

Information Management Project 2014

Information Management (IM) Profile

At home we had few books when I was a child - but we had a set of encyclopaedias and I thought all knowledge was recorded in those large tomes. My frequent visits to the library, especially once the new, airy, modern library opened, enabled me to explore into different areas as my interests expanded.

One of those interests was archaeology and prehistory and it must be there I started to realise the value of classifying and organising things in order to understand them better and gain more from them. On the other hand I could just have grown from a bossy, organising Taurean child who liked lists into a bossy organising adult

When I was fourteen I was allowed to join the library staff as a Saturday assistant. I learned to find my way around the 'nonfiction' collection and enjoyed helping people find what they wanted. As I began to consider librarianship as a possible career, I realised that a large part of the attraction was that for me the public library was – and still is , or could be, the gateway for self learning, personal development, education and it was all FREE. The ideals of the Mechanics Institutes were alive and well and open to all.

Initially mystified by the different classification scheme at the University library I soon learned how to find what I wanted and on leaving was very happy to be offered a place on the London Borough of Barnet's Trainee Librarian Scheme. Three of us started in the September and following a varied 15 month programme working in all sections and Departments of the library service plus weekly meetings with a senior librarian so we began to understand the budgets, planning and politics behind services, I started the 11 month post-graduate diploma course.

Barnet was an early adopter of computerised cataloguing. On my return I worked in a small team responsible for cataloguing non fiction whose authors

Information Management Project 2014

last names fell between G and N. Some resources (especially government publications) were a nightmare to catalogue, others were relatively straightforward. I then became a reference librarian.

Eventually I left Barnet for A N Other London Borough that was less successful but after a spell there as a reference librarian I set up a project loans service to schools and then managed a Book Bus. There 's a saying that experience is what you get when you don't get what you really want but both were fun and working for a really good manager makes a real difference.

Throughout all these jobs I'd become more passionate about the transformative potential offered by access to information – and good library services. The shock of redeployment led me to study for a qualification in Personnel Management and with my existing trade union experience, suddenly I was well qualified to join The Library Association as one of their Professional Officers. My role there was advising members and employers on job descriptions and grades and promoting the value of professionally run library and information services.

In 1997 I joined the Department of Health in the relatively new post of NHS Library Adviser. Library services in the NHS suffered from byzantine funding and disparate management standards but were heavily in demand for education and training, ongoing professional development and a growing awareness that management information should underpin service planning and delivery and clinical decision making should be evidence based.

Things in the NHS and the Department of Health change occasionally. Following this fantastic role I managed the DH Call Centre, working on Freedom of Information requests and my current post is as Head of Data Protection with a sideline in information risk management.

Information Management Project 2014

The rewards- they've been a few. The most recent naturally come easiest to mind. Setting standards for NHS Library Services; developing new skills and knowledge in FOI and data protection; professional contacts and colleagues; opportunities to present and learn at international conferences. And all this because I was the mainstay of the public library.

What would I advise new entrants? Set yourself high standards; actively manage your own career; volunteer for tough projects; learn, grow and ask for feedback.

For the profession I'd like to see greater recognition of our professional skills and for every professional to have the personality and 'nouse' to make this happen.

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