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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 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 update.

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Dawn Bassett

1150 Rossland Street, Vancouver, BC V5K 4A1

BORN & LIVED: Born in Salem, Oregon but have lived in Vancouver British Columbia since the age of 2.

EARLY LIFE: Mostly grew up in Chilliwack, BC (a small farming community) and was out of there and off to Vancouver as soon as I graduated. I was an actor in highschool. So when I left, I went off to attend theatre school.

FAMILY: Most of my family still lives in Oregon. My father has been a writer for most of his life. My whole family is very musical and loves to sing and write songs and poetry. I am the oldest of 6 siblings who are split between two families (both my parents remarried while I was young).

EDUCATION: I have a diploma in Stage Management from Studio SB. I hold a bachelors degree in English Literature (first class honours) and a minor in technical theatre. I am 2 semesters away from completing my MLIS at SLAIS.

FIRST JOB: My very first job was working as a clerk in a donut shop on the graveyard shift. It was horrible and I made $3.00 an hour.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I am mostly self-employed at the moment. My full-time position involves managing records and developing a records index for a facility related project at Vancouver General Hospital. I also work the occasional shift at the Biomedical Library for the University of British Columbia. Lastly, I provide information/search services for a few clients in the city.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Spare time???? — Just kidding. In my spare time, I try to read and write, I spend time at the gym. I love to cook, and try to spend time either seeing theatre or being involved in theatre somehow when I can.

FAVORITE BOOKS: That’s a hard one! I am taking a class in Science-Fiction Fantasy right now and would have to say that that is my favorite genre of the moment, but it changes all of the time. I am quite fond of Michael Palins travel books series and enjoy graphic novels. The novels that I have enjoyed the most from my class were the Golden Compass books by Phillip Pullman.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Intolerance, racism, religious fundamentalism.

PHILOSOPHY: Whatever tough questions. I would have to say it I use the idea that we are on this planet together and we should try to recognize that and stop fearing each other and doing everything the media tells us to and try to make some changes before its too late.

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: I don’t think it has happened yet, but I have managed to get published in two different magazines this past year and that was a big achievement.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I would like to find a permanent library position somewhere in the medical area.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: Five years is not that far away and yet much could happen in that time. I don’t believe that we will see a large amount of difference in terms of physical space in libraries. I think that more services will become available electronically. I think that the consortium movement will grow as libraries continue to find ways to serve their patrons within their budgets.

After doing our survey, I am not sure that the electronic book will take off the way a journal has unless something is done to help people read off of a screen. Perhaps devices like the PlayStation-PSP will be a way that people can sit with a “book” in front of the fire, but I doubt it. It might take more than five years for publishers to figure that out. I think that library interiors might start to change. We will probably see more computer stations and less shelving for journals, newspapers and magazines which are available online. I think that the librarian will gain even more importance as educator in public and academic institutions.

When I first entered library school, I was told that this was the best time because so many librarians would be retiring in ten years. That was almost three years ago, but I don’t think this is going to happen in the next 10 or even 15 years particularly ir Academic and corporate libraries. I think that because library schools jumped on the suggestion that the work force was depleting, there will be some kind of market saturation with all of us grads and jobs will be difficult to find. I also think that the original projections did not take into account the fact that the baby boomer generation is generally healthier, living longer and hanging on to jobs as long as they can because working feels good, and even the worst library paycheck is probably better than anything you would get on a pension (At least this is the case in Canada). This might mean that there will be more diversification of the role of librarian as us “newbies” get out there and try to make work for ourselves. The number of independent information professionals may grow because of this. It will also mean that all librarians will really need to keep on top of the latest industry and technology trend in order to survive the competitive climate.