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Has the Job Market for Information Professionals Changed?

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- ✱ Where a LIS professional works affects the tasks he / she does
- ✱ Traditionally LIS professionals have worked in libraries with collections built around the needs of a user community - public, academic, special and corporate libraries
- ✱ The tasks were fairly well – defined

Winds of Change

- 1960s - Use of computers for information handling and automation of library housekeeping
 - The situation did not change much except
 - Librarians began using the new technology for enhancing library services
 - More efficient management of the library
- Reference librarians continued to assist users in the effective use of large online databases
- Libraries continued to be the principal employers of products of LIS schools

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Winds of Change [Contd.]

- The INTERNET and WWW appear to have changed the situation – for ever;
 - Increasing dis-intermediation; Increasing tendency among users to find information without going to the library; Increasing Googalization
 - Use of information has increased but library is not seen as the place to find information; Web emerges as the major source of information
 - Web also becomes a major channel for publication of information
- Digital Libraries emerge

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Winds of Change [Contd.]

- ☀ The present scenario which is still evolving displays certain other characteristics as well:
 - Information becomes a key player not only in R&D but also in business, government, etc
 - Large corporations create parallel facility / information support systems (in addition to the library) for capturing and managing '*tacit information*'
 - '*Information sector*' emerges as a visible sector of the economy; *Information* appears to have become everybody's territory!

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The Library

- ☀ Also there are qualitative changes in the requirements of the traditional library job market;
 - Emphasis on provision of access to required information
 - '*Value addition*' – major function of libraries
 - Increased use of IT at all levels

☀ Job Types

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The Library [contd.]

- ☀ Obviously there are major changes in the nature of the job positions and their requirements within the library, which will continue to be the principal job market for products of LIS schools
- ☀ Such requirements do exist in India; there are however, differences in handling these:
 - Some of these are not considered the responsibility of the library and are assigned to some other unit / outsourced

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The Library [contd.]

- ☀ The transition from
 - Largely '*print-on-paper*' to digital resources
 - Largely manual to computerized systemsis surely taking place
- ☀ The requirements in terms of depth of knowledge and skills in IT vary depending on the task for which a person is being considered

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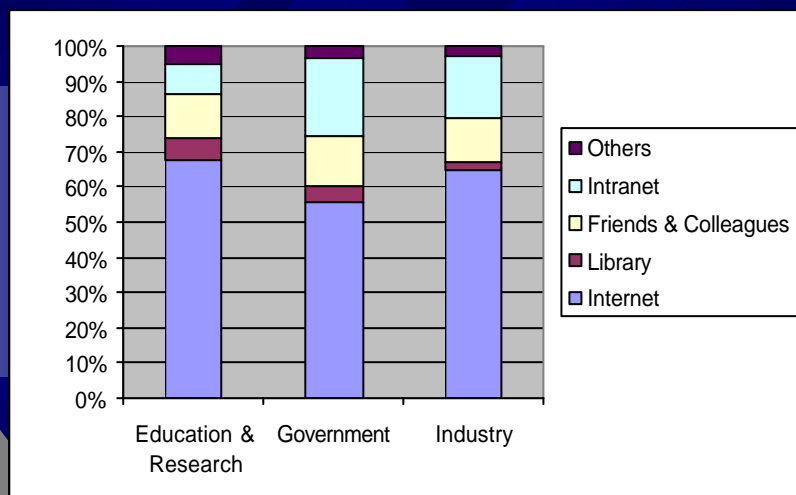
The Library [contd.]

- * This has resulted in a situation (in India, for example):
 - There are emerging job positions in libraries for which suitable manpower is not available;
 - A number of LIS school products are unemployed or, at best, underemployed
- * The Reason:
 - A certain amount of '*Mismatch*' between job requirements and education programmes
 - Misconceptions about what LIS school products can or cannot do!

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What People do to find Information?



Courtesy: Informatics (India) Ltd

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The Result

- ✦ Traditional Librarianship has become a severely challenged profession
- ✦ Information Science, information handling and management appear to be every one's territory
- ✦ In the workplace, Information / Knowledge Management is closer to Management than to Librarianship

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Job Profiles of LIS School products

| Sector | No. |
|---|-----|
| Library - Corporate Houses | 4 |
| Specialized Information work – Corporate Sector | 4 |
| Library – College | 3 |
| Research / University Library | 4 |
| Library - Others | 4 |
| Faculty positions | 2 |
| Research / Higher studies | 4 |
| Knowledge Management - corporate sector | 2 |
| Software Development - corporate sector | 2 |
| Self-Employed / Consultant | 2 |

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Proposal

We submit that:

- There is clear evidence that the traditional library job market is not growing
- The traditional Library job market is rapidly changing
- Look for new job markets

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Proposal [Contd.]

- **Information content / product industry:** LIS Schools should view the rapidly growing information content / product industry as a job market
- **Knowledge Management Area:** While the fast growing economy has seen a substantial reduction in job positions in the conventional library market in the academic and R & D sectors, it has also resulted in the emergence of a new job market primarily within the corporate sector. Many of these positions are not designated as library positions but require information skills.

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Proposal [Contd.]

- Traditionally libraries and information institutions have been partners in the development, publishing, disseminating and delivery of information products
- Such a broad-basing offers opportunity for growth

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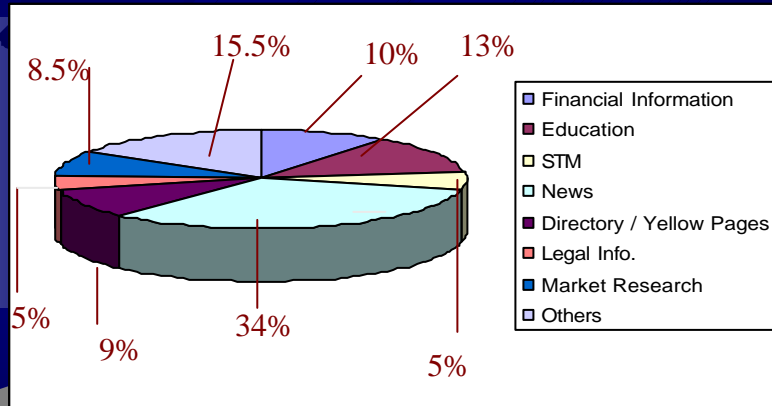
How big is the Information Industry?

- In 2005 it was estimated that the revenue of the global information industry will be in the order of 280 Billion U.S. Dollars
- The industry has major segments each with its own market share

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Market share of Information Industry segments



Courtesy: Informatics (India) Ltd.– (Source: Outsell's Database of Information Markets & Users – 2005)

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Implications for LIS Education

☀ The changing job market has implications for LIS Educational programmes This will require:

- An Interdisciplinary Perspective
- User-Centric Paradigm
- 'Information as a Resource' Philosophy
- 'Container - Independent & Format - Independent Information' Focus
- 'A Value-Addition Process' view of information handling

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Desirable Professional Characteristics

- **Managerial Skills**
- **Aptitude for Information handling**
- **Domain Knowledge**
- **Content Management Skills and technologies**
- **Ability to understand Information needs**
- **Learning from related professions --
Journalists, Editors, Statisticians,
Market Researchers, Publishers, etc.**
- **Knowledge of information industry**

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Thank you

Questions?

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