Ready, Set, Hire!
Perceptions of new technical services librarian preparedness

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Abstract

Previous studies have investigated technical services librarian job availability and preparedness, but have not compared library administrators' and librarians' assessments of entry-level technical services librarian preparedness. In this study, the researchers explore the perceived preparedness of entry-level technical services librarians upon graduating from a Master of Library Science/Information Science (MLS/IS) degree program, and assess library administrators' employment projections for technical services librarians, including hiring, retiring, position consolidation, and elimination. An electronic survey was distributed to library administrators and technical services librarians from public and academic libraries located across the United States. The researchers identified discrepancies between how prepared entry-level technical services librarians felt upon graduating, and how prepared administrators perceived them to be. Data gathered from both administrators and entry-level technical services librarians suggests the majority of respondents feel entry-level technical services librarians are adequately to exceptionally qualified for their first entry-level position upon graduating from a MLS/IS degree program. However, both groups felt current MLS/IS degree programs do not fully prepare technical services librarians for their first professional jobs, yet the desired skills and areas of knowledge which were identified as lacking varied between the two groups. The researchers discovered employment data which indicate relatively low turnover or consolidation for technical services librarians, and which support projections of low to moderate growth for this area of librarianship over the next decade.

Introduction

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an estimated 136,510 librarians are employed in the United States.[1] The projected rate of growth from 2012 to 2022 is only 7%, which is lower than the national average (11%) for all occupations.[2] *Library Journal's* "Placement & Salaries

2013" report produced data on the employment status of recent MLS/IS graduates.[3] Out of this report's 1,898 respondents, 994 acquired a permanent professional position, 171 acquired a temporary professional position, and 240 acquired a non-professional position. Thus, more than half of the respondents gained professional positions after graduating with their MLS/IS, but it is unclear whether they were sufficiently prepared to handle all tasks associated with these positions.

While general employment data for the profession is plentiful, there is a lack of employment data pertaining specifically to technical services librarians. Additionally, little research is available that examines how well MLS/IS degree programs prepare technical services librarians for their first professional jobs. Due to the lack of data in these two areas, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- *"How prepared are entry-level technical services librarians upon completing a MLS/IS degree program?"*
- *"What are the employment trends facing current and future technical services librarians?"*

Literature Review

Opinions vary greatly within the industry concerning whether entry-level librarian jobs are truly available,[4] or increasingly competitive.[5] Much of the published research investigating employment trends has been based on analyzing job advertisements to determine job availability.[6] Specific demand for catalogers, as well as the changing desired qualifications for those librarians, was analyzed by Ann Copeland in her 1997 article "The Demand for Serial Catalogers."[7] Additional examination of new academic cataloger's preparedness was further expounded upon by Michael Dulock in 2011.[8] In 2001, William Fisher investigated employers' desired core competencies for acquisitions librarians over three decades using position advertisements from 1975, 1987 and 1999.[9] Outside of these job-advertisement analysis studies, other sources of employment statistics are also readily available. The American Library Association regularly releases data on overall librarian employment, librarians' age, and retirement and hiring trends. Further, *Library Journal* annually surveys recent MLS/IS graduates to gather salaries and placement data. Surprisingly, very few studies were found that directly surveyed library employers on hiring trends. One exception is Eamon Tewell's 2012 study of employment opportunities for entry-level academic librarians, which surveyed 33 human resource departments after analyzing job advertisements at their respective institutions. Tewell's

study found that one-fifth of librarian jobs posted were for entry-level positions, and of those, more than 60% were for public service positions.[10] Additionally, there have been several studies on the availability of technical services librarian positions (entry-level and experienced positions).[11] However, the researchers did not find any studies which specifically focused on these librarians' job availability, their knowledge and skill level upon completing a MLS/IS program, or how these factors may affect library administration and the management of library technical services departments.

While preparedness of new library school graduates as they enter the professional industry has been an area of research interest by library professionals, much of it has focused on certain job areas or geographic locations. White & Paris' 1985 cornerstone article "Employer Preferences and the Library Education Curriculum" was quickly followed by Preschel's 1988 "Education of the information professional: What employers want". Both found that graduates need skills outside of what is taught within MLS/IS degree programs, while employers wish for these skills to be taught within the library school curriculum.[12] In recent years, several studies, including Don Fallis and Martin Fricke's 2000 article "Not by Library School Alone", Lawson, Emma, et.al's 2014 article "Getting to the Core of the Matter: Competencies for New E-Resources Librarians," as well Sylvia Hall-Ellis' 2006 article "Cataloger Competencies…What Do Employers Require?", support the notion that practical knowledge and skills outside of the theory-focused content typically taught within MLS/IS curriculums would be beneficial.[13] Other recent job advertisement analysis articles were restricted to surveying the perceived preparedness of librarians within the metropolitan area surrounding New York City.[14]

For additional materials regarding the demand for entry-level technical services librarians, and/or the qualifications of technical services librarians upon completion of their MLIS degree, please see Appendix A: Further Readings.

Method

The researchers' target population for this survey was any public or academic library administrator or technical services librarian who worked for an institution located within the United States. Since the target population included an indefinite and potentially varying number of librarians, and since it was beyond the means of the researchers to account and collect contact information for every possible qualifying participant, the researchers determined it unfeasible to administer the survey in such a way as to measure response rate without either

simultaneously reducing the target population or potentially limiting participation. Instead, the researchers elected to disburse the survey invitation via a combination of listserv postings and mass e-mail methods, and then use the survey to excuse participants who did not meet the target population criteria.

The recipient list for the mass e-mailed survey invitation was constructed using the online edition of the American Library Directory.[14] The final e-mail recipient list was restricted to only those public, community college, and college & university libraries which listed an e-mail address in the directory and which are located within the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or the Republic of Palau. In most cases, only one e-mail was listed for each institution; however, since the researchers desired to potentially survey multiple respondents from each institution, the researchers asked the e-mail recipients to forward the survey to all library administrators and technical services librarians within their respective libraries. To this effect, the researchers elected not to control survey submissions by IP address due to the possibility that some librarians working within the same department may be required to work from shared computers.

Survey invitations were e-mailed to 7,691 addresses on April 17, 2014, and posted to seven technical services-affiliated listservs on April 1- 2, 2014, including: AcqNet-L, SERIAL-ST, AUTOCAT, TS Librarians, OCLC-CAT, RDA-L, and LLAMA-LIB-ADMIN. Within the survey invitation, the researchers stated the purpose of the study and provided a Web link to the survey hosted through the commercial online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. As an incentive for participation, the researchers also mentioned a chance to enter a gift certificate drawing upon completion of the survey. The survey was officially closed on June 2, 2014. A random number generator was used to select three winners out of all participants who chose to provide an e-mail address for the gift drawing. The complete survey instrument may be accessed at http://library.shsu.edu/libfac/TechServicesLibSurvey.pdf.

The survey questionnaire was designed with two sections, and consisted of 30 questions overall. In the first section of the survey, the researchers asked about the type of library the participant works in, the library's population served, the state in which the participant's library is located, the participant's role within the library, and whether the participant holds a MLS/IS or equivalent degree. Since subsequent portions of the survey included questions covering MLS/IS degree program experiences, the researchers elected to excuse librarian respondents who did not hold this degree. Similarly, since subsequent portions of the survey included questions

covering the respondents' experiences working in a technical services role, the researchers elected to excuse librarian respondents who were not working in a technical services role at the time the survey was administered. Consequently, based on the answers provided to the first section's questions, only respondents who met the following criteria were asked to complete the entire survey: a) currently employed in an academic or public library, and b) technical services librarian who holds a MLS/IS degree, or c) head of library technical services department, library dean, director, or an equivalent role.

Upon completing the first section of the survey, participants were directed to the second section of the survey where one of two groups of questions were presented based on the participant's selected role within the library (e.g., library director, head of technical services, or librarian). All respondents who indicated holding a position as a head of technical services, library dean, library director or equivalent, were routed to the administrator group of questions. Further, all participants who indicated holding a librarian position in acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, licensing, systems management, or similar capacity, were routed to the technical services librarian group of survey questions.

Many of the questions in the second section of the survey were asked to both groups, albeit with slightly modified wording. The overlapping questions were designed to form a basis of comparison on a specific subject while accounting for variance in perspective (e.g., a manager's assessment of an employee's performance compared to the employee's assessment of his or her own performance). All other questions were group-specific based on their relevance to the respondents' position and responsibilities. For example, both the administrator and technical services librarian group of questions consisted of questions covering entry-level librarian qualifications upon completing a MLS/IS degree, whereas only administrator participants were asked to project the number of technical services librarians they anticipated hiring over the next ten years. The administrator group of questions consisted of questions covering various areas of the participants' respective libraries, including: a) prevalence of MLS/IS degrees held by all librarians, b) policies regarding institutional requirements for a MLS/IS degree when hiring new librarians, c) technical services librarian position hiring, cutback, consolidation, and retirement trends, d) hiring projection comparisons among technical services librarians and other types of librarians, and e) perceived level of preparedness exhibited by entry-level technical services librarians who have earned a MLS/IS degree. The technical services librarian group of questions consisted of questions covering the participants': a) level of preparedness following

completion of the MLS/IS degree program, b) perceived level of preparedness of other entry-level technical services librarian colleagues who have completed a MLS/IS degree program, c) thoughts on which qualities, skills, or knowledge were not possessed but were desired following completion of the MLS/IS degree program, and d) thoughts on whether previous library experience, if possessed, had any impact on the participant's ability to fulfill the current position's requirements.

Demographics

Responses were collected from participants in 49 U.S. states and Puerto Rico. Fifty-six percent of responses were from academic library respondents, and 37.1% were from public library respondents. Four hundred and seven respondents identified themselves as librarians, while 638 respondents identified themselves as either a head of technical services department, library dean, or library director. Librarian respondents were allowed to choose multiple job areas if applicable. Out of all librarian respondents, 117 selected Acquisitions, 273 selected Cataloging, 72 selected Circulation, 152 selected Collection Development, 131 selected Electronic Resource management, 48 selected Interlibrary Loan, 47 selected Licensing, 94 selected Public Services, 157 selected Reference, 80 selected Bibliographer, and 46 selected Systems. Ten percent of the respondents' affiliated libraries serve less than 1,000 patrons, 43.2% serve between 1,000 and 9,999 patrons, 20.8% serve between 10,000 and 29,999 patrons, and 26.4% serve more than 30,000 patrons.

Out of the 1,390 total survey participants, 101 were removed for not working in a public or academic library; 176 were removed for not having an employment role of librarian, library administrator, or head of technical services; 58 librarians were removed for not having a technical services job area; 31 librarians were removed for not having a MLS/IS degree, and 72 voluntarily discontinued the survey while still in the first section. As a result, 638 survey respondents were directed to the administrator group of questions, and 314 respondents were directed to the technical services librarian group of questions. However, 113 administrator respondents and 28 technical services librarian respondents voluntarily discontinued the survey prior to beginning the second section of the survey. Overall, 811 participants successfully completed the entire survey (see fig. 1).
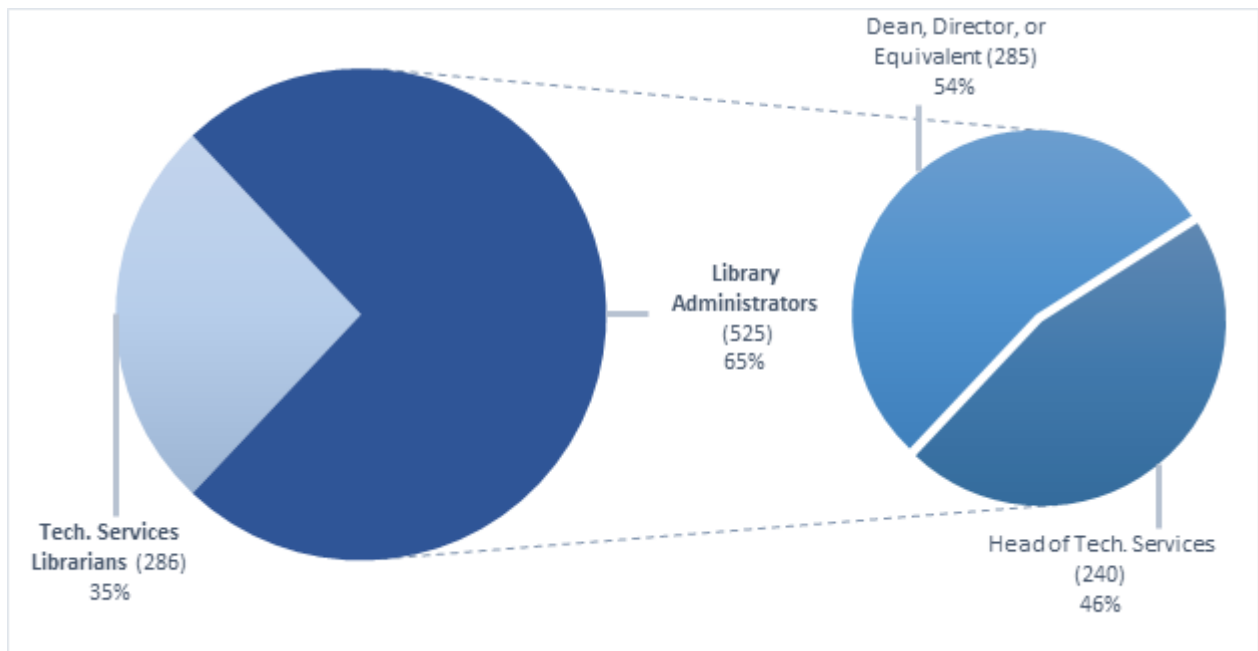
Figure 1. Participants' Role Within the Library

Results

Technical Services Librarians

Respondents who qualified as technical services librarians were asked nine questions pertaining to their work experience and level of preparedness following completion of their MLS/IS degree. Participants were asked to rank how qualified they felt for their first professional technical services librarian position after graduation. Twenty percent felt exceptionally qualified, 39.5% felt moderately qualified, 12.2% felt poorly qualified, and only one respondent indicated feeling completely unqualified.

When respondents were asked to identify any qualities, skills, or knowledge they did not possess but wish they had possessed upon completing their MLS/IS degree, 42% desired the capability to program in at least one language, 39.2% selected familiarity with contract and license negotiations, 36.4% wished for more familiarity with server maintenance and data security best practices, and 34.3% wanted insight on how to get published in scholarly sources. Additionally, nearly one-quarter of all respondents wished they had gained experience working with any Integrated Library System (ILS) software, and 21% wished they had been exposed to a cataloging-specific software. Only 7.3% felt there were no additional skills, qualities, or knowledge needed upon completion of their MLS/IS degree.

Respondents were also asked to assess the perceived level of preparedness of any technical services librarian colleague(s) possessing less than 2 years of professional experience. The majority of respondents selected that this question was not applicable to them; however, of the 106 respondents to whom this question applied, 66% believed their colleague(s) to be either adequately or moderately qualified, more than one-quarter felt their colleague(s) were poorly qualified, and only 5.6% believed their colleague(s) to be exceptionally qualified.

More than half of the respondents reported having 10 or more years of experience as a technical services librarian, 24.2% had 5-10 years of experience, and 12% had 0-2 and 2-5 years of experience respectively. When asked about previous library experience acquired prior to their first professional technical services librarian position, 9.6% reported having no previous experience, 54.7% had 1-5 years, 24.1% had 6-10 years, and 10.5% had more than 10 years. Of those respondents who reported having acquired previous experience, 71.5% reported this experience as being derived as a paid librarian or staff member, 45.9% as an intern or student worker, and 17.4% acquired their experience through volunteer work. Respondents were also asked to rank whether they felt their previous library experience was helpful or detrimental upon beginning their first technical services librarian position. Nearly three-quarters of the applicable respondents believed this experience was extremely helpful. Only two respondents felt their previous experience was either detrimental or not at all helpful.

Library Administrators

Respondents who identified themselves as heads of technical services departments, library directors, library deans or equivalent were asked 15 questions pertaining to their library's technical services librarians, MLS/IS degree requirements, and technical services employment trends. More than half of the respondents' libraries always require newly hired librarians to have a MLS/IS degree whereas 22% never require the degree. Further, more than three-quarters of all academic library respondents selected that their institution always requires the degree compared to only 23% for public library respondents. One percent of academic library respondents selected that the degree is never required compared to 42.5% for public library respondents (see fig. 2).
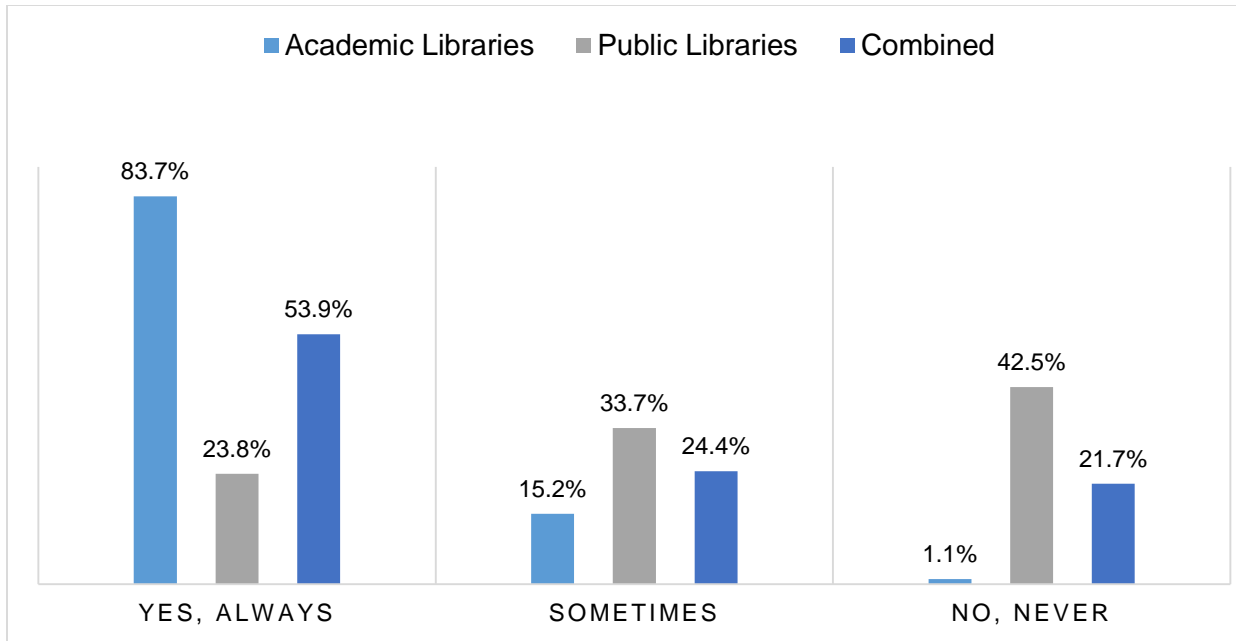
Figure 2. Master of Library Science/Information Science Degree Requirements for Newly Hired Librarians

Participants were asked to provide the number of technical services librarians their library has hired over the past 10 years, as well as the number of those who have retired over the same timeframe. Nearly half stated that none have been hired during this time, 22% had hired one, 14.5% hired two, 8.4% hired three, and 8.9% hired four or more. Sixty-seven percent indicated that no technical services librarians had retired in this timeframe, and only one-quarter of the respondents indicated that just one had retired.

Respondents were also asked to project how many technical services librarians they anticipate hiring over the next 10 years. Three-quarters of the respondents had no plans to create any new positions over this period of time, 19% had plans to create 1-3 new positions, and 3% were unsure. Additionally, half of the respondents had no plans to fill or replace any existing positions should they be vacated, whereas more than one-third had plans to fill or replace one existing position, and 11% had plans to fill or replace at least two positions. When asked to compare their library's hiring projections for technical services librarians and all other types of librarians, 44% anticipated hiring less technical services librarians than other types of librarians, whereas only 5% projected their library to hire more technical services librarians than other types of librariansover the next 10 years. Twenty-two percent were either unsure or felt the question wasn't applicable to their institution (see fig. 3).
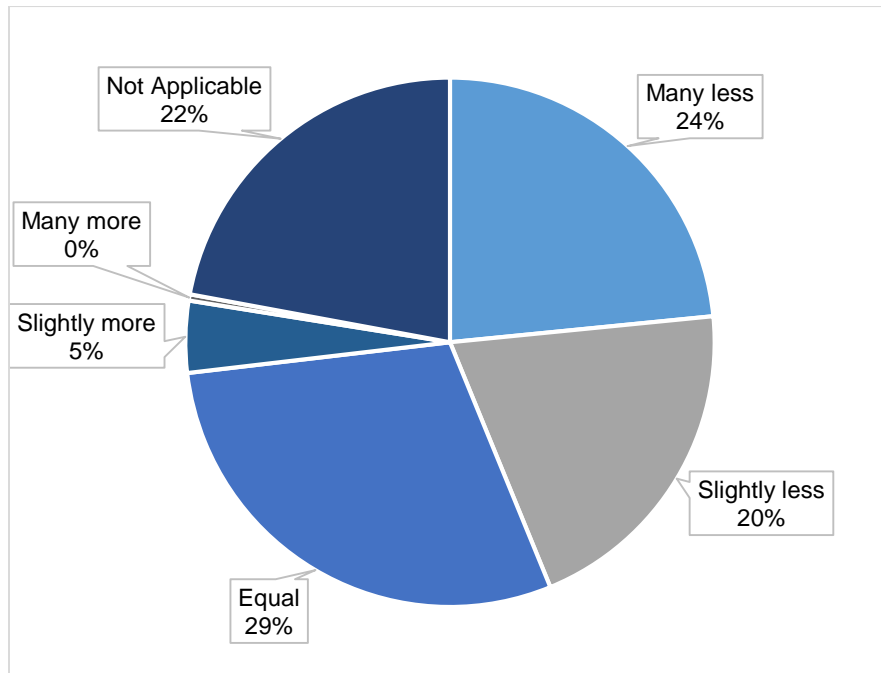
Figure 3. Administrators' Projection for Number of Technical Services Librarians to be Hired Over Next Ten Years Compared to All Other Librarians

Of the 525 administrator respondents, 233 indicated that an entry-level technical services librarian was currently employed by their library. When asked to rank how qualified they believe these librarians were upon beginning their entry-level position following completion of a MLS/IS degree program, nearly one-quarter felt they were moderately to exceptionally qualified, 17% felt they were only adequately qualified, and 10% ranked them as having been either unqualified or poorly qualified. Fifty-two percent were either unsure or believed the question was not applicable.

Forty-eight percent of the administrator respondents (233) identified desirable qualities, skills, or knowledge entry-level technical service librarians did not possess upon completing the MLS/IS degree program. Multiple responses were allowed for this question. Of the completed responses, 41.6% selected familiarity with contract and license negotiations, 39.1% selected familiarity with acquisitions vendors and ordering processes, and 30.5% selected an awareness of current trends and options for electronic resource tracking and management. Fifty-two percent of the administrator respondents indicated their library did not employ any entry-level technical services librarians and were therefore unable to identify any desirable qualities, skills,

or knowledge for those librarians. Additionally, despite the recent full implementation of Resource Description and Analysis (RDA) as the successor cataloging standard to Anglo American Cataloging Rules (AACR2), only 22% wished their entry-level technical services librarians possessed more knowledge of current cataloging standards. The full list of responses can be seen in table 1.

Table 1: *Comparison of Perspectives on Non-Present but Desired Qualities, Skills, or Knowledge Among Entry-Level Technical Services Librarians Upon Completing a MLS/IS Degree Program*				
Qualities, Skills, or Knowledge Area	Librarian %	Ranking	Administrator %	Ranking
Capability to program in at least one language	42.0	1	20.2	12
Familiarity with contract and license negotiations	39.2	2	41.6	1
Familiarity with server maintenance and data security best practices	36.4	3	28.3	4
Insight on writing for scholarly sources, and getting published	34.3	4	12.5	13
Familiarity with acquisitions vendors and ordering process	30.1	5	39.1	2
Awareness of current trends & options for electronic resource tracking & management	27.3	6	30.5	3
Experience with any ILS software	23.1	7	22.8	7
Ability to bridge differences in term. used by librarians and computer science	21.3	8	20.6	10
Exposure to cataloging software (excluding ILS software)	21.3	9	23.6	6
Experience with your library's ILS software	17.5	10	20.6	11
Ability to assess and select appropriate MARC records	16.4	11	20.6	9
Knowledge of current cataloging standards	12.9	12	22.8	8
Not applicable: No additional skills, qualities or knowledge needed	7.3	13	24	5

Of the 216 administrator group respondents who reported having entry-level technical services librarians who had previous library experience, 88% believed these librarians' previous experience has been either helpful or extremely helpful in their new role, 9.7% felt the previous experience was neither helpful nor detrimental, and only 1.4% felt this experience was either detrimental or not at all helpful to the librarian's performance.

Discussion

Although responses show that the majority of the surveyed academic and public libraries have no entry-level technical services librarians, the results also show that many of these libraries reported very few technical services librarians had been hired over the last 10 years. This may indicate libraries are not simply passing over librarians with little to no experience, but are in general hiring technical services librarians at a slow pace in accord with an overarching industrial hiring lull. Additionally, the majority reported not having any technical services librarians retire in the past 10 years. This, in addition to very few reported positions being eliminated or consolidated, may be further compressing job availability. Based on the surveyed administrators' projections, the employment outlook for this area of librarianship over the next 10 years appears stable, with nearly half of the applicable respondents reporting plans to hire one or more technical services librarians over this timeframe.

This study's results were consistent with past research,[15] which found a disconnect between knowledge gleaned via MLS/IS education and knowledge expected on the job as a professional librarian. However, results from this research may also indicate an additional disconnect specifically between administrators and new technical services librarians, with new librarians generally perceiving themselves as more prepared upon beginning a new position than administrators perceive them to be. It should also be noted that technical services librarian respondents tended to assess their entry-level technical services colleague(s)' preparedness on a scale more consistent with administrators (see fig. 4).
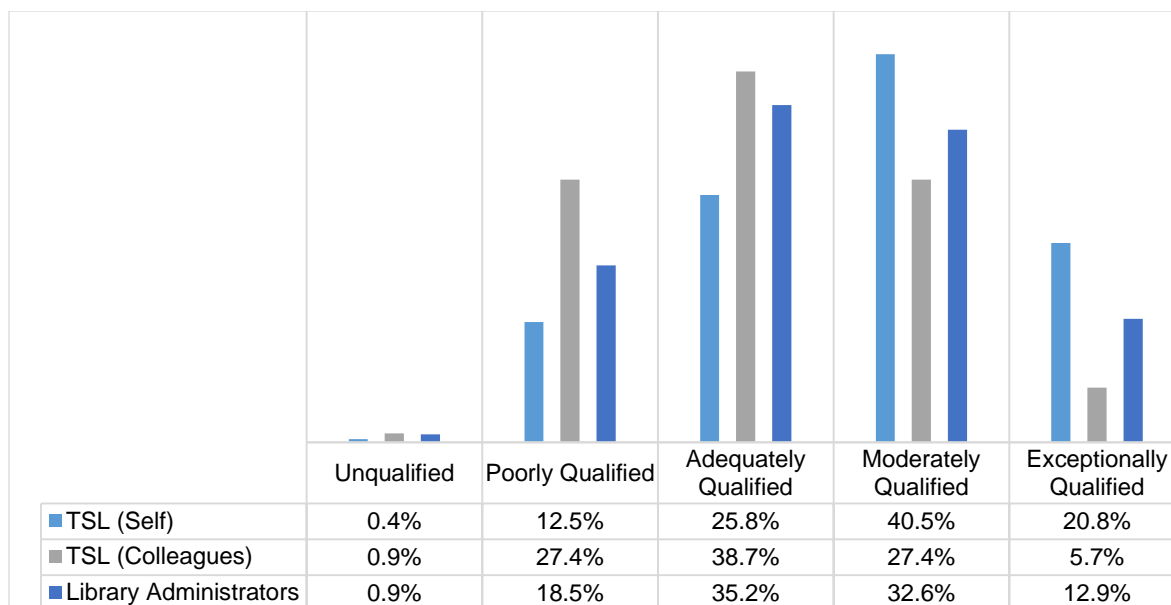
	Unqualified	Poorly Qualified	Adequately Qualified	Moderately Qualified	Exceptionally Qualified
■ TSL (Self)	0.4%	12.5%	25.8%	40.5%	20.8%
■ TSL (Colleagues)	0.9%	27.4%	38.7%	27.4%	5.7%
■ Library Administrators	0.9%	18.5%	35.2%	32.6%	12.9%

Figure 4. Comparison of Perspectives on New Technical Services Librarian Preparedness

Interestingly, when selecting desired but lacking skills from new graduates, librarians and library administrators both identified familiarity with contract and license negotiations at a similar frequency; however, librarians' most frequent selection of capability to code in at least one language was selected third from last among administrators, and librarians' fourth most frequent selection of possessing insight on writing for scholarly sources was selected least frequently among administrators. Considering the large degree of variance found between both groups' desired but lacking skills selections, the researchers suspect these diverging perspectives may be experiencing influence from new and evolving technologies within the technical services landscape, and the resulting discrepancies of how these new tasks are being prioritized. Variances in perceptions may also be attributed to the separation of work typically found between administrators and librarians, as well as the separation of work found in various areas within the technical services department.

Additionally, the researchers speculate this divergence in perspectives might also be due to the respective groups holding different MLS/IS degree program expectations. Librarians may feel adequately prepared to handle the specific tasks to which they were exposed within the MLS/IS degree curriculum and recognize unfamiliar job-specific tasks as necessary on-the-job training, while administrators may have expectations for MLS/IS degree programs to better prepare new graduates for a wider variety of tasks that would reduce the amount of on-the-job training required. Responses and voluntary comments from administrators and librarians lend support to

this possibility, which may warrant institutions offering MLS/IS degree programs to consider modifying or implementing courses to address those areas noted frequently from both groups. For example, by learning general information about ILS software in conjunction with being able to use several different ILS software programs within MLS/IS coursework, graduates would be equipped with both the theoretical knowledge and the practical experience needed to simultaneously satisfy MLS/IS curriculum and future employer requirements. However, the results also suggest many librarians feel that even with curriculum enhancements, the MLS/IS degree cannot fully prepare technical services librarians for their first professional position. To this end, both administrators and librarians regarded previous experience—whether that be attained as a volunteer, paraprofessional, or derived from an internship—as being a highly valuable means of enhancing knowledge and developing necessary skillsets which may not be readily taught or feasibly provided within the scope of the MLS/IS degree curriculum.

Study Limitations and Further Research

The study limitations vary in regards to demographics, question wording, and perceived biases. Data was lacking from Alaska, therefore the results cannot be considered a complete representation of the United States. The researchers did not consider other demographic limitations before sending out the survey, such as very small libraries in which only one or two librarians have all of the technical services responsibilities, thus potentially skewing the data on employment outlook.

Additionally, the question which asks librarians to rate their entry-level colleague(s) could be perceived as leading by possibly implying the existence of such colleague(s), and respondents who did not have a colleague(s) that fit the requirements may have answered in a hypothetical manner. Also, since the researchers chose not to limit the technical services librarian section solely to recent graduates or entry-level librarians due to the population size constraint, some librarians would have rated their level of preparedness based on MLS/IS degree program experience gleaned on an average of 10 or more years ago. It is also possible administrators may tend to elevate ratings for librarians with whom they were involved in hiring. Moreover, a personal bias may exist when conducting self-assessments.

There are many interesting opportunities for future research on the topics of technical services employment trends and entry-level technical services librarians' perceived preparedness. One suggestion for expanding the research is to remove the limitations on library type, thus including

school and special libraries. With the limitations removed, employment data could be compared to the profession as a whole. Also, by repeating the research incrementally (possibly every decade), employment trends and perceptions of entry-level technical services librarian preparedness can be noted and compared to past research.

Furthermore, analyzing MLS/IS degree programs in regards to technical services skills provided may be an interesting topic for further research. Areas that may warrant additional examination are comparisons of perceived preparedness by MLS/IS institution, self-perception of preparedness by gender, and whether degree program format (e.g., online, face-to-face, hybrid) directly affects librarians' self-perception on preparedness for their first technical services jobs.

Conclusion

The researchers explored employment trends for technical services librarians, as well as the perceived preparedness of entry-level technical services librarians from the librarians themselves, colleagues, and administrators. The results suggest most technical services librarian jobs are not being consolidated nor eliminated, and very few technical services librarians are retiring. Hiring projections for this respondent pool over the next 10 years appear moderately stable, with nearly half of the surveyed administrators indicating plans to maintain current positions if vacated, and one-fourth indicating plans to increase their library's number of technical services librarians during this timeframe. The vast majority of administrators and technical services librarians feel entry-level technical services librarians are adequately to exceptionally qualified for their first entry-level position upon graduating from a MLS/IS degree program. Both administrators and technical services librarians tend to agree that MLS/IS degree programs do not fully prepare technical services librarians for their first professional jobs, yet there exists some incongruences in the groups' respective selections of those skillsets believed to be lacking.

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Appendix I: Survey Tool

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Type of Library

✱1. In what type of library do you currently work?

○ Academic library (college, university, or junior college)

○ Public library

○ School library (elementary, middle, and high schools, etc.)

○ Special library (museum, government, corporate, etc.)

○ Other

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Your role within the library

*1. What size patron population does your library serve?

[　　　　　　]

If known, enter the exact patron population your library serves here:

[　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　]

*2. What state is your library located in?

[　　　　　　]

*3. What is your role within the library?

◯ Library Dean, Library Director or equivalent role

◯ Head of Technical Services (librarian)

◯ Librarian

◯ Library staff member

◯ Other

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Areas of librarian job duties

✱ 1. Please select the role(s) you perform in your current librarian position:

☐ Acquisitions	☐ Electronic Resource Management	☐ Reference
☐ Cataloging	☐ InterLibrary Loan	☐ Subject Selector/Bibliographer
☐ Circulation	☐ Licensing	☐ Systems
☐ Collection Development	☐ Public Services	

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

*1. Do you have an Master of Library Science/Information Science degree or equivalent?

◯ Yes

◯ No

If you selected No, please list your degrees and years obtained below (e.g. M.S. Chemistry, 2005)

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Library Administrators - 1

Definition of a Technical Services Librarian:
A librarian who has a Master of Library Science/Information Science (MLS/IS) degree and is employed in an acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, licensing, systems management, or similar capacity.

✱1. How many librarians are employed at your library, and have a MLS/IS degree?

	employed (including vacant positions)	have a MLS/IS degree
Number of librarians at your library:		

Please provide comments or more specific information here.

✱2. Does your library currently require newly hired librarians to have a MLS/IS degree?

◯ Yes, always.

◯ Sometimes

◯ No, never.

If you selected "Sometimes", please elaborate.

✱3. How many technical services librarians are employed at your library, and have a MLS/IS degree?

	employed (including vacant positions)	have a MLS/IS degree
Number of technical services librarians at your library:		

Please provide comments or more specific information here.

✱4. How many of your library's technical services librarians have 2 years or less professional* experience? (*experience that required a MLS/IS degree)

✱5. In the past 10 years, how many technical services librarians has your library hired?

✱6. In the past 10 years, how many technical services librarians at your library have retired, or left their position (voluntarily or involuntarily)?

	retired	left their position
Number of technical services librarians who:		

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

*7. In the past 10 years, how many technical services librarian positions at your library have been eliminated or consolidated with another position?

	eliminated	consolidated
Technical service librarian positions:		

*8. Using the total from your answers in Question #7, how many of these eliminated/consolidated jobs were held by librarians who retired OR left their position?

	retired	left their position
Number of technical services librarians who:		

*9. In the next 10 years, how many technical services librarians does your library project to hire? Please include any existing positions (vacant, or expected to vacate), and new/proposed technical services librarian positions.

	existing librarian position(s)	new/proposed librarian position(s)
Technical services:		

*10. In the next 10 years, is the number of estimated technical services librarians to be hired more or less than librarians in other areas in your library (reference, circulation, etc.) ?

Many less technical services librarians to be hired	Slightly less	Equal	Slightly more	Many more technical services librarians to be hired	Not applicable/ unknown
○	○	○	○	○	○

Please elaborate or provide more specific information.

11. Please add any additional comments or insight you have regarding the employment outlook of technical services librarians in your library.

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Library Administrators - 2

Definition of a Technical Services Librarian:
A librarian who has a Master of Library Science/Information Science (MLS/IS) degree and is employed in an acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, licensing, systems management, or similar capacity.

For the purpose of this survey, entry-level is defined as a professional librarian position requiring a MLS/IS degree and less than 2 years experience.

*1. Based on your library's entry-level technical services librarian(s)' initial knowledge and skills (ILS familiarity, information retrieval, etc.), how qualified overall do you feel these librarians were immediately following completion of their MLS/IS degree?

Unqualified	Poorly qualified	Adequately qualified	Moderately qualified	Exceptionally qualified	Not applicable/ unknown
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please elaborate or provide examples:

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

*2. Upon completing their MLS/IS degree, what qualities, skills, or knowledge did your entry-level technical services librarians NOT possess that you wish they had?

☐ Ability to assess and select appropriate MARC records

☐ Ability to bridge differences in terminology used by librarians and computer science

☐ Awareness of current trends and options for electronic resource tracking and management

☐ Capability to program in at least one language

☐ Experience with any ILS software

☐ Experience with your library's ILS software

☐ Exposure to cataloging software (excluding ILS software)

☐ Familiar with acquisitions vendors and ordering process

☐ Familiarity with contract and license negotiations

☐ Familiarity with server maintenance and data security best practices

☐ Insight on writing for scholarly sources, and getting published

☐ Knowledge of current cataloging standards

☐ Not applicable: No entry-level technical services librarians at our library

☐ Not applicable: No additional skills, qualities or knowledge desired

☐ Other (please specify)

[text box]

*3. In general, for those entry-level technical services librarian(s) who had previous library experience upon beginning their position with your library, do you feel this library experience was helpful or detrimental to that person(s)' performance in their new role?

Deterimental	Not helpful	Neutral	Helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable/ unknown
○	○	○	○	○	○

Please specify:

[text box]

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

4. Please add any additional comments or insight regarding your perception of how prepared entry-level technical services librarians are with only the knowledge and skills acquired through completion of their MLS/IS degree.

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Technical Services Librarians

Definition of a Technical Services Librarian:
A librarian who has a Master of Library Science/Information Science (MLS/IS) degree and is employed in an acquisitions, cataloging, electronic resources, licensing, systems management, or similar capacity.

*1. What year did you obtain your MLS/IS (or equivalent) degree?

Please enter the year in 4 digit format (e.g. 1995)

*2. Based on YOUR initial knowledge and library skills (ILS familiarity, information retrieval, etc.), how qualified did you feel in your first professional technical services librarian position, immediately following completion of an MLS/IS degree?

Unqualified	Poorly qualified	Adequately qualified	Moderately qualified	Exceptionally qualified	Not applicable.
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please elaborate or provide more specific information.

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

*3. Upon completing your MLS/IS degree, what qualities, skills, or knowledge did you NOT possess that you wish you had?

☐ Ability to assess and select appropriate MARC records

☐ Ability to bridge differences in terminology used by librarians and computer science

☐ Awareness of current trends and options for electronic resource tracking and management

☐ Capability to program in at least one language

☐ Experience with any ILS software

☐ Experience with your library's ILS software

☐ Exposure to cataloging software (excluding ILS software)

☐ Other (please specify)

☐ Familiar with acquisitions vendors and ordering process

☐ Familiarity with contract and license negotiations

☐ Familiarity with server maintenance and data security best practices

☐ Insight on writing for scholarly sources, and getting published

☐ Knowledge of current cataloging standards

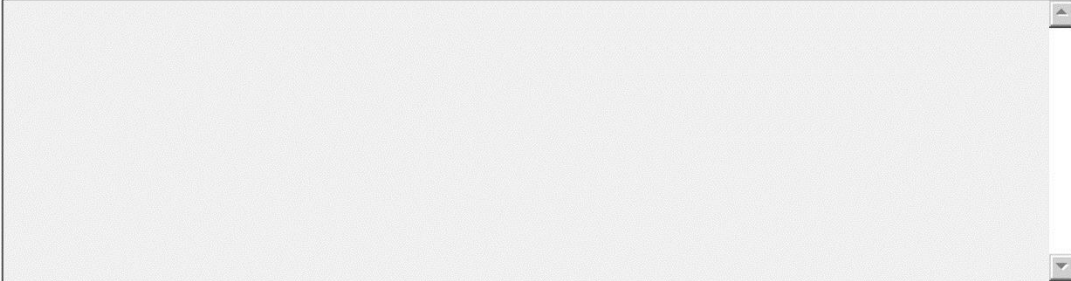☐ Not applicable: No additional skills, qualities or knowledge needed

4. If you have a colleague librarian(s) in technical services with less than 2 years experience - based upon their initial knowledge and library skills (ILS familiarity, information retrieval, etc.), how qualified do you feel he/she/they were at the start of their position?

Unqualified	Poorly qualified	Adequately qualified	Moderately qualified	Exceptionally qualified	Not applicable
○	○	○	○	○	○

Please specify if you chose "Not Applicable"

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

5. Please add any additional comments or insight regarding how prepared you OR your colleague(s) were as entry-level technical services librarians, having only the knowledge and skills acquired through completion of a MLS/IS degree.

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Technical Services Librarians - 2

*1. How many years of professional experience do you have being a technical services librarian?

○ 0-2 years experience   ○ 5-10 years experience

○ 2-5 years experience   ○ 10+ years experience

*2. Did you acquire library experience prior to your first professional technical services position? Choose all that apply

☐ Yes - paid library employment (staff or librarian)

☐ Yes - volunteer work

☐ Yes - internship/student worker

☐ No

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*3. How many total years of previous library experience did you acquire prior to your first technical services librarian position?

[   ]

*4. Do you feel your previous library experience was helpful or detrimental to your performance when you initially started your technical services librarian job?

Detrimental	Not helpful	Neutral	Helpful	Extremely helpful	Not applicable
○	○	○	○	○	○

Please elaborate or specify.

[   ]

Entry Level Technical Services Librarians

Thank You

Thank you for completing our survey!

You will now be redirected to the prize drawing page, where you may enter your email address for a chance to win 1 of the (2) $30 Amazon gift cards.(Optional)

If for any reason you do not see the survey page to enter the prize drawing and you do wish to enter, please email klandry@shsu.edu with the subject line "Tech Services Librarian - Prize drawing" and enter your email address in the email text.