

How's the Library business folks?

By Katherine Watmough.

As Bob Dylan said, 'Times they are a changin'. In the library business, things are changing too. Online services are in high demand for the fast-paced lifestyle of library patrons, and the technology of learning resources is always advancing. Learning styles are evolving with younger generations and we find they want quick bursts of instruction with fancy lights, bells and whistles. All kidding aside, libraries are trying, and succeeding to keep up with the times. Developing a workforce with a forward looking attitude is desirable, and a requirement in this day and age.

More and more frequently we see the need for the technical skills of a Library Technician Diploma and the advanced organizational skills of the Library Science Masters program. There is a necessity for both of these certifications and there is the desire of a greater number of people to obtain these skills, for employment and for the love of the work.

There are three different aspects to library work- the technical side, the administrative\collection side, and the customer service side. Administrative, reference and collection librarians build the collection based on needs and trends; help patrons make research choices, and also fulfill an instructional role in an academic setting. They provide leadership and guidance to staff and patrons alike. Technicians process the material and get it ready for patrons to use. They label, catalogue, receive, list, and inventory; to name a few of

their responsibilities. Customer service, more commonly circulation, accommodates the patron on the most immediate level. They are the first point of contact, and the last. They provide direct access to the material and guide patrons to the correct areas of assistance. They see things from the patron's perspective and can assist in finding solutions for the individual and the institution. All work to the common goals of education, research, accessibility and information. Technology is changing how we provide these services and in what form it can be accessed.

In the [Geoffrey Weller Library](#) at the University of Northern British Columbia, the staff and faculty are working towards these goals. The effort is a shared one, from top down and the bottom up. Professional development is essential, and here at the library, it is evident that it is taken seriously. There are three staff members who are in the process of attaining their Master's in Library Science. There are others who have taken, or are in the midst of taking their Library Technician Diploma. All to better serve the students and work more effectively in their field. They work full-time jobs and still manage to find time to advance their skills, most often at their own expense. They love what they do and they are keeping up with the changin' times.

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