

Literacy Within Special Libraries and Other Information Organizations

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Literacy within special libraries and other information organizations has been proven necessary and central to the development of the public and private sectors. (Megaridis, 2018). Special libraries typically include librarians who are trained in specific areas, such as law or medicine; they are then able to provide particular knowledge and research to the requesting party (government, museum, law firm, hospital) (Megaridis, 2018). To ensure these knowledge managers are equipped to handle the level of importance and workload this profession brings, most have to earn a tertiary degree to their master's in library and information sciences or have some kind of specialization within their bachelors (Megaridis, 2018).

The topic of literacy within special libraries and other information organizations is and will be an important and continuing topic in the librarianship career. Information is constantly changing and becoming available as our society moves into a more technologically advanced age (American Library Association, 2007). Especially within the areas of law and medicine, it is critical to the field that law and medical librarians are aware of new information, resources, and changes within their practices. The high level of importance this type of work and information hold within librarianship lends to the conversation of this type of literacy being a continuing issue. Within Megaridis's chapter in *Information Services Today: An Introduction*, she provides insight from a few specialized librarians on what their day-to-day schedule entails (Megaridis, 2018). These individuals provide detailed accounts of the roles and work they take on within their job as specialized librarians and exemplify how important literacy is to the profession.

The ALA demonstrates its goals of continuing importance with its "Literacy" webpage, which serves as an information hub for different efforts toward creating a more literate population and career (American Library Association, 2017). Initiatives such as ALA Literacy Clearinghouse is a resource net for a variety of different literacy-based websites and collections that can be accessed freely (American Library Association, 2017). The resources are organized by types of literacy, target population, and additional supporting resources, and expand to more than just resources provided by the ALA (American Library Association, 2017). In addition to their clearinghouse, the ALA has access links to projects, organizations, and other libraries that are pushing similar initiatives towards literacy, such as increasing literacy in adults, non-native English speakers, and the general public (American Library Association, 2017).

Literacy extends beyond the information and resources available, to every type of librarian in the work field. It also extends to every type of librarian. The constant stream of information we have opened ourselves up to will not ever dry out. There will always be information to be shared and discovered, but that is a constant that is already well-established within the profession. The constant evolution of technology, however, provides an equally

relevant but trickier type of literacy to achieve. In the last few decades, engineers, developers, and other great minds alike have completely transformed our abilities and reliance on technology in most aspects of our lives (Abram, 2018). Computers, applications, instant messaging, digitization, and so much more have made incomprehensible developments that have transplanted everything and anything onto the internet (Abram, 2018). To be literate in the librarianship field has to include technology as well; this was fully put to the test during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic quarantine. Libraries across the globe, whether they were academic, public, specialized, or archival, were forced to move into a fully online setting, which even in 2023, has remained. Traditional libraries, public, youth, and academics were all thrown into this new age world without warning or training, and that severely impacted these organizations at the beginning of the pandemic. Despite the time quarantine provided for these systems to develop and become implemented, it still proved a great struggle for many to resort to and stay in a mostly online world.

Regarding the topic of literacy, I believe creating the opportunity for educational demonstrations or sponsorship of other initiative-type classes for librarians is necessary. Ensuring that librarians remain informationally and technologically literate will become essential for the profession as we move into a heavily digitized and online world post-COVID-19. Within the legal profession, both as librarians and attorneys, our bar associations/the American Association of Law Libraries require us to complete a certain amount of continuing legal education credits every year, as an assurance that information is being kept up to date among the professionals (American Association of Law Libraries, 2022). These credits can be obtained from conferences, classes, symposiums, or individually online (American Association of Law Libraries, 2022). Establishing a similar system for other library associations or personally within an institution would be optimal first steps into ensuring a literate profession. I think it would also be interesting to create more joint symposiums within the librarian field, so people from all across the librarian profession could connect and learn from others outside their scope.

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