

“Our Professional Identities in a World Gone Digital”: Experts Panel and the Public

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Questions addressed:

1) Do we still need archivists/records managers, librarians, and information scientists? Or should we rather educate a new generalist profession on the key components of all information disciplines?

2) What knowledge and skills do you expect our graduates to have?

Summary of responses:

We do not need generalists, but specialists working together in teams. It is important that graduates have the discreet body of knowledge that identifies their profession and that enables them to pursue much needed original research.

We do need graduates who have technical skills and the capacity to assess technology without needing to know all the nuts and bolts, and ~~but~~ only to the extent necessary to understand where information technology specialists are needed, to establish the requirements for their work, and to assess the value of what they do.

We need graduates who have very strong communication and collaborative skills, who can understand where the knowledge of their discipline intersects with that of other disciplines and can explain what archivists and records managers do, how they do it, and why.

We need professionals who understand accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, and representation, the political aspects of what they do and the respective places occupied by the rule of law, aspiration to social justice, and professional responsibility.

In consideration of the fact that 90% of archival graduates in Canada work in archival or records management units with less than five archivists/records managers (often only one) we need graduates who are complete professionals and can carry out all archival and records management functions in addition to being managers, politicians, and researchers.

Web 2.0 confronts us with a transforming event that radically changes the way we communicate, carry out business, and do research. We need professionals firmly rooted in the

theory of their discipline who are able to conduct leading edge interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research as a necessary component of their professional work.

Professionals need to recognize the importance of conducting research and publication. Research and publication are vital to the development and expansion of the profession's body of knowledge.