



Qualitative methodologies for determining the skills and competencies required of the hybrid information professional of the 21st century

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The topic for investigation is the boundaries and scope of the contemporary B“information professionB”, specifically in relation to (1) the differing skills and competencies within the profession, including any differentiation between the individual domains in relation to the skills and knowledge base; and (2) concepts of professionalism, particularly in relation to categorisation of areas of B“professionalB” expertise as opposed to B“non-professionalB” work and skills. Given a demonstrable lack of clarity and shared understanding of the concept of the term B“information profession (IP)B” (see Broady-Preston 2009) it is timely to map the contemporary profile of the IP and the skills required in practice. The research will be based within the British Library as the range and scope of its services are such that it is, in effect, a microcosm of the information profession as a whole. By embedding a researcher within the organisation, and s/he observing and participating!

g in all aspects of information related activity within the BL, a complex rich picture of information work and practice should be derived.

However, as Eisenhardt asserts, B“whilst early identification of the research question is helpful, it is equally important to recognise that both are tentative in this type of researchB...Also, the research question may shift during the researchB” (Huberman & Miles, 2002, 11). Thus, a more focused research question will emerge as the research develops. This paper will review and assess appropriate methodologies for the development of this rich picture of the contemporary IP.

References

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