

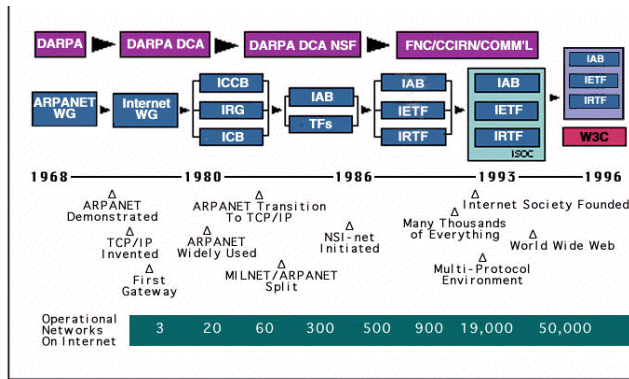
# **Trends in the Library Profession and the Impact of Technology at the Montgomery College Libraries**

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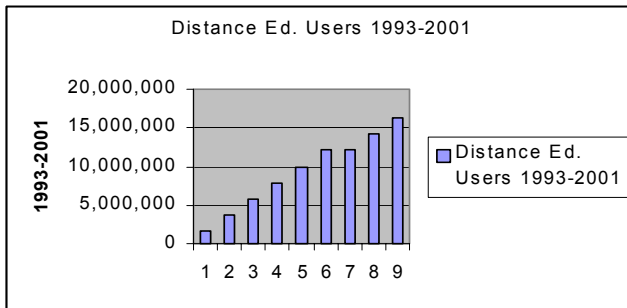
The technology revolution has brought many changes to the way librarians and library staff manage their day and provide information to users. Up until ten years ago, libraries were book focused institutions. There were just print card catalogs; online vendor databases had barely become tools in the librarian's arsenal to answer questions; the Internet as we know it now was still years away from practical use. Library acquisitions, cataloging and circulation were done via paper or managed by using print ledgers, pens and card pockets. Spreadsheets, internal databases or other productivity software was never used to manage library data.

The first major wave of change came with the advent of digital storage technology and networks to move information from one area to another.

- In the early 1990's, Public access terminals and new online public access catalogs became ubiquitous in libraries to share information regarding library holdings and for the management of library acquisitions. These first generation library systems were hard wired LANs running PC based software. Access to holdings to the outside world was not widely shared. Dial-in access was limited to large institutions. Modem speeds at this time were no faster than 28.8kps
- CD-ROMs were introduced for the most part as a storage and research tool in libraries during the mid-1990's. These CDs held large amounts of data which were inserted into single use PCs; or were kept in CD towers for small LANs of up to six PCs to access information simultaneously.
- In the late 1990's, the Internet became the life blood of information sharing not just for libraries, but for commerce, education, government and the general public. High-speed networking availably created an efficient and fast way to move both text and graphics from one server to another in a matter of nanoseconds. The Internet is the most democratic, yet confusing information tool ever devised. On one hand, storage and access issues are eliminated, yet since anyone can place anything they want on the World Wide Web, users frequently find erroneous or false information and use it as "fact". There are now three billion websites on the Internet and that number continues to grow. While the Internet is a wonderful thing, it is not a substitute for the campus library, or more importantly, the librarian. Librarian's guide and teach students and other users how to find the best sources of information, whether print or online. In fact, most of the world's knowledge before 1970 does not appear on the Web in any organized or holistic fashion.



Rate of the Internet Explosion



Rate of Distance Users

- The role of the academic librarian in the information age is to promote access to appropriate and accurate information to serve the needs of users. This has been the librarian's mission for generations. However, the information age has made this mission much more challenging and complex. It has also demanded that librarians and library support staff bring or develop new technical skills to promote information access.
- Libraries are in the retail end of the information revolution. It is important to note that even with all the technical complexity and additional responsibilities, a librarian's core role as gatekeeper to information is unchanged. We still select books and print periodical titles, we still teach users one-on-one and in classroom settings how to do research; we still answer questions from students and other users. Except we now answer questions via phone, fax, and email as well as in-person. Through technology, we select, manage and maintain complex computer and web-based information systems and we teach via distance by creating on-line tutorials.
- The card catalog which was replaced in the early 1990s has itself been replaced with a Web-based interface. This means that the maintenance of the information, typically handled by library support staff, has to be accurate and the level of sophistication and technical expertise to handle the amount of information added to the library's own knowledge base increases yearly as the capacity to store and access information has increased. Also important to note, the online catalog is accessible from anywhere as it is a web-based catalog.

- The librarian and library staff at Montgomery College are knowledge workers. That is, they maintain and manipulate PC and web-based software, web-based databases as well as the library's website, which for historical reasons should be noted was the first website of Montgomery College. Today, the librarians and library staff manage thousands of online periodical and newspaper subscriptions through vendors. Our staff has the technical knowledge to write, manage and implement Oracle databases, HTML or UNIX programming and to design and program other computer code. We are in frequent contact with database providers and vendors to ensure access to the College library's information resources are available to in-house and distance users. These and many other technical skills are necessary and commonplace. If we did not have the technical and human relation skills, we could not do our jobs as effectively.

You can't have good education without good libraries, and you can't have good libraries without good library staff. The MC library staff across all three campuses work diligently to improve the lives of all those who come into the library to access our information resources. Today's library staff are well-trained technology savvy information professionals. The librarian staff enriches the learning process of every library user. The important role of library support staff has increased as more sophisticated technology has changed the way we maintain daily operations and service in the library.

In Fiscal Year '01-'02, the three library's turnstile count exceeded **809,000** visits. Librarians and library staff are the ultimate search engines. We provided **377** instruction classes that saw a total of **7,680** students. At our reference desks, we answered **39,064** questions and at our circulation desks we charged out over **63,955** items. In terms of collection development, the librarians and technical services staff purchased and added almost **nine thousand** items to the collections between the three libraries. All of these usage and collection statistics are increases from last fiscal year. All library staff should be paid 21<sup>st</sup> Century wages for 21<sup>st</sup> Century services.

## **SPECIFIC REASONS WHY THE FOLLOWING STAFF SHOULD SEE SALARY INCREASES**

### **Head Librarians**

Without strong leadership and knowledge, the libraries would not have the same level of expertise to guide staff as well as form and make policy decisions which impact access to all information assets. The Head Librarian is responsible for setting the corporate culture of each library. The Head Librarian exhibits strong leadership and communication skills in order to motivate, supervise and excite the staff towards excellence. Each Head Librarian directly or through proxy, assists in training library staff so that they can grow and become better at their jobs

The Head Librarians should be classified at the same level as some supervisory positions within the IT unit. A Head Librarian position is clearly a managerial position responsible

for an academic service that supports the instructional programs at the college. As each library is a very complex unit involving relationships with faculty and administrators, teaching and research, customer service and satisfaction, use of up-to-date technology, and a sufficient understanding of all disciplines and subject areas to purchase, catalog and provide access to materials, strong managerial competency is required to maintain quality service standards

### **Technical Services Librarian**

The Technical Services Librarian is responsible for managing and leading the Technical Services Unit. This includes the supervision of four library employees as well as managing cataloging contract workers of up to an additional eight staff. The Technical Services Librarian is also responsible for the operations, management and coordination of the technical services activities, supporting collegewide library functions such as, but not limited to: maintenance and development of serials, acquisitions, cataloging; inventory; systems maintenance and related computer applications; conforms to AACR2rev, MARC and metadata, communicates with vendors, negotiate contracts for electronic databases.

The Technical Services Librarian trains staff and librarians on modules and other electronic and imaging systems. Oversees the interlibrary loan and services to distance learners, intercampus library loan, electronic resources, electronic reserves, and coordinates collection development; is the primary liaison between the libraries and the Computer Applications group of the Information Technology unit; oversee all contracts currently managed by this unit. This position will recommend potential policies and procedures for the library function of technical services to the Manager of Libraries and Director of ITLC for consideration. This position manages all personnel currently reporting to technical services and the ILL functions and is responsible for evaluating, recommending hiring.

It is strongly recommended that the Technical Services Librarian title be changed to Head, Technical Services, as the work performed is concurrent with the Head Librarian's tasks and responsibilities. This will also require reclassification of the position.

### **Librarians**

Librarians are the ultimate search engines. Their level of technological expertise extends past the simple reference interview and selection of materials for the collections. Librarians interface with faculty to design and teach their students appropriate research skills; they manage and select digital collections and services; they serve on a variety of committees with the College; they conduct outreach and perform a vital three campus function. Libraries are information portals and librarians are the guides who connect need with satisfaction.

Librarians are the glue that binds successful, efficient and excellent library services to the students, faculty and staff that require library information resources. The librarian staff care deeply about how they are perceived by all our customers and handle their complex responsibilities with the utmost compassion, professionalism, technical ability and

diligence. In user studies performed on each campus, the library is always singled out by respondents as an important and vital resource to their educational success. Without the librarian staff and their ability to perform all their tasks, students would be lacking in research and study skills and would not be able to complete their course assignments. Many of the study skills taught by the MC librarians will be with our students for life.

### **Library Assistant Supervisors**

The Library Assistant Supervisors are responsible for ensuring effective service-oriented management of the daily operations and long term planning of the Circulation, Reserve and Periodical service areas of the library as well as stack management and the adding and removal of reserve materials. The Technical Services Library Assistant Supervisor Position is responsible for the acquisition of all print, non-print and electronic information assets as assigned by supervisor, through a centralized purchasing system utilizing the library's Voyager system and the College's BANNER system. This includes monitoring librarian requests for materials to avoid duplication or poor distribution of collection development funds, acquiring, distributing and dispensing of library assets. Technical administration of the Voyager system for acquisitions, office workstations and perform OCLC searches as well as management of Inter-library and Inter-campus loan requests as assigned. Requires working knowledge of OCLC, Voyager's acquisitions, circulation and cataloging modules, preparation and compilation of acquisition reports, generate customized and canned Access reports through the use of via Oracle database and serve as the back-up Systems Administrator in the absence of the Technical Services Librarian. This position also manages student aide workers. Library Assistant Supervisors provide direct support to the Head Librarian or unit manager and ensures that the library facility and information assets are in proper operating order. The Library Assistant Supervisor evaluates and manages all full and part-time Library Assistants, Library Technical Assistants and student workers in the library. This work is accomplished by providing strong leadership, a customer first orientation, an understanding of and the ability to use information technology to promote access including the use of the Internet, WebVoyage, PCs and a wide variety of other technical equipment.

The Library Assistant Supervisors are front line staff who have direct contact with all students, faculty, staff and the community. It is critically important that the Library Assistant Supervisors have a strong customer orientation to both provide excellent customer service and to show their staff how best to assist the public.

### **Library Assistants**

The Library Assistant staff is responsible for ensuring effective service-orientated customer support in the daily operations in Circulation, Reserve and periodical service areas of the library as well as stack management and the accession and removal of reserve materials. These positions provide library circulation desk services to students, staff, faculty and the public in a highly customer service orientated environment. Duties include but are not limited to circulating library materials in all formats, creating patron records, clearing fines, maintenance and use of the reserve collection and processing

inter-campus and inter-library loan requests. Library Assistants must use computer databases, PC operation, the Internet and Voyager, the library's online catalog in managing circulation services. Library Assistant staff must also possess a deep understanding of database structure, specialized technical and bibliographic skills in the processing of library materials.

The Library Assistant staff in the Technical Services unit, are responsible for ensuring effective service-orientated customer support by managing and monitoring the acquisition of all print, non-print and electronic information assets as assigned by supervisor, through a centralized purchasing system utilizing the library's Voyager system and the College's BANNER system. This includes monitoring librarian requests for materials to avoid duplication or poor distribution of collection development funds, acquiring, distributing and dispensing of library assets. Technical administration of the Voyager system for acquisitions, office workstations and perform OCLC searches as well as management of Inter-library and Inter-campus loan requests as assigned. Requires working knowledge of OCLC, Voyager's acquisitions, circulation and cataloging modules, preparation and compilation of acquisition reports, generate customized and canned Access reports through the use of via Oracle database and serve as the back-up Systems Administrator in the absence of the Technical Services Librarian. This position also manages student aide workers.

Library Assistants carry out the daily operation of the circulation areas at each library. They are front line staff that has primary contact with our customers - the students, faculty, staff and the community. As with the librarian staff, the circulation staff are the first people most library patrons see when they enter, use or leave a library. It is critically important that the Library Assistants exhibit a strong customer care orientation so that excellent service is maintained at all library locations. Front line staff has the highest contact and most impact on how we are perceived in the user community. Because the Library Assistants are so diligent in their duties, we are thought of as an organization that meets and exceeds user requirements.

### **Library Technical Assistants (LTA's )**

This position provides high-end technical and instructional support of library computer resources and other related equipment to students and other library patrons. Position requires a working knowledge of LANs, WANs, as well as IT related tasks such as programming, inserting and changing computer hardware, installing and monitoring software used in maintaining connectivity to an array of online databases, the Internet, and WebVoyage, the library's online catalog. Position requires working knowledge of FTP, UNIX, Windows and functional use of web programming languages, such as HTML and JavaScript. Position provides for the physical maintenance of IT technology and equipment, the maintenance of photocopiers and printers, all library AV equipment as well as the maintenance of the computers used in the instruction classrooms located at each campus library. Position also requires incumbent to work with all library staff to ensure access to information technology remains working and reports any and all downtime to IT management for support. Troubleshoots and takes direction from IT technicians when appropriate.

Because of their strong technical abilities, high customer contact and intense training responsibilities, the LTA's should be reclassified so that their duties reflect their skill level. The LTA's as a group are underpaid for the knowledge and effort they put into their work.

I also suggest that the job title, Library Technical Assistant be changed to, **Onsite Library Computer Assistant**