

# Opening Library Doors: Changing Roles for the Information Professional



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# My presentation

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- Will focus on possible opportunities for librarians and information professionals in government that reach outside of their traditional library and research functions
- Will discuss the new and additional roles being taken on by library and information professionals at the Ontario Legislative Assembly

# Shifting Focus to IM

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- ❑ Expanding role of information management in governments
- ❑ Definition: IM specialists has abilities in: records and document management, library services, archiving, data management, content management, business intelligence and decision support, information access, information protection and information privacy.
- ❑ Federal government study (Jordan and DeStricker, 2013) shows that information management work in the federal government is carried out by librarians, records managers, archivists, content managers, IT professionals:

# So, how can librarians help?

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- By doing what we do best:
  - We know information and how people use it: We know how to make it accessible, how to find it, how to organize, store and preserve it, how to integrate it and how to manage it.
  - We understand how technology supports information and how it can be used to access it
  - We have lots of expertise in digitization
  - We are subject specialists

# We can help to manage, protect and preserve information

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- ❑ Recent events in Ontario highlight the need for strong recordkeeping and information management fundamentals being in place in governments
  - Difficulty in finding and producing documents
  - Procedures in place not identifying documents that should not be included
  - Offices not adhering to record keeping principles
- ❑ Providing expertise in record keeping, privacy, FOI
- ❑ Providing expertise in document management

# We help in understanding and using social media

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- ❑ Social media can facilitate information sharing and knowledge management
- ❑ Demonstrating and promoting the use of social media, both as a tool for gathering information for the use of government and for delivering information to the public (Note that the Library of Congress is capturing every tweet published)

# We can promote the benefits of open data

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- Demonstrating and promoting making government information 'open data' so that it is accessible and useable

# We can help to present information in a different way

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- Putting legislative and government information into context and into plain language
- Presenting research and information in useable formats

# What We are Doing in Ontario

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- Restructuring in 2012
- Created a division consisting of:
  - Legislative Library and Research Service
  - Technology Services
  - Information Services
- Goals:
  - To improve delivery and access to the information that is created, documented, gathered, purchased, and used by Members and Assembly staff
  - To integrate the various sources of Assembly information
  - To “better tell the story of the legislature”

# Information Services

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- New branch that brings together
  - Content Management (formerly collections and acquisitions)
  - Systems Development (formerly part of IT and the 'systems' group in the Library)
  - Records and document management
  - Information Architecture
  - Web Publishing

# Expanding Role of Records and Document Management

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- ❑ New 'functional' classification scheme introduced and being implemented
- ❑ Looking to work with Clerks to assist in the organization distribution of large groups of records to legislative committees (protecting privacy, adhering to FOI)

# Changing Role of Content Management

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- While still responsible for acquiring information and publications from publishers, have increased role in development of metadata and taxonomies for legislative publications and information
- Goal is improved accessibility to the legislative information that will be made available through our websites and internal databases and systems

# Rewriting legislative information and putting it into context

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- Developed first website for incoming MPPs
- Use of plain and simple language, put information in better context, better told the story of what it means to be a MPP
- Increasing responsibility for integrating and merging information on the sites

# Making better use of visual information and infographics in our reference and research work

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- New position of Statistics and Data Librarian
- Provides expertise, support, training and assistance to Members and Legislative Library and Research Services branch staff in the use of specialized information sources containing data, statistics and maps.

# What is the constant in all of these initiatives?

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- ❑ Led and staffed by librarians, library technicians, former library staff
- ❑ Understand value of information and how it is used and how to best make it accessible and useable
- ❑ Understand the legislative environment and the information needs of Members

# Benefits to the Librarians

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- ❑ Improved recognition of knowledge, skill sets and abilities of librarians who are involved in more projects and activities
- ❑ Improved career opportunities: No longer just limited to traditional library positions

# Benefits to the Legislature

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- ❑ Working toward improving the information provided to the public about what the legislature does and its activities
- ❑ Improved integration of information results in reduced duplication and replication of information
- ❑ Increased awareness of RM and documents management processes and requirements: improved protection for the Assembly
- ❑ Greater integration of technology and content. No longer 'technology for technology's sake'
- ❑ Reduced costs
- ❑ More innovation

# Challenges ahead

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- ❑ As noted in study: “the definition of IM is skewed toward internal records and decision support, losing sight of libraries’ external communications dimension and their relevance to a large understanding of government information and its management.”
- ❑ Finding a way to better integrate the work of IM and libraries
- ❑ Explaining how our qualifications are useful in a variety of roles