Help Wanted: Effectively Articulating and Assessing Information Literacy Skills for Employers and Job Seekers

Dr. Loriene Roy, Professor
Ms. Elizabeth Hallmark, Director of Career Development
Objectives:

(1) Understand how the need for IL proficiency is articulated and prioritized in job vacancy announcements

(2) Consider the potential impact of the 2016 Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education in the hiring process

(3) Understand how employers perceive the value and importance of IL as well as assess it; and

(4) Understand how recent LIS program graduates perceive the importance of IL skills and their impact on the job search process
iCareers: vetted and curated job board exclusive to School of Information students/alums and employers interested in hiring them.
Selection of postings - pilot

- Ran a report of all job postings submitted to iCAREERS database from November 2016-June 2017 (prime recruitment time period).

- **N = 1,108** (total job postings for time period), culled to 665 after removal of duplicates and non-applicable jobs for LIS students.

- **n = 100** sample job postings reviewed (posted Nov. 2016-end of Dec. 2016) as pilot for content analysis.
Employment areas

n = 100

- Academic Library: 36%
- Academic (non-library): 7%
- UX: 11%
- Special Library: 8%
- Public Library: 9%
- Other: 14%
- IT: 8%
- Archives: 7%
61 out of 100 job postings sampled included some type of reference to IL skills that could be indirectly tied to framework.
References to job duties and requirements related to Scholarship as Conversation listed most often (82 percent of postings with IL).

But with often broad descriptions, e.g.,:

- Strong communication skills
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to work with faculty and students
- Engagement with community
- Work collaboratively
References to job duties and requirements related to *Information Has Value* listed least often (31 percent of postings with IL).

But with more specific descriptions, e.g.,:

- Advises on library policy issues...such as **copyright** policy, intellectual freedom issues, **fair use**, e-privacy concerns, or censorship of Internet content.

- Develop and implement an educational program on the **rights** of both creators and users of original works of authorship.

- Familiarity with **copyright limitations, exceptions, and defenses** in US copyright law
Placement of IL skills

Where skills are referenced in job posting:

- Job Duties only: 23%
- Requirements only: 7%
- Job Duties and Requirements: 70%
Developed **two surveys** to measure knowledge of framework and hiring practices related to it:
- for employers
- for recent graduates

Divided questions into knowledge and attributes of IL in alignment with framework.

Ask also about knowledge of framework.

**Piloted** employer survey with UT Librarians in hiring roles.
Thinking of that job opening (or others), how important do you think it is for someone applying for this position in your institution to demonstrate their ability to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Often Important</th>
<th>Sometimes Important</th>
<th>Seldom Important</th>
<th>Never Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Define different types of authority such as subject experience</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Use research tools to determine credibility</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Recognize well-known scholars and publications</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Recognize that authoritative content may be found in many formats</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Acknowledge their responsibility in becoming recognized as an authority</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Level of **detail** from framework was overwhelming, making the survey too long

• Recommend measuring level of **priority** rather than level of importance of each element – as all are important

• Need to clarify whether **assessment** of candidates is about what candidates *know and can do* vs. whether candidates *know how to teach it*
Next Steps

• **Complete content analysis** to study how IL skills are articulated and if ACRL framework begins to be more pervasive over time.

• **Redesign** survey for employers and recent graduates to simplify and focus on prioritization of IL skills.

• Identify perceived IL **gaps** in the candidate pool as well as recent graduates’ ability to articulate and prove IL skills.