

Librarian or Information Architect? Trends in the Academic Education of Information Workers in Poland

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Abstract. *The academic training of librarians and information workers in Poland has undergone transformation for several years. The article presents the history of the training of librarians, reasons for changes in the teaching offer, its current state, the figure of the graduate, and the main trends in the world.*

Keywords: information architecture, training of librarians, library and information science, information workers.

INTRODUCTIONS

The tradition of the academic training of librarians in Poland goes back to the 19th century. It was then that university lectures in bibliography began, which evolved into organized university training after WW2. At the start of the 21st century, the program in library and information science was offered by 14 universities and colleges. The situation has changed so drastically in recent years that the librarian community are beginning to talk about the abolition of the profession of librarian. There are several causes of this state of affairs. First of all, these are changes in the law: the new Act of 2011 on Higher Education, which introduced the broadened autonomy of universities in the field of teaching, thereby allowing them to independently create teaching programs, and abolished the uniform obligatory teaching content and course names, as well as the Act of 2013, which deregulated the profession of librarian, and abolished the obligatory requirement for librarians to have university education. Other causes include

changes in the labor market, the declining interest in library science studies, and the world tendencies aimed at training information and knowledge managers.

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL OFFER OF TRAINING LIBRARIANS

Study programs in information and library science (first-cycle [licencjat/BA], second-cycle [MA] and postgraduate) are currently offered by only four universities: University of Warsaw: Faculty of Journalism, Information and Bibliology – full-time and extramural first- and second-cycle (BA/MA) degree study programs; University of Wrocław: Institute of Information and Library Science – full-time first- and second-cycle (BA/MA) degree study program; University of Silesia in Katowice: Institute of Culture Studies (formerly Institute of Library and Information Science) – first- and second-cycle (BA/MA) degree study programs; and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan: Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts in Kalisz, Information Science Department – first-cycle (BA) degree study program. Furthermore, nine universities offer postgraduate study programs in this field. The other university centers have changed their profile in this domain, now offering training in information management and information architecture.

TRAINING OF INFORMATION SECTOR WORKERS

For several years the world tendencies in education in information science have laid emphasis on such skills and competencies as knowledge management, information architecture, ICT skills, information systems, project management, promotion and marketing, as well as communication skills. To meet the needs of the market the Polish universities have changed their educational offer by transforming library science study programs or complementing them with study programs in: *Architecture of Information Space* (University of Warsaw), *Information Architecture* (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, University of Silesia in Katowice, Pedagogical University of Krakow), *Information Management* (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Jagiellonian University, Pedagogical University of Krakow), *Digital and Network Publishing* (University of Wrocław), *Information in Digital Environment*, and *Information Science with Business English* (University of Łódź).

Evidently, the prevailing direction of changes in the offer by the university centers that have so far trained librarians is the training of information architects and information managers. This is the result of the information revolution at the turn of the 20th/21st century and the development of the economy, in which information has become the main intangible resource of companies, and, consequently, the need has arisen to create standards integrating the domains of knowledge related to the gathering, designing, preparing, making available and managing of information. Discussion held among representatives of different disciplines, including those related to information technology, and information and library science, have resulted in the development of methods and procedures for designing the information space, which were given a common name: information architecture.

At present, it has become a set of knowledge and competencies connected with the creation, storage and retrieval of information in digital form to

facilitate its access and use by the users. An information architect is a specialist creating the information structure and designing information systems in such a way that users can access the content sought as easily as possible. This profession requires the knowledge of many factors that impact on the seeking, gathering, designing, processing and retrieving of information. Richard S. Wurman describes this specialist as one who creates the information structure or information map that allows others to find their own path to knowledge and that organizes patterns characteristic of information.

When browsing through particular new study programs, one can notice that some of them contain the educational content that was also part of the library science programs. Some specialties suggest that they train for work in libraries. It appears, however, that the training of librarians and of information architects should be clearly separated.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the above-described changes many questions arise about the future of training librarians in Poland. Changes in the educational offer in the new educational and technological situation were unavoidable. The question whether information architects will replace specialists in library science is still an open issue.

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