognition that subject specific resources were needed  
  (Farber & Walling, 1974)

- Beginning of interlibrary cooperation to build collections
Instruction took place mostly as one-shot sessions

Philosophical shift from the previous era:
- Responsibilities are limited & explicitly defined
- Subject department work was silo-ized
- Passive assistance, that is, the librarian waited for a request for assistance from the user

To:
- Interdisciplinary – activities require crossing departmental lines
- Assessed by achievement of goals set by administration and quantitative numbers

(Farber & Walling, 1974)
Reasons for the Changes in Liaison Work in the 21st century – mid 1990’s- present

- Rapid advances in digital technologies
- Increase in the number of communication channels
- Increased online conversations & collaborations
- Migration of resources from print to electronic & online formats
- Evolution of librarians from consumers of information to creators
- Trends toward interdisciplinary studies
- Increased expectancy for sharing of research data and publication
- STEM and medical research and their short publication cycles

(Pasek, 2015) & (Glynn & Wu, 2003)
Eastern Michigan University’s Current Library Liaison Activities

Primary Activities

1) *Course integrated research instruction
2) *Special topic research instruction, e.g., avoiding plagiarism, resource reliability
3) *Assignment design re: student learning outcomes for information literacy
4) *Research guides for specific subjects and courses
5) *Individualized student research appointments
6) *Individual resource and research consultations with faculty
7) Assessing student learning outcomes regarding information literacy
8) *Resource selection; books, videos, subscriptions – communication, collaboration, sharing
9) Collaboration with new courses or programs
10) Citation management tools
11) *24/7 research assistance
12) *Present at departmental faculty meetings regarding hot topics, trends in research and scholarship, changes to library resources or services

12/2016
Eastern Michigan University’s Current Subject Specialist Activities, cont.

Secondary

1) Scholarly impact, e.g., author rights, impact factors
2) Special topic research instruction, e.g., fake/pseudo news
3) Textbook and course reading alternatives
4) Serve on undergraduate and graduate thesis committees
5) Training research assistants
6) Places to publish research; journal identification
7) Data management
8) Copyright and creative commons licensing
9) Research and scholarly collaborations
Current Liaison Engagement – Philosophy

“Agents for Radical Positive Change”

- Directly engage & inform communities in order for them to use knowledge to achieve their dreams & aspirations (Lankes, 2016)

- No longer library users or patrons, but “community members” (Lankes, 2016)

- The old “tripartite model” i.e., collection, reference, instruction, is replaced by the “engagement model” (Totleben & Birrell, 2016)

- Requires time & freedom to work with patrons
Current Liaison Engagement – Philosophy

- Recreating our duties (Lankes, 2016)

- Engage in lifelong professional learning in order to improve professionally (Farber & Walling, 1974)

- Assessed by:
  - the level of integration achieved with the clientele, colleagues, or community
  - qualitative productivity rather than quantitative productivity (Farber & Walling, 1974)
The Information Business Has Transformed into...

- The Knowledge Creation Business
- The Conversation Business
- The Learning Business  
  (Lankes, 2016)
Current Liaison Engagement –
The Knowledge Creation Business

- Develop course integrated research instruction materials
  - Electronic research guides
  - Tutorials, e.g., avoiding plagiarism, resource & fake news evaluation
  - Course assignment design
  - Write student learning outcomes for information literacy

- Creators of web content, e.g., podcasts, videos, webinars, point-of-need instruction to distance users

(Thull & Hansen, 2009)
Current Liaison Engagement – The Conversation Business

- Active outreach vs. passive assistance (Pasek, 2015)
- Meet patrons where they work, in dorms, online, offices, labs, departments (Espe, 2016)
- Tailor outreach to local academic culture & community (Pasek, 2015)
- Basis for marketing library resources - make library resources more visible

- Archives
  - Assist in the identification & acquisition of collections
  - Advocate for material donations (Totleben & Birrell, 2016)

- Acknowledgement faculty research, grants, and awards
- Awareness of program changes in the departments & programs
- Meet faculty in formal & informal settings, especially face-to-face (Pasek 2015)
- Work with collection management colleagues to ensure that resources for specialty subjects areas are being met
Current Liaison Engagement –
The Learning Business

- Information literacy & research skill programs

- Provide specialized information assistance to faculty & students at all levels

- Develop an understanding of research methods in assigned disciplines

- Embedded librarian in all its forms, at the point-of-need - e.g., online, group consultations

- Support faculty & student research
Skills Needed by Librarians for These New Roles

“Chance Favors the Prepared Mind” - Louis Pasteur

- Nimble & flexible
- “Stem cell librarians” – ability to grow & change into whatever is needed in response to changing user needs
- Empathetic – listen to community and be aware of their “pain points”, e.g., copyright, publishing
- Reinvent reference and one-shot instruction sessions (Bakkalasi, et al, 2016)
- Project management
- Data literacy
- Scholarly communication knowledge & skills
Emerging Roles – Marketing

Ambassador to the Library

- Proactive in promoting library resources to faculty & students

- Educate users re: the depth and breadth of library resources and their value over Google Scholar and other freely available web resources

- Attend liaison department activities, e.g., faculty searches

- Become involved in university-level committees

(Thull & Hansen, 2009)
Emerging - Marketing

Meeting the Needs of Your Community

- Determine your community’s needs & wants
- Create a strategic marketing plan with goals, a set of objectives, and a timeline
- Use less email blasts and greater targeting of emails to specific users
- “The Constant Liaison”

- Elevator Speech - be prepared to tell everyone, in 60 seconds, what you & the library can do for them

(Espe, 2016)
Emerging Roles –
Scholarly Research & Scholarly Communication Support

- Educate the classroom faculty regarding:
  - Open access books & journals
  - OA movement & its philosophy
  - Publishing models
  - Scholarly impact metrics
  - Authors’ Rights
  - Creative Commons licensing
  - Copyright & fair use
  - Institutional repositories
  - Database alerts & citation management
  - The serials crisis
Emerging Roles –
Scholarly Research & Scholarly Communication Support

Engagement Opportunities

- Recruit content for institutional repositories (Totleben & Birrell, 2016)

- Making tenure & promotion decisions more informed - present real measures of impact

- Create a current inventory of the university’s scholarly output (Lankes, 2016)
Emerging Roles – Data Literacy & Curation

- **Definition**
  - the ability to use, understand, and manage data
  - the ability to access, assess, manipulate, summarize, and present data

- **Problem - absence of knowledge & training**
  - Faculty assume students already have learned & been exposed to data management
  - Lack of formal training for students working with data

- **Funders require that data management plans that detail how data will be described, secured, stored & curated**
  - (Wright, Laurensen, & de Waard, 2016)
Emerging Roles – Data Literacy & Curation

Engagement Opportunities

- Liaison advise faculty on personal data information management

- Archivist can advise on file naming, file format, digital preservation

- Create a course and teach data management

(Totleben & Birrell, 2016)
Emerging Roles - Partnerships

Engagement Opportunities

- Makerspaces
- Alternatives to textbooks experts
  - http://guides.emich.edu/texts
- Attendance at:
  - capstone project presentations
  - poster sessions
  - graduate & undergraduate symposia
- Teach workshops in faculty resource centers
- Partnering in faculty research, e.g., co-authoring articles (Bakkalbasi, et al, 2016)
Questions & Contact Information

- Questions?

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References


References


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