

Academic Librarians in Transition: Stories, Narratives and Job Strategies on Moving into Different Library Careers

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Abstract

What if you were an academic librarian and wanted to move into special or public libraries? How would you do that and how different would those worlds be? Today, more and more librarians are transitioning into different roles in the field. There is also a misconception that it is very difficult to transition from one kind of role into another. This session features a panel of librarians and administrators who have worked in various public, academic and special libraries in CA and beyond. They will share their experiences in moving from one type of library into another by covering their success stories and challenges along the way. The panelists will cover the kinds of risks they took, how they built, identified and cultivated specific skill sets and demonstrated values for career transitions. Audience members may expect to participate through smaller group discussions after a brief Q&A panel with panelists to learn how librarians can take career risks, embrace change, and transition successfully and effectively regardless of the library environment.

Panel Description

1. *How have your past experiences in different libraries helped you obtain the job you have today?*

Panelists shared their experiences working in different libraries and industries, and how they developed a framework and strategy to seek out new opportunities and professional/personal developments to continue pursuing new projects.

2. *What advice can you give to those who want to do something but are unsure if they can work outside of academic libraries?*

Panelists shared how individuals need to market themselves - do outreach, networking, attend different conferences (outside of regional/local ones) sometimes, and attend webinars and be active. Figure and identify your gaps, look at job ads, senior colleagues' resumes/CVs, and see if you can strengthen those skill sets.

Job titles are not always descriptive; you may be applying for one job and may be considered for another job.

Consider being on search committees to experience and understand how transferrable skills can be from other libraries/industries outside of academic libraries. Remove jargons from your CV/resume, and think of ways to translate your work in public context that is relatable and understandable.

3. *Name or predict a "new" or existing skill/trend from academic libraries that will be "in demand" for any industry and briefly explain why.*

Panelists mentioned collaboration, mentorship, instructional design; ways to bridge people and translate/mediate between groups; cataloging and knowledge management remains critical.