Opening Library Doors: Changing Roles for the Information Professional

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My presentation

- 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.
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?

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- Putting legislative and government information into context and into plain language
- Presenting research and information in useable formats
What We are Doing in Ontario

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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?

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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