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People Profile: Dawn Bassett

Editor

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is a large reference book with a complex index). They just need to pick up a book and read it. Similarly, library employees have had years of experience providing access to print material. With an electronic book or journal, however, some new skill sets are required of all library employees so that they can ensure that their patrons understand how to retrieve the content of a particular book or journal. Library employees have embraced their roles as educators in order to help patrons strengthen these skills so that they have better access to information. Unfortunately, if the patron is accessing the content remotely, they must rely either on their own skills, documents created by the library to guide them through the process, or in some cases online chat reference service. As mentioned before, since there is no standardization in access, indexing or controlled vocabulary in databases, patrons who use these services need training in these areas as well. This may account for the large percentage of comments made by our respondents that many users still prefer print materials. For new students or for people who are used to print whether they are technologically savvy or not, they want the quickest, most efficient access to the material they can get. Grabbing that reference book or journal off the shelf is less of a learning curve. This is an area where, as our respondents suggest, a standard interface would help. If patrons only need to know one mode of access, it would be easier for them to learn how to efficiently use a particular electronic resource.

Advances in electronic access and the need to negotiate complicated licensing agreements are two areas where library employees may need new skill sets to perform their job efficiently. Library managers and administrators must look for new employees who already have these skills or provide additional training to existing employees on how to use, maintain, license and up...

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